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Truth is for humanity; error for its time.—GOETHE.

Views and Opinions.

PRESIDENT TAFT'S letter to the Albert Hall meeting in celebration of the tercentenary of the Authorised Version of the English Bible contained the following curious passage:—

"The Book of books has not only reigned supreme in England for centuries, but it has bound together as nothing else has done the two great Anglo-Saxon nations—one in blood, in speech, and in common religion. Our laws, our letters, and our social life owe whatever excellence they possess largely to the influence of this our own classic. Americans must, therefore, with unbounded satisfaction join in thanksgiving to the God of the Bible who has thus bound together the Old and the New World by precious ties."

President Taft wrote as a Christian to Christians. He would never have written a political letter in that unguarded way. It is so easy to see the absurdity of his tribute to the Bible. He says that it bound England and America together, and that both nations should thank the God of the Bible accordingly. Common blood and common speech, which are the usual bonds of nationality and amity, were not enough in this case. The Bible was necessary in addition. And how has the Bible bound England and America together? Let us see.

Did the Bible unite England and America when King George's troops, and scalping Red Indians, were let loose upon the Colonists in the eighteenth century? The English Bible was in full circulation then, and was probably read with more devout attention than it is now. Both sides swore by it as the Word of God, yet it did not prevent them from fighting out their quarrel (which might easily have been avoided) to the bitter and bloody issue. And how about the war of 1812? England and the United States were fighting each other again. Yet the Bible was still in their hands and its texts in their mouths. How much did it bind them together then? Moreover, there was ill-feeling between the two countries nearly to the very end of the nineteenth century. Several times they were on the verge of another war. An outbreak of hostilities was again and again prevented by the wise action of a few leading men on both sides. The mob on each side of the Atlantic would have hailed a rupture with something like delight.

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The greatest enemies of England in the United States have been the expatriated Irishmen and their descendants. We do not complain of this, it is perfectly natural; we merely state it as a fact. Now the Irish, being Catholics, are not great Bible readers; and if they do read the Bible at all it is not in the English Authorised Version. What has induced them to become less hostile to England of late? Not the Bible, but the prospect of Home Rule.

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Mr. Asquith's "eloquent and powerful" speech—as the *Chronicle* called it—at the Albert Hall meeting, contained the following passage:—

"Surely there could not be a worthier, a more appropriate, a more splendid monument of this tercentenary

year than that it should witness the sealing of a solemn pact between the English-speaking peoples which would put an end once for all to the hideous and unthinkable possibilities of fratricidal strife."

But what on earth has all this to do with the Bible? Why did not British premiers talk like that a hundred, or fifty, or even twenty years ago? They had the Authorised Version then as they have now. What has caused the difference? The people have grown more enlightened and humane, the Peace movement has been advanced by thinkers and enthusiasts, and the organised working classes are everywhere in revolt against militarism, having at length perceived that wars of conquest and glory are only means for keeping the toilers in subjection and postponing social reforms.

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One would think from President Taft's letter that the God of the Bible was another being than the God of the universe. If the two beings are identical, it is very odd, to say the least of it, that this Deity should take a special interest in a good understanding between England and America. Why does he not take an equal interest in a good understanding between other nations? They are all his children. What is the reason of his partiality? Or is it that British and American vanity is responsible for the idea that "Providence" is specially interested in John and Jonathan? * * *

We now turn to another subject—the Warschauer-Foote debate. Caxton Hall was crowded on both nights. The Rev. C. Drawbridge took the chair very pleasantly the first night. Unfortunately, illness prevented Mr. Herbert Burrows from presiding the second night. His place was taken by Mr. C. Cohen, who had a rougher task than Mr. Drawbridge. It happened that the Freethinkers formed more than half the audience, and this fact seemed to be resented by Dr. Warschauer, who should rather have complained that the Christians were not supporting him properly. Everything passed off agreeably on the first night. The Freethinkers gave Dr. Warschauer generous applause when he rose and when he set down. He could not expect them to do more. It was for his own side to applaud his arguments. But on the second night he started in a cross temper, and went on from bad to worse, frequently lecturing the audience, and to all appearance deliberately irritating them. Many audiences would refuse to hear a speaker further, without an apology, if he told them that "if they never acted as gentlemen before, they might try to do so then, and establish a record." His last complaint was that somebody hissed him. He appears to have been mistaken, but there was a bit of a scene, and Mr. Cohen did his best to restore order. Oil fell upon the troubled waters at last, but Dr. Warschauer and his clerical friend who kept egging him on bounced off the platform while the chairman was acknowledging the customary vote of thanks. We believe Dr. Warschauer will live to regret his hastiness. The audience gave no trouble at all the first night, and none the second night until he gave provocation. We need not hesitate to say this—for we said a good deal more to him in the ante-room.

G. W. FOOTE.

On Cause and Effect.—II.

(Concluded from p. 211.)

AT first sight nothing seems more obvious or more convincing than Hume's description of causation as consisting of invariable succession. Further consideration will, I believe, show, even when we have added Mill's rectification of unconditional and invariable succession, that the description misses the essential nature of causation and provides the opportunity for the use of that vague speech and abuse of language against which Locke properly protests.

It is easy to see why the notion of invariable succession as the essence of causation commended itself to Hume, and what it was he had in mind when dealing with the problem. Before him was the metaphysical and theological notion of a cause producing an effect in virtue of power passing from one to the other, and upon which "causal nexus" all kinds of wild, flighty, and unprofitable theories had been, and were, based. Looking for this metaphysical "will," or "power," or "force," Hume, of course, failed to find any such connecting link, and against this idea of causation his essay, *Of the Idea of Necessary Connection*, was brilliantly successful. Taking his stand on Locke's analysis of the mind, and utilising the principle by means of which Berkeley abolished "matter" as a figment of the imagination and a refuge of Atheism, he argues that as our ideas are no more than copies of impressions, and our idea of cause and effect is a register of our experience that certain objects are followed by other objects, or certain conditions by other conditions, with invariable succession. We think of them as related because we have always found them together. Further than that we cannot go, because that is the limit of our knowledge on the matter.

Cause and effect was, then, with Hume, simple succession. Succession was, indeed, admitted by all. His opponents case rested on the belief that this succession was merely the expression of some indwelling principle or power. Hume admitted the succession, but denied any intervening agent. In denying this intervention he was unquestionably on safe ground. What he did not see was, what was seen in a very effective way by Sir William Hamilton, glimpsed, but very poorly appreciated, by John Stuart Mill, and clearly seen and properly emphasised by George Henry Lewes. But Hume did not see that all the gratuitous mystery of a "causal nexus," etc., resulted from taking cause and effect as two things separated in time, and that the true line of rectification lay in treating the difference between cause and effect as the difference between a fact and its factors. Nor was the matter made any clearer by Kant's description of causality as a form of thought, replacing an objective by a subjective necessity. A necessity of thought is, after all, only one side of a necessity of things, and there is a change of language without any simplification of the problem.

The true nature of the question will be best seen by taking one of Hume's illustrations. If, he says, we observe the collision of two billiard balls, we find that the impulse of one ball is attended with motion in the second. This is all that we have seen, and it is the sole ground and reason we have for saying that the motion of the first ball is the *cause* of the motion in the second. The one motion actually follows the other; and, in any example we take, says Hume, we shall get no farther than this fact of succession.

Now, is this a *complete* description of the phenomenon? If it is, then Hume's case remains impregnable. But I think it can be shown that Hume—probably through having in mind the metaphysical idea of a "causal nexus"—exhibits as an effect what is only one aspect of the effect. An analysis of the problem will make this plain. A ball moving across a table strikes another ball and sets it in motion. The motions of the two are then related as cause

and effect. But is that all of the effect of the impact? For brevity we will call the moving ball A, and the ball that is struck B. To commence with, the mere motion of A does not bring it into causal relation with B. It might not travel as far as B, or it might pass by it. The two are only in a causal relation at the *moment of collision*. But, omitting loss of momentum by friction and the generation of heat, the momentum acquired by B represents the momentum lost by A. Therefore, if the acquired momentum of B stands in the relation of effect, of which the momentum of A is the cause, the inertia of B stands as the cause of which the decreased momentum of A is the effect. Taking, then, the product of the collision—the acquired momentum of one ball and the decreased momentum of the other ball—cause and effect become interchangeable terms. Hume really establishes a succession by exhibiting a part of the effect as the whole.

The problem to be explained is the effect or the product of the collision of a moving ball with a stationary one. But the two balls, as we have seen, only exist in a causal relation at the moment of collision. Previous to that, they are quite unrelated. And the effect of the collision must, as we have also seen, cover the whole of the product of the impact. Further, the whole of the effect is not merely the acquired motion of one ball, it includes the arrested motion of the other ball. The one ball is, indeed, in motion before the other, but it is not the motion of the ball, but its potential energy at the moment of collision that makes it a factor in an act of causation. That is, the cause is not constituted by mere antecedence, but by a co-operation of forces or conditions, and the effect is the expression of the power of the co-operating conditions. It results not from a succession of conditions, but from their assemblage. And this effect, be it noted, does not *follow* the assemblage of the conditions, it is simultaneous with their conjunction.

In looking for an explanation of causation in succession, whether invariable merely, or unconditional and invariable, philosophers have been straying from the right path. In establishing a cause for any phenomenon we are describing the conditions that, in co-operation, possess the power of producing an effect. In establishing an effect, we are describing the product or result of these co-operating conditions. Cause and effect are thus, in reality, the same thing looked at from different points of view. The very essence of causation is the co-operation of conditions or forces. When, for example, I ask for a cause of gunpowder, and am told that it is sulphur, charcoal, and nitre, it is clear that, considered separately, these ingredients are not causes at all. Whether charcoal and sulphur will form gunpowder or not will depend upon the presence of the third agent. It is in every case the combination of appropriate factors that constitute a cause. But given the co-operation of the factors, gunpowder does not *follow* its combination; there is not a succession, the resultant is instantaneous with the assemblage of the factors. The effect is the registration of the combination.

There can, indeed, be no serious objection to speaking of cause and effect as antecedent and consequent, so long as we realise that by antecedent we mean conditions and forces which, when related, result in a certain effect; and by consequent, the synthesis of these forces and conditions. But it is a source of endless confusion to first separate in thought that which is inseparable in fact, and then treat them as independent existences. Apart from the quality of relation we have no "causes," only factors that may become such. Of necessity, we separate an effect into its factors, we combine factors and produce an effect, overlooking, meanwhile, the important point that the "power" expressed in causation is the relation of the factors, while the effect is the manifestation of the combination.

Had this consideration been always borne in mind a great deal of the controversy over the question of causation would never have transpired. The curious

thing is to find a thinker like John Stuart Mill unable to rid his mind of the conception of cause and effect as being two different phenomena, one of which succeeded the other. This is the more striking as Mill actually expressed the true view of the case in the course of his writings on causation, but without properly appreciating its importance. When he defined a cause as "the assemblage of phenomena, which occurring, some other phenomena invariably commences," he was working along the right lines; but how little he saw the full value of the definition was shown by the immediately following remark, "whether the effect coincides in point of time with, or immediately follows, the hindmost of its conditions, is immaterial." If what has been said above be correct the effect is *always* coincident in point of time with the cause. And far from this consideration being immaterial, its neglect has been responsible for best part of the misunderstandings on the subject. People have spent their time looking for a cause of causation, when causation is nothing more than an expression of a relation, and have, therefore, failed to realise the absurdity of looking for a relation apart from the things related. They have been searching for a link between cause and effect, and the denial of any such link, while maintaining the separateness of the two, has only made the confusion more intense.

Probably, had causes been thought of as forces, instead of things, the confusion would have been sooner removed. It would then have been realised that while the identity of cause and effect is fundamentally an illustration of the indestructibility of force, the change in phenomena due to a combination of factors is an illustration of the equivalence and convertibility of forces. But in thinking of cause and effect as *things*, room was given for speculation as to what united the two—the metaphysician found room for his "principle" and the theologian for his action of deity. Also, there ensued the discussion as to whether we could ever know "causes in themselves," which again left room for an unknowable something as the effective agent in causation. I have tried to show that we know causes in the only sense in which we know anything. When we know that a certain effect has proceeded from the co-operation of certain forces, we know causes in the only sense in which we can hope to know them. We know that a particular group of agents possess, in relation, the power of producing a certain result. Its function as a cause, I repeat once more, is the establishment of these relations; its quality is an effect of the combination. Whether we know all about the various powers of these relations and all about the possible actions of the effect, is quite another question. On this road there is room for endless development. But development is neither certain nor secure while we obscure the issue with metaphysical verbiage or theological fallacies.

C. COHEN.

The Kingdom of God.

It will be remembered that the Rev. Charles Brown, in his address at the recent meeting of the Free Church Council, referred to the lamentable decrease of Church membership and attendance which has taken place on so large a scale during the last few years. He also complained that the people who still go to church and chapel pay no heed whatever to the ministrations of the pulpit. It was altogether a doleful and depressing utterance. According to Mr. Brown, the Churches were losing both members and adherents, and they were seriously threatened with the loss of their field-day. The reverend gentleman spoke the truth that is patent to every unprejudiced observer. There is no doubt whatever but that the Sunday League is one of the most powerful foes of the Christian Church. But Dr. Jowett takes a different view of the situation. On the occasion of

his departure for New York he is reported to have spoken thus:—

"I personally do not take at all a depressing view of the state of the Churches, and I think we should make a great mistake if we allowed the decrease in the statistics of membership to interpret for us the real state of religion in this country."

The reverend gentleman did not say what interprets the real state of religion in Great Britain; but, surely, steadily emptying chapels do indicate that religion is losing its hold upon the minds of the people. Dr. Jowett, being a very popular preacher, probably estimates the real state of religion in this country by the crowded congregations to which he spoke wherever he went. The *Christian World* calls him "an incurable optimist," possibly because it is aware that all the facts are against him. The Rev. F. B. Meyer is another "incurable optimist." He says: "The kingdom is here. I am quite aware that there is a great revolt, but that does not hinder the fact that the kingdom has come. According to this divine kingdom of God is "the Divine order of society." Fancy an intelligent congregation complacently listening to the following strange utterance:—

"Just as when we were boys and girls we looked at our copy-books and saw our poor, uneven handwriting underneath the copper-plate at the top of the page, so amid all the lies and changes and revolutions of earth there is God's kingdom, now a mystery, that will some day be revealed. Because it is there the order of society is maintained. Where does society come from? Do you think society came out of the brain of man? Do you think we owe it to Plato or to Moses? To neither of these ultimately, but to Plato and Moses reading from the eternal tablets of God's constitution all those mighty conceptions of government which are for ever associated with their names."

Mr. Meyer is quite sure that the kingdom is here, though as yet only as "a mystery that will some day be revealed." The child sees the copper-plate at the top of his copy-book, but Mr. Meyer admits that he does not see the kingdom of God in this world. His account of the origin of society is laughably childish. Society is countless ages older than Plato and Moses, and owes scarcely anything to either. It is a natural growth, not a manufactured article. Where "the Divine order of society" comes in is another of Mr. Meyer's mysteries which "will some day be revealed." He asserts that because the kingdom is here, though unseen, "the order of society is maintained." "Revolution," he says, "will expend itself in vain, and mankind will never go back to chaos, because underneath all government and the power of judge and constable there lie the great outlines of the kingdom of God." Through the eye of his imagination he has seen the kingdom, and this is the result:—

"The Christian man is bound to be a politician because he sees the outlines of that kingdom, and is constantly desiring to write the statutes of that kingdom upon the statute-book of his fatherland. Ever since I saw the kingdom I could not help being a politician. I do not mean a party politician; but I have striven in my humble way to translate that which I see—the kingdom of God—and make it operative among nations and communities of men."

"I do not mean a party politician" is the finest joke that ever fell from the lips of man. The clergy are always saying that, although nearly all of them are actively identified with some party or other. It is a notorious fact that the Free Church Council, in which Mr. Meyer is a great and shining light, is a self-appointed agent of the Liberal Party. It moved heaven and earth to secure the return of that party to power in 1906. Is not Mr. Meyer himself a staunch Liberal? If he is, he is so, according to his own words, because he sees the outlines of the kingdom beneath the Liberal Party. Now, if the outlines of the kingdom of God are discernible beneath the Liberal Party, it inevitably follows that they are not underneath the Tory Party. In other words, the Liberal Party is of God and the Tory Party of the Devil. When the Liberals are in power the British Empire is governed from heaven, but when the Tories hold the reins the Empire is guided from the

Pit. If the reverend gentleman's words do not imply all this, then they are meaningless.

Mr. Meyer assures young people that God is king, and exhorts them to place their affairs in his hands. There is a girl listening to him who has heard "the call of her life. It may be to art, or to music, or to literature. She longs to find the road, for she is conscious she has the capacity, but up to now has found no outlet, and her heart yearns to do something. Why should not she be a Rosa Bonheur? Why should she not be a Rossetti? Why should she not be a Barrett Browning?" Having thus described her aspirations, he says to her: "Oh, be calm and still. God is king. He will find your niche in the kingdom. He will bring you to the open door. He will bring you your chance." What a mischievous advice, for anyone who took it would be ruined for life. There is no God who brings people their chances. We must watch for, and often make, our chances ourselves, and firmly seize them at the psychological moment. Unless a man becomes his own providence he will be left behind in the race of life. Mr. Meyer himself tacitly admits this in the following passage:—

"The other day the man who created the *Thunderer*, while lying on his bed of pain, was carried to a temperance meeting, and witnessed his resolve to be a total abstainer. There is a man who, though he seems to be conquered, grips his sword; dares to believe God is King."

That is an extremely awkward illustration, for it contradicts the preacher's doctrine. If that man really believes that God is king, and was willing, even anxious, to give him the victory over his enemy, why on earth did he grip his sword, and make a public declaration of his resolve to give up the drink? Whether he believes in God's sovereignty or not this man knows quite well that, if his craving for alcohol is to be overcome, he must fight against it with all his might, and be supported by the active sympathy of his fellow-beings. If God did exist and were king and in love with mankind, there would be no drunkards. The truth is, however, that when the drink-craving acquires a specific strength no amount of trusting and praying will save its victim. The only hope in such a case lies in regarding it as a case of serious disease needing careful and skilful medical treatment. This is only an illustration of a principle that is of universal application. In no department of life does the belief that God is king find actual justification. If God only helps those who help themselves, the very belief that he does that is tantamount to a proof of his non-existence.

Christian ministers believe that God sent his only begotten Son into the world to publish the laws of his kingdom. There is a collection of them in the Sermon on the Mount. Here is one: "Give to him that asketh thee." The other day a man knocked at the door of a prominent London clergyman's house and asked, but was refused, and handed over to the police. Instead of God punishing his servant for disregarding a divine law, we find the preacher, who is the real culprit, punishing the beggar by sending him to prison for so many months. Whenever such an instance is cited as an objection to Christianity, the evasive reply is made that the saying is not a rule of life, but a general principle. In the name of wonder, what is the difference between a rule and a principle in the simple saying, "Give to him that asketh thee"? These preachers are so fond of expatiating on the duty of complete obedience to Christ; but when their attention is called to a number of Christ's sayings which are totally ignored even by themselves, they instantly resort to sophistry and call them principles, as if principles were never intended to be carried into practice; and so obedience to Christ is seen to be nothing but an empty phrase.

This is one of Mr. Meyer's earnest appeals:—

"Oh, believe in God. Believe that, above all, there is an eternal program; that above your employers, above those who are constantly watching you to see whether you do your duty, amid all the chaos of daily life eddying round you, God has a program, and God has a plan,

and God has a purpose. He has assigned places to us. Life is a Divine thought which we have to work out."

Mr. Meyer speaks with an intimacy that nothing short of direct knowledge would justify. Has he ever seen the program, the plan, the purpose? Does he know of anybody else who has been privileged to examine it? If not, what right has he to speak about it? What he sees in the world is chaos, what he has to witness are baffled and disappointed lives, and yet he asserts that Almighty God has a program, a plan, a purpose which he is working out. Either the program is a thoroughly bad one, or else God is not almighty. "Life is a Divine thought," says the preacher, "which we have to work out"; and, behold, the thought expresses itself in miserable slums, standing armies and navies, bloody wars, and lunatic asylums. "True," answers the preacher, "but the fault is ours, not God's. It is we who are responsible for all that is wrong in human life. The plan is perfect, and the Planner possesses all power; but he has to carry out his plan through us." This is another palpable evasion. Jesus is reported to have said to his disciples, "Without me ye can do nothing"; but to-day it is the disciples who say to him, "Without us thou canst do nothing." This is an egregiously dishonest method of dealing with an insurmountable difficulty. The kingdom of God is an empty dream. It never did and it never can actually exist. It is for the coming of the Kingdom of Man that we should work; and this kingdom is coming slowly, in spite of all hindrances thrown in its way.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Apocalypse.—IV.

(Continued from p. 214.)

A QUESTION which I had nearly overlooked—that of the authorship of the "Revelation"—has now to be noticed. Upon this subject one point at least may be taken as certain: the author was a Jew named John—a fact stated in the book no less than four times (Rev. i. 1, 4, 9; xxii. 8). The next point, however, is not quite so certain: this is—Which John? Up to a decade or so ago, there was but one answer to the question, namely, John the apostle, the son of Zebedee. This is not now the case. There was another and a later John, a friend or acquaintance of Papias (A.D. 180—150) who resided at Ephesus. These two Johns have been confounded, chiefly through mis-statements made by Irenæus (A.D. 185). Papias, in his book of "Expositions," after separately naming the twelve reputed disciples of Jesus (including John the apostle), mentioned two contemporaries, Aristion and John the Presbyter, as having told him something respecting writings by Matthew and Mark. After reading these statements of Papias, Irenæus tells us that the last-named individual was a disciple of "John," a statement which every Christian reader of his book understood as referring to the apostle John, who was thereupon assumed to have lived to an advanced age in Ephesus. Irenæus further stated that Polycarp, another contemporary of Papias, was also a disciple of "John," and that he himself when quite a lad remembered hearing that aged bishop speak of his teacher John. Later Christian writers (including Eusebius) repeated the mis-statements of Irenæus, and so John the apostle (of whom nothing was known) was put in the place of John the Presbyter. This obvious fact I remember referring to some time back; now I notice that the writer of the article "Apocalypse" in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* has come round to the same opinion, for he says (without entering into any particulars) that "Criticism has advanced another step, and has declared the whole tradition regarding the presence of John the Apostle (and Evangelist) in Asia Minor to have been due to a confusion between his name and that of John the Presbyter": after which this writer comes to the conclusion that John the Presbyter was the author of the Apocalypse.

Upon the latter point, however, the writer just referred to is certainly in error. There is no earthly reason for ascribing the authorship of the Apocalypse to John the Presbyter save that the latter rejoiced in the name of John. Moreover, Papias's friend the Presbyter was a Christian, and in all probability a Gentile; whereas the Apocalypse was written by a non-Christian and a Jew. In the next place this friend of Papias lived nearly half a century too late; two facts, which quite settle the question. It is far more likely that John the Presbyter was the author of the Fourth Gospel, which, as far as can be ascertained, was never heard of until after the time of Papias. We have evidence, too, that the last-named individual was acquainted with some of the sayings in the "First Epistle of John," a document undoubtedly composed by the author of the Fourth Gospel. Assuming that the Epistle was given to the world first, this would account for Papias knowing something of one writing, but not of the other. It is, of course, possible that John the Presbyter may have been the Christian interpolator of the Apocalypse; but we have no evidence as to the identity of that unscrupulous individual.

Again, there can be little doubt that the name handed down as the author of the book was that of the writer of the original Jewish Apocalypse. This, if nothing else, would adhere to the work, as in the case of Mark and Luke—two unknown men, having no connection with Jesus—with regard to the authorship of the Second and Third Gospels. As a simple matter of fact, nothing whatever is known of the author of the Apocalypse, save that his name was John. And such being the case, I will now disclose to all whom it may concern a fact unknown to any Biblical critic, to wit—the real name of the writer. This was "John the Essene."

Upon the breaking out of the Jewish war with the Romans (A.D. 66) generals were appointed by the council at Jerusalem to take command of bands of patriotic Jews in all parts of Galilee and Judæa. Amongst these was "John the Essene," of whom brief mention is made by Josephus, as follows:—

War. ii. xx. 4.—"Joseph the son of Simon was sent as general to Jericho.....and John the Essene to the toparchy of Thamma; Lydda was also added to his portion, and Joppa and Emmaus. But John, the son of Matthias, was made governor of," etc.

War. iii. ii. 1. A large Jewish force having been sent to besiege Ascalon—"This expedition was led by three men, who were the chief of them all, both for strength and sagacity: Niger, called the Peraite, Silas of Babylon, and besides them, John the Essene."

The result of the last-mentioned expedition was that "ten thousand men of the Jews' side lay dead, with two of their generals, John and Silas." In recording the appointment of provisional generals, Josephus found it necessary to add some particulars respecting them by which they might be identified; but in the case of "John the Essene" it was sufficient merely to give the name. Among the four thousand Essenes in Palestine there were, no doubt, scores who answered to the name of John; but to the Jews in that country there was but one "John the Essene"—a reputed wise and religious man, the pillar of the society. When war with the Romans had actually commenced, John was fired with a spirit of patriotism, and throwing aside his Essenian white robe, he volunteered for service against the enemies of his country.

Prior to this, the great Essene had composed a short Apocalypse, which he left in the hands of a trustworthy member of the Society. After his death (A.D. 66) the MS. remained unnoticed for several years; but, some time after the fall of the holy city, it was brought out and read by some of the senior members of the sect, who thereupon decided to make additions to it which should render it more complete. This task was duly accomplished; but the name of the writer of the original portion—a name known and honored by all—was that which appeared on the title page, and the enlarged work was known as the "Apocalypse of John the Essene."

Later on, in the hands of a Christian teacher, the author was said to be "John the Divine." Some sceptical readers may perhaps ask, How did I ascertain the particulars just mentioned? To such a question I need only reply that no Biblical scholar is able to disprove a single word of what I have here stated.

As most readers know, the historian Josephus has given a detailed account of the doctrines and practices of the Essenes (War. ii. viii.; Antiq. xviii. i. 5); but the apocalyptic narrative is not of a nature to cast much light upon either of these subjects. Still, several incidental statements in the work appear to clearly point to the fact that the author belonged to that sect. These are the following:—

1. (Essenes): "These Essenes reject pleasure as an evil, but esteem continence and the conquest over their passions to be virtue. They neglect wedlock.....they do not absolutely deny the fitness of marriage.....but they guard against the lascivious behavior of women," etc.

Rev. xiv. 1—5.—"And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having the name of God written on their foreheads.....These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins.....These were purchased from among men to be the firstfruits unto God. And in their mouth was found no lie: they are without blemish."

If we turn to Rev. vii. 3—4, we shall find that these 144,000 Jews, who were "sealed" with the name of God, comprised the whole number of the "servants of God"; and if we next turn to Rev. xxii. 4—5, we shall see that only those "sealed" in this manner would receive the reward of a future life with their God in heaven, and would there "reign for ever and ever."

2. (Essenes): "They think it a good thing to wear white garments."

Rev. iv. 4.—"and upon the thrones four and twenty elders sitting, arrayed in white garments."

Rev. vi. 11.—"and there was given to each one [of the saints] a white robe."

Rev. vii. 9.—"a great multitude.....standing before the throne.....arrayed in white robes."

Rev. xix. 14.—"And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure."

3. (Essenes): "They contemn the miseries of life..... and as for death, if it will be for their glory, they esteem it better than living"—"Their doctrine is this: That the body is corruptible, and that the matter it is made of is not permanent; but that the soul is immortal, and continues for ever."

Rev. xii. 11.—"And they overcame him [Satan] because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death."

Rev. vi. 9—11.—"I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried, saying," etc.

Rev. xx. 4.—"And I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the word of God.....and they lived, and reigned a thousand years."

Rev. xxii. 3—5.—"and his servants shall do him service; and they shall see his face.....and they shall reign for ever and ever."

4. (Essenes): "They esteem that the rewards of righteousness are to be earnestly striven for."

Rev. xi. 17—18.—"We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty.....Thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to thy servants the prophets, and to thy saints, and to them that fear thy name."

Rev. xx. 12.—"and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works."

Rev. xxi. 3—4.—"God himself shall be with them..... and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more."

Rev. xxi. 7.—"He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

The foregoing examples—which are all taken from the Apocalypse proper—are, I think, amply sufficient to demonstrate the Essene character of the book.

It would thus appear that my intuition with regard to "John the Essene"—for I need not say that I received no revelation from heaven on the subject—is, in all probability, correct. There was no other John—that is, a Jew and an Essene—to whom the authorship of the Apocalypse can be rationally ascribed, and no other John whose name would carry sufficient weight to cause the work to be regarded as a revelation from God. As to "John the Apostle," it would be simply absurd to attribute to him, a poor Galilean fisherman, the qualifications necessary for writing such a work, or indeed any writing at all.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

A correspondent who writes to us as "Dear Mr. Foote," and gives an address at Bristol, but forgets to sign his name at the other end of the letter, tells us that he was speaking to a friend about us, and that—

"This friend happened to remember your once debating with a Mr. Celestine Edwards (a colored gentleman) at the the St. James's Hall, Bristol, some 15 or 16 years ago (or thereabouts). He said you acknowledged yourself 'beaten on all points.'.....My friend went so far as to say that since your debate you had been afraid to show yourself at Bristol—had never since been there. Will you kindly let me know, through my weekly instructor, the *Freethinker*, if I may deny all these statements."

Our answer is that we never debated with Mr. Celestine Edwards or any other "colored gentleman" at Bristol or anywhere else. The rest of our correspondent's friend's statements are just as accurate as his first. We should say he has a pious memory.

This is not the first time by many that we have confessed ourselves "beaten at all points" in public debate; in fact, it seems to be quite a habit of ours. That must be the reason why distinguished Christians are so anxious to debate with us.

We saw a cinematograph picture the other day in which a pious young soldier in the Boer war had his life saved by "Mother's Bible" which was inside his tunic and stopped the force of the bullet which would otherwise have killed him. Most people watching the show sniggered. They had outgrown that simple silliness.

We should agree with Mr. Keir Hardie more often than we do if he would only leave off chattering about Christ. He said something that we very much agreed with in his recent speech at Manchester. Referring to Sir Edward Grey's proposal of a peace treaty with the United States, he said:—

"The Church stood aloof so long as the peace movement was struggling to secure recognition, but now that statesmen talk of peace your Bishops and all the crowd of them are tumbling over each other to show their sympathy with the great movement."

We have said this sort of thing a thousand times ourselves. But we want no monopoly of it. The more it spreads the better.

At present the papers are devoting a fair proportion of their space to speeches—more or less intelligent and more or less intelligible to the Bible. And the speakers have an obviously easy task. Nothing like a balanced judgment of the Bible is asked for or desired; nor could it be tolerated if it were offered. All they have to do is to claim, in the words of Lord Northampton the other evening, that the Bible was the source of all our inspiration in literature, music, painting, and everything else that was of any value. That a Mohammedan might make exactly the same claims for the Koran, and that, had any other book occupied the same religious position as the Bible, the same things would have been said of it, are considerations that, apparently, never occur to any of the speakers. On they go with their stupid and falsome praise, oblivious of the fact that to leave out of sight the influence of race, climate, traditions, social customs, and scientific inventions on a people's development, and attribute all to a single book, is to make oneself a spectacle at which all intelligent people will smile.

Of course, one can understand all the clergy writing in praise of the Bible. It is in their particular line of business, and they are not likely to miss the chance of a gigantic, and

cheap, advertisement. But here is Mr. Asquith informing an Albert Hall meeting that the Bible has been, and is, a symbol and safeguard of unity. Ye gods! We wonder whether it will ever be possible to find a Christian who will be able to talk about the Bible and retain his mental balance. Mr. Asquith is the head of a Government that in four years brought in as many Education Bills it could not pass into law. And why? Because the various Christian sects in the country could not agree on a common method of capturing little children and fleecing the non-Christian rate-payers. How much unity did the Bible give them? Mr. Asquith has also had the law set at defiance by thousands of Passive Resisters. Why? Because, they say, as believers in the Bible, they cannot allow other believers in the Bible to act unjustly towards them. How much unity did the Bible give England during the stormy years of the seventeenth century? Or during the struggle of Dissent with Episcopalianism in the eighteenth century? Or during the nineteenth century? Of course, it united some. But so does every belief, or fad, or hallucination. Apart from this fact, there is no other single force in our history that has done so much to prevent a genuine unity as the Bible. It cannot even unite people in prison. Even there arrangements are made to keep one Christian sect free from contamination by other sects.

Mr. Whitelaw Reid, the American Ambassador, speaking at the same meeting, placed it to the credit of the Bible that the recent peace proposals came from a people who had been nurtured on the Bible. Really! And from what people comes the enormous current expenditure on militarism, and from what people have proceeded the wars of, say, the last four hundred years? What obstacle to war has ever been found in the existence of the Bible by believers in it? On the contrary, they have gone to it to seek inspiration for slaughter and sanctification for massacre. President Taft is deserving of all honor for his peace proposals, but his proposal is only the result of a very long agitation against war, in which Freethinkers have usually played a leading part.

In a circular sent out to Congregational ministers by the Rev. C. Silvester Horne, asking them to observe a special Sunday as Bible Sunday, the writer asked preachers to make the Bible "the standard of life." Such an expression is a piece of downright stupidity. The Bible never has been a standard of life, and never will be because it never could be. People have at various times taken portions of the Bible as a standard of action, and in obedience thereto they have burned and drowned witches, imprisoned and killed heretics, and bought and sold slaves. Matthew Hopkins had one part of the Bible as a standard when he sent thousands of women to their death for dealings with the Devil. The slave owners took another part as a standard when they issued copies of the New Testament as an anti-abolitionist tract. The Church took other parts as a guide when it opposed the Copernican astronomy. Protestants did the same when they opposed the theory of evolution. There is hardly a delusion or an iniquity of the Christian era that has not been referred to the Bible for sanctification. And still we have the same stupid and sanctimonious advice to take the Bible as the standard of life. Verily, the world's experience seems to leave some people blind to its most obvious lessons! Or is it that they have no desire to learn?

"A curious instance of perverted notions regarding the proper use of the Bible is recorded in the Note-books of Bishop Hew. A woman in a small Welsh farmhouse was taken ill, and a neighbor went for a clergyman, who said he would come directly. The neighbor went back to the farm and said they had better get out a Bible, as the parson might like to use it. Whereupon the farmer told her she would find one, he thought, at the bottom of an old chest, adding 'Thank goodness we've had no occasion for them sort of books for many a long year—never since the old cow was so bad.'—*Daily Chronicle*."

Religion is always meddling with what does not concern it. Here is a curious instance. The Committees of the Holy Synod in Russia has adopted a resolution prohibiting Jews from bearing Christian first-names. This petty tyranny is worthy of the official representatives of the Russian branch of Christianity. They persecute living Jews—and worship a dead one.

The Holy Synod seems capable of any meanness. Baron de Hirsch endowed the Jewish Colonisation Society with a capital of £10,000,000, and £40,000 was paid over to M. Pobiedonostzeff (Procurator of the Synod) for the benefit of the Jewish patients in public hospitals. The money was never applied to that object, but to purposes of the Holy Synod. In spite of all protests, M. Pobiedonostzeff retained

Baron de Hirsch's money, and the interest has latterly been applied to the up-keep of Church schools. Such is Christian morality.

The editor of the *Christian Guardian*, of Toronto, has been conducting an investigation into the results of the Chapman-Alexander Mission in that city. The two evangelists, with a large staff of assistants, conducted services during the whole of January. At the end there were all the usual accounts of gigantic meetings, numerous conversions, and a general strengthening of the "Christian life." Following the mission, the editor of the *Guardian* sent a list of inquiries to every Methodist pastor in the city asking for a straightforward reply. The general result was that no additions to church or Sunday-school had been made as a result of the mission, no improvement in the spiritual tone of the church had been noticed, nor had there been any increase of church attendance. This is exactly the result—or want of result—recorded in other places where anything like an exact inquiry is instituted. The truth is, as we have often pointed out, these mission meetings are attended by the same people time after time, who welcome them as an opportunity for a religious debauch. Usually the missionaries themselves provide reports for the press, and the outside public, credulous and uninquiring, take them at their face value. Next to the foreign missionary movement, these travelling missions are amongst the greatest impostures of the religious world.

Men of God of all denominations were up in arms against the Labor candidate at the Rhondda Urban District Council elections. The really burning question was Sunday concerts and other "profane" uses of licensed premises on "the Lord's Day." Canon Lewis had the impudence to print in his address the statement that Sunday concerts "were proving injurious to the moral welfare of our young people." There was more truth in the statement that "they interfered with the Sunday School work of the Religious Bodies of the District." The Free Church Council issued an address "To the Electors of the Rhondda" printed in red, containing extracts from the writings of leading Socialists in opposition to Christian Marriage and other "sanctities." Karl Marx was quoted to the effect that "The sheep's nature of a Christian is shown in his resemblance to the Lamb of God." This was enough for the pious Rhondda voters. The Christian lambs went to the poll and justified themselves.

"When we think of all that death involves for believing men," says the Rev. John Kelman, D.D., "we cannot but class it among the festivals of life." Has the reverend gentlemen never seen a Christian funeral?

More "Providence." Rev. Henry Collison fell down dead in the vestry just before the evening service at Coltishall, Norfolk.

Another poor servant of Christ. Rev. John Mirehouse, of Coisterworth, Lincolnshire, left £35,248. He was a well-known sportsman. The sport he practises now, if the gospel is true, is dancing on hot bricks. The case of the Congregationalist minister, the Rev. Dr. Brown Paton, who left £8,828, is hardly worth mentioning after the sporting parson's.

An inmate of Salford workhouse wrote to the Bishop for a curacy. The doctor reported him as not a lunatic, but only deficient in common sense. One of the *Guardians* ventured to doubt this; he said the man knew pretty well what an easy job it was. The other *Guardians* laughed.

We have noticed with no small alarm the arbitrary power the police are getting in the habit of exercising in enforcing certain laws, and the tame manner in which many people submit. We are glad to see that Judge Moss, at the Chester County Court, recently administered a sharp reprimand to a constable who not only proceeded against a boy for crying on Sunday papers, but took upon himself to punish the offender by seizing his goods. A test case was made by the Shopkeeper's and Small Trader's Association, and the judge found that a trespass had been committed and gave judgment for the plaintiffs. He rightly held that the confiscation of goods must follow conviction and upon an order from a court. This kind of thing is often done by zealous policemen, who are egged on by bigots or by their own piety, but it is a monstrous usurpation of power, and it would be well if those who act in such a manner were promptly brought to book.

The *Christian Commonwealth* has been discovering things. It announced in its last issue, as though it were a brand new discovery, that "Nonconformity is, in its way, just as

intolerant as Romanism; and its offence is even worse, because while professing to champion religious liberty, actually it seeks to curtail it, thus adding the sin of hypocrisy to the crime of bigotry." There is no need to remind our readers how often we have used these identical expressions, and while we are glad to see the *C. C.* recognising, tardily, the truth of our statements, our opinion of this Nonconformist journal would have been higher had the conclusion been reached by an impartial survey of the facts, instead of coming as the result of its own followers suffering from the intolerance of other Christians.

When it has ceased smarting from its own sufferings, we hope the *Christian Commonwealth* will turn to consider the question of Why is it that, at all times, all sects of Christians have been intolerant, and have persecuted to the exact limits of their power and opportunity? There have been, of course, scientists, politicians, artists, and men of letters who have been intolerant by nature; but there is no subject to which intolerance clings with so uniform a persistency as it does to religion. Moreover, there is nothing in either of the subjects named, except religion, that involves intolerance. A man is not looked upon as a better politician, or artist, or scientist, because he is intolerant; on the contrary, it detracts from his value. But fervency and intolerance are in religion substantially two aspects of the one thing. We imagine it is because in other things the appeal is to facts that belong equally to all. In religion the appeal is to feelings. In science there is, in the main, no desire except for truth, whatever form it may take—at any rate, a scientific statement or theory has no value except so far as it is in conformity with facts. In religion it is not the truth that is denied, but a truth; with the result that everyone who challenges it is treated as a personal enemy to be suppressed whenever possible.

We are indebted to the *Christian World* for the information that some of those who went to hear Mr. Tunzelmann's lecture on the "Destruction of Atheism by Modern Science" must have found it difficult to follow him. All we can say is that on that particular head they cannot have missed much worth hearing, however interesting and instructive the lecturer may have been on purely scientific matters. Mr. Tunzelmann is an authority on electricity, and on that question we are quite willing to listen to him with all possible respect, but as to whether there is a God he is no better authority than the local dustman. When Mr. Tunzelmann says that the order and simplicity in the world is due to there being a mind at the basis of the world, we venture to suggest to him that he is talking unmitigated nonsense, which, however acceptable to his audience at Sion College, is without scientific value, and even lacks intelligibility. The "order" of nature is nothing more than the mind's registration of the observed sequence of events, and has nothing whatever to do with whether a mind originated the "order" or not. Conceivably the "order" might have been different to what it is; but whether there is a mind in nature or not, some "order" is indispensable.

Perhaps the rarest of all mental qualities is the ability to apply a rule, or principle, or method of investigation in all directions and to all subjects. This capacity was strikingly illustrated in the case of Herbert Spencer, who did carry a single principle, with striking success, into all departments of life. But with most men the application of a sound principle in religion is no guarantee that it will be applied when they come to deal with sociology, or *vice versa*. Rational enough in one direction, they may be quite irrational in another. Here is an illustration. The other day one of the regular writers in the *Daily News* had some notes on the subject of the character of Richard the Third. He called attention to the fact, well known to students, that the charges against Richard rest upon flimsy foundations, and are mostly discredited by writers like Walpole, Gairdner, Stubbs, Rogers, etc. Richard's life had been written, in earliest times, by Tudor historians who had an interest in concealing the truth, and who made it dangerous for those who could have contradicted to speak out. Now, if it is possible in a recent age, and in an age of books, to circulate a character of Richard the Third quite at variance with the truth, and for that to become popular public property, what is the strength of the historic argument for a character like that of Jesus Christ? In this last case the ignorance amid which the legend was created was greater, the inducements to remain silent much more powerful. Yet, we have no doubt that the writer who is willing to accept the popular estimate of Richard the Third as being pure myth would take it as an outrage upon human reason to suggest that the story of Jesus Christ comes under the same category.

The way in which Christian belief blinds people to the real significance is amusingly illustrated in a leading article

in the same issue of the *Christian Commonwealth*. Lecturing the more degenerate Christians, it remarks that people do not consider how the coming of science transforms the forms of service. For instance:—

"There was a time when the presence of plague or pestilence would mean crowded prayer meetings. No one thinks of calling a prayer meeting now to stop the spread of any epidemic disease. Is it because we are less religious? Not at all. It is only because we are more intelligent; the zeal that ran into a prayer meeting in the old time should now flow into the sanitary committee."

Quite so; but if this does not mean that we are less religious, what does it mean? Will the C. C. deny that an Atheist may not work as heartily and as well on a sanitary committee as a believer in God and a future life? A sanitary committee, as such, has nothing to do with a God and nothing to do with a life beyond the grave. It is concerned solely with the conditions of disease here, and the conditions of its removal. To call this religious merely because some people engaged in the work believe in religion is absurd.

There is a profound truth in the statement that science transforms the direction of our energies, but it is not of the character the C. C. imagines. Nature seldom destroys either an organ or a function. It adapts the old to new uses, while the growth of knowledge economises force that has hitherto been squandered in a wasteful manner. In connection with religion, science has shown us that the happenings in nature that were once treated as the acts of God have no such connection. And just as it has shown that these physical happenings were dressed in the livery of the gods by pious ignorance, so it has shown that the feelings which led men to work and sacrifice themselves for their gods, were merely distorted expressions of man's social nature. In directing attention to the real nature of both sets of forces, science has, therefore, robbed them of all direct religious value or significance. Its work has been destructive of religion, because it has been constructive in teaching man that for the right ordering of life the hypothesis of deity is without value. Diphtheria and deity are two things that often run together. Diphtheria and effective sanitation are practically an impossible combination. And intelligent people are not slow to draw the obvious conclusion.

Rev. Prebendary Carlile, the boss of the Church Army, has a novel view of Sunday cinematograph pictures. He thinks they ought to be allowed and that they do good in a way—and might do a great deal more good if they were carried on by a Committee of the London County Council. It would be better still, he suggests, if they were put under the control of the Church. People would then be always edified by clerically selected pictures. The reverend gentleman is careful to remark that there should be nothing humorous permitted on Sunday. This is very natural on his part, but we are afraid that the Church pictures, to draw satisfactory crowds, would have to include spicy scenes from the Life of David, including Bathsheba's ablutions and the King's dancing before the Ark in less than Maud Allen costume. Adam and Eve before the Fall would also catch on.

Sabbatarianism is fighting for all it is worth—which means that the men of God are striving desperately to protect their business against Sunday rivalry. Sunday picture shows have hitherto been a popular feature at Worthing, but the magistrates have stopped them at the instigation of the local bigots. Religion talks a lot about benevolence, but is generally active in mischief.

The Manchester Licensing Justices have been censoring the picture theatre programs for Good Friday. Sir Thomas Shann, who presided, seems a pious old joker, but he was firm against profane subjects, and readily passed "Saul and David," "Life of Moses," and "Life of Christ." It is to be hoped the first doesn't include David's obtaining and presenting that dowry for Saul's daughter, nor the second what Jahveh showed Moses outside the cleft of the rock, nor the third the supernatural birth of Christ. Otherwise the police would interfere.

Rev. Dr. Jowett had a crowded congregation at his first Sunday morning's sermon in New York—preached from the £2,500 a year pulpit, in the name of the poor carpenter of Nazareth. According to the *Daily News* special correspondent, he showed that "his mission here is to lift New York out of the materialism in which it is rooted." A big performance! Will he succeed with it? He did nothing like it in the sixteen years he labored in Birmingham.

Dr. Diggle (Bishop of Carlisle) has been preaching a romantic sermon about the people in his own Cathedral.

Amongst other things he said that "all the men and women who took part in the emancipation of slaves and the destruction of slavery were daily devoted students of the Bible." All! If his lordship did use that word, which appeared in the *North Mail* report, he must be either grossly ignorant or recklessly untruthful. Many leading abolitionists in America were Freethinkers, and some were open Atheists. As a matter of fact, it was Thomas Paine who first lifted a pen against slavery in the United States.

We venture to prophesy that, what with the torrents of nonsense let loose by the Bible Tercentenary celebrations and the encouragement given to ultra-loyalty and militarism by the Coronation, 1911 will not be very favorable to the really progressive movements in the country.

Sir A. Conan Doyle, like many other people, has a curious sort of a God. Take the following verses from his new collection of poems—*Songs of the Road*:—

"The harlot and the anchorite,
The martyr and the rake,
Deftly He fashions each aright,
Its vital part to take.

Wisdom He makes to form the fruit
Where the high blossoms be;
And Lust to kill the weaker shoot,
And Drink to trim the tree."

A God who designed Lust and Drink as two of his head gardeners is a very questionable character himself. One would prefer his room to his company.

The late Sir Richard Burton wrote a work which, coming from his pen, must be of the highest interest and importance, on "Human Sacrifices amongst the Sephadim or Eastern Jews." After his death Burton's executors arranged to publish the work in a castrated form, objectionable passages being excised owing to representations made by influential Jews. The manuscript having since been acquired by the Hon. Henry Manners Sutton, it was proposed to publish the work in its integrity. Legal action was taken to prevent this, the plaintiff being Mr. David Lindo Alexander, K.C., chairman of the Jewish Board of Deputies. It was argued that the publication of the work as proposed "might stir up feeling against Jews in the East." Things that might be true might not be advisable to publish broadcast. And so on, and so on. In the end Mr. Justice Lawrance granted an injunction restraining the defendant from dealing with the manuscript in any way. Which is a nice thing for the dead author, and a nice thing for British students.

Michael Collins, an army reservist, charged with the murder of Elizabeth Ann Kempster, a widow, at Peabody-buildings, Glasshouse-street, Whitechapel, elected to give evidence at the inquest. He had "kept company" with her, but the previous week she had refused to speak to him, and asked him to leave her and try to forget her. This upset him very much, and he borrowed half-a-crown and bought a razor. What followed may be described in his own words:—

"I said, 'What is it to be: are we going to live together or apart?' She said, 'Apart.' Then I said, 'Nothing but death shall part us!' I took up a hammer from the fireplace and hit her on the temple. She fell, and her words were, 'Oh, Mike, don't.' I then drew the razor across her throat, and knelt down by her side and kissed her, and said, 'Good-bye, we shall meet above,' and then left the room."

What an awful mixture of piety and ferocity! Christians take this thing as a matter of course, but what a rumpus they would make if such a criminal happened to be a Freethinker!

Providence was never yet found fighting against the law, and a prepotent father, who stamps his own impress on character of offspring is stronger than any Providence, either for good or evil.—*Eden Phillpotts*, "Demeter's Daughter."

RELIGIOUS IMPUDENCE.

Christian history is one of endless cruelties and countless horrors. Its constant effect has been to paralyse human activity, and to prevent every beautiful human instinct. Its teachers and preachers have been from age to age the enemies of human thought. Yet on the score of the beautiful words spoken by its founder, Christianity has, with overmastering arrogance, claimed for itself every great moral victory that men have achieved.—*Robert Buchanan*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 9, Secular Hall, Brunswick-street, Glasgow; 12 (noon), "Man's Discovery of Himself"; 6.30, "Deity Up To Date."

To Correspondents.

- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—April 23, Liverpool. W. P. BALL.—Best thanks for cuttings. LAGO.—Pleased to hear from one who has "benefited more than words can tell" by reading our writings. H. T. HILL.—We have more than once criticised Mr. Harold Begbie as a writer in publications that give a fictitious value to his utterances. But we have not criticised his preaching novels. They are not worth it. Neither have we reviewed Sir Oliver Lodge's Survival of Man in these columns. We found nothing in it but Spiritist gossip and personal opinions. H. J. HUDSON.—Pleased to hear you found Mrs. Bonner's biography of her father, Charles Bradlaugh, in your Free Library, showing marks of frequent reading. We were not disturbed by "the fidgetting of the child." Never let your wife stay away from our lectures on that account. J. A. E. BATES.—Thanks for cuttings. G. CROOKSON.—You waste your time in writing in defiance of our explicit statement that Dr. Warschauer had objected to the report of the debate appearing in the Freethinker. The law now is the only law we need trouble about. As a matter of fact, we have never published a debate in the Freethinker. We have published some in booklet form, but always with the consent of our opponents, and with the advantage of their revision. V. WHITTY.—Impertinent, as you say, but we are full up and cannot deal with it this week. R. STEVENSON.—We may find the cutting useful next week. It is a compliment you pay us in cycling 25 miles to hear us lecture at Glasgow and 25 miles back. E. B.—Yes, it is true that the best of us may blunder. You are right in pointing out that the pathetic "Land o' the Leal" does not depict a dying wife addressing her husband, as Mr. Lloyd said, but a dying husband addressing his wife. It is one of those easy blunders, however, that really make no difference. But accuracy is accuracy—as Mr. Lloyd knows as well as anybody. JOHN VASEY.—Glad you consider this journal "brain food." You are "sorry it is not more circulated," but you touch the spot when you say that "thinking men seem to be scarce." E. C. R. (Edinburgh).—We print your initials, as it occurs to us that you might want your name withheld. Glad you anticipate the Freethinker, after reading it for six months, as you never anticipated any paper before. Your letter gives us pleasure. Shake hands with us after one of our Glasgow lectures. You will not be sorry to learn that we share your admiration for the founder of Buddhism. C. WOOLLEY.—See paragraph. Thanks. P. W. PATR.—Will try to deal with it next week. Thanks. H. W. LOWRY.—Shall have attention. MARY JACKSON.—Miss Vance has shown us your letter. We are very glad that you find "pleasure and enlightenment" in reading this journal, and that you introduce it to your older children and your friends. H. C. BAGNALL.—Sorry you have read the Freethinker for seven years and are still a bigot. You do not question the truth of what we said; only our right to say it—which will never depend on any man's permission. S. W. COWDROY.—Glad to hear you were so pleased with our defence of Atheism in the debate, and still more pleased to hear your wife was "immensely impressed." It is to the mental emancipation of women that we must look now for the supreme victory of Freethought. Sorry you were disturbed by a C. E. S. lecturer giving vent to "claptrap" and other adjectives while we were speaking. We have heard of several other cases. The antics of Dr. Warschauer's clerical friend on the platform were the subject of general comment. J. B.—We wish all Freethinkers shared your energy and enthusiasm. Your letter in the Birmingham Daily Mail is excellent. We hope you will write again at the psychological moment. H. BOULTER.—Thanks for the reference. We shall probably reprint the pamphlet. W. A. YATES.—Quite right. Complaints should be addressed to Mr. Foote direct. T. G.—Your letter gives us nothing but pleasure. You have a right to your opinion. L. T.—Bishop Welldon seldom keeps up his name. His remarks about Morrison's having "no fear of God before his eyes" as a proof of the value of religion is utterly foolish. Morrison was a Theist when he called upon God in his evidence. Crippen was a Catholic. Does that prove the value of religion too? Nearly all murderers are "believers." M. E. PEAR.—It is good news that Mr. Lloyd closed the lecture season in Manchester "with increased and enthusiastic audiences."

- HENRY PORTER.—Something must have miscarried. The twenty years' Freethinkers you sent us arrived safely, and we thank you most heartily for them. R. HUGHES and J. CRAWSHAW.—See paragraph in "Sugar Plums" and one that will appear next week. D. MACDONALD.—Why not send us the paper itself? Thanks, however, for the reference. THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C. THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C. WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance. LETTERS for the Editor of the Freethinker should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C. LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted. FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention. ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor. PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send halfpenny stamps. THE Freethinker will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

President's Honorarium Fund, 1911.

Thirteenth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £166 9s. 8d. Ontario, Canada £50; J. W. Ives, 10s. 6d.; C. Bridger, 1s.; H. Potts, 1s. Mary Jackson, 2s. 6d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote pays his postponed visit to Glasgow to-day (April 9) and delivers two lectures (at 12 and 6.30) in the Secular Hall, Brunswick-street. Both his subjects are new, and should prove very attractive:—"Man's Discovery of Himself" and "Diety up to Date," with special reference to Dr. Russel Wallace's new plea for God in the Wonders of Life.

Stratford Town Hall was crowded on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote delivered the last of the special course of Freethought lectures there under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd. Mr. Foote was in excellent form and voice, and his lecture on the Bible was keenly relished and lustily applauded. Some questions were asked, and one foolish Christian tried to oppose, but the audience laughed at him consumedly, and the lecturer said he was not worth replying to—a statement which the audience endorsed.

The Stratford Town Hall meeting included a gratifying proportion of ladies. This is a regular characteristic of Mr. Foote's meetings nowadays, and it gives him the greatest pleasure and satisfaction.

We have a shorthand report of the Warschauer—Foote debate, but we cannot say anything definite until next week about publication.

Mr. Halley Stewarts' article in the Nineteenth Century for April on "The Policy of Secular Education," will prove of great interest to Freethinkers, who should introduce it to their Liberal, Radical, and Labor friends. This is the very first time that a strong and bold article on Secular Education has appeared in a leading magazine. There is nothing apologetic or compromising about it. It hits out in the most open fashion at all the leaders of Religious Education in the nation's schools. Professor Inge, Dr. Sadler, and the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare come in for some very hard blows. A severe attack is made on the Educational Settlement Committee and its policy of universal Cowper-Temple Christian teaching. We give some extracts from this article in another column.

The Spanish Cortes has been debating the Ferrer case, and the result is a political crisis, the Cabinet having resigned in a body, although the Premier has accepted the task of forming a new Ministry. It appears that the Generals could not stand what they call "insults to the

Army," which, in their eyes, evidently can do no wrong. Military leaders took up the same attitude in the Dreyfus case in France, but they got well beaten in the end, and so will the Spanish military leaders. They will find that the ghost of Ferrer cannot be laid until his memory is vindicated.

A Freethinker of Ontario, Canada, being "sorry to see the President's Honorarium Fund dragging along so slowly," helps it along with a handsome contribution of £50.

Mr. Halley Stewart's Article.

SOME EXTRACTS.

LORD MORLEY, in dealing with the whole controversy over the first Education Act, does not hesitate to say that "at bottom the battle of the schools was not religious but ecclesiastical." "Quarrels about education and catechism and conscience," he adds, "masked the standing jealousy between Church and Chapel." "The parent and the child" he notes, "in whose name the struggle raged, stood indifferent." They stand indifferent still. The war over religious teaching in elementary schools is a clerical war. Even when School Board elections were heated sectarian quarrels, the great mass of the ratepayers did not go to the poll. They take less, rather than more, interest in the quarrel nowadays, for the people are recognising clericalism as the enemy in every civilised country. The parents and children are never heard of, except by proxy in this dispute, which is carried on exclusively by the representatives of other interests than theirs. Lord Morley's quick phrase sums up the whole matter. The quarrel over education is a quarrel between Church and Chapel. The choice between the policies of these rivals is the only one presented to the people in a country where religious congresses never tire of lamenting that four-fifths of the adult population seldom or never enter church or chapel. Politicians are slow to learn, but it should be easy for them to see that the incubus on education all along has been the assumption put forward on behalf of the Churches that it is their right, in the very nature of things, to have special consideration shown to them. All the controversy and strife has sprung from this cause. And the mischief will continue until statesmen learn—and are bold enough to act on their knowledge—that members of Churches, however powerful and distinguished, should only be treated as citizens with regard to all political and social questions. The interests of their special religious organisations should be nothing to the State. Fortunately, this view is finding even wider and wider support both without and within the Churches.

The separation of the temporal and and spiritual powers is surely, if slowly prevailing in every civilised country. It has dealt with one department after another, and it will finally settle the question of national education. This has already happened in France, and we are on the way to it in England. We are nearer to it, perhaps, than is usually believed. In the article by the Rev. Professor Inge, in the September number of this Review, it was admitted that "the potential strength of the secularist vote is far greater than most friends of religious education at all realise." "The danger of complete secularisation," he said again, "is far greater than most religious persons imagine." The same confession was made by two other members of the Education Settlement Committee, writing elsewhere in behalf of the program called *Towards Educational Peace*. Dr. M. E. Sadler said that "Strong forces are pushing English education into secularism." This was his opening sentence and the reason of his article.

Further on he referred to what might soon be the fate of religious teaching "if public opinion once turned decisively towards secular education," and added, what to him is evidently the alarming announcement, that "there are many signs that such a change may quickly show itself." This statement was even more strongly expressed on a later page. Dr. Sadler remarked that "most cool-headed observers who have travelled in the United States and in the British Colonies would be inclined to predict that the secular solution is most likely to be adopted in England as the next step." "I am bound to admit this likelihood," he said, "though I deplore it." The Rev. J. H. Shakespeare used words very much to the same effect. After declaring that religious education must and would be preserved, that ethics divorced from religion were not only of no value, but positively dangerous, and that the people were dead against secular education, to give gravity to his warning of his fellow-religionists and to justify his own anxiety he almost involuntarily disclosed the actual truth. "I do not agree with the *Guardian*," he said, "that it [secular education] is a bogey of which we need not be seriously alarmed. It has drawn perceptibly nearer. More and more men say to each other, 'We do not wish it or like it, but it is better than this endless and bitter strife!'"

Christian Science Again.—II.

H. T. BUTLIN, F.R.C.S., D.C.L., LL.D., President Royal College of Surgeons, etc., believes that there are deliberate impostors who simulate disease. There are neurotics and neuro-mimetics of every degree and kind. "How easily," he says, "some of these people lend themselves to a cure by faith!" Sir James Paget declared that people "love to be cured with a wonder," and, at the same time, he pointed out that the cured cases are noised abroad, while the uncured do not publish their misfortune or their folly.

Then we have "The Faith that Heals," by William Osler, M.D., F.R.S., Professor of Medicine, Oxford University, and he discourses with considerable eloquence in favor of faith as a real and tangible therapeutical agent. As we said at the beginning of this article, we are by no means inclined to scout this idea as impossible, though the reason of actual physical result from mind action may baffle us. Osler declares that faith is the one great moving force, the radium of the moral and mental spheres, for it pours out an unending stream of energy, while abating nothing of its potency. "Creeds pass," he says, "but an inexhaustible supply of faith remains." And we add, that it is from this supply that Christian Science has unduly drawn. And of Christian Science, Osler says:—

"A new cult has arisen, attractive and aggressive, unlike, in many ways, anything hitherto seen. It was only natural, and the punishment fits the crime, that such a cult should come from the United States..... That the founder should be a woman profoundly ignorant of theology and of science, without, indeed, a single bond between the professors of the one or the practice of the other, was in itself, a favoring element. A disciple of an American Spiritualist, Mrs. Eddy had one strong conviction—the paramount importance of the things of the spirit. Never before in a history surcharged with examples of credulity, has so monstrously puerile a belief been exploited. To deny the existence of disease, to deny the reality of pain, to disregard all physical measures of relief, to sweep away in a spiritual ecstasy the accumulated wisdom of centuries in a return to oriental mysticism—these, indeed, expressed a revolt from the Materialism of the latter half of the nineteenth century, at once weird, perhaps not unexpected, and, to a student of human nature, just a bit comic. One cannot but smile to think that this happened at the very time when the Goddess of Reason was priding herself on the brilliancy of the accomplishments of her devotees. It is, indeed, a salutary lesson in humility, and serves to remind us that our credulous nature is still plastic and receptive. To some, a sign of decadence; to me, the growth of Christian Science is a hopeful indication that we are in the childhood of the race. Only in the welter of a new world, untrammelled by a past, and by regard for authority, among a keen people too much absorbed in business to work out for themselves any mental salvation, could such a chaotic mass of rubbish have had any measure of successful acceptance.....The tragic side of the story lies in the valuable lives sacrificed to the fanatical ignorance of so-called healers."

These are strong words but true, and we cannot ignore the source from whence they come.

In an article entitled "Considerations on the Occult," by T. Clave Shaw, M.D., F.R.C.P., Lecturer on Psychological Medicine at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, the questions are put:—

"What is body without mind? What is mind without body? The former can illustrate some forms of organic life, but that is all; the latter may exist, in some form or other, but we cannot prove it, and this proof is just what we are most anxious to obtain. We want to know the nature of the force which, when interpreted through the human mechanism, means mind.....It is life which links up mind and body, but life is not mind; there is plenty of life without mind, but there is no mind, as we know it, without life. Are life and spirit the same thing? A living body is evidently a combination of body and something else. What is that else?.....A living body has selective powers; it incorporates this and rejects that; and this selective

power is its life. When the selective powers cease, the organ is dead. Nutrition, or selective power, is life; but it is not of necessity mind."

All this and a lot more, does not help Christian Science in the least, nor, in fact, would Christian Science be able to accept the argument if "Mind is All."

The *Journal* deals editorially with "Miracles," also with "Mental Healing." Matthew Arnold said miracles do not happen. Our contemporary rightly says the word should be defined, and it uses the word "in its etymological sense to denote something marvellous and opposed to common experience, that at first sight cannot be accounted for by the agency of natural causes" (italics ours). Quite right. A miracle cannot be, as it was once held to be, a "violation of the laws of nature"; and what appears to be a miracle to-day may be a commonplace tomorrow. Diseases, for instance, now incurable, may be curable by the advanced medical cult of the future. This editorial refers to our old friend Harriet Martineau in the following words: "Could there be a more authentic 'miracle' than the restoration of Harriet Martineau, a professed Atheist and a strong-minded woman of the most pronounced type, to health by means of mesmerism after long disablement by a pelvic tumor? The tumor, it is true, was found in her body after her death, but what of that? It had ceased to trouble her, and she may for practical purposes be counted a 'cure.'" This is interesting if true, but what if Harriet Martineau had been treated by Christian Science? Would not the "Scientists" have declared they had cured her because the tumor had been "an error of mortal mind"? No doubt. But the tumor disclosed after death either nullifies this or forces the conclusion that all the mortal minds seeing it were in error. Though, of course, they really wouldn't see it because it wasn't there!

Probably the earliest conception of disease was, as Grant Allen has shown, centered in the belief in evil spirits. These could "take possession" of the body. They visited us in our dreams, and were undoubtedly the nucleus of belief in immortality. Jesus "cast out" the devils from the man and shoved them *holus* into the pigs, who forthwith ran down the first turning to the sea and drowned both the devils and themselves. Then, as there were gods for the thunder and the lightning, so there came gods for diseases. The Hindus built temples to the Goddess of Small-Pox, and the Romans dedicated shrines to the Goddess of Fever. The demonological theory of diseases probably held sway for thousands of years. And the *Journal* rightly enough says: "If the simple pathology of primitive man causes us amusement, the smile dies on our lips when we reflect on the appalling consequences of that belief translated into action." Yes, and translated into action by Christian Science it spells death. We are reminded that "As the last refuge of paganism was in the shrines of healing, so the old gods themselves became gradually supplanted by the saints, and temples were replaced by churches." Yes, and now the churches are being supplanted by cinematograph shows. The *Journal* goes on:—

"The general character of diseases cured at the Christian shrines is similar to that given in the pagan records. The accounts are as meagre as those of the testimonies of Christian Science and other modern methods of spiritual healing, but the prominence of lameness, blindness, and paralysis is striking..... Christian Science is a repulsive subject, inasmuch as it shows in a way no other form of spiritual healing does, the depths of degradation to which the human mind can sink under the weight of superstition..... That it brightens the lives of some persons who have no aim in life, and who have nothing to do but evoke pains and ailments by thinking of their health, is also true..... We have asked over and over again for facts that would convince a trained mind, but none are forthcoming. Christian Science may, indeed, be described as faith with the least possible amount of works, and the largest possible number of words. There is nothing new in Christian Science except the colossal impudence of its pretensions..... In one thing it has probably an unique

record of achievement. Beyond any sect or system that we know of it has succeeded in exploiting human imbecility and turning airy nothing into solid cash."

The foregoing is not too severe on a creed claiming so much more than any other. If "Health is not a condition of matter," we ask, "Is disease?" And if disease is not, "Why does disease kill?" We really ought to have the thing explained, for if ill-health is not a condition of matter in cancer, tuberculosis, or lephantiasis, of what is it a condition? We hardly dare ask Mr. Butlin as a prominent and notable authority on cancer, so perhaps Mr. Frederick Dixon will oblige. Mrs. Eddy herself fails to explain, though she asks, "Which was first, Mind or medicine? If Mind was first and self-existent, then Mind, not matter, must have been the first medicine. Mind being All, it made medicine, but that medicine was Mind." (The capitals are Mrs. Eddy's.) Good God! Is this sense or cabalistic rubbish? She declares, "Medicine is not a science, but a bundle of speculative human theories." Well, *theories* we suppose must be human, and *speculative* does not apply in thousands of cases of successful curative medicine. But what do the medical authorities think of the following? "You say a boil is painful, but that is impossible, for matter without mind is not painful." We will answer for them to prevent unnecessary delay. There is mind where there is a boil (except in the dead subject). Further:—

"The boil simply manifests your belief in pain, through inflammation and swelling, and you call this belief a boil. Now administer to your patient a high attenuation of truth on this subject, and it will soon cure the boil."

It really seems a pity that poor old Job had no attenuation of truth handy. Mrs. Job would then have administered the "mixture as before" with magic result. But, seriously, what would be the value of truth in cases of calculi, ossification, or fracture? What would be its value in appendicitis? Would any quantity dissolve or remove the irritating body in the vermiform appendix? She even asserts: "We have small-pox because others have it, but mortal mind, not matter, contains and carries the infection." So listen! ye *British Medical Journal* staff, ye Members of the Royal College of Physicians, listen! Know henceforth that small-pox is not zymotic, and that contagion can never happen when there is ignorance of proximity to the disease! Know also that mortal mind carries the infection by first creating the idea of millions of staphylococci! And take warning, ye men of the knife, never perform appendisectum again, for the inflammation is an error of mortal mind! Lord have mercy upon us!

Professor Osler himself does not appear to know of any cures by attenuation of truth, or he surely would mention them. He speaks of *reputed* cures—and this is quite different—of locomotor ataxia by Christian Science; but he adds significantly "two of these patients still take opium for the lightning pains."

Finally, as it seems to us, the Christian Scientist is like the metaphysician we have heard of who groped in a dark room for a black hat that wasn't there. The only difference is that the Christian Scientist says he's found it.

Christian Science will go where other faiths have gone. Christian Science will follow Theosophy with rapid strides. Christian Science will sooner or later reach that limbo which Ariosto makes the abiding-place of all forgotten things. Swinburne says in "The Altar of Righteousness":—

"God by God flits past in thunder, till his glories
turn to shades:
God to God bears wondering witness how his gospel
flames and fades.
More was each of these, while yet they were, than
man their servant seemed:
Dead are all of these, and man survives who made
them while he dreamed."

A. FAGG.

Christianity was shattered at the Reformation.—G. K. Chesterton.

Ferrer Notes.

THE Comité of the Œuvre Francisco Ferrer has now taken the decisive step for the inauguration this year of the Ferrer Monument at Brussels. As October 13 will fall on a Friday, it has been decided that the ceremony of inauguration shall take place on Sunday, October 15. A sum of 1,600 francs is still required to meet the necessary expenses, and subscriptions are invited both from Belgian Freethinkers and from Freethinkers in other lands towards the work of perpetuating the memory of the Martyr of Montjuich. It is understood that in the event of the funds contributed being found to be in excess of the requirements connected with the monument that the surplus shall be handed over to the Rationalist Orphanage which won the admiration of Messrs. Cohen and Lloyd, as well as of many other Freethinkers, on their visit to this institution last August. Contributions from societies and individuals should be sent to Professor Eugène Monseur, 67 Avenue Milcamps, Brussels.

There is some talk of erecting a monument to Ferrer in Rome, in front of the column of the Immaculate Conception in the Piazza de Spagna. This, and indeed anything concerning Ferrer, naturally exasperates the baser type of Roman Catholic. A fair specimen of their venom is exhibited in *Il Mulo* (Bologna), an illustrated clericopious journal, which makes a weak attempt to counteract the pungent satire of *L'Asino*. It reports all the stale lies about Ferrer's mythical marriage with a rich woman, and basely invents a new calumny, viz., that he feigned religion in order to extract money out of a pious lady for the purpose of founding schools of a religious character. "This," it says, "is your humanitarian, this the champion of the devourer of priests—the man who, rolling in wealth, left his girls starving on the streets of Paris"! After gravely quoting the fictitious manifesto as to the abolition of law, the demolition of churches, the confiscation of the Bank, etc., which the pious forgers attributed to Ferrer, *Il Mulo* sketches a type of monument showing Ferrer holding in one hand a dagger dripping with blood, and in the other hand a bag of gold; and depicts him lolling in an easy chair erected on a pile of skulls and skeletons. The monument has an inscription which is as full of lies as a Roman Missal: "To Francisco Ferrer, the hundreds of soldiers, burgesses, and priests blown to pieces by the bombs or slain by the knife of the Escuela Moderna."

Evidently Ferrer has got on the nerves of the Italian pious. *Il Mulo* has taken in hand the publication of counteracting literature. Listen to its genial announcement:—

"While the pigs are disseminating on every hand the Life of Ferrer, related after their fashion, and are issuing anew all their anti-clerical filthiness as well as the Mysteries of the Inquisition, the Mysteries of the convent, the Mysteries of the Vatican, to the immense injury of the working population....."

Then follow the names of two blood and thunder tales of clerical propaganda. The amen of the advertisement is a significant snivel. "What has taken place in Italy on account of Ferrer ought to open our eyes." No doubt; it has opened the eyes of many who formerly were blind. Shall we wonder that the Church can stoop to tactics like this? Well, no. Is it more difficult to slander than to slay?

Contrary to the expectation of the incredulous, miracles have happened, and the Cortes opened, on March 27, the debate on the revision of Ferrer's trial. At the moment when these lines are being written, the debate is still continuing its course, and absorbing the interest of the Spanish public. In despite of the censure, which is cutting off the supply of telegraphic information to Europe, all the Spanish papers are full of the topic, public interest in which has been greatly stimulated by the presentation to the Cortes of various petitions in favor of revision. Already, on March 24, telegrams were daily showered down upon the President of the Cortes

from every part of Europe and from America imploring the Cortes to give Ferrer a fresh trial.

The Spanish papers of the last few days give copious extracts from the voluminous records (ten tomes of 300 pages) just issued by the Government for the information of the members of the Cortes. From one of these documents—the *Auto de procesamiento*, dated August 23, 1909—it appears that, at the date mentioned, Ferrer's arrest was proclaimed and his surrender ordered on certain specific charges of trivial character for which the corresponding penalty (I quote the language of the proclamation) did not exceed a light term of imprisonment (*prision correccional*). It is important to note the above date, as the myth of Ferrer's leadership of the insurrection gradually took shape after the issue of this significant proclamation.

Senor Sorriano opened the debate in a speech which lasted two days. In his opening remarks he stated: "This is not a political debate. It has but one description: it signifies that Ferrer is a symbol of the struggle of ideas that now stirs the world."

In every land to-day the fight between the Old Ecclesiasticism, with its reaction and supernaturalism on the one hand, and one the other the Modern School of Evolution, Freethought, and progress, rages around the figure of the newest victim of the Christian bigotry, and it is this fact that makes the name of Ferrer the touchstone to try the qualities of our contemporaries.

The debate, as I indicated, is still proceeding. It may last ten or fifteen days. Later on, when the Cortes record their vote, I shall have something further to say as to its incidents and revelations, and the consequences of the verdict.

March 31, 1911.

WM. HEAFORD.

The Foote-Warschauer Debate.

"MILITANT Freethought is dead!" "Militant Freethinkers are flogging a dead horse!" Our opponents, and even our lukewarm ethical supporters, tell us that these are everyday platitudes.

On Thursday and Friday last the entrance to Caxton Hall was thronged by a seething mass of humanity, that seemed to indicate to the passer-by, had he been interested enough to inquire, that the dead horse was kicking pretty vigorously. The Foote-Warschauer Debate was evidently an effective galvanic battery.

The crush was almost more than the stewards inside the Hall could cope with, but by the time the opponents were fairly on the platform order had been restored, and the audience was ready to greet the appearance of the two combatants with hearty applause.

What a contrast in appearance!

The attributes of a certain type of "the chosen race" were personified in Dr. Warschauer: smooth, rotund, and oily. Personified also in the subtle twists and turns and evasions with which he managed all the time to confuse the issue. Overflowing with Christian charity was the converted Jew, even to the inclusion of the Atheist. "My friend, Mr. Foote," became almost wearying.

In strong contrast stood our Freethought champion—calm, imperturbable, relentless. Nothing smooth or oily to be found there. A strong, forceful Saxon, this man of Devon, disdaining the emptiness of platform friendship. "My opponent" rang clearer and truer.

The usual uninteresting preliminaries of chairmanship having been got over, Dr. Warschauer opened the debate, "Theism or Atheism?" Dr. Warschauer's first half-hour was taken up by the smoothly flowing argument that a first cause was essential for the working of all phenomena. Every phenomenon had a cause—an uncaused phenomenon was unthinkable. The universe was a phenomenon. Who could look at the universe for the first time without asking how it came to pass? What sort of cause lay at the back of the universe? Could you eliminate cause by saying that the universe had always been?—that matter had always existed? It was only a being who himself had eternally existed that could assert the eternal existence of matter. Besides, the eternity of matter was open to serious scientific objection. Changes had transformed the original fire-mist, but we had not got rid of the idea of a cause. Then the audience was presented with an illustration—the difference between a printed page and a printer's pie. Printer's

pie might be caused by accident, but the printed page showed design. The letters must first have been arranged by someone, as they were intelligible. Therefore, whatever was intelligible presupposed a cause that was intelligent. Intelligence presupposed personality, and as to the original first cause that the Theist calls God.

And then with the triumphant air of the conjuror producing the vanished pack of cards, Dr. Warschauer handed to Mr. Foote, a typewritten schedule of eight questions, the answer to which he patronisingly assured him, would facilitate his task. The old debater was not going to fall into the trap. As counsel for the defence he refused to take his stand in the witness-box and handed the eight carefully drawn-out conundrums back to his opponent unanswered!

Dealing with Dr. Warschauer's dissertation on cause and effect, Mr. Foote declared it was mere tautology—and as to the intelligence manifested by the first cause, that the Theist called God, the great designer—how was it that there was so many flaws in his designs. You could not give him credit for the beauty of the design, without also giving him credit for the ugliness. You had only to walk through any Christian city and mark the extremes of luxury and poverty to note how far the design fell short of perfection. "The theory must bear the burden of all the facts," declared Mr. Foote.

"Very good orators, when they are out, they will spit," says Shakespeare. This may also be applied to debaters. Dr. Warschauer, early in the debate became "gravelled for lack of matter," and found that the cleanest shift in this instance was to trot out his unanswered questions. How tired the audience became of those questions! and what an excellent opportunity they gave to Dr. Warschauer for posing as a Christian martyr! One could not help wishing occasionally for the historic lion "that hadn't any Christian." This well-fed martyr would have amply satisfied him!

The allusion to Mr. Foote's "coy, maiden-like shrinking" was greeted with delight by the Christians and with sarcastic laughter from the Freethinkers, and his sorrow for the cause that could not answer plain questions was pathetically touching. Strangely enough, however, he declined to accept Mr. Foote's challenge to a Socratic debate, thrown out to him three times in the course of the two evenings' proceedings. Is it possible that he can be afraid of questions?

The debate on the second evening was opened by Mr. Foote, who showed in the first half-hour that Dr. Warschauer's arguments were nothing but apologies. He could give no firm basis for his Theism, and there was no agreement among Christians as to their different forms of Theism. The more men discussed scientific facts, the nearer they came to agreement—The more they discussed theological theories, the further apart they drifted. As an instance of the practical use Science could be in the world, he reverted to the sinking of the liner *Republic*, and the saving of life due to wireless telegraphy, incidentally mentioning that the hero of that occasion, the operator, Jack Binns, was an atheist.

Pointing out that the task of the Christians of the present day was that of reforming their God, and bringing him up to date, he prophesied that, if a new Bible should be evolved, the first chapter of Genesis, instead of recounting how God made man, would be altered to show how man made God.

The moments in the evening which most closely approached the nature of a debate proper were those devoted to Darwin. Quotations and counter quotations followed each other, till finally the champion of Atheism drove his lance deep into his opponent, through the aperture in his Darwinian armor of a mere semicolon! It was a good bluff from Dr. Warschauer, but the author of *Darwin on God* knew a little too much for him.

After this, Dr. Warschauer's defence became gradually weaker and weaker. He still clung to his unanswered questions, and, when the listeners finally showed that this line of argument had ceased to be convincing, turned his attention from his opponent to address sarcastic remarks to the Freethinking portion of the audience, begging them to follow the example of gentlemanly behavior set them by the Christian. In fact, he skilfully contrived to work up the elements of a very pretty row, which was finally quelled by the Chairman, aided by a personal appeal to the audience from Mr. Foote himself.

At the conclusion of the debate, instances of gentlemanly deportment were given by Dr. Warschauer and by his secretary. The latter, also a clergyman, presuming no doubt upon his cloth, so far forgot the rules of platform etiquette as to administer reprimands to both the audience and the Chairman, Mr. Cohen; and while the customary vote of thanks to the Chairman was being acknowledged the two Christian gentlemen turned their backs upon him and abruptly left the platform.

To an outsider the whole debate must have been an object-lesson in the shifty methods that the supporters of a dying

cause are obliged to resort to; and the contrast between the self-control of the Atheist and the petty, childish irritability of the Theist must have been apparent to the most bigoted opponent of Freethought.

Freethinkers had hoped that at last the Christians had found an opponent more nearly worthy the steel of the greatest Freethought champion. They were bitterly disappointed.

N.B.—The Socratic debate will *not* come off!

K. B. K.

What Do We Know About Jesus?

(Reprinted from the New York "Truthseeker.")

NOTHING, absolutely nothing. And we defy anyone to find one fact to contradict our assertion. All we have about this person is found in the New Testament. And all there is in that collection of anonymous writing has not one single historical fact.

No one knows that Jesus, as man or God, was ever born. No one knows when or where he lived. No one knows whether he was prince or peasant, black or white, married or single, rich or poor. No one knows one single thing about his family, his relations, or his domestic affairs. No one knows how longed he lived or when he died. The name of Jesus neither adorns nor stains the page of history.

There is a character in the gospels of the New Testament called Jesus. These gospels are simply dramas, of which Jesus is the hero. Three of them are filled more or less with the spirit of the Israelites. They are swan songs of a dying faith. The hope of a Messiah, which inspired the Hebrew prophets of old, was fading away. The destruction of Jerusalem was the ending of that burning hope. But from its ruins, although no armored leader should arise and no fierce warriors fight under his command, there came an ideal.

The cry of the ancient prophet was still. The God of Israel no longer manifested his power to save his people. An awful fate hung over their dead city. Outwardly it was a mass of crushed homes and crushed humanity. But there was within that terrible doom a spark that was to become a dream, a thought, a poem, a drama. Israel must arise from its death. Its hope must be revised. Its ideal must be painted in words of light. Its thought must be bodied forth, and its drama acted on the stage of life.

Gradually there grew into shape a man to represent this ideal. Hundreds of hands painted it; hundreds of lips sung it; hundreds of voices told of its wondrous glory, until human genius, inspired by the marvellous story, wrought the character of Jesus of Nazareth.

But in all of Roman history not a line can be found which refers in any way to the person called the man of Nazareth. That silence is fatal to all claims that this person ever lived as a human being on this earth.

While millions of men and women who have done good deeds, who have been kind to their fellows, who have lived brave and heroic lives, who have died for truth, for liberty, for right, failed to have their names or virtues recorded on history's scroll, volumes have been written of the great and gifted, of those who have charmed with their personality or conquered by their superiority.

We cannot believe that a God could go through this world unnoticed. We cannot believe that a person endowed with extraordinary powers could live among men and not attract the intelligent and enlightened. We cannot believe that a person who could scatter miracles like flowers about him could perform his wondrous deeds and not have his work recorded by reliable historians. We cannot believe that anyone could draw multitudes after him without at the same time making some impression upon those whose business it is to take notes of passing events.

Ask any writer of the age of Augustus who were the great Romans of that period, and their names are found written in splendor on their pages. That Roman historians speak of Seneca but not of Jesus shows that Seneca lived and that such a person as Jesus of Nazareth did not.

Outside of the gospels of the New Testament there is not found one word about Jesus, and these gospels are not histories, but dramas.

So we answer the question: What do we know about Jesus? by saying, Nothing.

L. K. WASHBURN.

"Not at all, not at all," answered the other imperturbably "There's none can despise like your out-and-out Christian. There's nought despises the fire like the frost—the frost that's only happy in darkness and hates sunshine."—*Eden Phillpotts, "Demeter's Daughter."*

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.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7.15, Mr. Rowney, "Holy Moses & Co."

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 noon, Ivan Paperno, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, J. Rowney, "The Atonement."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): G. W. Foote, 12 noon, "Man's Discovery of Himself"; 6.30, "Deity Up to Date."

LAINDON, ESSEX (New Council School): Saturday, April 8, at 7, Debate between W. Skinner and R. H. Rosetti, "Is Christianity the True Revelation from God?"

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, E. E. Lowe, F.L.S., "Leicester, as Illustrated in the Museum." Lantern illustrations.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): Joseph McCabe, 3, "Christianity and European Progress"; 7, "Science and the Hope of Immortality."

RHONDDA BRANCH N. S. S. (Parry's Temperance Bar, Tony-pandy): 3, Sam Holman, "The Wonderful Ways of the One Above."

OUTDOOR.

BLACKBURN (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates, Thursday, April 6, "Christian Melodrama"; Friday, April 7, "Credulities in Decay"; Saturday, April 8, "The Origin and Nature of Christian Worship." At 7.30.

BURNLEY (Market Square): 7.30, Joseph A. E. Bates, "God and the Modern Perspective." Tuesday, April 11, at 7.30, "Philosophy of Death."

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Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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