

**REASONABLE APPREHENSIONS AND
REASSURING HINTS. BEING PAPERS
DESIGNED TO ATTRACT
ATTENTION TO THE NATURE OF MODERN
UNBELIEF, AND TO MEET SOME OF ITS
FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649386758

Reasonable apprehensions and Reassuring hints. Being papers designed to attract attention to the nature of modern unbelief, and to meet some of its fundamental assumptions by Henry Footman

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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HENRY FOOTMAN

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PAPERS DESIGNED TO ATTRACT ATTENTION TO THE
NATURE OF MODERN UNBELIEF, AND TO
MEET SOME OF ITS FUNDAMEN-
TAL ASSUMPTIONS.

BY

REV. HENRY FOOTMAN, M.A.,

SECOND THOUSAND

NEW YORK :
JAMES POTT & CO., PUBLISHERS,
14 & 16 ASTOR PLACE.

1885.



Press of I. J. Little & Co.,
Nos. 12 to 20 Astor Place, New York.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO AMERICAN EDITION.

“Let us come out into the open and look our opponents in the face.”

Such was my exclamation when I sat down to prepare some addresses to some brethren in the ministry, at their request, upon the subject of Modern Unbelief. And that exclamation expresses the predominant thought of this book, the first English edition of which was sold here, in England, with such rapidity, that, within a few months of its publication, a learned and able reviewer, in the columns of the leading religious journal of Great Britain, found himself calling attention to a book which was then nowhere to be bought. Since then, indeed, and in the current year, thousands of copies of a second English edition have been sold, and the book has therefore received a full and, to me unexpectedly,

ample justification of its existence, already from the English public.

MESSRS. POTT & CO., of New York, now, however, write to me to say that they have determined to bring out, at once, an *American* edition of the work, and in informing me of their design, they kindly offer me a page or two for a few prefatory remarks, addressed to their readers of the New World. This is, indeed, to be invited "to play to the larger audience," but nevertheless I shall not detain that audience long, and shall only trespass for a few minutes upon the space allotted to me.

Let me say then, at once, that I take this spontaneous and unsolicited determination of publishers who possess such ample means of knowing the requirements of America, as decisive on one point at any rate, and that is *this*, that the Christian Faith in the United States is surrounded and in many cases penetrated by an atmosphere of unbelief, as that same faith is in England; and that the philosophical speculations, the physical discoveries and theories, the critical researches, and ethical systems, of our day, are being popularized in America as they are in England, and popularized too often in the anti-theological and anti-Christian interest.

This being so, I ask all Theists and all Christians, who may take up this volume, not to be offended with me for forcing upon their attention the very words of many of those whose words and influence are most deeply and widely felt (felt *against even Theism*), not only in the study, but upon the popular platform, and in the factory and stores.

I ask the Theist and the Christian to do themselves the justice, and to do the unbeliever the justice, of seeing for themselves what is really said, and said so that "words are deeds," upon *the wrong side*; and then I ask them, and especially I ask the *teachers* among them, each man for himself, to put it to himself plainly, "what is the answer which I can give *myself*, and then, when needed, give to others, on the *right side* of this tremendous question?"

I say this tremendous question; for I believe the question is tremendous, and so tremendous that we must not try to answer it *at second hand*.

GOD, OR NO GOD?

CHRIST OR NO CHRIST? An Eternal Word of God the Light of every man everywhere—*or* the Hero of a Galilean Idyl, an amiable, tender teacher, sinking down into an illusioned fanatic?

Man or no man?

A living personal responsible immortal being—
or a bundle of sensations, actual or possible, to be destroyed sooner or later, and of which, whatever “labels” we may put upon it, no eternal future and no moral responsibility can be predicted?

I repeat, these questions, and other such-like questions about which this book is busy, are too tremendous for any thoughtful man to feel able to treat of them *second* hand. Only, let it be distinctly understood, that when I say second hand in this connection, I do not mean that all our thoughts and arguments should be what is called “original” upon this matter. I do not mean that we are not to read what others have affirmed or denied upon this and kindred questions; I do not mean that if another man’s argument strikes us we are not to use it. But I mean, “make the affirmation, or the denial, or the argument *your own* first, assimilate it, put it into your own words, apply it to your own mental needs, and *then*, but not before, lean on it personally and use it frankly with others.” In short, take and give at first hand, in the spirit of frankness and of charity combined.

And this last remark brings me to a point which

I feel it necessary to mention here, and that is that of the *spirit and temper* in which I have tried to write the book, and in which the unbelief of our time should be persistently met by the Christian Controversialist. I have made up my mind that it is best to put the *strongest case I know of* against Theism and Christianity. Very frequently I have done so in the very words of the writers or lecturers who know how to put that case most strongly (by strongly I do not mean abusively), but when I have not quoted their words I have always tried to state their case, from their point of view, and as strongly as if they were stating it themselves. And, further, I believe I have succeeded in this attempt, for more than one able Christian critic has told me that I put the unbelievers' case more strongly than they can put it themselves, and Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant, in their review, state very frankly that I "do not abuse or intentionally misrepresent them."

From the method, then, which I have here adopted, Theistic and Christian readers may feel assured that, when they have read this book, *they know* the *worst* of their opponent's case. And they may feel further assured, that in what I have said by way of answer or "Hint" of an answer to such