

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIII.—No. 85

SUNDAY, AUGUST 31, 1918

PRICE TWOPENCE

The local traditions of Christianity are clear enough during the last 1,300 or 1,400 years. It is during the first two or three centuries that the chain fails.

—MACAULAY.

"Only a Woman's Hair."

ANY man who can take Bacon in one hand and Shakespeare in the other, having read them both, and say that they were written by the same hand and display the same faculties of mind, is almost past praying for—from a literary point of view. Mark you, having read them both is a necessary criterion. Catching at occasional words and ideas is futile. Such things were in the air for all men of brains and reading. No, it is the weight of the whole work that must tell. And, judged in that way, is it possible for anyone with even a moderate literary sense to hesitate in his verdict?

Many years ago the present writer pointed out the difference in the styles of Bacon and Shakespeare, and in their ways of thinking. Bacon's style, as may be seen by comparing the first and last editions of the *Essays*, tended to greater simplicity; Shakespeare's style, as may be seen by comparing the earlier with the later plays, tended to greater complexity. This was really because Bacon's mind did not grow like Shakespeare's. He lacked the creative energy. From first to last he had dignity, but no fire; but the blood of Shakespeare ran hot from *Venus and Adonis* to the *Tempest*. His restraint was not that of a cooling nature, but that of a great, patient, and perfected artist. And see how differently they think. Bacon's wisdom of life is open, worldly, and largely cynical; it is that of a very distinguished player in the great game. Shakespeare saw all that just as well, but he saw behind it; perhaps we should say below it—for the difference is really between superficiality and profundity. The great game palls in time; it is the more intimate things of life that outlast and outweigh the more public. When the doom falls on Macbeth, it is the death of his wife, more than the loss of his crown, that fills his mouth with ashes; and when Hamlet is at his last gasp he thinks only of his good name, and "the rest is silence"; but that silence held his love as it was to hold his life—the love that leapt to his lips as he leapt into her grave beside Laertes.

"I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum."

Precisely in their treatment of that very passion of Love, as the present writer observed so many years ago, lies perhaps the most fundamental difference between Bacon and Shakespeare. Bacon's essay on Love is cynical. The man of the world, the well-bred statesman, looked on Love "as the child of folly." To him it was a more or less inevitable nuisance; a tragi-comical perturbation of social life. Shakespeare saw in it the very mainspring of existence; in which he was true to nature—and evolution. Bacon says that Love speaks "in a perpetual hyperbole." Shakespeare knew that too. He said that the lover "sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt." But he knew more. Behind the hyperbole

was the passion that made it, and that was the thing beyond price; not the "child of folly," but the inspirer, the chastener, the sustainer. "Conscience is born of love," said Shakespeare, in one of his sonnets; and this all-profound sentence, this full-inspired oracle, is like a glove flung in the face of Bacon's shallower philosophy.

The present writer was, long afterwards, delighted to see this very point raised in Colonel Ingersoll's splendid lecture on Shakespeare. Ingersoll quoted what Bacon wrote of Love, and added on his own part the simple words, "The author of *Romeo and Juliet* never wrote that." Only nine words. Yet they are enough. To the knowing reader everything is there.

Turning from the greatest of our poets to the greatest of our generals, the magnificent Marlborough, we may remark that by far the most important thing in the world to him was his Sarah; the beautiful, witty, termagant great Duchess, with a feminine brain to match the masculine one of her husband. When he died she opened a cabinet, in which he kept in secrecy all he most valued, and she found a mass of her own hair. Years before, when furious because he had disobeyed her, she had resolved to mortify him; and the rest shall be told in the words of Mr. Fitzgerald Molloy, who has written her Life under the title or *The Queen's Comrade*:—

"Knowing that her beautiful and abundant hair was a source of pride and delight to him, she had impetuously cut it from her head. The shorn tresses had been left in a room through which he must pass, and in a place where he must see them. But he came and went, saw and spoke to her, showing neither anger, sorrow, nor surprise. When he next quitted the house she ran to secure her tresses, but they had vanished, and on a consultation with her looking-glass she saw how foolish a thing she had done. But she said nothing about her shorn locks, nor did he, and she never knew what had become of them until they were found by her among those things he held most precious."

Is it a wonder that the great Sarah asked with amazement if anyone imagined that she could marry another man after having been the wife of John Churchill?

One is reminded of a darker picture, connected with one who stands alone in English literature, as he really stood alone in life. After the death of Swift there was found a lock of Stella's hair. It was enclosed in a paper, on which he had written the words: "Only a woman's hair." Could pathos go further? Is it not more touching than a storm of ejaculations or a deluge of tears? Thackeray moralised over it in his too facile way, but Swift frightened him, and he did not see to the heart of this mystery. Read the "Journal" with its "little language," then read that "Only a woman's hair," and then go your way, sobered and softened, as one who has lighted on an unspeakable tragedy.

Bacon would have smiled at that "Only a woman's hair." Another proof (he would have said) of what he had declared of Love that "in life it doth much mischief; sometimes like a siren, sometimes like a fury," and that "great spirits and great business do keep out this weak passion." Shakespeare would have had quite other thoughts. He would have understood how a lock of hair could be more to a man than the Lord Chancellorship of England.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Study of Religion.

NOWADAYS one does not care to rob clergymen of any little comfort they may find in the religious situation. There is so much to discourage and so little to cheer them. Church attendances steadily diminish, there is a general complaint as to the falling off in subscriptions, and heresies of all kinds find voice in the pulpit, while those who protest are plainly told they are old-fashioned and need to move with the times. Popular preachers are driven to political subjects to attract audiences, and there are serious proposals for adopting the cinematograph as a regular adjunct to the Sunday service. In America, a company has actually been formed for this purpose, although it naturally promises to restrict itself to religious and educational subjects. Still, the thing may grow, and we have no doubt that the younger portion of the congregation will find Samson's exploits with the Philistines, or Jonah's adventures with the whale interesting enough. Parsons must live, churches must be maintained; and if this cannot be done on the old lines new methods must be adopted.

No one, therefore, will grudge the Rev. Dr. Neville Figgis extracting comfort from the reflection that there are many signs of our living "once more in an age of faith." There is an awakened interest in religion. "The spirit of scientific research has become alive to the fact of religion as a human phenomenon, and it is studied with increasing enthusiasm and research among all kinds of races and in every stage of culture." Therefore, Dr. Figgis is pleased, because "once religion is seen to be a natural and inevitable fact.....an increasing minority will turn to that religion which is most pure, most emphatically religious, most representative—the religion of religions." The steps are simple. An awakened interest in religion leads to a study of religions among all races of people; having studied these religions, people are driven to the recognition of Christianity as the purest and most representative, with the result that we shall all end in being reunited to the Christian faith.

This is quite an idyllic prospect—from the Christian point of view. Only one can recall a time when the recognition of religion as a natural phenomenon was resented as gross infidelity. And so in truth it was; for religion in the doctrinal and Christian sense is not a mere natural phenomenon. It stands in a category of its own. The orthodox doctrine of revelation involved this. Religion was revealed to man because he could not have acquired it by any other means—at least, not true religion, and a false religion was worse than none at all. At any rate, Dr. Figgis's thankfulness appears to be excessive. It is not warranted by the facts. The greatest and most confirmed Atheist living does not doubt that religion is a natural—a human fact. It would be sheer lunacy to doubt it. In human thought there are only two ultimate categories. One is supernatural and the other natural. The Freethinker does not believe in the former; he does pin his whole faith on the supremacy of the latter. And certainly no Freethinker was ever lunatic enough to deny the existence of religion. He affirms it "as a natural and inevitable fact," only he explains it—and there is no surer way of killing religion than by explanation. A religion explained is a religion doomed. That is why all Churches, Christian and non-Christian, appeal ultimately to man's sense of mystery. Faith lives on the unintelligible, and churches are built on the unexplainable.

Dr. Figgis is quite right in saying that religion is now being studied with enthusiasm, and that this study is pursued among all races and in all stages of culture. In this direction, as in many others, the pioneers have been Freethinkers. In our own days the names of two such men as Tylor and Frazer are enough to prove this. Distinguished religionists such as the late Robertson Smith—dismissed from his post for heresy—have done valuable work, but

the honor of leading the way rests with the unbelievers. And there are two reasons why unbelievers led the way. In the first place there was the necessity of meeting Christianity on its own ground and demonstrating the hollowness of its claims. Events have moved so rapidly during the last generation or so that we seem ages removed from the time when educated Christians really believed that the doctrines and teachings and symbols of Christianity were peculiar to that religion. It required a long fight to force from Christians a general recognition that Christian doctrines and symbols existed in other religions, some of them already ancient when Christianity was in its cradle. The Christian replied that all these were inventions of the Devil or copied from Christianity. To-day there are few educated Christians who would deny that the Christian miracles, the story of a crucified and resurrected Savior, a virgin birth, a day of judgment, heaven and hell, all have their counterparts in other religions. Christian preachers have not yet developed enough honesty in the pulpit to tell these things to their congregation, but they know that many of their hearers are aware of the truth, and, if pressed, would admit as true what has been said.

Secondly, there has been an enthusiasm for religious research, because it was seen that the truth concerning one religion could only be derived from a study of all. What can one make of the Christian doctrine of Deity by itself? Little or nothing. It is a mere incomprehensible jumble, or, at best, offensive and contradictory so far as it is understandable. But when we take this doctrine and relate it to the belief in God among other peoples, study its growth as a natural fact, and note the causes that have led to its development and modification, we see that the whole question is a historical and psychological one. The question is no longer whether there is a God; the vital question is how did people come to believe in one? The question of veracity gives place to one of origin. By examining the beliefs of all peoples we can in thought stand at the cradle of Deity. We can see the social and mental conditions that gave it birth. Gods are reduced to a species, with all the varieties classified and labelled in the anthropological museum.

Or the great Christian belief in miracles. Who now seriously bothers to prove that the Christian miracles were actual historic facts? It is with them as with Deity—no longer a question did they occur, but only one of how did people come to believe in their occurrence? Research showed the Christian miracles to be in no sense peculiar. Other religions had theirs, and of an exactly similar kind. Still further, miracle was pushed back to the region of magic, to a time when men in their ignorance of nature believed anything was possible, because nothing was certain. The magic-working of primitive mankind became the miracle-working of the later and more elaborated religions. And the miraculous element in religion persisted just so long as there existed a type of mind suitable to it. Again there is nothing before us but a problem of historical psychology. It is not a question of evidence at all. Evidence does not establish a miracle, and it very seldom disproves one; still less seldom does it disprove the possibility of a miracle. People either *outgrow* the miraculous or they continue to believe in it.

The enthusiasm for research has, then, made plain three things. First, the fact that all religions are fundamentally alike. They all originate in the same conditions, and involve the same fundamental beliefs. Second, that these beliefs owe their origin to human ignorance of natural causation; and until that ignorance is removed, religion is indestructible. Thirdly, the primitive mind persists under all stages of culture. In relation to religion, there are worshippers in twentieth-century churches who are as truly primitive as the uncivilised inhabitants of an African forest. To the student of comparative religion there is no vital difference between the incantations of a primitive medicine-man and the peti-

tions of an Anglican, Catholic, or Nonconformist preacher. The prayers of a Church of England clergyman for the success of the British arms is upon precisely the same level as the religious dance of a North American tribe before setting out on a fighting expedition. Scientific research has indeed established the unity of religion, but it is a unity rooted in the uncivilised nature of mankind.

Finally, the scientific interest in religion is partly due to a perception of the truth that superstition plays a large part in determining the form of early society and of early institutions, and that no study of social origins can be adequate which ignores this factor. Far from belittling the influence of religion on life, the Freethinker has been foremost in pointing out the enormous range and extent of its influence. That it has been an influence for evil makes no difference to this fact. But early society is so beclouded with superstition that there is not a single institution that escapes its influence. Birth, marriage, and death—family, social and political life—are all fashioned under the denominating influence of religious beliefs and fears. The consequence is that a study of social life, an examination of the significance of many of our surviving institutions, drives the student to a study of the origin and value of religious beliefs. The cheap sneer of uninformed Freethinkers that the militant unbeliever is flogging a dead horse because so many people have given up a belief in current forms of Christianity is thus quite wide of the mark. You cannot understand what a thing is until you know how it became what it is; and it is ultimately in the interests of a wider and more scientific sociology that the Freethinker insists upon a complete and careful study of religion in all stages of culture.

We admit, then, that religion "is studied with increasing enthusiasm among all kinds of races and in every stage of culture." But how can this be converted into an increasing belief in the veracity and value of religion? That is really what Dr. Figgis wishes his readers and hearers to believe, although he does not say it in so many words. How many of the master names in anthropology are believers in the Christian religion? Very few, I fancy. Some may believe in a transfigured Christianity, which, on close examination would turn out to be not Christianity at all, but a misnamed humanitarianism. The vast majority of investigators too clearly realise the level of culture betokened by orthodox Christian beliefs to have any real faith in them. When a man has traced the idea of a God or of a soul back to their origin in the fear-haunted dream of a primitive savage, what is the use of all the fantastic arguments that have been invented in the name of philosophy to support those ideas? When scientific research takes in hand the study of a delusion, its days are numbered. The end may be delayed, but it cannot be averted. It does, indeed, point out that religion is "a natural and inevitable fact"; but so is many another delusion that has flourished during the history of mankind. But the inevitability of religion's appearance on the human stage is offset by the inevitability of its disappearance. The ancient salutation, "O king, live for ever!" never extended by a single hour the life of the individual to whom it was addressed. That the gods can live for ever is a belief just as surely rooted in delusion, and as certain of disproof by the logic of facts. The gods come and the gods go; and while the tenure of existence may be longer with some than with others, the same fate awaits them all.

C. COHEN.

Then and Now.

THIRTY-TWO years ago a memorable debate took place between Colonel Ingersoll and Judge Jeremiah Black upon the subject of "The Christian Religion." That discussion is of interest to-day because it illustrates the method of attack and defence gener-

ally followed at that time both in America and this country. The first thing that strikes us is the comprehensiveness of Colonel Ingersoll's survey of the field to be covered. His statement of what he understood to be the fundamental doctrines of Christianity was such as to necessitate a critical examination of the whole Bible, because at that time the whole Bible was regarded as the Word of God. It is true that Bishop Colenso's great work on the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua was already in circulation; but it should be borne in mind that both Houses of Convocation had condemned it as heretical, and that Bishop Gray, of Cape Town, had publicly excommunicated him. It is also true that *Essays and Reviews* had been published ten years prior to the occurrence of the debate, but we cannot afford to ignore the facts that for the space of four long years after the publication of that famous book a violent storm raged in academic and clerical circles, and that two of the contributors to it were condemned in the Court of Arches. The truth is, that the Protestants of thirty years ago still believed in the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible. Hence to make his attack on Christianity effective, Colonel Ingersoll was obliged to begin by attacking the popular doctrine about Holy Scripture. This portion of the discussion has only an historical interest now. On critical questions the generality of Protestant scholars stand to-day where Freethought advocates stood thirty, forty, and even a hundred years ago. What the Colonel maintained was that there are "a few reasons for thinking that a few passages, at least, in the Old Testament are the product of a barbarous people," and that the moral code of which Jehovah was believed to be the author "is in many respects abhorrent to every good and tender man." There was nothing extravagant about that statement, and it is often made to-day from Christian pulpits; but its effect on Judge Black was to make him boisterously angry. Forgetting his manners and his logic he thus burst out:—

"Does Mr. Ingersoll know what he is talking about? The moral code of the Bible consists of certain immutable rules to govern the conduct of all men, at all times, and in all places in their private and personal relations with one another. It is entirely separate and apart from the civil polity, the religious forms, the sanitary provisions, the police regulations, and the system of international law laid down for the special and exclusive observance of the Jewish people. This is a distinction which every intelligent man knows how to make. Has Mr. Ingersoll fallen into the egregious blunder of confusing these things? or, understanding the true sense of his words, is he rash and shameless enough to assert that the moral code of the Bible excites the abhorrence of good people? In fact, and in truth, this moral code, which he reviles, instead of being abhorred, is entitled to, and has received, the profoundest respect of all honest and sensible people" (*The Works of Robert G. Ingersoll*, vol. vi., p. 36).

There is a true Christian Evidence ring about that passage. The opponent is coolly set down as being neither good, honest, intelligent, nor sensible; and nothing is advanced but bare assertions, which Mr. Ingersoll characterises as "base and spurious coins." Then the renowned Freethinker delivers himself of the following wise and true utterance:—

"We have a right to rejudge the justice even of a god. No one should throw away his reason—the fruit of all experience. It is the intellectual capital of the soul, the only light, the only guide, and without it the brain becomes the palace of an idiot king, attended by a retinue of thieves and hypocrites."

The supreme fault of Christianity is its remoteness from real life. That is why it is made to rest upon the immoral doctrine of the atonement and to base salvation upon belief. Colonel Ingersoll sketched the history of the sacrificial system of the Israelites and then said:—

"This terrible system is supposed to have culminated in the sacrifice of Christ. His blood took the place of all other. It is necessary to shed no more. The law at last is satisfied, satiated, surfeited. The idea that God wants blood is at the bottom of the atonement, and rests upon the most fearful savagery. How can sin be

transferred to animals, and how can the shedding of the blood of animals atone for the sins of men?"

Ingersoll's arguments against salvation by faith and through the atonement of Christ are logically and ethically sound. No honorable man, he contends, would be willing to let the innocent suffer for him. Such a willingness would amply prove that the man was utterly unworthy of the sacrifice. "What would we think of a man who would allow another to die for a crime that he himself had committed?" The curious thing is that the doctrine of the atonement against which Ingersoll fulminated with such eloquence thirty years ago has now been abandoned by nearly all Protestant divines. It is no longer preached except by an old-fashioned clergyman here and there. But Judge Black defended it with great earnestness and declared that Colonel Ingersoll disgraced his own intellect by describing it as absurd, unjust, and immoral. Then he said:—

"The plan of salvation, or any plan for the rescue of sinners from the legal operation of Divine justice, could have been framed only in the councils of the Omniscient. Necessarily, its heights and depths are not easily fathomed by finite intelligence. But the greatest, ablest, wisest, and most virtuous men that ever lived have given it their profoundest consideration and found it to be not only authorised by revelation, but theoretically conformed to their best and highest conceptions of infinite goodness. Nevertheless, here is a rash and superficial man, without training or habits of reflection, who, upon a mere glance, declares that it 'must be abandoned,' because it *seems to him* 'absurd, unjust, an immoral.' I would not abridge his freedom of thought or speech, and the *argumentum ad verecundiam* would be lost upon him. Otherwise, I might suggest that, when he finds all authority, human and Divine, against him, he had better speak in a tone less arrogant."

We thus see that Judge Black had a characteristic Christian style of treating his opponent. Unable to meet his arguments, he turned round to heap abuse upon him, to call him "a rash and superficial man, without training or habits of reflection," who spoke arrogantly from an empty head. That method is still in operation. Many a defender of the faith has nothing else to fall back upon. To himself he whispers maliciously, "Since I cannot answer him, I will fling brickbats at him; I will pelt him with foul epithets; I will blacken his character for him; and for God's sake I will lie about him like any trooper." It is a very hoary-headed method, and it always goes down with the mob; but it does not help the cause on behalf of which it is employed. Not long ago two Sunday-school teachers, out of mere curiosity, attended a Freethought lecture. The hall was crammed with Christian believers who did everything within their power to prevent the lecturer from being heard. They nearly succeeded, and felt particularly proud of themselves; but the two teachers were so disgusted with their cowardly behavior that they immediately resigned their Sunday posts and avowed themselves Freethinkers. The curious thing is that fairly intelligent apologists do not realise that slander is at once the most cowardly and the most futile of weapons, and that its use is bound sooner or later to react upon the user. Christians have always taken a special delight in belittling and reviling Paganism, especially the Paganism of ancient Greece and Rome. Judge Black spoke of it in the following extravagant language:—

"Reflect what kind of a world this was when the disciples of Christ undertook to reform it, and compare it with the condition in which their teachings have put it. In its mighty metropolis, the centre of its intellectual and political power, the best men were addicted to vices so debasing that I could not even allude to them without soiling the paper I write upon. All manner of unprincipled wickedness was practised in the private life of the whole population without concealment or shame, and the magistrates were thoroughly and universally corrupt. Benevolence in any shape was altogether unknown. The helpless and the weak got neither justice nor mercy. There was no relief for the poor, no succor for the sick, no refuge for the unfortunate. In all pagandom there was not a hospital, asylum, almshouse, or organised charity of any sort."

Since that vile calumny was written thirty-two years ago it has been demonstrated beyond the possibility of a doubt that the picture of ancient Rome therein painted is an entire caricature. Even a bigot like the late Dr. Reich and a great scholar like Professor Harnack have given it the lie direct. But what we wish to point out is that Christian apologists, in pursuing this method of exalting Christianity, have overreached the mark, and a strong reaction has already set in both in America and Great Britain, as well as on the Continent, in favor of Paganism. At several of our seats of learning champions of the cheerful and sane outlook upon life of the Greeks of the fifth century B.C. are hard at work sowing the seed of a new, saner, and more virile Paganism in the minds of their students and readers which, based upon modern scientific knowledge, is, in their confident hope, destined to supersede the Christian religion and initiate the establishment of wholesome and happier conditions of life all round. Literature and science are at last joining hands and working harmoniously towards the bringing about of so glorious an end.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—XVI.

(Continued from p. 541.)

"Why should a Chinaman abandon, at the bidding of anyone, a cult so essentially humane and deeply poetical as the worship of his ancestors? The Chinaman who did so would not be a better Chinaman. The chances are that he would be a vagabond, a déclassé item, instead of a respectable link in an endless chain of social continuity."—T. C. HAYLLAR, "The Chinese View of Missionaries," *Nineteenth Century*, November, 1895.

"I believe it to be strictly within the limits of truth to say that foreign missionary effort in China has been productive of far more harm than good. Instead of serving as a link between Chinese and foreigners, the missionaries have formed a growing obstacle."—SIR HENRY NORMAN, *Peoples and Politics of the Far East*, p. 304.

AND why should missionaries be sent to China? To teach the Chinese morality? That is like carrying coals to Newcastle; for, in the teachings of Confucius—who lived five hundred years before Christ—the Chinese possess one of the finest codes of morals in the world.

Even the much-belauded Golden Rule, which many Christians regard as containing the very pith and essence of Christianity, "Do not unto others that which thou wouldest not that they should do unto thee," was taught by Confucius, not only once, but "again and again."* Professor Giles, who has made China and the Chinese a lifelong study, and who is one of the highest authorities on the subject, declares:—

"The cardinal virtues which are most admired by Christians are fully inculcated in the Confucian Canon, and the general practice of these is certainly up to the average standard exhibited by foreign nations."†

Indeed, says Freeman-Clarke:—

"The sacred literature of the Chinese is perfectly free from everything impure or offensive. There is not a line but what may be read aloud in every family circle."‡

Which is a great deal more than can be said for the Bible, which contains passages that no clergyman would dare to read from the pulpit to a mixed congregation.

How the Chinese regard these parts of the Holy Book may be judged from the following statement of Sir Henry Norman, who says:—

"Protestant missionary tracts are distributed bearing coarse illustrations of such Biblical incidents as the swallowing of Jonah by the whale and the killing of Sisera by Jael. Moreover, up to the present, the Protestant missionaries have circulated the whole Bible in Chinese. They have recently seen their error, and are

* G. G. Alexander, *Confucius, the Great Teacher*, p. 272.

† H. A. Giles, *Religions of the World*, "Confucianism," pp. 26-7. Cited by R. F. Johnston, *Lion and Dragon in Northern China*, p. 307.

‡ Freeman-Clarke, *Ten Great Religions*, p. 61.

now considering the advisability of following in the steps of the more circumspect Roman Catholics, and withholding certain parts obviously unfit for Oriental comprehension."*

Lord Curzon also remarks that:—

"The missionary societies do not seem to have sufficiently realised that the Holy Scriptures, which require in places some explanation, if not some expurgation, for ourselves, may stand in still greater need of editing for a community who care nothing about the customs or prepossessions of the ancient Jews, but who are invited to accept the entire volume as a revelation from on high."†

Then the missionaries outrage the most sacred sentiments of the Chinese by declaring that the ancestors they revere and worship are paying the penalty for their ignorance of Christianity by endless torments with devils in hell. Dr. Morrison quotes several missionaries as teaching this horrible doctrine, among them Mr. Broomhall, Secretary of the China Inland Mission and editor of the missionary magazine, *China's Millions*, as saying: "The heathen are all guilty in God's eyes; as guilty, they perish." Of another missionary in China who taught "hell," Dr. Morrison says: "There are hundreds in China who teach as he does."‡ As Mr. Hayllar well says:—

"But when we come to the supernatural basis of the Gospel, no common meeting-ground seems possible. The literates especially reject Christian miracles with contemptuous indifference. What the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius is to the Protestant, or the cures of Lourdes to the Paris physician, such are the supernatural chronicles of Holy Writ to the literate. His mental attitude towards all such matters is in the highest degree sceptical. Why, if there were to be stupendous events, material to his wellbeing in another life, should they have happened in a remote corner of Asia, outside the ken of the Middle Kingdom? The idea is as offensive to his patriotic pride as to his trained intelligence. Moreover, if there is but one true road to salvation, what has become of his ancestors, and the sages whose memory he venerates? Is it pretended that, instead of being objects of worship, they are expiating unconscious sins in endless and undreamt-of tortures? To be instructed at the same time that the best he can look forward to in the future is to share an unseen paradise with foreigners, whom it is his dearest wish on earth never to see again, is equally terrible."§

Look, then, says Dr. Morrison, at the enormous difficulties the missionaries raise for themselves in China:—

"They tell the Chinese inquirer that his unconverted father, who never heard the Gospel, has, like Confucius, perished eternally. But the chief of all virtues in China is filial piety; the strongest emotion that can move the heart of a Chinaman is the supreme desire to follow in the footsteps of his father. Conversion with him means not only eternal separation from the father who gave him life, but the 'immediate liberation of his ancestors to a life of beggary, to inflict sickness and all manner of evil on the neighborhood.'"||

Because there is no one to appease the ancestral spirits by the performance of ancestral rights and propitiatory offerings.

To tell the Chinese that their great teacher, Confucius, affectionately known to them as the "uncrowned king," is in hell, is as great an outrage as it would be for Chinese or Indian missionaries to come over here and tell Christians that Jesus Christ is in hell.

And why should the Chinese give up the teaching of Confucius for that of Christ? Mr. R. F. Johnston emphatically declares that:—

"If China thinks, or Europe persuades her into the belief, that her backward position among the great Powers of the world is due to Confucianism, she will be doing a great wrong to the memory of one of her greatest sons and a greater wrong to herself."¶

* Sir Henry Norman, *Peoples and Politics of the Far East*, p. 206.

† Lord Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, p. 290.

‡ Dr. Morrison, *An Australian in China*, p. 66.

§ T. C. Hayllar, "The Chinese View of Missionaries," *Nineteenth Century*, November, 1895; pp. 772-3.

|| Dr. Morrison, *An Australian in China*, p. 68.

¶ *Lion and Dragon in Northern China*, p. 307.

This was in reply to the missionary, Griffis, who declared that "Confucius cut the tap-root of all true progress," and, therefore, was responsible for China's arrested development. "It is to be hoped," says Mr. Johnston further,

"for the sake of China that many centuries will elapse before Confucianism as a moral force, as a guide of life, fades away from the hearts and minds of the people" (p. 302).

Sir Robert Hart, for so many years Inspector-General of Chinese Maritime Customs, who passed nearly all his life in China and knew its people as intimately as any European can, was of the same opinion. Mr. Douglas Story, after observing that, "No European knows so much of China and the hidden things of its mysterious inner life as the Inspector-General," tells us that he was "a profound believer in the value of the Confucian philosophy as an educator of Chinese minds," and adds:—

"As Sir Robert himself told me, he advised the retention of the ancient ethical training for the four literary degrees according to the custom in China for over two thousand years, and then the addition to this curriculum of a fifth and final degree in Western science. He argued that by such means the best brains of the land would be instructed in the high moral precepts which are the theme of Chinese classics, and would at the conclusion of the course be in a fit state to imbibe and to profit by the teachings of modern science. 'Train your youth in the classics,' he said; instruct them in the philosophy of Confucius, and then, when their moral education is complete, let them turn to the lessons of modern thought and knowledge. In such way you will possess a well-built fire laid beneath a chimney which will ensure complete combustion."**

The teachings of Confucius are thoroughly adapted to the Chinese character. As Mr. Diosy well says:—

"There is no doubt that the Sage [Confucius], himself a typical Chinese, knew his countrymen thoroughly, and formed for them a rule of life he knew to be suited to their peculiarities. Hence the extraordinary sway his teaching has exercised since his death, in 479 B.C., over the minds of the Chinese. Surely, the memory of no man, not even of Mohammed, is venerated by so many millions at the present time, and this veneration of Confucius had existed for a thousand years when Mohammed preached Islam."†

And Mr. Archibald Little has pointed out:—

"The entrance of Protestantism into China, with its inquiring and disputatious spirit, is proving fatal to the ingathering of the harvest anticipated by devout Catholics as the result of two centuries of toil in this ungrateful land. As in the West, the door once opened to doubt, *dogmatic* Christianity is doomed."

For, as we have seen, the Chinese look upon the multitude of differing sects as different religions. Mr. Little also tells us:—

"And it must not be supposed that, to quote one of the many false impressions derived from missionary reports, the Chinese are so steeped in materialism as to be callous in regard to moral teaching, and hence to be dependent on Western charity for their spiritual food. Hortatory works, urging men to reform their lives, are perpetually being circulated by benevolent individuals, in addition to which the people are stimulated by open-air exhortations by paid preachers. A common sight in Chungking in the evening, after the day's work is over and the shops are closed, is an elevated stand at a street-corner, consisting of a raised table draped in red cloth; upon it two flaring red candles, and behind it a man in full ceremonial dress, with the stiff official hat and silk ma-kwa, addressing the crowd. At first sight one would, but for his careful costume, take the man for a story teller, surrounded as he is by a group of silent listeners, until on a nearer approach you find he is expounding the doctrine of the native classics and exhorting men to repentance. No nation has so many wise saws and moral maxims always at its fingers' ends as the Chinese; scarcely a sentence but is interlarded with a proverb or a text from the ancient sages. That a people so generally well read as are the Chinese, and possessing in the teachings of Confucius a doctrine in no way inferior to Christianity, and which, unlike the latter, has survived unquestioned throughout all the wars and commotions of twenty-five centuries; to expect

* Douglas Story, *To-Morrow in the East*, pp. 188-9.

† Diosy, *The New Far East* (1904), p. 211.

that a people so unemotional and so eminently practical in the application of their ethics to the wants of daily existence, should ever pin their faith to a work like the Hebrew books of the Bible, seems to a layman preposterous. That the Chinese fail to live up to their standard is only to say that they are human.*

Just as Christians fail to live up to the teaching of the New Testament by selling all and giving to the poor, and loving their enemies—especially if they happen to be Freethinkers.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

"The Boom that Thou Gavest Me."

THAT modest writer, Mr. Hall Caine, is fortunate in having publishers who are so unlike himself, for seldom has any book been heralded with such a blare of trumpets as his latest novel, *The Woman Thou Gavest Me*. These industrious tradesmen announce the book as "a love story for all the world and for all time," and inform the reading public that of the *Eternal City* 702,212 English copies, of the *Christian* 643,228, of the *Manxman* 397,966, have been sold up-to-date. The new story is to be translated into sixteen languages, including Japanese and Yiddish.

The reasons for a popularity such as this are worth considering, for, if foreign sales come anywhere near the English purchases, it may be assumed that contemporary English fiction is represented in Europe by Mr. Caine as French literary art is by Anatole France, Belgian by Maurice Maeterlinck, Italian by Gabriele D'Annunzio, and German by Herman Sudermann.

Yet some people, not wholly illiterate, have been known to admit that they could only regard Mr. Caine's tremendous popularity with wonder and stupefaction. The genius of Hardy and Meredith, as of Shelley and Keats before them, dawned slowly on the general reader. But here is a writer of novels whose books run into new editions as fast as the printing presses and the bookbinders can supply them. Like Miss Marie Corelli and Mr. Charles Garvice, he has succeeded in winning the hearts of myriads of readers. What these stern moralists are to the worldly minded, Mr. Hall Caine is to the other worldly minded. In each, vulgar, but virtuous ordinary people and grotesque villains win the unlettered appreciation of their readers. Mr. Caine represents this taste, with the addition of an affectation of realism and the sham ethics of an invertebrate Christianity.

In his latest work, Mr. Caine breaks no fresh ground, but tells a commonplace love story in strident tones and with much elaboration of detail. Although occupying nearly 600 pages of close print, the plot can be told in a few words. A woman is married by force to a profligate brute; gets disgusted with her husband; loves an Arctic explorer; gives birth to an illegitimate child; and dies of consumption. The characters in the novel are older than the everlasting hills. There is not a single portrait of an actual personality; but only personifications of bravery, self-sacrifice, profligacy, greed, and so forth.

The story, it will be seen, is frankly popular, and incidentally presents a considerable opportunity for introducing theatrical effects, and the author's fondness for the Catholic Church. Indeed, Mr. Caine takes nothing for granted, and "wallows naked in the pathetic." Naturally, the explorer must be an Arctic one, and, when his mistress is suffering, by some theatrical telepathy he hears her voice calling him over thousands of miles of space. Mary O'Neill, the heroine, is what our American cousins call "a continental idiot." Forced into a loveless marriage with an almost unknown man, she has not sufficient sense to earn her own living after leaving her husband, and gets consumption through drying her baby's wet clothes on her own body. Although madly in love with an explorer, she does not read the

daily papers to be informed of the expedition, and she starves herself in order that her child may be strong and healthy. Frankly, the book is altogether unreal and melodramatic, for, when the heroine is forced by poverty to solicit in Piccadilly, the only person she accosts is her long-lost explorer.

Mr. Caine tickles the ears of the groundlings with Biblical phrases. The title strikes the key-note, and Mary's narrative begins with the following words:—

"Out of the depths, O Lord, out of the depths," begins the most beautiful of the services of our Church, and it is out of the depths of my life that I must bring the incidents of this story."

The ending has the same air of novelty:—

"Very soon the mist will rise, and the day will break, and the sun will come again, and—there will be no more night."

"These were the last words penned by Mary before her gentle and tortured spirit took flight from earth."

It is enough to break a poor critic's heart. However, Mr. Caine is giving pleasure to thousands of Yiddish, Japanese, and other readers, and no great harm is done, if, in reading his work, they cherish the pleasing delusion that they are reading really great English literature. But, since Mr. Caine plainly labors under the belief that he is a great writer, it is a pity that he cannot be enlightened. He has won a very large body of readers precisely because he is not a genius. Why should he not be content? Why should he hug the delusion that he is a brother to Hardy and Meredith, to Anatole France or Gabriele D'Annunzio? He is the universal provider of the circulating libraries, and is as little an artist as any other manufacturer. MIMNERMUS.

Acid Drops.

When the present writer was a little boy—under eight years of age in fact—he lived next door to a house that had been "haunted" until the local parson solemnly "laid" him (it was a *he*) at night with a lighted candle and tall regimentals, in the name of the blessed Trinity. The little boy used to hang about that once haunted house a good deal, hoping to catch sight of Mr. Ghost if he should ever turn up again. Some people used to say that "the thing" could be heard and seen occasionally, but only after long intervals. He never appeared to the little boy, however; perhaps because the youngster was born to be a sceptic, and it is well known that ghosts only appear to believers.

We dare say a good many ghosts have been "laid" since then. But a case has just been reported in which the haunted house was a parsonage. It was Asfordsby Rectory, Leicestershire, occupied by the Rev. F. A. Gage Hall. The nocturnal visitant had disturbed the household for some thirty years. It had a partiality for pulling the bedclothes off sleepers in the middle of the night. It was tolerated for a whole generation, in point of time, and then the rector took a sudden decision to deal with the nuisance. So he dressed up in "full fig"—as they used to say in last century's novels, and solemnly ordered Mr. Ghost to depart in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It may be that the mention of three rival ghosts, and especially the last of them, upset the poor fellow's equanimity; anyhow, he took the hint and made himself scarce—and the rectory is now quiet and humdrum without him.

Such is the story that the newspapers give a lot of space to. And this is a Christian country, and it is nearly two thousand years after Christ, and Christianity is the cause of civilisation. No doubt the reader sees the joke.

Nothing could be more characteristic of the good Christians in London than their latest dead set at Jack Johnson. He is a pugilist, but there are plenty of white pugilists, and friendly reports of their performances are given by the English newspapers, including the dear *Daily News*. He is said to be "immoral"—which appears to mean, not only that he is fond of the ladies, but that the ladies are fond of him. But are there no "immoral" persons on the music-hall stage already? And is it necessary to make such a fuss about adding one to the number? He is also declared to be

* A. Little, *Through the Yang-tse Gorges*, pp. 257-8.

a fugitive from justice. Yes, from such justice as whites deal out to blacks in America. White men are allowed to consort with black women over there, but black men are not allowed to consort with white women. Johnson has done nothing that is illegal for white men to do, and nothing that is a crime under the laws of England. To talk about his "breaking the white slave laws of his country," as even the *Citizen* does, is malicious nonsense. The bed-rock truth is that Johnson's offence is his color; he is a black man, and he can beat any white man who likes to stand up against him.

Rev. Dr. Clifford calls Jack Johnson "a most disreputable individual." This is vague slanderous gabble. What specific crime has he committed? We have not heard of anything definite to his discredit. If there is, what is it? We should like to see Dr. Clifford brought to book for this slander. He evidently thinks he can say what he pleases about Jack Johnson with impunity. Perhaps he relies on the difficulty the black pugilist would find in getting justice against the white preacher.

Sir Hiram Maxim is to be congratulated on his letter to the *Daily News*. He has seen Jack Johnson in Paris, and obtained particulars of the pugilist's crime, which the Rev. F. B. Meyer and other gentlemen full of "Christian charity" are making so much of. Our readers will be surprised to learn that Jack Johnson's only "crime" is marrying his wife. She was employed as cashier at Johnson's café at Chicago—and this is what followed, in Sir Hiram's words:—

"A strong friendship sprung up between Johnson and his cashier. The girl wrote to her mother in Ohio that Johnson wished to marry her, and she asked for her mother's consent. The mother disapproved very strongly; she went to Chicago naturally in a fearful rage, and those who wished to have a part of Johnson's money took advantage of the situation and brought criminal proceedings against him on what they were pleased to call the 'White Slave Trade,' i.e., they claimed that it was the White Slave Trade because the woman was a native of another State, and she had left her native State to meet Johnson in another State—the same as it would be in England if a woman in Essex should join her lover in the county of Kent. The proceedings were of the most abominable character, but nothing could turn the white woman against her black lover, and they were married."

Sir Hiram saw and conversed with Mrs. Johnson at Paris. She is the idol of her husband, and they are as happy as possible together. But she came out of Ohio and married him in another State, and American lawyers are trying to convict him as a "procurer" in consequence. Fancy a man procuring his own wife—for himself! What devilry will the Americans be up to next? Isn't it enough to soak negroes with kerosene and burn them alive on mere suspicion? Must they improve even on that?

Jack Johnson's first crime is that he is black. His second is that he whipped Jefferies, the white pugilist, who was put forward to rescue the championship from him, and failed so ignominiously. Other fighting films were shown freely, but the films of *that* fight were not allowed to be exhibited anywhere between New York and San Francisco.

Jack Johnson is a fighter. So are the clergy. He fights tangible adversaries. They fight the invisible Devil. He appears to be an honest man. They are—well, we are really not equal to the task of describing them.

Two poor Jesusites in the "Latest Wills" of August 22. This time they are hardly worth noting. But here they are. Rev. James Protheroe, Porthcawl, Glamorgan, left £4,344. Rev. William Frederick John Kaye, Archdeacon of Lincoln, left £4,082. Small humps, it must be allowed; yet still too large to go through the needle's eye. But here are two better developed humps from the same day's record. Rev. Percival Laurence, rector of Walesby, Lincolnshire, left £25,824. Rev. William Henry Custler, of Hendon, left £38,925. Ah! That's the sort.

One is struck, too, by the way in which these poor servants of Christ hurry along through this vale of tears. The age of the first was not stated, but the others lived to 84, 73, and 85 years respectively. How sad they must have felt at keeping out of heaven so long!

Turkey has not evacuated Adrianople, and is not likely to do so. Of course, the Powers could force her to give it up if they were united, and decided to do so; but these Christian nations distrust each other so thoroughly that they agree best when nothing is to be done. Meanwhile, it is rather amusing to read the moral lectures being delivered by

some of the English papers, and the moral indignation expressed at Turkey not keeping rigidly to the terms of the Treaty of London. Not one of the Christian Allies have kept their agreement with each other; they have lied and robbed and murdered in turn. It is the non-Christian Power that must keep to the terms of an agreement forced upon it at the point of the sword—as though, under existing conditions, there is not as much justification for the Turks retaking Adrianople as for the Bulgarians to capture it in the first instance. But, apparently, the Christian papers of this country are convinced that a Mohammedan is the only one of the bunch that ought to act up to the letter and spirit of an agreement.

The following is cut from the *Daily Mail* of August 23, and is a telegram from its Paris correspondent:—

"The steerage of a Transatlantic liner running from Trieste to New York was the scene of violent encounters between parties of Servians, Greeks, and Bulgarians returning to America after serving in the recent war.

"The captain of the ship, an Englishman, had all the 1,200 third-class passengers searched for arms when two days out of port. Afterwards they were deprived of knives and forks, and for the rest of the voyage had to eat all their food with spoons alone."

How these good Christians love one another!

Dr. Page, the new American Ambassador, delivered what appears to have been an eloquent speech at the unveiling of the *Mayflower* monument at Southampton. Two sentences in his speech are noticeable. The men of the *Mayflower*, he said, "made the Deity a partner in their enterprise." That, we think, was not specially a characteristic of the Puritan settlers. It has been a characteristic of Englishmen in all their colonising efforts. God was always with them; they went to spread the knowledge of God; the Deity was always ostentatiously invited to a partnership. It was only when the dividends were declared that he was forgotten. The second remark was that the Pilgrim Fathers were not only God-led; they were God-led Englishmen. That, we suppose, is a sort of congratulating God Almighty on the nature of his followers. The colonists were lucky in having God as leader; God was lucky in having Englishmen as followers. Yankees had not then been invented, or he would doubtless have selected them. Failing them, he fell back upon Englishmen. Therefore, we admire the wisdom of God, also the judgment of Englishmen. Honors are about equal.

"It is no exaggeration to say that a mind which doubts the historicity of Jesus is to all historical and spiritual intents a thoroughly unsound mind." As this comes from that cock-o'-the-walk, Sir Robertson Nicol, we suppose the matter ought to be regarded as settled. But we have our doubts. Is there anyone of education and discernment who really does believe the Jesus of the New Testament to be a historical character? We doubt it. For they each retain what they call a New Testament Jesus by throwing a large part of him overboard. One drops his miracles, another rejects his miraculous birth, another denies his bodily resurrection and ascension, another does not believe in his conflicts with Satan. And what is really all this but a rejection of the historical character of the New Testament Jesus? The New Testament Jesus is the one depicted in the New Testament, with all the stories and characteristics, from the miraculous birth to the ascension. To reject these and still claim to believe in his historical character is ridiculous. It is as though one claimed to believe in Napoleon the First, but denied that he was a soldier, that he was Emperor of France, that he fought Austerlitz, Jena, Waterloo, and died at St. Helena. One might believe in some person that one chose to call Napoleon, but it would not be the Napoleon of history. So with Jesus. To say that Jesus was a historical character, but that nearly all miraculous things related of him are false, is puerile. The historicity of Jesus honestly means the historicity of the New Testament character of the New Testament stories related of him. If these are not true, nothing worth bothering about remains. The question of whether there may not have been someone, about whom the only certain thing we know is that nearly all we are told about him is false, is not worth the trouble of discussing. Sir Robertson Nicol's statement is pure bluff.

Sir Robertson Nicol says that sceptical critics forget that there is historical evidence for the death and resurrection of Jesus. We should like to see it. We do not want evidence of his death. Evidence for his birth will be enough. If that is established, we are quite content to take his death for granted. And we should dearly love to see the evidence for his resurrection. *Evidence*, we mean; not what Christians usually understand as such. We do not want to be told that some people a long while ago believed in it, or that

in more recent times other people are convinced because certain drunkards have been made sober, or any other of the fantastical rubbish that is served out so liberally in the pulpit. We mean the kind of evidence that would convince a jury of educated and impartial men. The difficulty of demonstrating certain assumed historic facts is, again, a mere piece of bluff. The accuracy of accounts of ordinary events may be difficult to demonstrate, because it may be only a long while after that they assume importance. But the birth and death of a God is in a category by itself; and it should have been accompanied by evidence that would have commanded the world's assent once and for all.

Rev. D. Ewart James, of Southend-on-Sea, has been lamenting the decay of dressing for Sundays, and sighs for the top-hatted, frock-coated, rolled-umbrella days of yore. The reverend gentleman will not stop the fashion. Church parade in the Garden of Eden was not a dressy affair, and even the apostles never wore trousers.

"Sand Services" runs a headline in the *Christian Globe*. It is a dry subject, but such services ought to be suitable to a religion built on the same material.

The Methodists of Vancouver intend having a cinema theatre of their own, and have started with capital amounting to £20,000. It will cost that sum for films only, if the pious picture-lovers start with a realistic film of Noah and the animals in the ark. There is one picture that would cost them more than that—Adam and Eve before the fall.

Dr. J. M. Gray is quoted in the *Christian Globe* as saying: "If we deny the endless miseries of hell then we must give up the idea of the endless joys of heaven." This may be logical; but it won't catch on. Not yet. You can't expect the poor Christians to suffer the loss of Heaven and Hell in one year.

Rev. J. Cones Vaughan, of Endcliffe Park Congregational Church, Sheffield, preached recently on "Is there a Hell?" and said that "the hell of everlasting, hopeless torment did not exist." Freethinkers have been saying the same thing for centuries, and there is no great novelty in the discovery. Moreover, the reverend gentleman gets credit for liberality of opinion, whilst the Freethought pioneers got imprisonment and ostracism.

Mr. Harold Begbie is to write the Life of the late General Booth. This is a most excellent choice. The title of the book should be the *Romance of the Salvation Army*. The facts are in Mr. Manson's book already. William Booth never troubled about them; neither, we feel sure, will Harold Begbie.

A correspondent of the *Westminster Gazette* has made the wonderful discovery that "the Turks provoked the Crusades." This is astonishing news and surprising chronology. We never heard before, from any historian of the Crusades, that there was any provocation in the matter, except on the side of the Christians, who suddenly found that they could not tolerate the Holy Land and the sepulchre of their Savior being in the hands of the "infidels." For that, and that alone, they made war on the "infidels"—that is to say, the Saracens. And both the Holy Land and the sepulchre of Christ are in the hands of the "infidels" still.

Whether the sepulchre of Christ is authentic or not, it is at Jerusalem, and a big church is built around it. That church is divided into two. One half is used by the Greek Christians—the other half by the Latin Christians; and they love each other so that a guard of Turkish soldiers stands between them to keep them from flying at each others' throats.

The British and Foreign Bible Society report that the sale of Bibles in the Balkans has been greater during the past year than in any similar period. We presume the beneficial influence of the Holy Book has been shown in the two Balkan wars and the behavior of the Christian combatants.

Mr. R. J. Campbell asks whether the Gospel of Christ has "really effected any marked and permanent change in the feeling about death?" So far as the present is concerned, we answer, Decidedly no. People to-day face death much as people have always faced it. Some are afraid of death, some never trouble about it, some face it with calm resignation. And their profession of religious belief makes, apparently, no difference whatever, since one meets about the same proportion of each class in the religious as in the non-

religious world. Education and temperament count for far more in the matter than does religious belief. It is, of course, a carefully fostered Christian teaching that Christianity enables people to bear the blow of death with calmness, and even with cheerfulness. But this is quite false, and almost everyone's experience proves it to be so. We defy anyone to detect, in the mere attitude of the average man or woman towards death, whether he or she is Christian or not. Of course, if one happens to be a Christian, a set phraseology will be used. But in the grief shown, and the state of mind manifested, the religious person is apt to show less genuine resignation, and certainly less strength of mind, than the average Freethinker.

Historically, the "Gospel of Christ" did make a difference in the feeling of mankind about death. It was noted by a clerical Professor—Professor Mahaffy—that an examination of the inscriptions on Pagan tombs showed an entire absence of morbidity. There was no morbid talk about death being a "release," or about the littleness of life, and no trace of fear. They were all in the spirit of bidding a last good-bye to a loved friend or relative. The change came with Christianity. That taught people to dread what might possibly await them after death, and also sought to reconcile them to the fact of death by dwelling upon the littleness and sinfulness of life. There is no question whatever that for many centuries Christianity made death more terrible, and so made people greater cowards in its presence, than had ever been the case before. So far as the Christian teaching affected men's minds about death, it affected them altogether for the worse. And so long as the Christian doctrine of heaven and hell maintained its force no improvement was possible. Improvement only came as this teaching lost its power. Then a saner and more rational attitude of mind towards death became possible. And in this instance, as in many others, the philosophy of the better Paganism showed itself far more commendable than that of the Christianity which succeeded it.

The twenty-five delegates from the Medical Congress who visited the Llandrindod Wells district got no welcome from the Urban District Council. The function was to have taken place on a Sunday, and the Nonconformist members kicked for all they were worth against such an abominable desecration of the Lord's Day. Science has no chance against religion in Wales.

A strike has taken place among workmen employed at Liverpool Cathedral. Efforts are being made to settle the quarrel. The newspapers do not state whether the clergy prayed for the workmen, or sprayed them with holy water.

We have received the following cutting from the *Daily Express* of August 12. It is a little behind date now, but it is too good to lose:—

"The Bishop of Manchester, preaching on Blackpool sands on Saturday, told the story of an answered prayer—a true story, he said, that had been passed on to him by one of his own clergymen.

"There was no bread in a cottager's house, and the father was out seeking work. The mother had not laid the table because there was no food to put on it.

"At the suggestion of the little girl of the family, the mother laid the table, and then the two knelt down and prayed: 'Give us this day our daily bread.' Some time later, when the father returned, he threw a shilling on the table and explained that he had met an old employer, to whom he mentioned his distress. The old employer gave him the shilling and employment.

"The mother, father, and child compared notes, and found that the father had met the employer at the exact time at which the prayer was being offered in the home."

Surely the Bishop of Manchester was playing to the gallery in that ridiculous anecdote. He must have been bamboozling his audience. It is difficult to believe that he is himself the dupe of such an absurdity. Perhaps, if the story were investigated, it would turn out to be pure fiction; or what little truth there was in it might prove to be a mere coincidence. Why should God go out of his way to help those three people, and leave millions of others without the slightest assistance? And why did his benevolence rest content with a shilling, when he might as easily have made it half-a-crown? A partial God and a thrifty God was the God of Dr. Kuox's story.

Rev. James Beeby, of Wimbledon, says that "Christianity will never be popular." If hundreds of thousands of priests, and millions of money, and the alleged aid of "Omnipotence cannot make it popular in two thousand years, it had better be given up as a bad job.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £166 17s. 5d. Received since:—J. M. Gimson, £3 3s.; J. Hopkins, 2s. 6d.; A. H. Deacon, 2s. 6d.; Mr. McCarthy, 4s. 4d.; G. W. Wright, 5s.; E. Parker, 5s.; Two Barnsley Freethinkers, 10s.

E. RAGGETT.—Bible stories are fairly worked out in our *Bible Romances*. One cannot go back upon such work; it is done once and for all. We have not heard from Mr. Bryce lately.

H. ABBOTT.—The Old Testament is written in Hebrew. The oldest manuscripts date about A.D. 900. They are many centuries later than the New Testament documents. Nor is the Old Testament in any sense "the oldest Scripture in the world."

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

C. CLINTON.—The subject you write about is vastly important, but it is outside our special scope in the *Freethinker*.

G. W. WRIGHT.—Pleased to hear you consider this journal an "intellectual treat," which has "altered your outlook on life considerably." The extracts you so highly appreciated were from a selection by E. B., which had to be broken in the make-up of the paper. We think you may expect more of them.

PRESS CORRECTOR.—We meant no offence to your profession. Judging by books in general, they do their work extremely well. We understand also that the pride of bad authors, and the love of profit on the part of their publishers, must sometimes stand in your way.

BERTRAM H. WATTS.—We hope we have your name correctly, but your signature which looks so wonderfully clear, rather puzzles us. We had already noted Professor Bury's definitions of Atheism and Agnosticism. They will be corrected in our review. You are quite right in your criticism.

E. PARKER.—Your wishes don't add to the amount of the subscription, but they add to our appreciation of it.

TWO BARNSELY FREETHINKERS.—Your letter is inspiring. We shall be glad to receive such letters until the Freethought millionaire comes along—and after.

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

BLACKBURN SECULARIST.—It was not sent to us; your copy is the only one we have seen. We are not giving any more cheap advertisements. Thanks, all the same.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote has engaged to lecture at the Secular Hall, Leicester, on Sunday evening, September 21. This will be a good occasion for trying his strength for platform work after his late severe illness. Leicester is the only place except London where only one lecture is required on Sunday. Two lectures might be something too much for a start. Mr. Foote feels himself fit; but you never know till you try, as the proverb says. The result of the Leicester visit will decide whether he will take two lectures at Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, and other places that are pressing for a visit.

It is Mr. Foote's intention to minimise his lecturing work for a time. He will not lecture every Sunday—at least not

up to Christmas. He means generally to husband his strength, and the wear and tear of travelling is obviously the first thing to be dropped. There is plenty of literary work awaiting him, and the issue of fresh books and pamphlets through the Pioneer Press.

As soon as he has seen this number of the *Freethinker* through the press Mr. Foote will be going off on his long-deferred visit to Yarmouth. Anybody who can arrange fine weather for a week is earnestly invited to do so. But we are not hopeful. Last summer was an allegation, and this summer is not a realisation.

We have lately enjoyed a few days in the company of Mr. M. M. Mangasarian, of Chicago, whose name is well-known to our own readers. To give us longer time together Mr. Mangasarian came down to the seaside place where we avoid the London atmosphere and get plenty of pure air—without which we should not keep fit for our work very long. We spent some thirty-five years in London, and that is enough for one man's share. We were glad, therefore, that Mr. Mangasarian made our companionship easy during the few days referred to. We were also glad to find him looking well and fit for the hard work he will have to resume when he is back in Chicago. We met Mr. Mangasarian first at the memorable Rome Congress; we liked him then, and he reciprocated the feeling, which has since grown into a warm mutual friendship. We earnestly wish him a long life of happiness and usefulness. In his case the former will depend upon the latter. He is a born propagandist of the Humanist philosophy, and nature endowed him with all the requisite qualities for the task.

Mr. Bottomley's "Unconventional Thoughts" in last week's *John Bull* would have been none the worse for the acknowledgment that all his facts in the "Religion and Drink" portion were derived from Mr. Foote's *Bible and Beer*. We are not exactly complaining, for we know what modern journalism is, but Mr. Bottomley stands out of the ruck of the profession. Moreover, we like to see our work getting all possible publicity, even though it brings us neither profit nor praise.

Mr. J. M. Gimson, of Leicester, writes: "This Honorarium Fund of yours is too nearly stagnant. I send a second small donation to enliven it a bit."

The July number of the *Examiner*, of Christchurch, New Zealand, edited by Mr. W. W. Collins, contains the following editorial paragraph:—

"Mr. G. W. Foote, President of the National Secular Society and Editor of the *Freethinker*, has, we regret to say, again been the victim to a severe illness. We are exceedingly glad to learn that he had so far recovered as to be able to preside over the National Secular Society's Conference, which was held in London on Sunday, May 11. We send our sincerest wishes for his speedy restoration to full health and strength. And we do this not only on personal grounds, but because never more than now was such strength as his of greater value to the great cause to which he has devoted the energies of his life."

We beg to assure Mr. Collins that his good wishes are sincerely appreciated.

Mr. Gimson is a student of English literature—as an amateur, not professionally—especially in regard to *belles lettres*, and more particularly the novelists. He writes us as follows on a matter that was sure to attract his interest:—

"Apropos of Charlotte Bronte's letters—the paragraph from the *Dewsbury* paper given in 'Sugar Plums' does not help matters. Your note settles the Coleridge reference, but the substitution of Southey for Shelley does not help in either, for Southey died in 1843, before Charlotte Bronte had published anything, and his mind had given way some time before that. The statement she makes is most inexplicable."

We agree with Mr. Gimson. There is one theory, of course, not yet suggested—namely, forgery. We see nothing in the letters to render this inconceivable.

The Leeds case comes on the day after the *Freethinker* goes to press—on Wednesday, August 27. We have no information to give, therefore, but we hope to have good news for next week. Meanwhile we beg to remind our readers that the N. S. S. has defended, or offered to defend, in every "blasphemy" or "profanity" prosecution where the defendant has made any attempt to stand his ground.

The Gospel History a Fabrication.

THE MINISTRY IN GALILEE FRAUD.

WE have examined the accounts in the Synoptics of the alleged ministry of Jesus in Galilee, and find them to be merely compilations made from hearsay stories, originated by nobody knows whom. A further examination of the subject from another point of view leads to the same inevitable conclusion—that there was no public ministry of "Jesus the Nazarene" in Galilee at all. This fact becomes obvious when we come to consider the rough-and-ready method of maintaining order in Palestine in the first century.

Both before and after the reputed time of Jesus, it was the uniform practice of all rulers, whether king, tetrarch, or procurator, to suppress all abnormal gatherings of the people by sending against them a body of troops, with orders to slay the leaders and chief followers, and disperse the rest. This was done as a precautionary measure against insurrections and the wanton destruction of life and property by the mob. The grossly ignorant and credulous people of those times were easily led into excesses by cunning agitators or self-styled prophets: hence, these were hunted down and slain whenever they showed themselves. The mere fact of the appearance in public of an individual who preached a new religion or counselled "innovations" was sufficient to bring down upon him and his followers the guardians of the public peace. In considering this subject, our modern ideas of liberty and the right of public meeting must be set aside. The people of the first century, more especially the Jews, could not be trusted to assemble in large numbers without committing all kinds of excesses, and acting like madmen. After the death of Herod the Great, when his sons were in Rome waiting to be appointed tetrarchs of Galilee, Samaria, and Judæa, all the hooligan population of those provinces plunged the whole country into anarchy and bloodshed, which was not suppressed until Varus, president of Syria, came with a legion of Roman soldiers, and crucified two thousand of them. Again, when, during the siege of Jerusalem, the hooligan element gained the upper hand, the city was turned into a pandemonium, and all the quiet and peaceable inhabitants were subjected to the most horrible outrages: and this went on daily until the city was taken.

The following examples of "innovators" are mentioned by Josephus.

1. A religious pretender who led a number of people to Mount Gerizim in Samaria. Pilate, being then procurator over that province, "sent horsemen and foot-men" against him, who slew the leader and put his followers to flight (*Antiq.* 18, 4, 1).

2. John the Baptist, who was put to death by Herod the tetrarch "lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion" (*Antiq.* 18, 5, 2).

3. "A certain magician named Theudas," who called himself a prophet, and led a multitude of people to the Jordan. The procurator Fadus, as soon as he heard of the gathering, "sent a troop of horsemen out against them," who slew many and dispersed the remainder. "They also took Theudas alive, and cut off his head, and carried it to Jerusalem" (*Antiq.* 20, 5, 1).

4. The two sons of Judas of Galilee, James and Simon, were arrested by the procurator Tiberius Alexander, who caused them to be crucified. Their offence is not stated: probably they were seen in public with crowds around them, and their father having raised an agitation forty years before, the governor thought it safer to crucify them offhand.

5. An Egyptian, who proclaimed himself a prophet, and drew after him "a multitude of the common people" towards the mount of Olives. As soon as Felix, the procurator, was informed of the event, he sent from Jerusalem "a great number of horsemen

and foot-men," who slew four hundred of the followers, but the Egyptian managed to escape (*Antiq.* 20, 8, 6).

6. The procurator Festus sent "horsemen and foot-men" against a "certain impostor" who had induced a number of people to follow him into the wilderness: the pretender and his dupes were slain (*Antiq.* 20, 8, 10).

In recording the putting down of these "innovations" Josephus implies that the authorities performed a duty they owed to the public. Moreover, it is quite probable that none of these pretenders had the smallest idea of raising an insurrection against the State; but the populace, when excited, might get out of hand and do much mischief: hence the prompt action taken to suppress the innovations.

Coming now to the case of "Jesus the Nazarene," that teacher (according to the Gospels) appeared in Galilee as a prophet and miracle-worker, and was followed wherever he went by great multitudes of people (*Matt.* iv. 25; etc., etc.); so much so indeed that he had to go up a mountain or into a boat to escape them. He is also said to have spent two whole years of his ministry (A.D. 28—30) in Galilee, wandering from city to city, and from village to village—always followed by a vast multitude. The question arises, then, Where was Herod the tetrarch? For it is quite certain that, had that ruler heard that a self-constituted prophet was going about Galilee preaching a new religion, both Jesus and his disciples would have been summarily dealt with before the new ministry was a week old. News of a prophet declaiming to the populace in every city or village which he entered would not be long in reaching the ears of Herod, and would be immediately followed by an order to his chief captain to send a strong force against the innovator, and to see that neither he nor his disciples were allowed to escape. This is what every ruler in Palestine did in those times, and what Herod himself had done in the case of John the Baptist. Why, then, did Herod the tetrarch permit this innovation to go on? The answer is, that he had no occasion to do anything; for Jesus never came into Galilee as a preacher. Had he done so, the tetrarch would have heard of it at once; for he resided at Tiberias, a city near the sea of Galilee which he had himself built some years before. The Nazarene could not have gone about the province followed by his multitudes, as represented in the Gospels, without having his ministry curtailed by the sword.

THE JERUSALEM MINISTRY FRAUD.

According to the accounts in the first three Gospels, Jesus and his disciples came into Judæa a few days before the passover, and upon leaving Jericho "a great multitude followed him" (*Matt.* xx. 29). When the procession neared Jerusalem Jesus rode upon an ass, "and the multitude..... cried saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Having in this manner entered Jerusalem, it is not surprising that "all the city was stirred," more especially as the multitude shouted "This is Jesus the prophet" (*Matt.* xxi. 8—11). Next, "Jesus went into the temple, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrow the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves." And no one in the city appears to have had the power to check such high-handed proceedings. The "chief priests and scribes," it is true, "were moved with indignation;" but they were helpless and did nothing. In the evening Jesus retired to Bethany (*xxi.* 12—17). Next morning he returned to Jerusalem and went into the temple: there the chief priests and elders asked him, "By what authority doest thou these things?" This question he evaded by a quibble, and then told them some parables in which "they perceived that he spake of them" (*xxi.* 18—46). On that day, or the one following, Jesus publicly denounced the hypocrisy and evil doings of the scribes and Pharisees, the calumny

taking up the whole of chapter xxiii. From this oration I make the following short extract:—

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!Fill ye up the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye off-spring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?"

We have no evidence that the scribes and Pharisees of the time of Jesus were "hypocrites," or that they did any of the things of which they are accused; nor do we know that one of them was such a systematic perverter of the truth as the writer of the first primitive Gospel, or the later forger of the Fourth Gospel, to say nothing of the fabricators of the admittedly lying apocryphal Gospels.

But it is unnecessary to follow the career of Jesus farther: the Gospel accounts of his doings in Jerusalem, and of his arrest, trial, and crucifixion, are all pure fiction. Had Jesus really appeared in Judæa in the days of the procurator Pilate, and had he entered Jerusalem at the head of a shouting multitude, both his ministry and his person would have been cut short by the Roman soldiers who were always on guard there. There would have been no arrest or trial: he and his disciples, and the most prominent of his shouting adherents, would have been put to the sword before they could have penetrated far within the city. The fabricator of the Jerusalem story appears not to have known that from A.D. 6, when Judæa was made a Roman province, until the beginning of the Jewish war (A.D. 66) a garrison of Roman soldiers was stationed at Jerusalem, their quarters being the spacious tower of Antonia, which was close to the temple. This fact is several times referred to by Josephus (*Wars* 2, 12, 1; 5, 5, 8; *Antiq.* 20, 5, 3; etc.). Thus, he says of some narrow passages near the temple—"through which the guard (for there always lay in this tower a Roman legion) went several ways, with their arms, on the Jewish festivals, in order to watch the people, that they might not there attempt to make any innovations." This Roman garrison is referred to in "the Acts" (xxi.—xxiii.) as rescuing Paul from the hands of the infuriated populace: the Gospel writers, apparently, knew nothing of it.

At the time when Jesus is represented as riding into Jerusalem, that city would be filling with Jews from all parts, who came to find lodgings for the passover week; and Pilate, or his chief captain, would be making preparations for dealing with anyone making "innovations." Jesus would thus be entering a trap from which there was no escape. To cut down the self-styled prophet and his disciples would be the first step in quelling the disturbance, no quarter being given to those caught red-handed: for Jesus was the leader of a hostile demonstration against the priests and elders and others in authority. This was a greater innovation than any of those recorded by Josephus; for none of those pretenders had the audacity to march into Jerusalem, to set the city authorities at naught, and to utter denunciations against them. No Roman governor who was responsible for the order of the province committed to his care would have permitted such an innovation, and if he chanced to be absent, the officer commanding the Roman legion within the city would know how to act. In either case there would be no trial, though there might be many executions. Josephus has not recorded Pilate's suppression of this astonishing innovation, though he has mentioned minor ones that occurred before and after. We may safely say, then, that the Gospel accounts of the "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem, and all that is said to have followed it, are unhistorical; otherwise we should have some account of the affair, and of the punishment dealt out to the innovators.

It has been said that the Jews had no power to put Jesus to death, and so brought him to Pilate to go through the farce of a trial: but, as a matter of history, we find that they often took the law into their own hands, more especially in a question relating to their religion. In the case of Stephen (Acts vii.) we are told that "they cast him out of the city, and stoned him." There was no handing him

over to the procurator, and, though the incident is not historical, this is exactly what they would have done to Jesus had he really uttered the denunciations recorded in Matt. xxiii. The latter chapter, too, is a further proof of fabrication? Who heard the words uttered? Who wrote them down? From whom did the primitive writer get his report? The answer is in each case the same—"No one." The chapter was fabricated for the occasion.

ABRACADABRA.

A Plant and a Parasite.

THE spirit of rebellion rang fiercely through his words. They were hot with the contagious enthusiasm that sets even dull minds ablaze. Bitter contempt, like a poisonous antidote to a poisoned subject, coated the sharp points of his arrows, and indignant wrath strengthened them. His language was often coarse, but never weak. He was a fighter who knew that the glamor of life lay with the "respectable" people, not with the men to whom he spoke; and so his words were like their lives, hard, bitter, rough, and strong.

Every man in the crowd knew the speaker loved his fellow men, knew it for a certainty about which no doubt could cling. No amount of splendid oratory could have achieved that more successfully than the hard language he used. He drew the crowd with him up the heights; shaped for them their formless longings; let the light of his genius shine upon their needs, their desires, their faltering, death-clogged aspirations. He brought near and clear thoughts that had long hung dim on the obscure horizon of their purblind minds. He inoculated them with some of his own strength; and their eyes flashed, and their lips moved restlessly. And from their unusual feeling of power came the applause that rewarded him. Then the crowd melted into the darkness, becoming part of it.

I remained behind, wishing to speak to him for a few minutes. During his speech I often found myself wondering about the relationship between his ideas and the minds of his street-corner audience. I knew these men's lives and minds, as I thought, too intimately. The uncouth relaxations from uncouth labor, the ugly tongue they spoke, their low attitude to everything that seemed to possess any refinement, the continual use of base sex references, the merriment these caused, the sordidness of their minds, all relieved only occasionally by a flash of human purity, had encircled me like a heavy mist from my earliest association with men and their ways. Such knowledge, in itself, should be sufficient to make one a rebel at war with every superstition that ever darkened the minds and lives of men.

His ideas were diametrically opposed to their method of life, and yet he so dexterously worked upon the little best in their natures that, for the moment, they became cleaner, straighter men. He cursed thoughtlessness, and they knew he denounced them. Sharply he pricked their many foolishnesses, and they felt like beaten dogs. His fiery invectives frequently brought a self-accusing growl of approval. He whipped them till they squirmed, and poured upon them a tornado of denunciation against their "slave-worship," and they recognised they were slaves worshipping the men and things that made and kept them slaves.

It was here the thought-thread, linking his ideas to their minds and lives, snapped in my mind.

His slashing attack on industrialism as one of the causes of this slave-worship was all very well in its way; but to me it seemed, despite his powerful words, he had taken the lesser cause. Certainly he had emphasised the abrasion from our minds of antiquated theories; and had put a bomb under the man who allowed appreciation to descend to reverence; and, also, he had not spared the man who preached commandments to other people, and could not, or did not, obey them himself. But that seemed

insufficient. It lacked the decisive note. It fringed the question. It was all very well to preach freedom; but freedom realises itself first in the mind; and a mind touched even with the slightest admiration of religion cannot possibly be free.

Challenging him on the point, I asked why he had obviously and deliberately refrained from introducing religion, and he replied: "What you say is true; religion is more of a mental influence; but its 'penetrative influence,' as you call it, is not worth bothering about. I, of course, agree that, as we have to go *vid* the mind, bad influences must be fought; and that religion is, therefore, one of the first obstacles we should encounter. At the same time, the religious influence is a triviality compared to the industrial influence. I have thrown both the cursed things into the balance. The latter is the more damnable. The worker understands it better. He sweats blood under it. He feels it tearing the life out of his miserable body. He hasn't a soul: born without it: dies without it. I am fighting the bigger devil. The worker can test the truth of what I say, simply by looking at his comrades. It's different with religion. The average worker doesn't give a damn for it: treats it as non-existent: it is, for him. That's why I leave it alone. The 'penetrative influence' of religion, as you call it, is played out. It is too slight, in comparison to the other thing. That has killed the religious obstacle, so far as the worker is concerned."

"And still," I remonstrated, "you have labor leaders, with a considerable working-class following, who can pray in public. And we cannot possibly forget the very many speakers you have who say God with an intonation of sanctimonious solemnity, knowing the majority of their working-class audience, if they do not turn their eyes heavenward, will, at least, have a spasm of reverence. The existence of these very far advanced people in your movement seems to prove that religion still exercises some sway. It proves the religious attitude is still alive, and it seems to suggest that what I have called the 'penetrative influence' of religion is at work, even yet, notwithstanding your assertions to the contrary. The workers still show more respect for the cloth than for their masters."

"We differ," he retorted, "the average worker, more's the pity, shows more respect for his master than for his minister, if he has such a luxury."

"Questionable," I broke in, "and that's why I wish you wouldn't forget that minister-worship preceded master-worship, and has a bigger and longer history behind it. The average worker often shows his respect for his master by striking."

"And he has struck church attendance as well, not spasmodically, but permanently."

"Maybe; but he has still to strike from the instruction he received at church, an instruction that opens channels for the 'penetrative influence' of religion. This mental environment, because of its age, has a greater power than the industrial environment against which you turn your broadsides. It is, besides, a much more subtle thing; for it fixes itself to the mind when the mind is young, destroying, if only in part, the power of logical thinking that might develop in the young brain, and be strong enough, in after days, to tackle and subdue the social problems you spoke about. Religion prepares the young mind for the coming dulling influence of unjoyful labor by partially chloroforming it. And this malevolent characteristic is not confined in its operations to the children of the middle class alone. Even if it were, it would be sufficient to justify your continual antagonism."

"You're like the rest of Freethinkers," he said. "You imagine that the death of religion is the first article of progress to strive for. I tell you religion is a nonentity where the worker is concerned. To him it is a dream; he laughs at it in the morning. We counteract the influence of the dream, wherever it has any, by filling the worker's mind with realities."

"The influence of some dreams is not so easily dissipated. Let the dream but have historical and social life behind it, and the dream becomes a reality in its effects. The time is coming, and may not be so far distant, when you revolutionaries will discover we Freethinkers were not so far wrong in our estimation of your attitude. Creeds, too, struggle to survive. Religion sucks nourishment from young ideas that show the potentiality of growth. It is fastening itself now to the safe portions of your plant. It will gain some renewed strength from your plant's life; and its resuscitation of vitality will retard the maturity of that for which you now strive. The Freethinker says, 'Cut it off, ere it is too late.' The roots of religion are diseased. Disease springs from it; and you and your movement should be kept clean at all cost. Good night."

ROBERT MORELAND.

Two Warriors.

BEFORE the tomb where rest the ashes of the great, one is moved by feelings which escape analysis. Whether they are instinctive or intuitive, one cannot say; but they have their primary being in the heart. It was with these mixed feelings of reverence and hero-worship that I found myself on Wimbledon Common, the wild and free garden of Swinburne.

It is now lovely beyond description. As I write, the songs and echoes of birds resound through those leafy glades where once the Master trod. There is a Naples blue sky, making a magnificent canopy over the rustling leaves of the queenly birch-trees. The gorse has scattered its golden bloom, and now the seed-pods are browning in the sun. Soon they will burst, and fling their seed far and wide in the profligate way beloved of Nature. A red and gold butterfly flits by, and hovers round the eyebright which trails its tiny star-shaped flowers round the feet of the tall rushes. The bramble bloom tells of the approaching end of the summer, and the young birds will soon be able to relieve their parents of responsibility. All these signs observed by Freethinkers who are nature-lovers speak of endless change, but they give intense delight to those who do not vainly imagine man to belong to some super-earthly species.

I am now where the Master hath been. He has looked on these peaceful scenes of beauty, his foot has pressed the heather, and his eye has caught the glories of these colors and wrought them in imperishable verse. To a lover of Swinburne, his very presence is almost felt amidst these surroundings, and I cannot associate anyone's name but his with this lovely wind-swept common.

Swinburne was a prophet. His visions and ideals were of such strength and splendor that even admirers of Shelley found them too spacious to comprehend. Shelley was the light, but Swinburne was the fire, which burnt up the dead wood and festering jungle of each and every superstition. To sense this fiery spirit of revolt and destruction, the reading of "A Year's Burden" confirms the verdict that he invested his song with the robes of flame.

"Are ye so strong, O kings, O strong men? Nay,
Waste all ye will and gather all ye may,
Yet one thing is here that ye shall not slay,
Even thought, that fire nor iron can affright."

I often speculate as to whether he had Giordano Bruno on his mind when he wrote those virile lines.

There is a great stir in the air lately about Nietzsche; it is a pity that the efforts to give him a wider circle of readers cannot also be used to circulate in a cheap form his English poetic prototype. What humbugs the English are to be sure! They can subscribe thousands of pounds to save a miserable and dreary place called the Crystal Palace, they can even "Peter Pan" Kensington Gardens, but to an Englishman who was a monarch of ideas in the

regions of thought, they cannot even raise a stone. London is statue-ridden. Good, bad, and indifferent, the figures of disreputable kings, of fire-eating and Bible-loving soldiers, stare upon us from all quarters. Pensions are showered upon those warriors who swept down with gunpowder poor devils armed with bow and arrows, and yet Swinburne finds no champion to support a scheme to commemorate his name. A bronze statue of Liberty awarding the wreath of victory to this slayer of superstition would be a fitting monument to adorn the stretch of country beloved of the poet. But then the English are so peculiar; they would rather, to their shame, wear cheap rag roses. Thus, in a Christian country, they would help to keep the hospitals in their ignoble position of depending on voluntary subscriptions. Jonathan Swift left the greater part of his fortune for the erection of asylums in England, as he said the people needed them; my respect for this sardonic Irishman increases every day.

Where is the man who might kiss the hem of immortality's robe by erecting a statue to one of nature's aristocrats? Where are those poets of Bohemian fraternity who profess to love their art? In honoring Swinburne they would be honoring one of the greatest of singers since Shakespeare; and this would be the highest tribute they could pay to their art and to Swinburne. It is too much to expect. We have a commercialised pulpit, a corrupt and bought press, and now we are treated to the degrading spectacle of poets bellowing their claims to the Laureateship. Shades of the muse in exile! Very soon the sign of Lombardy will be graven over the temple door of the Sacred Nine.

From Wimbledon Common to Parnassus is a far cry, and I had originally intended to write of the relationship of Nietzsche to Swinburne, but the open sky, and with only the Book of Nature to refer to, makes a straight line of thought impossible. At some future date, with the editor's permission and the readers' indulgence, I shall endeavor to show the kinship of spirit between Nietzsche and Swinburne.

Swinburne killed death in his "Hymn to Proserpine," and the Superman-idea of Nietzsche, with the great "Yea" to life, conclusively proves to Free-thinkers that they were twin spirits fighting in the greatest cause of all. The "Yea" to life, and the "Nay" to the hideous Christian trappings of death, were two of the most powerful broadsides fired into the discredited hulk of Christianity.

WILLIAM REPTON.

God and Life.

[A few more excerpts forwarded in compliance with Mr. Foote's request at bottom of page 408 of the *Freethinker*.]

All the world over, I wonder, in lands that I never have trod,
Are the people eternally seeking for the signs and the steps
of a God?

Westward across the ocean, and Northward across the snow,
Do they all stand gazing, as ever, and what do the wisest
know?

—SIR ALFRED LYALL, *Meditation of a Hindu Prince*.

Life is pleasant, and friends may be nigh,
Fain would I speak one word and be spared;
Yet I could be silent and cheerfully die,
If I were only sure God cared;
If I had faith, and were only certain,
That light is behind that terrible curtain.

But what if He listeth nothing at all
Of words a poor wretch in his terror may say?
That mighty God who created all
To labor and live their appointed day,
Who stoops not either to bless or ban,
Weaving the woof of an endless plan.

—SIR ALFRED LYALL, *Theology in Extremis*.

So many Gods, so many creeds,
So many paths that wind and wind,
While just the art of being kind
Is all the sad world needs.

—ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

An Ode to the Devil.

ONE Sunday, as I pensive sat,
Revolving over this and that,
Beneath my pane, a brazen glare
Told me Salvationists were there.
I shut my window, but in vain;
The music of this Sabbath's bane
My spirit through the glass pursued.
I muttered something strong and rude.
Then, when the tamborinists' din
Had ceased awhile, there floated in
From one wild man, with hair unlevel,
A noisy discourse on the Devil.
"A bloke," he said, "on mischief bent."
These words an inspiration sent.
My heart went out to Satan then,
Who tempted me these lines to pen:

Hail, friend of humankind, good Satan, hail!
Thy sterling virtues shall not be unsung
The while thy vices, magnified, are hung
Upon the very housetops. Satan, hail!

Father of lies? Nay, rather friend of truth,
Who, like Prometheus, to knowledge led
(If it be true what some say Moses said)
The early fathers of our tribe uncouth.

'Tis not my task to paint thee dazzling white.
Thy greatest enemies, or those who claim
To hold in greatest scorn thy hated name,
Shall here inspire the praises I indite.

The sweetest joys that this fair earth can give
Have fallen, one by one, beneath the ban
Of God's black-coated killjoys, until man,
Afraid to die, has hardly dared to live.

Who tempted us to taste the luscious fruit
The tree of knowledge bears? What gift divine
Could ever equal this great gift of thine?
Who could the worth of knowledge e'er compute?

Those who denied their earth-born God a sire
First taught that love of man and wife were vain.
The purest source of joy man e'er could gain
By unwed priests was trampled in the mire.

When two young hearts were warmed by love's sweet
'Twas said the Devil fanned the soft desire, [dame
And all who would to holiness aspire
Must flee from love, and shun conjugal shame.

'Twas thou who tempted men to wash their skin
When holy saints the bath disdained to use;
All who a life of Godliness would choose
Must reckon cleanliness a pagan sin.

Did one man bravely dare to stand alone,
That man was called thy child. Dared one to think,
He stood already on perdition's brink,
All thine were those who called their souls their own.

When puritans grew strong, and in thy name
Forbade the dance, the play, and all delights
With which men loved to gladden days and nights,
Thy temptings, Satan, spoiled their dismal game.

Thanks to thy work, as many parsons wail,
Our weekly day of freedom oft is spent
In country rambles, and thy aid is lent
To those who use the Sunday tram and rail.

Do some desire with Wagner to commune,
Or taste the joys of Mozart's gentle strain
Upon their day of rest, the fact is plain
That Satan's artful plan commands the tune.

All pleasant things have thus been traced to thee.
Love, knowledge, recreation, all are thine.
Without thy temptings, lower than the swine
In point of intellect our race would be.

Let those who will desire with God to be,
Who fashioned hell,—on adulation fed,
I'd rather share thy damned, eternal bed.
Good Satan, kindly save a place for me.

HERBERT W. THURLOW.

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 Bandstand): 3.15 and 6, W. Gallagher, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30 and 6.15, Miss K. B. Kough, Lectures.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, "Beelzebub," "The Conquest of Doubt"; 7.30, R. Miller, "Christian Progress."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, W. Davidson, a Lecture. Finsbury Park: 6.30, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, R. Rosetti, "Bible Blunders."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Spouters' Corner): 7.30, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

PRESTON BRANCH N. S. S. (B. S. P. Rooms, 7 Market-street): 7 to 8, E. Glaister, "Secular Education."

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 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; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. 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.



LATEST N. S. S. BADGE.—A single Pansy flower, size as shown; artistic and neat design in enamel and silver; permanent in color; has been the means of making many pleasant introductions. Brooch or Stud fastening, 6d. Scarf-pin, 8d. Postage in Great Britain 1d. Small reduction on not less than one dozen. Exceptional value.—From Miss E. M. VANCE, General Secretary, N. S. S., 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C.

General Secretary, N. S. S., 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C.

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.

Determinism or Free Will?

By C. COHEN.

Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.

A clear and able exposition of the subject in the only adequate light—the light of evolution.

CONTENTS.

I. The Question Stated.—II. "Freedom" and "Will."—III. Consciousness, Deliberation, and Choice.—IV. Some Alleged Consequences of Determinism.—V. Professor James on "The Dilemma of Determinism."—VI. The Nature and Implications of Responsibility.—VII. Determinism and Character.—VIII. A Problem in Determinism.—IX. Environment.

PRICE ONE SHILLING NET.
(POSTAGE 2d.)

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

A LIBERAL OFFER—NOTHING LIKE IT.

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

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



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

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

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

THE YOUNG—How to choose the best to marry.
THE MARRIED—How to be happy in marriage.
THE FOND PARENT—How to have prize babies.
THE MOTHER—How to have them without pain.
THE CHILDLESS—How to be fruitful and multiply.
THE CURIOUS—How they "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.

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, or Finnish.

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 more 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.

FREETHOUGHT PUBLICATIONS.

LIBERTY AND NECESSITY. An argument against Free Will and in favor of Moral Causation. By David Hume. 32 pages, price 2d., postage 1d.

THE MORTALITY OF THE SOUL. By David Hume. With an Introduction by G. W. Foote. 16 pages, price 1d., postage 1/2d.

AN ESSAY ON SUICIDE. By David Hume. With an Historical and Critical Introduction by G. W. Foote. price 1d., postage 1/2d.

FROM CHRISTIAN PULPIT TO SECULAR PLATFORM. By J. T. Lloyd. A History of his Mental Development. 60 pages, price 1d., postage 1/2d.

THE MARTYRDOM OF HYPATIA. By M. M. Mangasarian (Chicago). 16 pages, price 1d., postage 1/2d.

MISCELLANEOUS THEOLOGICAL WORKS. By Thomas Paine. Including all but the *Age of Reason*. 134 pages, reduced from 1s to 6d., postage 1d.

THE WISDOM OF THE ANCIENTS. By Lord Bacon. A beautiful and suggestive composition. 86 pages, reduced from 1s. to 3d., postage 1d.

A REFUTATION OF DEISM. By Percy Bysshe Shelley. With an Introduction by G. W. Foote. 32 pages, price 1d., postage 1/2d.

LIFE, DEATH, AND IMMORTALITY. By Percy Bysshe Shelley. 16 pages, price 1d., postage 1/2d.

LETTER TO LORD ELLENBOROUGH. Occasioned by the Sentence he passed on Daniel Isaac Eaton as publisher of the so-called Third Part of Paine's *Age of Reason*. By Percy Bysshe Shelley. With an Introduction by G. W. Foote. 16 pages, price 1d, postage 1/2d.

FOOTSTEPS OF THE PAST. Essays on Human Evolution. By J. M. Wheeler. A Very Valuable Work. 192 pages, price 1s., postage 2 1/2d.

BIBLE STUDIES AND PHALIC WORSHIP. By J. M. Wheeler. 136 pages, price 1s. 6d., postage 2d.

UTILITARIANISM. By Jeremy Bentham. An Important Work. 32 pages, price 1d., postage 1/2d.

THE CHURCH CATECHISM EXAMINED. By Jeremy Bentham. With a Biographical Introduction by J. M. Wheeler. A Drastic Work by the great man who, as Macaulay said, "found Jurisprudence a gibberish and left it a Science." 72 pages, price (reduced from 1s.) 3d, postage 1d.

THE ESSENCE OF RELIGION. By Ludwig Feuerbach. "All theology is anthropology." Büchner said that "no one has demonstrated and explained the purely human origin of the idea of God better than Ludwig Feuerbach." 78 pages, price 6d, postage 1d.

THE CODE OF NATURE. By Denis Diderot. Powerful and eloquent. 16 pages, price 1d., postage 1/2d.

A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN LIBERTY. By Anthony Collins. With Preface and Annotations by G. W. Foote and Biographical Introduction by J. M. Wheeler. One of the strongest defences of Determinism ever written. 75 pages, price 1s, in cloth; paper copies 6d., postage 1d.

LETTERS OF A CHINAMAN ON THE MISCHIEF OF MISSIONARIES. 16 pages, price 1d., postage 1/2d.

THE PIONEER PRESS,

2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

PIONEER PAMPHLETS.

Now being issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.

No. I.—BIBLE AND BEER. By G. W. Foote.

FORTY PAGES—ONE PENNY.

Postage: single copy, ½d.; 6 copies, 1½d.; 18 copies, 3d.; 26 copies, 4d. (parcel post).

No. II.—DEITY AND DESIGN. By C. Cohen.

(A Reply to Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace.)

THIRTY-TWO PAGES—ONE PENNY.

Postage: Single copy, ½d.; 6 copies, 1½d.; 18 copies, 2½d.; 26 copies, 4d. (parcel post).

No. III.—MISTAKES OF MOSES. By Colonel Ingersoll.

THIRTY-TWO PAGES—ONE PENNY.

Postage: Single copy, ½d.; 6 copies, 1½d.; 18 copies, 2½d.; 26 copies, 4d. (parcel post).

IN PREPARATION.

No. IV.—CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS. By G. W. Foote.

No. V.—MODERN MATERIALISM. By W. Mann.

Special Terms for Quantities for Free Distribution or to Advanced Societies.

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

THE POPULAR EDITION

(Revised and Enlarged)

OF

“BIBLE ROMANCES”

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

With a Portrait of the Author.

CONTENTS.

The Creation Story
Eve and the Apple
Cain and Abel
Noah's Flood
The Tower of Babel
Lot's Wife

The Ten Plagues
The Wandering Jews
A God in a Box
Balaam's Ass
Jonah and the Whale
Bible Animals

Bible Ghosts
A Virgin Mother
The Crucifixion
The Resurrection
The Devil

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

SIXPENCE—NET

(POSTAGE 2d.)

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