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PRICE TWOPENCE

It is a small thing, too, in appearance, that we should have a few more thoughts in our heads, a new feeling at our hearts; and yet is just that which slowly leads us where we hope to win.—MAURICE MAETERLINCK.

The Jerusalem Ghost.

GHOSTS are rarely seen nowadays. Just as they used to flee before "the bird of dawn," so they flee before the rising sun of science, and vanish altogether when it ascends the heaven of truth. The fact is, and most people are beginning to see it, that ghosts are merely "phantoms of the heat-oppressed brain." They are products of faith. It is with ghosts as with miracles. Seeing them does not produce belief in them, it is believing in them that makes people see them. Superstitious persons occasionally behold one. A sceptic never does.

There have been a great variety of ghosts in history. The Cock Lane ghost is remembered through its connection with Dr. Johnson, and many more have "had their day and ceased to be," giving place to fresh wonders for the gaping mouth of credulity. But the famous Jerusalem ghost still holds the field. It waits for Freethought to lay it with the magic words of common sense.

This Jerusalem ghost is supposed to have begun its mysterious career eighteen hundred and seventy-eight years ago this Sunday morning. Curiously enough, it was the son of a ghost, or at least they say so; and therefore it belongs to a ghostly family. While it lived in the flesh it inhabited the body of a Jewish carpenter named Jeshua or Joshua, the Greek form of which is Jesus. What became of the corpse when the ghost had done with it God only knows. There are some groggy pamphleteers, called Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, who pretend to give an account of the business; but they are so terribly confused and self-contradictory that no sensible person can give them any credence. At one minute they write of a ghost pure and simple, that crept through key-holes, and came and went like a sunbeam. At another minute they write of a man who invited his friends to feel his muscle, and joined them at a fish dinner.

The most curious thing about this Jerusalem ghost is its fastidiousness. It was not a ghost that appeared to everybody and anybody. No one ever caught a glimpse of it except a few male and female friends. They told others, and they told others, and so the story spread. But we have not a single scrap of writing from a single one of the original eye-witnesses. All we possess amounts to this—somebody saw somebody who knew somebody that saw the ghost. The persons who were mixed up with Jeshua's death never got wind of the affair. The Roman governor who sentenced him to execution, and the soldiers who carried out the order, died in ignorance of the young fellow's posthumous performances; while the Jews amongst whom they happened laughed at the story then, and have laughed at it ever since. True, the laugh was sardonic when they were fined, imprisoned, hung, drowned, and burnt, for their obstinate incredulity. Yet they have always kept a stiff upper-lip and a wrinkle under the eyes as to the pretensions of that

Jerusalem ghost. They still assert that it was simply a Cock Lane affair that never got properly investigated, and that it was only extensively credited far away from the spot or long after, when investigation was impossible.

One peculiarity of this Jerusalem ghost is that if you do not believe in it you will be damned. Such a terrible threat is a great hindrance to inquiry. No wonder, therefore, that most people thought belief was the right side, and settled the matter by saying Amen. Yet there were always a few sceptics who sniffed at the yarn. They had a very bad time of it, although one would think that disbelief in one of the many ghosts that have flitted about in the world was no very heinous crime. They were treated worse than dogs; nay, they were treated like devils. But they were the toughest of their race. They persisted in their scepticism, their numbers grew, and now they are a mighty host that all the popes and priests in the world are unable to suppress.

At this stage, when sceptics can breathe a little and look about them, it does seem an impolite way of addressing a gentleman to say, "Believe or be damned." The proper answer to such rudeness is, "Be damned yourself," and that is what the sceptics are beginning to retort on the ghost's friends. As a matter of fact, too, those gentry begin to see that they must modify their impudence. They say less about punishment, and more about reward. They withhold the menace, and offer a bribe. They put the stick behind their backs, and offer the sceptics an ounce of lollipops.

Another peculiarity of the Jerusalem ghost, and this the supreme one, is that it was no less than God Almighty himself, or at least a third part of that being, if infinity can be divided by three. The Deity who is supposed to rule, after having created, this illimitable universe, not only walked about like a man, worked at a carpenter's bench, ate, drank, attended to the meanest necessities of nature, was reviled, buffeted, spat upon, and finally executed as a malefactor, but actually flitted about like a hedge-row ghost for forty days afterwards, and finally ascended to heaven, where he cannot have arrived yet, even if he has been travelling all the time with the rapidity of light, which is not far off 200,000 miles per second. Surely such a monstrous story should be attested by overwhelming evidence, especially if our salvation or perdition is to depend on whether we accept or reject it. But instead of this we have such evidence as would not suffice to render a village ghost-story plausible. If this Jeshua was indeed the Son of God, and wished to assure us of his Resurrection and Ascension, why did he not publicly appear to Pontius Pilate and the Sanhedrim? Why did he not give ocular and incontestible proof of his having burst the bonds of death? Why did he not invite the whole of Jerusalem, aye, and representatives of every foreign nation, to witness his flight to paradise?

Twenty such Whys might be asked, each as pertinent and each as difficult to answer. The civilised world is getting sick of this Jerusalem ghost story. A mighty roar of laughter is shaking the realms of superstition, fluttering all the ghosts, warning them to melt into thin air, and, "like the baseless fabric of a vision faded, leave not a wrack behind."

G. W. FOOTE.

God and Causation.

IN the two preceding articles "On Cause and Effect" I confined myself to a description of the true nature of causation, with only incidental references to such theories as are based upon misunderstandings of the process. But, so far as Theism and Atheism are concerned, at any rate, the value of the elucidation, as Captain Cattle would say, lies in the application thereof. If it be granted that cause and effect, instead of being a succession of phenomena, are really two aspects of the same thing, all the arguments by which Theists have imagined they could reach God by tracing causation to its fountain head, or through the transference of divine energy from one object to another, goes by the board. The arguments are worthless because their groundwork is fallacious. In the present article I purpose considering the value of causation as an aid to Theism.

Great stress is laid by Theists upon what they are pleased to call the mind's innate craving for causality. In reality there is no innate craving for anything of the kind. One of the greatest delusions—born of theory-spinning instead of seeking information from facts—is that which pictures the primitive mind as curious, inquiring, and eternally seeking the "why" of phenomena. As a matter of fact the savage has little curiosity, and seldom troubles about the cause of things. Events are accepted as they occur, and it is only an exceptional stress that drives him into inquiry. And without going so far afield as savage life, one can trace the growth of the questioning habit in children, and observe how, with the mass of adults, things that repeat normal experience are taken for granted without question. The philosophic or scientific mind naturally seeks for causes of phenomena; but it will hardly be denied that the mass of people are neither scientific nor philosophic in any marked degree. The craving after a reason for things is the result of education—a course of instruction that commences with our earliest years, true, but still a product of education.

Now there are several reasons why the use of the fact of causation is quite invalid when used as a proof of the existence of God. In the first place, if cause and effect are not successive but simultaneous, "cause" being the name for the related powers of the factors, and "effect" a name for their power in co-operation, to talk of working back along the series of causes until we come to God is meaningless. Even though we could perform this retrogressive feat, we could not reach a God distinct from the universe. Ultimately we should be dealing with the question of how something already existing transformed *itself* into the universe. A form of Pantheism might be reached by this method—granting the possibility of practising it—but not Theism.

But here a fresh difficulty presents itself. A cause, as I have pointed out, must consist of a combination of at least two factors or forces. This is absolutely indispensable. But assuming that we have got back to a point prior to the existence of the universe, we have, on the Theistic theory, not two factors in existence, only one. The essential condition for an act of causation is lacking. A single factor could only repeat itself. By this method, then, if one were to grant to the Theist the use he makes of it, he might reach his God. But having reached him, there he would remain. God would exist, but nothing else.

The same difficulty will be realised by another road. Philosophers of certain schools divide existence into two—the world of appearances (phenomena) and the world of reality or substance (noumena). We know phenomena and their laws, they say, but no more. We do not know substance in itself; and the Theist adds that the phenomenal is the manifestation of this unknown and partly unknowable reality—God. Further, we are cautioned against applying the laws of the phenomenal world to noumena, or, in theological jargon, against measuring

the infinite by the finite, or judging God by human standards.

Now, granting all this, let us see how the argument stands. The laws of phenomena belong exclusively to the phenomenal world. They have application and validity only with phenomena. Once we leave this region we are in a sphere in which they have no application whatever. What, then, is the meaning of speaking of God as a "First Cause"? Cause is a phenomenal term, and has no meaning when applied to this assumed unknown reality. Thus, when the Theist, to use his own language, has traced back an effect to its cause, and this to a prior cause, until he has reached a "First Cause," what happens? Simply this. At the end of the phenomenal chain he makes a mighty jump and gains the noumenon. But between this and phenomena he can establish no relation whatever. It cannot be a cause of phenomena, because, on his own showing, causation is a phenomenal thing. He has worked back along the chain of causation, discarding each link he passes in his journey. Finally, he reaches God and discards the lot. And here he is left clinging *with no intelligible way of getting back again*. If he relates God to phenomena, he merely adds one more phenomenon to the others, and the "First Cause" remains as far off as ever. And if he does not relate God to phenomena he ceases to be a cause of phenomena in the only intelligible sense in which that expression may be used.

Still further, why travel along the chain of causation to discover God? What is gained by travelling back along an infinite series and saying, "At this point I espy the agency of God"? Confessedly, we may trace back phenomena as far as we will without being nearer a commencement than when we started on the journey. Consequently, all the evidence that exists when we cease our investigations exists at the moment we commence. In other words, if God can be shown to be the efficient and necessary cause of phenomena anywhere, it can be shown everywhere, and the proof, if any, can be produced through phenomena immediately at hand, as well as from those removed from us by an indefinite number of stages. The evidence becomes neither stronger nor more relevant. To say that we must pause somewhere may be true, but surely it is foolish to first induce mental exhaustion, and then use it as the equivalent of a positive and verifiable discovery.

And even though by some undiscovered method we had gained that metaphysical nightmare, a cause of all phenomena, and, in defiance of intelligibility, had christened it a "First Cause," how would that satisfy the "causal craving"? Professor Campbell Fraser says, properly enough, that "the old form of each new phenomenon as much needs explanation as the new form itself did," but this need is certainly not destroyed or satisfied in explaining one form of existence by another. If A is explained by B, we shall be driven to explain B by C, and so on. Or if we can stop with B, then the causal craving is not so persistent as was supposed, and man can rest content in the recognition of impassible limitations. For what Professor Fraser calls an "absolutely originating cause" is only such so long as we have not reached it. We are satisfied with an imaginary B as an explanation of the actual A so long as B does not come within our grasp. So soon as it has become the originating cause of the phenomenon in hand, we are off on a further search. "First" has no other sense or meaning than this. "First" in relation to a given phenomenon or cluster of phenomena we may grant. "First" in the sense of something that calls for no explanation is sheer theological lunacy.

Mr. Frank Ballard, that travelling Methodist wind-bag and would-be scientific thinker, remarks that—

"To press the inquiry whether the principle of causation does not necessitate that the great First Cause should also itself be caused is, to put it most mildly, an amazing instance of lack of perception..... It is plain beyond all question that to ask for the causes of a First Cause is nothing but sheer contradiction in terms."

This is quite charming, although a common retort

to criticism. The Theist erects a perfectly gratuitous theory on the fact of causation. The Atheist points out that he has really only moved the problem back a step, and that as a cause can only be a cause in relation to an effect, to speak of a First Cause, in the sense of it existing before an effect, is meaningless. An eternal First Cause could only be such in relation to an eternal effect, in which case it does not originate it. They are co-eternal. On this the Theist, instead of revising his language or restating his meaning, calmly replies, as the "First Cause" excludes anything prior to itself it is a contradiction in terms to ask for its cause. Quite so; but the contradiction is involved in the Theistic theory. All that the Atheist has done is to point out its absurd and contradictory nature, and reduce the argument to an absurdity. The Theist calmly packs the absurdities of his own theory on the back of the Atheist, and declares that the possession of the burden disqualifies him from asking questions. All the Atheist need do is to return the present, with thanks, and insist that as a relation is of the very essence of causation, to leave that out of account is to mistake an aerial disturbance for philosophic language.

Causation, in short, does not and cannot carry us beyond phenomena. The notion that because all phenomena has a cause, therefore, there must be a cause for all phenomena—meaning by this a non-phenomenal cause of the sum total of phenomena—is wholly absurd. It is not sound science; it is not sound philosophy; it is not even common sense. It is simply nonsense, given an air of dignity by being clothed in philosophic terms. You cannot rise from phenomena to the Theists "God"; first, because, as I have said, cause and effect are terms describing the relations of one phenomenon to another, and the moment we get outside the circle of phenomena our language and our laws lack all application. It is like discussing a bird's flight in the absence of atmosphere. Secondly, because the search for causes is a search for the conditions under which phenomena occur. When we have described these conditions we have done all that is required to establish an act of causation. The Theist commences with a wrong conception of causation, he proceeds by applying language and principles derived from one sphere to another in which they have no intelligibility, and having confused the issue with a whole series of meaningless words, ends with a conclusion that, even on his own showing, has no relation to the premises laid down.

C. COHEN.

False Inferences.

It is admitted on all hands that, from a numerical point of view, the Christian Church has been steadily declining for many years. Both its membership and its attendance have been decreasing on a highly significant scale. Greater London has a population of nearly seven and a half millions, and one-third of the crime of England is said to be committed within its area. The following is a Christian's description of its condition:—

"It has a public-house frontage of 180 miles, every inch of which is a temptation. There are in London some three to four hundred dramatic clubs, where thousands of people witness dramatic performances every Sunday, and in some of them liquor can be procured without let or hindrance from Saturday night to Monday morning, such clubs being controlled neither by dramatic or licensing authority. The workhouses accommodate 100,000 paupers. But the most appalling fact of all is that some 70 per cent. of London's population never enter a place of worship."

Only 30 per cent. of Londoners ever darken the door of church or chapel at the beginning of the twentieth Christian century. During the last decade the population has probably had an increase of at least a million; but the Church not only has not grown with the population, but has a considerably smaller mem-

bership to-day than it had ten years ago. From the Christian point of view this state of things is alarming and discouraging in the extreme. The only natural inference is that Christianity is a signal failure in the city of London. Its ministers boast that they are entrusted with a momentous message from another world, from the Creator and Ruler of the Universe, a message that vitally concerns every man, woman, and child; and yet only some thirty in every hundred of the citizens can be persuaded to pay the slightest heed to it. Christ and London are still strangers. London ignores the Divine Savior, and makes light of its eternal interests.

Such is the natural inference from the facts; but Christian leaders flatly refuse to draw it. Numerically, they allow, the Church has seriously lost, and is likely to go on losing for some time to come; but influentially she has gained. This is how they put it:—

"Though the outlook of organised religion may be quieting, there is no need for pessimism. The decrease in Church membership and the lessening of church attendance are not the only tests by which religious influence should be judged. The growth of public opinion in favour of international peace, the founding of institutions for medical research to discover the causes of disease in order to counteract them, the attention paid by the State to the mental and physical equipment of the children, are all products of religious sentiment."

It is amazing with what cool brazenness Christians credit themselves with all that is good in the world. Are they not the salt without the cleansing and preserving quality of which mankind would have perished long ago? The curious thing is, however, that the growth of public opinion in favor of international peace, the institutions for the study and treatment of disease, and the interest taken in the physical and intellectual development of children are all products of these modern times. In practice, Christianity has always been the advocate of war, and the bloodiest wars on record have been religious wars. It was by the use of the sword that the Christian Church won her way to power in Europe, and it was the sword that kept her in power until the sceptre was taken from her by science. How is it, then, that now, all of a sudden, she becomes the champion of international peace and other prominent reforms? It is not because of her Christian faith, for this is much weaker and vaguer than it was in the Middle Ages, but because she, too, in her turn, is being borne along on the wave of humanism that is now sweeping over the civilised world. Unconsciously she is substituting science for theology, knowledge for faith, and effort for trust. The world has now returned to the point it occupied at the advent of Christianity early in the fourth century, and the teachings of Pagan philosophy are once more finding an echo in the human heart. All students of history know how eloquently Cicero, Seneca, Celsus, and others discoursed on the horrors of war and the beauty of peace, and how passionately they condemned the military spirit, the spirit that has so abundantly thriven in all ages under the Christian religion. The love of peace, the desire to understand in order to stamp out disease, and the attention paid to the physical and intellectual welfare of the young, are not products of religious sentiment, but so many signs of the triumph of humanistic science; not results of the influence of the Church, but indications that the reign of superstition is coming to an end. The so-called Brotherhood movement is not strictly a Christian movement, but a humanitarian movement nobbled by the Church because her more spiritual exercises were no longer appreciated. The Institutional Church is a half-way house between the orthodox Church and the Secular hall, and the Brotherhood movement was only started when the Church, run on the old lines, had practically failed.

Speaking generally, no inference can be falsier than that the world is indebted to the Christian Church for all the good there is in it. It would be difficult to mention any great social reform which had its origin in her. As a rule, she opposed most great reforms as long as she could safely do so; afterwards

she adopted and claimed them as her own. As Mr. J. A. Farrer says, in his *Paganism and Christianity*, "the progress that in certain lines has accompanied Christianity is not necessarily for that reason its consequence; and the ideas that preceded and conditioned such progress were mainly of Pagan, and especially of Stoic origin.

The existence of God is another false inference. It is well-known that the unbiassed study of Nature inevitably leads to Atheism. No one in his or her senses can read the story of life on this planet without coming to the conclusion that no good Deity has ever had anything to do with it. It is impossible to conceive how anybody who realises the horrible evils of life can believe that there exists an all-powerful, all-wise, and all-loving Father. Someone "declared that there could not be any such God as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for if he existed the woes of the world would break his heart"; but a better way of putting it would be to say that if such a God existed there would be no woes of the world to break his heart. Mr. R. J. Campbell tells us of "a bright, pure-minded young girl who went to work in the slums, and who became eventually so depressed by the awfulness of the suffering and degradation around her, by the seeming hopelessness of doing much to relieve it, and by the consequent loss of her faith in God, that she took her own life." Then Mr. Campbell adds:—

"When we know what life is like for untold millions of our fellow-creatures, can we really wonder very greatly at the adoption of such a desperate remedy? Think of the people who are the victims of loathsome, lingering, painful diseases; think of the myriads of little children who are damned from their birth, who will, if they survive at all, grow up poorly nurtured, stunted in body and brain, and without the opportunity of leading anything but an animal existence..... Nor is this all. Take practically any rank of society you like and you will meet with tragedies which cry out against heaven and seem to cry in vain. What dark passions are at work under many a calm exterior! What awful wrongs are being perpetrated without the least likelihood of redress in this world!"

Now Mr. Campbell is honest enough to acknowledge that the problem of evil is apparently insoluble, that in spite of everything "there still remains a mystery we cannot penetrate in regard to human lot in this world." The question is, from what conceivable facts does Mr. Campbell infer the existence of an infinitely powerful, wise, and good God? It is all very well for the reverend gentleman to say that he can no more do without communion with God than he can do without food and drink; but the truth is that the God with whom he has communion must be held responsible for the unspeakable evils and cruelties and butcheries of the world. Is it any credit to a man to believe in and commune with a deity who, if omnipotent, is wicked, and, if good, is impotent? Mr. Campbell reminds us very strongly of the man portrayed by Tennyson in *In Memoriam*—

"Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law—
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed."

There is no disputing the fact that Nature, including humanity, furnishes a demonstrative evidence of the non-existence of the Christian God.

"'So careful of the type?' but no.
From scarp'd cliff and quarried stone
She cries, 'A thousand types are gone;
I care for nothing, all shall go.
Thou makest thine appeal to me:
I bring to life, I bring to death;
The spirit does but mean the breath;
I know no more.'"

Does Mr. Campbell know any more? To worship God as a perfect Being, who is yet the author of a shockingly imperfect Universe, is a glaring contradiction in terms. The reverend gentleman admits the sufferings and sorrows with which Nature teems, and yet claims that Nature is God's work. It follows, therefore, that if God exists he must be an imperfect being, for a perfect being could not produce imperfect work. To worship the God of Nature would, therefore, be an immoral act. Instead of facing this fact Mr.

Campbell pours out a flood of trashy sentimentalism, and hides himself behind a wall of mere words. "If anyone were to say to me," he exclaims, "'Your God of love exists only in your own imagination,' I should point to the multitude whom no man can number who have won their victory over evil by Divine grace." Has the minister of the City Temple the audacity to declare that the 70 per cent. of London's population who never enter a place of worship, thousands of whom do not believe in God at all, are the slaves of evil? He knows better. He is thoroughly aware that, on an average, unbelievers are quite as noble and good as believers, and that unbelief, to say the least, is not a moral disadvantage. It seems as if the reverend gentleman had allowed his emotionalism to run away with his common sense.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Ferrer Case in the Cortes.

THE European press—which loves a divorce case and a boat-race, but squeezes out ideas as bad copy—has, for the most part, submitted tamely to be gagged in reference to the great Ferrer debate in the Cortes. Only a few niggardly lines of telegraphic news trickled through the Censor's hands, as though the bigots and the reactionaries everywhere were frightened of Ferrer's ghost. The Spanish press was not so easily silenced—indeed, to its honor, it displayed much courage amidst considerable danger of fine and imprisonment, and put to shame the timidity of the English press, which only had Mrs. Grandy and the pet curate to be afraid of. Although in Spain the army is sacrosanct, and like the Ark of the Lord removed from the profane hands of criticism, thousands of columns of report, comment, and discussion were devoted, day by day, by the Spanish press to the momentous issues raised by the Ferrer debate. Nothing so engrossing has occupied public attention in Spain for many a long day.

The debate began on the Monday of the closing week in March. On the Saturday Canalejas resigned from power owing to the indecent clamor of the militarist party, who were angered at the flood of light shed during the debate on the turpitudes of the Maura Ministry—its suppression of truth, and suggestion or even manufacture of untruth in connection with the proceedings which culminated in the assassination of Ferrer. This makes the third Ministry which the avenging hand of Ferrer has pursued to its destruction. It is true that Canalejas has since formed a fresh Ministry by the elimination of the former War Minister, General Aznar, and of the militarist and anti-Ferrer element in the late Ministry, but his hands are probably tied—I believe against his inclination—and his pledges with almost certainty are given (judging from his recent utterances in the Cortes) not to meet out even-handed justice to the memory of Ferrer and not to bring Ferrer's murderers to the criminal dock. It is as certain, however, as anything can be in this world, that neither the courage nor the cowardice of Canalejas will stay the movement in Spain in vindication of the name of Ferrer. The movement will proceed till the revision of the trial is granted, as was the case with Dreyfus in France. His legal rehabilitation will involve two consequences, first, the restitution of Ferrer's property to the executors under his will; and, secondly, the trial and punishment of Maura and La Cierva and of all the guilty parties involved with this holy duo in the palpably illegal proceedings which delivered Ferrer over to the shooting party in the trenches of Montjuich.

The recent crisis was, no doubt, a military crisis. During the debate, the troops at Madrid were placed under arms, and the Bank of Spain and other public offices were literally choked full of police and soldiers of the Guardia Civil. Every evening, on the termination of the sessions of the Cortes, the streets of the capital were patrolled by large numbers of mounted

police and ordinary police in order to repress any possible rising.

Things were brought to a head by the powerful speech of Senor Melquiades Alvarez, one of the most eloquent members of the Cortes and a leading lawyer of great repute, who, in the course of a crushing oration, which lasted two days, declared that:—

"In studying the proceedings of the trial the conviction grows upon one of the innocence of Ferrer as well as the conviction that the sentence pronounced by the Council of War was unjust."

The authority of Melquiades Alvarez as a lawyer and advocate is well recognised; as an orator, he ranks amongst the four or five leading orators of the present day. Speaking of the Military Code under which Ferrer was tried, he turned round to the Conservatives and said:—

"Tell me, for shame's sake, Have you ever seen, in any part of the world, a more barbarous Code, a Code more inquisitorial or more unjust than the Penal Code of Military Justice? Well, then, this was the Code put in operation in order to try the events of the Tragic Week."

After examining its odious methods of procedure as applied in Ferrer's trial, he declared that the "procedure is one forged expressly for the purpose of entrapping the innocent and rendering impossible his liberation." He gave chapter and verse from the volumes issued recently to the Cortes to show that, in the Ferrer case, the evidence admitted against him by the judges contained six or seven anonymous declarations written by some cowardly creatures who invoked "the religious fervor of the judges in order, no doubt, to make hypocritical parade of their religious piety." The whole speech, which was a veritable masterpiece of eloquence and solid argumentation, pulverised the reputation of Maura, and notably of La Cierva, whose envenomed hatred of Ferrer and unscrupulous methods of legally procuring his assassination have won for him the appellation of the hyena.

In Alvarez, we had the inflamed and polished orator. But when the great criminologist, Salillas, arose and calmly submitted the case to the cold analysis of the trained scientist, the rage of the Conservatives knew no bounds. His speech threw La Cierva off his guard, for in an address in which rancor rather than reason was uppermost, he actually complained that the friends of Ferrer—

"can only see the proceedings in the trial with reference to the events at Barcelona, and you do not seek to discover if there exist other and more interesting data which demonstrate his culpability. Let those who defend Ferrer as an innocent man seek out with the same forensic intention the facts in the trial concerning the bomb in the Calle Mayor and they will find out for themselves what sort of man Ferrer was."

This speech is absolutely decisive as to the tendential character of the proceedings instituted against Ferrer, and explains the motive underlying the arbitrary methods employed by La Cierva and his fellow conspirator, Maura, in order to rid themselves by foul means of the man, odious in their eyes and in the eyes of the Church, because he stood forth as the embodiment of the rationalist trend of ideas in modern Spain.

The intervention of the Generals and the threats of the militarist gang that fetter the freedom of Spanish political life will not lay the ghost of Ferrer which for eighteen months has haunted the uneasy consciences of the clericals and reactionaries in Spain. The new ministry at once promised to reopen the debate, having eliminated the Pretorian element that had sought to gag the discussion. The issue of the crisis has been a signal triumph for the civil power, due to the accident that the military camarilla that acts as the bodyguard around the throne and the altar, could not depend upon the Army for a *coup d'etat*. The debate has now been resumed, and it will be prosecuted with even greater thoroughness than before. We are, in fact, only on the threshold of the inquiry. All that is

most progressive, all those who are truly democratic and intellectual in Spain are determined that the full sunlight of truth shall be shed on the shameful transaction of Ferrer's death. They are determined that the land of Servetus and Cervantes shall be free to redeem itself from the stigma of barbarism and enter the comity of civilised nations by an act of supreme justice to the memory of a man foully murdered by a Church which with equal baseness glorifies and extols the hateful deed.

April 7, 1911.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

Some Strange Heretics.

AN altogether new race of heretics is rapidly coming into being. The intellectual tenets held are in harmony with those of the sturdy and valorous Freethinker of yore, but there is a great difference in the personal character—as sad and regrettable as it is great. Those new unbelievers have no belief in any known or unknown religion, yet are willing to pay a tacit homage to any form of superstition which may be fashionable for the time being. They know neither God nor a future life, and in the privacy of their own home, or in the company of equally discreet and heretical friends, laugh to scorn the notion that any Deity would inspire the writing of any book. They, however, will not let the public into their confidence. Heresy is a good thing, they consider, for purely private consumption: the general public must look after its own truth or errors. They decline, because of a multitude of reasons, to add schism to their disbelief. It is not cowardice which has led them to adopt this policy, but a peculiar lack of interest in the propaganda of their views. "Why?" is their invariable reply when asked to do or say anything in aid of the spread of Freethought. They will acknowledge their absence of belief, and add, the same lack of faith in common, yet fail to see why they should go even a little out of their way to further discredit a discredited system. They see a creditable tolerance in the policy of letting those who enjoy the tomfooleries of creeds go on enjoying these strange luxuries. Those indifferentists are numerous, respectable enough in point of numbers to destroy the remnants of odium still attached to the possession of heretical views if only they would come out boldly and proclaim, where men might hear, their lack of agreement with Christian theology. The utility of propaganda is not apparent to them because they lack the fine spirit of the Freethinker which bids each to take his place in the fighting rank in the army of emancipation and freedom. Sometimes it is even worse. Willing are they to endorse, by the acquiescence of silence, the calumnies defenders of Christianity use as weapons against Freethought. They hear, without a quiver of a muscle, the clerical lie that the doctrines of unbelief are immoral, and that whatever Freethinker lives a reputable life lives it because of his Christian surroundings and in spite of his belief. When a member of the black gang utters safe lies, lies concerning the moral character of our glorious dead, or the lie as to the character of the writings of those illustrious men who are no longer with us, they give no protest. The utterer of those lies knows he is safe from legal punishment, as the law wisely says you cannot slander or libel a dead man, and those to be reproached heretics of the new school will not attempt to punish by exposing his dishonesty to the odium of the people. Of those indifferentists there is a minority who go yet further in the path of wrongdoing. These resent, with no measured wrath, the expression of opinions in opposition and hostile to the prevailing religious beliefs. They are interested in political or social movements, and in these movements are associated with men of intense religious faith, and fear that the intrusion of expressions of unbelief is likely to give offence to those gentlemen and ultimately cause the loss of their service.

Nearly all these men essay to justify themselves by the fact that the leaders of Christian thought to-day are quite willing to admit everything which has been proved. They do not plead their creed against absolute demonstration. They will surrender to geology the story of creation found in Genesis; to zoology the special creation of animals also therein related; to historical research they yield up whatever is conclusively proved to be false in the book which they allege to be in some way specially of God. The clergy do not risk being laughed out of existence by insisting upon the accuracy of proven inaccuracy. But the clergy still form a firm defence to error not yet proved to be error. To refrain from challenging the truth of a demonstration in Euclid is not precisely a proof of an admiration for learning.

Are any of these indifferentists justified? Is heresy of such slight moment in the world's affairs that heretics can

afford to be silent? Does non-belief carry a moral duty to spread the light? To ask these questions would appear to answer them; yet to-day everything must defend itself, and these questions must be definitely answered. The Freethinker obviously cannot and will not be silenced. His thoughts are free because he is always willing, in the proper place and in suitable circumstances, to boldly state that which he believes to be true. It is not necessary to ask the Freethinker to consider the value of his opinions. Throughout the world's history men who have thought freely upon the creeds have unhesitatingly placed the result of their cogitations at the world's service. The men who could truly claim the grand title have been of infinite service to humanity, not only in unbending the mental fetters forged by theology, but in every direction of human endeavor. A universal biography of Freethinkers would be an history of all human progress. In literature and art, in politics and commerce, they have wrought fearlessly whatever lay at their hands to do in the service of man. To them it has mattered but little that their efforts appeared foredoomed to failure; that they at least could not reap the rewards if success ultimately crowned the effort. No appeal is then needed by the Freethinker. Yet it may be well to make one to the many heretics whose irreligion is concealed or masked under the guise of indifference.

The function of the priest ever remains the same. Creeds may change, this or that story may be relinquished or others substituted, dogmas formerly insistently held may be placed amongst the non-essentials of faith, but the priest does to-day the same things he did yesterday. He is placed in office to find a justification for conditions not naturally justifiable. Never is he remiss in the performance of this duty. An idle tale of something supernatural is the tool with which he does his work. The nature of the tale depends upon the credulity of his hearers. If at all critical, the metaphysical merely becomes incomprehensible, yet still fearful. Should credulity be large, the supernatural takes the form of a savage, stern God, a relentlessly cruel Devil, and a fearfully hot hell. "Ecclesiasticism is the enemy" is absolutely true. It is the enemy of human progress in all departments of life and thought.

It is not a mere coincidence that the period of most profound faith was also the time of deepest tribulation. Our knowledge of the Dark Christian Ages is not sufficient to depict with any degree of minuteness the life of the masses, but what little evidence we have points to the disgusting conclusion that the serfs lived pretty much the life of the cattle they tended. Revels of debauchery varied the intervals of active cruelty and slaughter, which was the staple employment of those in higher ranks. The clergy, who ruled high-handed over all, grovelled in filth, and were proud of their filth! A belief in a power superior and outside the universe, controlling all the affairs of life, naturally tended to this result, and it was only as belief waned improvement came. Every advance in knowledge which has made for human happiness has been made in defiance of the supposed power and wishes of God. Men learned to harness natural force only when lesser faith in the Almighty obtained. The devout assent, "Thy will be done," is antagonistic to human well-being. Neither is it an accident that the advent of Christianity drenched Europe in blood and the pages of its history reek with gore. Scepticism was assumed to be an offence to the Christian God. I am a jealous God, said he, visiting the sins of the father even to the third and fourth generation, and I punish nations for lack of faith. Naturally the extermination of the heretic must have been a duty due alike to man and God. The departure from orthodoxy on the part of a citizen meant, if the creed was true, that disaster would be inflicted upon the nation sheltering the infidel, and that the unborn future children should bear the mark of the Deity's displeasure. Man is a gregarious animal, and all such visit with drastic and effective punishment whatever tends to lessen the effectiveness of the whole. It matters not that the sceptic is a good man and the orthodox may not be. The crime is resident in the fact that he does something to the disadvantage of the commonwealth. God punishes the people for the lack of faith of certain of their number, and hence, in self-defence, people, priests, and statesmen unite in uprooting heretical doctrines; and so in religion as in politics, the dictum, "stone dead hath no fellow," is a sound maxim; death was the natural fate of the unbeliever or misbeliever. To-day, perhaps, few Christians would kill to prevent assumed wrongful religious opinion. That is because they, owing to the widened knowledge of the universe now prevailing, no longer believe the Deity exercises the minute supervision over the affairs of men formerly accredited him. Toleration is loud-mouthed evidence of growing unbelief. Christians do not now persecute to death is only proof that they do not believe God has the aversion to, and punishes, heresy in the manner his book describes. Certain it is no politician or ruler, who fully believed the Christian scheme, would hesitate one

moment to punish heresy by the extermination of the heretics.

To the plea that association with intense religious men in other and necessary spheres of life is jeopardised by the expression of opinions hostile to the current superstition, I can only say that such association is not for permanent good. The lack of loyalty which would be evinced by the desertion from a cause because others will not bow down and worship his God would betray itself when other difficulties beset such a man. It must be remembered that whatever Freethinkers accomplish in co-operation with the faithful is always accredited to Christianity. A candidate was returned to the last Parliament for whom voted, worked, wrote, and spoke many pronounced and declared Freethinkers; yet it was acclaimed as a triumph of Christian prayer when he was returned. At the last election, prayer was not sufficient. He was defeated because he had a deficiency of votes. In the words of the devout, let me beseech you to rank yourselves with the militant Freethinkers

W. J. LIVINGSTONE ANDERSON.

Acid Drops.

Mr. Justice Channell, one of the judges trying the Exeter election petition, expressed astonishment at witnesses confessing that they had told lies for two shillings and in some cases for one. But really the astonishment seems rather gratuitous. Is not Exeter a cathedral city?

Mr. Foote, K.C., acting for Mr. St. Maur, the Liberal candidate at Exeter, stood himself some time ago as Conservative candidate for a West country constituency. He felt obliged to correct a damaging rumor as to his views on religion. "I am not the famous Mr. Foote," he explained, meaning that he was not the editor of the *Freethinker*. It appears that the story was going round that he was that dreadful personage. He lost the seat and he declared that he lost it because a number of electors wouldn't vote for "that Atheist Foote."

Brighton Council tied—24 to 24—on the question of cinematograph pictures on Sunday. The mayor gave his casting vote against them. The people who frequented these harmless shows will now be free to attend church—if they wish to. But will they? We don't believe this reactionary decision will add a single member to any congregation in Brighton.

We wish some public-spirited citizen would take legal action against the Brighton Corporation for keeping open the Aquarium on Sunday. One good turn deserves another. Let the mayor and the twenty-four reactionaries feel the weight of their own bigotry. It would probably make them more tolerant.

"Has Christianity Been a Failure?" This was the subject of an address by the Vicar of Portsea, the Rev. F. C. Garbett, at the recent Men's Conference in the Parish Institute. It would have been a miracle if it had answered the question in the negative—and the age of miracles is past. What he did was to claim all the good that had happened in Christendom during the past eighteen hundred years or so as due to Christianity. It had abolished the gladiatorial shows, for instance. As a matter of fact, it did not; but it certainly introduced what was worse than gladiatorial shows—the burning of people alive for a difference of opinion. Then again, it "abolished slavery." This also is a statement utterly devoid of foundation. Slavery existed in the nineteenth century, and to say that it was abolished by Christianity after all that time is a most flagrant absurdity. Then again, it "improved the status of women." This is so far from being true that it is the opposite of the truth. All the improvements in women's position in modern Europe are but a return to the best law of Pagan Rome. Mr. Garbett actually boasted that Christianity had so changed the character of men that "the best Christian of to-day was infinitely better than the best moral character of Pagan days." Well, that *does* take the cake. The cheek of it is almost sublime. Fancy the Vicar of Portsea, for instance, being infinitely superior to Marcus Aurelius! It is enough to take away the breath of anybody but a parson.

Mr. Garbett wound up by saying that Christianity's "work was only just commencing." In other words, it has wasted nineteen centuries. That sounds a bit truer than the rest of the reverend gentleman's address.

The Imperial Sunday Alliance has for one of its two honorary treasurers the Rt. Hon. Lord Avebury, whom it

seems rather odd to find in that kind of company. According to the principles of the Alliance, the weekly day of rest is founded on "Divine Law" and is rightly called "The Lord's Day." But does Lord Avebury really believe this? Is such a belief consistent with his famous book on Civilisation? We quite agree that "one day's rest in seven" is necessary, and should be secured to all; but we dissent from the view that this day should be Sunday. It will always be convenient for general businesses to close on the same day, but if that day is to be of much use to the workers thus liberated other workers must minister to their wants in all sorts of ways. The minority who work on Sunday must, of course, have another day of rest secured to them. Such is the law in France, and we shall have to adopt it, sooner or later, in England—ay, and even in Scotland.

The Salvation Army continues its work of emigrating people from this country to the colonies—and drawing commission from the shipping companies and capitation grants from the Colonial Governments. It guarantees work for all whom it takes out, but, curiously enough, it has just started an insurance scheme against unemployment. Now if the work is really certain, to insure against its absence is—well, to put it very mildly, curious. There is no risk to the Salvation Army. And if the insurance is necessary, what is the "work guaranteed" worth? Luckily for General Booth, the British public—or a large portion of it—is a prodigious ass.

General Booth celebrated the eighty-second anniversary of his birthday on Monday. According to a laudatory notice in a London evening paper, he is still "desirous of extensions,"—in other words, suffering from megalomania, otherwise known as "swelled-head."

Mr. Joseph King, M.P., says that the dying out of the practice of duelling was entirely due to the permeation of society by Christianity. Well, apart from the consideration that duelling is not yet extinct, and has only died out in some countries within very recent years, we would advise Mr. King to look to his facts. Christianity did not find duelling an established custom against which it had to fight; it grew up in Christian times, and flourished under Christian auspices. Neither in ancient Greece nor in ancient Rome was duelling practised. In Rome if a man was wronged or libelled, he appealed to the law for protection, as Englishmen do to-day. A Roman would have stared at anyone who suggested that two men could prove which one was in the right by taking pot shots at each other, or prodding each other with three or four feet of steel. Christianity, however, partly supplanted the reasoned legal procedure of the Roman world by the appeal to God in the form of trial by ordeal. From this there appears to have grown up the custom of single combat, which was trial by ordeal in another form. "May God defend the right" was the formula in both cases. "The spirit of Christianity" in this case, as in others, seems to get to work when other forces have done the trick.

The *Guardian* is still concerned over Sir Hiram Maxim's attacks on missionaries. One gentleman, who signs himself "G. D. Iliff" (Bishop in Shantung) says Sir Hiram is quite in error in thinking that there is any anti-Christian feeling—it is only anti-foreign. Perhaps Mr. Iliff will explain, if this is the case, why outbreaks in China have always been specially directed against missionaries? Naturally, we agree; and the Chinese are not intolerant. They are extremely tolerant; and other religions that have found their way into China have had to complain of no unfair opposition. It was only when bitter experience taught them the nature of the Christian missionaries' methods and pretensions that a strong feeling against them developed. And when Mr. Iliff goes on to declare that there has never been a single riot or disturbance in China caused by anti-Christian feeling, he is either speaking in ignorance or indulging in sheer bluff. Those who have read Mr. Cohen's *Foreign Missions* know—on the authority of our own parliamentary blue-books—that more than one serious disturbance has been due directly to Chinese claims and conduct. Mr. Iliff is correct in saying that the relation of European Powers to China has been that of a strong nation bullying a weaker one. But he does not say that because of this superior strength privileges have been extorted from the Chinese in the interests of missionaries that would never have been willingly granted.

The growing prospect of a complete exposure of the clerical and reactionary methods that were responsible for the death of Ferrer is driving the Catholic press into a state bordering on frenzy. The *Catholic Times* reiterates in a leading article its old slander that Ferrer was "a bad citizen,

a bad father, a bad husband." This is not quite such a brilliant performance as Roosevelt's description of Thomas Paibe as a "dirty little Atheist," when we had three lies in as many words, but there is at least the same number of lies in a single sentence. Ferrer was not a bad husband, but was saddled with a bad wife, from whom the Catholic laws of Spain granted him no freedom or protection. That he was not a bad father his children, still alive, have borne ample testimony. And that he was not a bad citizen was demonstrated by his giving his life to the noble and unselfish work of educating the children of Spain. Had he been a fervent Catholic each of his virtues might have been a trebly magnified vice, and the *Church Times* would have hailed him as a savior of his country.

Pastor Russell is off on a new campaign. He proposes commencing a campaign for uniting all who profess Christian creeds throughout the whole of Christendom. We don't believe he could do it if Jesus Christ were to pay his promised second visit and stand on the same platform with him. There would be a division as to who should take the chair, if about nothing else. And if Pastor Russell sticks to the task of uniting Christians he will not have much time left for any other performance.

Our readers will remember the case of Mrs. Woolmore, the Essex woman who was sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment by the local magistrates for the alleged neglect of her children, and was subsequently released by order of the Home Secretary. When the home was broken up by the compulsory removal of the mother, the children were taken to Ongar Workhouse, and on Tuesday, April 3, the father owed the Board of Guardians £2 for their maintenance. It was reported that he was only earning from 10s. to 12s. a week, and was trying to get a little home together for his family again. One member of the Board pleaded for delay in enforcing the payment of the £2. "If he earns 12s.," said another member, "he can pay us 5s. a week." This member, so good at poor-man's arithmetic, rejoiced in the non-plebeian name of Capt. Wellesley Pigott. A resolution was carried by a large majority that the payment of arrears should be enforced; and as the poor devil certainly had not £2 at his command the resolution meant that he should be imprisoned. And the seconder of this charitable resolution was the Rev. John Howard. Comment is unnecessary; the fact speaks for itself.

"The most appalling fact of all with regard to London," says Mr. R. Murray Hyslop, the chairman of the London Congregational Union, "is that 70 per cent. of its population never enter a place of public worship." Appalling to whom? To the gentlemen who "run" the places of public worship. Other people face the fact cheerfully.

Mr. R. Murray Hyslop must be a sly humorist. The following utterance of his must have been intended to chaff his Christian brethren out of their pessimism:—

"The complaint that the influence of the Church is declining cannot be substantiated by the fact, for in every walk in life its ameliorating influence is to be found. Neither is the decrease in church membership nor the lessening of church attendance the only test by which religious influence should be judged. The growth of public opinion in favor of international peace, the founding of institutions for medical research, to discover the causes of disease in order to counteract them, the attention being paid by the State to the mental and physical equipment of the children, in order that the next generation may be of greater value to the community, are all products of religious sentiment."

A few other fruits of Christianity might have been thrown in while the gentleman was on the job, such as wireless telegraphy and flying machines. And why not "Dreadnoughts"? Did not the Archbishop of Canterbury give a performance at the launching of one lately?

What a farce it is to put religious teaching into the public schools and then to declare that there shall be no tests for teachers! At a recent meeting of the Education Committee of the London County Council it was suggested that after the present year the teachers should be authorised to give extra instruction "on their own" as far as might be necessary to weld together the several portions of the syllabus and afford the scholars an intelligent appreciation of the Bible as a whole. Whereupon it was objected by Mr. Lithgow that "before giving such wide discretion they ought to know what were a teacher's views on any particular portion of the Bible." Precisely. That is sensible and straightforward. Discretion is rightly given to a teacher in his methods of teaching, but not in the substance of his teaching. It is necessary to have guarantees of his competence and fidelity

in religion as in other subjects. The denial of that is simply chaos.

Rev. Stewart D. Headlam is a secular educationist, but like most Christians he wants watching in such matters. According to the *Daily News* report he said that "he was one who did not believe that Christianity could be taught in their schools, but he saw no objection to making children acquainted with Bible history." But what is Bible history? Heaps of clergymen would reply, "All of it." Mr. Headlam knows better. But who is to decide the question? It cannot be decided. That is the plain truth. Secular Education, to be a reality, must rest on the exclusion of the Bible from the schools. Teachers may refer to it as they refer to other books—but no more.

Stinie Morrison, the murderer, who acknowledged God in the witness box and repudiated God in the dock (after sentence) has found God again in the condemned cell. Here are some of the pious expressions in letters to his sweethearts (he has several) and published in the *Evening Times*—"God grant me liberty once more, sweetheart"—"God grant that my innocence in this trouble is only established"—"God knows what I would do without you"—"God's mercy to prove my innocence." And this is the man that Bishop Weldon holds up as a warning against the dangers of a godless education!

According to the *Westminster Gazette*, in a report by Professor Hamilton respecting 150 freshmen who entered Ambert College, Massachusetts, last year, it is stated that a paper of six Bible questions was set, of which two were "the easiest that could be thought of," while "two were exceedingly difficult, so as to test the intimate as well as the average knowledge of the men." More than seventy-nine of the undergraduates could remember nothing about the fall of Jericho, thirty-seven knew nothing of Cain, forty knew nothing of Daniel, and sixty-five, 102, and 105 failed to answer questions about Saul, Gideon, and Timothy respectively. Professor Hamilton also reports that in visiting certain schools in New York he found, among pupils preparing for college and nearly of an age for entrance, whole classes that could not tell the story of Daniel in the lions' den. We should like to know what these young men suffered intellectually by the loss of such knowledge?

It is really a difficult matter to effectually suppress the truth. "The Church needs the children" was a sentence in the report of a sermon that caught our eye in glancing through one of the religious weeklies. This is the exact truth. The Church needs the children, because if it does not get them it will never secure the adults. The really vital question is the other way about—Do the children need the Church? We fancy not. At any rate, we are proud to say that Freethought does not need the child. It does need the adult; its concern with children is to see that their young minds are not debauched by having forced upon them speculative doctrines ill-adapted to their years, and that they get all that is really essential to the development of a sane mind in a sound body. By this means we shall develop a generation to which may safely be left the examination of all opinions with anything worthy to commend them.

Here is another gem of the same order. Mr. A. Lawrence, one of the Bible Society's agents in Japan, writes that the Lucha are "intellectually an inferior race," but in no part of the Japanese Empire did he find any more willing to purchase the Scriptures. We daresay that the rush for Bibles was not even then overwhelming; but we can quite believe that in the Japanese Empire the people who took it most readily were intellectually an inferior race.

The *British Workman* publishes a fancy picture of the "Mockery of Free Speech" in Hyde Park. Some auditors laugh and others are horrified at the "blasphemies" of a speaker who tells them that there is no God and no future life, and that Jesus Christ never existed. We gather that the *B. W.* would like to stop such speaking if it could, not by persuasion, but by something more effective.

The only means of consolidating the British Empire, says the Bishop of Pretoria, is the Christian Church. This is rather rough on Tariff Reformers and the advocates of a big Navy—unless, of course, it can be shown that both these movements are based on the Bible. At any rate, the Archbishop of Canterbury dots the i's of the Bishop of Pretoria's expression by asking for £100,000 and fifty clergymen annually for Canada for the next five years. We are not sure about the £100,000, but so far as the clergy are concerned we are inclined to be generous. Let him, by all means, send out fifty times fifty, or five hundred times fifty. In fact, if he would take the lot to Canada we would out-

selves subscribe towards the cost of transportation—provided no return tickets were issued.

Frederick George Marley, a clerk, of Ringstead-road, Catford, committed suicide by shooting himself in his father's house, and the jury brought in the usual verdict of "Suicide whilst temporarily insane." He was not too insane, however, to remain a Christian. "God" occurred three times in the brief letter he left on a desk. "I pray for God's blessing to rest upon me," he wrote. Clearly no Atheist, Dr. Torrey.

Nearly all the Camorristi who are on trial at Viterbo are pious and "wear sacred relics, scapulars, and other charms." They actually petitioned the President to suspend the trial during Holy Week, in order that they may prepare for the Easter Communion.

We are not often in agreement with the Bishop of London, but we do agree with him when he protests against an attitude of "kindly toleration" as being foreign to Christianity. Christianity never tolerates until it is forced, and then it lacks the manliness to submit under open protest; but apes an affection for a quality foreign to its nature and history. The Bishop also says that had Christianity welcomed the toleration of the old Roman Empire we should never have heard of the early Christian persecutions. To which we may add that little of these would have been heard of anyway had Christians not been such adepts in the manufacture of evidence to suit their own purposes. Bishop Ingram goes on to explain that the reason why Christianity cannot be tolerant is because it makes the "terrific" claim of being the one religion of the world. This does not strike us as being "terrific" so much as being idiotic. It is the claim that all fanatics make for their special nostrum, whether it be religious or social. And it is the usual mark of a narrow outlook, which is one of the prime conditions of intolerance and persecution.

Bishop Ingram also says that above all things he hates living in a paradise of fools. Well, it seems a small question for discussion whether Lambeth Palace ought to be called a paradise of fools or a paradise for fools.

"No More Churches Wanted." This heading in Monday's *Daily Chronicle* covered a communication from its special correspondent at Berlin, from which we make the following extract:—

"Church authorities here are in consternation at what they regard as the deplorable shrinkage in the Sunday collections throughout Berlin and the province of Brandenburg generally. Congregations remain unresponsive and callous to the most fervid appeals for missionary work, whether at home or abroad, and other branches of home work such as church extension are treated with the same indifference. It often happens that even in the richest and most fashionable districts special offertories do not exceed £5, and not a few congregations are content to contribute as many shillings."

In view of these facts, it is no wonder that the Berlin people protest against the building of new churches when the old ones are more than half empty. We understand it is the Empress who is the chief inspirer of this pious waste of money.

Rev. Dr. Jowett, late of Birmingham, and now pastor of the Fifth-avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, declared that he was going to America for practically the same salary he had in England. But we ventured to suggest that the contract would be liberally interpreted. We are not surprised to see that, in addition to his £2,500 a year salary, the church has just voted the sum of £1,600 per annum for the provision and upkeep of a house for the Rev. Dr. Jowett. That sum would have made J. C. and the twelve apostles, including Judas the cashier, feel "rich beyond the dreams of avarice." Simultaneously with Dr. Jowett's settling in New York another English apostle of the poor Carpenter of Nazareth, the Rev. Dr. Aked, goes off from New York to San Francisco in a private Pullman carriage, with £5,000 in his pocket as a farewell gift from the church he is leaving behind.

There was a poll for a new vicar of Stephen's, Coleman-street, City of London—the Rev. J. Jessop Teague winning by 480 votes against 362 for the Rev. Lewis Thomas. There were more than 200 applicants for the living, the keen competition being explained by the fact that the living is worth £800 a year. "Blessed be ye poor."

Another poor Christite gone to his doom! Rev. Edward Tindal Turner, of St. Giles-street, Oxford, lately Registrar of the University, left £84,908. A verbatim report of what Christ said to him when they met would be interesting. Judging from the New Testament it would also be vigorous.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Lectures suspended for the present.)

To Correspondents.

- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—April 23, Liverpool.
- HARRY SHAW.—See "Sugar Plums" for the enclosure. Glad to hear you have formed an N. S. S. Branch at Alfreton and that "there is every evidence of its doing much active work for Freethought."
- W. WINDSOR.—See paragraph. Thanks for good wishes.
- F. OAKLEY.—Pleased to hear from "a new reader" who is introducing the *Freethinker* to his friends.
- A. W. COLEMAN.—Thanks for your good wishes for the paper. Our circulation very slowly, but we think very surely, improves.
- W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.
- COMET.—We don't think the Chapman-Alexander combination is worth troubling about. Certainly our readers don't want reports of their doings. But, of course, we should be glad to hear of anything really special—if it happens. Rev. Dr. Dixon is another matter. We shall be on his track the moment he settles down in London.
- J. B. C. B.—Thanks for the rest of the correspondence. It will do good.
- A. G. H.—Of course the moon affects Easter, which depends on the first full moon after the twenty-first of March—the Spring equinox. Glad to hear of the profit you have derived from reading the *Freethinker*.
- C. G.—The passage you send us from Josephus is well known to us, and is dealt with in the chapter on "Pious Forgeries" in our *Crimes of Christianity*. It was interpolated into the text of Josephus, as Gibbon says, between the time of Origen and the time of Eusebius. It is one of the multitude of forgeries that disgrace Christian apologetics. No scholar now defends it—at least as it stands.
- D. COCKLIN.—Tuesday is too late for paragraphs in our next issue.
- W. P. ADAMSON.—See paragraph. Thanks.
- R. H. ROSETTI.—Glad your Laidon debate passed off so orderly. It is sure to do a great deal of good.
- F. ALLEN.—The weekly sermons in *Lloyd's* show to what a depth of imbecility Christian propaganda has sunk. One could no more reply to the one you enclose than one could fight a cloud or a feather pillow. Sorry you had to miss the debate.
- H. W.—Thanks for cutting. Pleased to hear you look forward with pleasure to every week's *Freethinker*.
- JOHN SUMNER.—Hardly "profane" enough for our columns, we fear, besides being of local rather than general interest.
- JOSEPH RATES.—Cuttings are useful. Thanks.
- W. H. E.—Thanks for encouraging letter.
- 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 reprinting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*.
- THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

It was fine weather in Glasgow on Sunday, and Mr. Foote had fine and enthusiastic audiences at the Secular Hall. Some "saints" came from distant places—from Edinburgh, for instance, and even from Dundee. South-west Scotland was well represented generally. Mr. Foote's visit practically ended the Glasgow season, at least as far as special lectures are concerned. We are glad to hear that the season has been very successful.

The *British Congregationalist* devoted some paragraphs to the Warschauer-Foote debate. It says "the large audiences" were not surprising "when the disputants were of the standing in their respective spheres of Dr. Warschauer, of Bradford, and Mr. G. W. Foote, of the *Freethinker*."

"The audience," our contemporary says, "was mainly in favor of Mr. Foote, and it may be freely admitted that Mr. Foote scored a few more debating points than his opponent." At the same time the case for Theism was "not weakened by the attacks made upon it." Of course not. How *could* it be?

"One would have preferred," the *B. C.* says, "that Dr. Warschauer should not have got into conflict with the audience in his closing speech, despite their unfriendliness." This corroborates what was stated in the *Freethinker*. But we object to the word "unfriendliness." The audience were not unfriendly to Dr. Warschauer. The bulk of them were not in agreement with him. That is true. And they were not likely to be brought into agreement by a display of bad temper.

We are happy to quote the following testimonial from the *Catholic Fireside*. (It is editorial.): "Mr. Martindale alludes to Foote's *Bible Romances*, containing passages which would compel a Catholic, at least, to deposit it promptly (with the aid of the tongs) in the nearest fire." We understand now what "Catholic *Fireside*" means.

The next London Freethinkers' "Social," under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, will take place at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet-street, on the first Thursday evening in May. As the spring may possibly be beginning then, there is room to hope for a good attendance. The program will be as before; some vocal and instrumental music, varied with some dancing for the younger folk (and the older if they care to join in) and just a few words from the President. Members of the N. S. S. will all be welcome, and entitled to introduce a friend. Outsiders who cannot get introduced in that way should obtain a ticket of admission (free) by applying to the N. S. S. Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, at 2, Newcastle-street, E.C.

The National Secular Society's Annual Conference is always held on Whit-Sunday. The place this year is Birmingham. Branch secretaries and others who have anything for the Agenda will please note that all notices of motion must be in the general secretary's hands by May 15 at the very latest.

The Wood Green N. S. S. Branch sent in a petition, signed by thirty-seven residents, asking that the *Freethinker* should be placed in the local Free Library. The Library Committee of the Council dismissed the petition unceremoniously. "We shall probably hear more of the matter," the *Sentinel* says. You will.

Every now and then enthusiastic Freethinkers start up to do, or get somebody else to do, real wonders in the way of propaganda and organisation. And it is always something fresh that wears a charm. Whether old and absolutely necessary agencies are properly supported scarcely ever troubles them. Their cry is "Let us go ahead." But they never actually go. Freethought soon ceases to hear of them. When the time is ripe for a new departure the leaders of Freethought are sure to know it. Meanwhile it is the duty of all Freethinkers to maintain one thing for certain—and that is the organ of their opinions and the channel of their publicities; in other words, a journal devoted to their cause. We are glad to see that this is dawning on the minds of American Freethinkers. "I believe," one of them writes, "money sent to the *Truthseeker* will bring better results to the Freethought movement than money invested in any other way." So do we. And we should be delighted to see a good regular fund raised to help Editor Macdonald keep his paper going strongly and keep himself going fairly at the same time. No paper, and assuredly no editor, can live simply on the readers' esteem. It is a pleasant thing to have, but something more substantial is wanted as well—to say nothing of how much better an editor can do his work when he is relieved from sordid anxieties. We hope Editor Macdonald will reproduce this paragraph in his own paper. We know his natural modesty, but not even that feeling should be allowed to stand against the welfare of the cause. Leaders of movements must sacrifice themselves if necessary, but they must not starve themselves on principle. Fighting can't be done without feeding. An army, Napoleon said, marches on its belly. And when it comes to policies and strategies, a special form of vitality has to be maintained. Even the most niggardly working man knows very well that his leaders, in Parliament and elsewhere, cannot possibly live on his wages. The only sad side to this is that their wages are too small. But that does not affect the argument.

We are sorry to have to send Editor Macdonald a message of sympathy in his bereavement. He has just lost his mother.

She was evidently a remarkable woman, and fit to be the mother of brave freethinking sons. We failed to make her personal acquaintance when we were in America, between fourteen and fifteen years ago; but we brought away a memento of her which we still preserve and value, in the form of a piece of beautiful lace worked with her own hands, although she was an old lady then. She gave it towards the funds of the Freethought Congress at Chicago, and the ladies at the Congress bought it and presented it to us as President of the English Secularists. We had it suitably mounted, and it occupies an honored place in what our family rather grandiosely call the drawing-room. Every time we look at it now we shall think of George Macdonald's luck in having a good and wise mother.

M. Frank Sandecki sends us from Warsaw a brief account of a recent "blasphemy" prosecution there. It appears that on February 21 M. Andjey Niemoyevsky, editor of *Mysl Niepodlegla* (*Independent Thought*) was cited before the criminal court of Warsaw and charged with "blasphemies" in his articles entitled *God Jesus*, under legal clauses rendering him liable if found guilty to limitation of civil rights and even summary banishment. Crown-appointed judges sat on the bench, as there is no trial by jury there. The prisoner conducted his own defence. After three hours' discussion with closed doors, the court issued a verdict liberating M. Niemoyevsky and quashing the confiscation of his paper. Amongst the congratulations that reached him from many places was one from Professor Drews, the author of the latest important book on the unhistorical character of the Jesus of the Gospels, who cried, "Hurrah for Free Discussion!"

We have pleasure in printing the following letter from a new subscriber—only omitting the name and address:—

"I must thank you for the two specimen copies of the *Freethinker* which I received this morning. But how you came by my address is a puzzle.

I had, as a matter of fact, ordered the *Freethinker* from my local bookseller, and by a happy coincidence the first copy arrived this morning simultaneously with your specimens. If I were a Christian I might be able to trace the 'finger of God' in this pie, but being only a plain man with no such fertile fancies I shall enjoy my feast without any thought of such spiritual handling.

I like your paper. I wish there were more like it. For men like me some such publication is a necessity. I have been a member of a Nonconformist Church, a Band of Hope leader, a local preacher, and a Sunday School secretary. I know experimentally the whole gamut of the Christian religion—and I have had to give it up.

There must be many of my kind about, and for us your paper comes as a refreshing change from the religious imbecilities which taint so large a region of current journalism. I shall continue to read it, and I heartily wish you success in your thankless enterprise."

Such a letter should encourage our friends to go on pushing the *Freethinker* round. Thousands of people would be glad to read it every week if they only knew of it.

We shall make a definite statement next week with regard to the publication of the Warschauer-Foote debate. We are afraid that Dr. Warschauer himself is under a misapprehension as to the extent of his legal rights in the matter. We shall see that the question of publication is settled, one way or another, within the next few days. This announcement may be regarded as absolute.

President's Honorarium Fund, 1911.

Fourteenth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £217 4s. 8d. S. M. Peacock, 10s. 6d.; A. W. Coleman, 10s. 6d.

MIND OVER MATTER.

"Much may be done," said the Acute Observer, "by an authoritative voice. Now, if a man says to a dog, 'Come here!' with a note of authority in his voice, the dog comes immediately."

"Yes," said the Traveller, "I've noticed it. And it is especially marked in Oriental peoples. Why, when I was in Khalisandjharo, I heard a man say, with that authoritative note in his tone, 'Oh, king, live forever!' and immediately the king lived forever."

The Foote-Warschauer Debate.

A LENGTHY report—five columns—of the Foote-Warschauer debate appears in the *Christian Commonwealth* for April 5. There is also over three columns of descriptive report in the same issue. Under some circumstances it might have been pleasant to see so much attention paid to a public discussion between a Christian clergyman and a well-known Freethinker. But bearing in mind the scrupulous care with which all the religious papers forbore mentioning the debate before its occurrence, we feel bound to assume that the editorial hunger for copy overcame in this case the customary religious boycott. The report of the debate is naturally "jumpy," both debaters properly objecting to a verbatim report in partisan papers, particularly as the question of the publication of a report by the two principals was then open. We leave the fragmentary report for what it is worth. On the description of the debate itself a word or two may fitly be said.

The writer of the report, being a highly sensitive, spiritual creature, was much disturbed at the character of the meetings. They were large gatherings, but the majority agreed with Mr. Foote; they were enthusiastic in their admiration, and when he scored a point they went into transports of delight. On the other hand they did not appreciate Dr. Warschauer's points, and so the meetings had a curious effect upon his delicate nature. "It jarred one's nerves, hurt one's sensibilities, and gave one a curious hungry, empty, dreary feeling." Poor fellow! In fact, it seemed to him that many of the audience did not actually disbelieve in God, but that they "reluctantly acknowledged his existence," and were anxious to defy him and show how much better they were than he. At last we are discovered! All our pretensions of disbelief are shattered, and we are exposed in our true character—trembling before a God whom we "reluctantly acknowledge" and keeping up each other's courage by an exhibition of mutual bravado. How the poor devil of a reporter must have suffered having to spend two nights in the company of such people! Perhaps, though, all it means is that the writer's Theism was getting sadly damaged in the course of the discussion. He does admit that some of Dr. Warschauer's rejoinders were unsatisfactory, and in that, at least, he and the bulk of the audience were in perfect agreement.

There is a curious description of Mr. Foote as "tall, austere looking, with long, straight, black hair [which he never possessed] turning grey, a beard but no side whiskers, he might be mistaken for a Methodist local preacher or Nonconformist deacon, or Scotch elder." We are not sure whether his description is intended for humor or not—although we should hardly think that A. D. (really A. Dawson, the editor of the *New Theology* weekly), the writer of the article, is blessed with much of that quality. If it is intended for humor, it strikes us as very poor, and if it is not—well, those who know Mr. Foote can complete the sentence. And when A. D. explains that the attitude of the religious world towards Mr. Foote was due to the "tone and style of controversy formerly adopted by him on the platform and in his paper," we can only remark that extreme spiritual sensitiveness is not, as usual, incompatible with falsity of statement and cowardly innuendo. The *Freethinker* has always been what it is now, drastic, straightforward, plain of speech, uncompromising. It has never been more than that, and we trust it will never be less. And Mr. Foote has always tried to exhibit the same qualities on the platform. Statements of this kind, made in quarters where no proofs will be called for, and where none are offered, are, we repeat, not only false but cowardly. The *Freethinker* and its editor have not changed; it is a section of the Christian world that are now repeating as advanced thought teachings that were common-place in the *Freethinker* a quarter of a century ago.

"No one," says the sapient A. D., "could listen to the debate last week without realizing that the Theist exemplified the modern spirit and the scientific method.....On the other hand, Mr. Foote did not always make his points clearly; his vocabulary was more limited and his phrasing looser than that of his opponent." We do not want to express any opinion concerning the debate, but we may point out in passing that the use of a few scientific words does not prove that one either appreciates the modern spirit or understands scientific method. Those who know Mr. Foote will be best able to gauge the probable accuracy of A. D.'s comment. The President of the N. S. S. has been accused of many things, but we do not think inability to make himself intelligible has hitherto been charged against him. Perhaps A. D. only means that some of the points were not intelligible to *him*, and on that point his decision is final. We can only point out that a speaker's power is limited to supplying arguments. Some contribution—of another kind—must be made by those who listen. A. D. is so satisfied of his superiority that he felt he "could easily make out a stronger case against Theism" than did Mr. Foote. We can only say that Dr. Warschauer was fortunate in not having A. D. for an opponent.

We can quite believe that Mr. Foote's points were not always clear to A. D. For instance, against the pretensions of those who claim knowledge of what lies behind phenomena, Mr. Foote quietly remarked that he was only a poor ordinary mortal, etc.; whereupon A. D. sharply reproves him for adopting forms of speech that savor of Uriah Heep. Again, replying to some point, Dr. Warschauer recommended Mr. Foote to read Lecky's *History of Rationalism*. Again came quiet and sarcastic thanks for reference to a book like Lecky's, "so recondite and almost inaccessible." Dr. Warschauer retorted that a cheap edition of the work had just been published. A. D. chronicles this as one of the points made by Dr. Warschauer. If Mr. Foote engages in another debate, and he wishes the *Christian Commonwealth* man to understand him, his best plan will be to supply the reporter with a commentary as to which portions of his remarks are intended seriously. Really, we would advise that journal next time it selects a representative to pick out one who is blessed with a little of the saving sense of humor.

One other word, in conclusion. A. D. says—this time quite correctly—that public debates on religion are less frequent than they used to be. Quite so; but this is not the fault of Freethinkers. They are always ready, if the proper man to represent the other side is to be found. To put it quite plainly, Christians fight shy of debates, not, as A. D. suggests, because they do not advance truth, but because they let in too much light on the nature and value of Christian belief. Christians have tried debates, and the result has taught them that the less believers hear of the other side the better for their faith. This is the real reason why all the religious papers were silent before the debate occurred, and why the *Freethinker* alone advertised it. It is part of the religious policy of silence and fear. A. D.'s further suggestion that debates are less frequent because some regard "Theism and Atheism" as one of the issues that died a natural death during the nineteenth century is simply silly.

There is no civilized country in the world where the number of Atheists is not increasing. To speak of Atheism as an issue that is dead, is absurd. There is no other issue of equal importance. It is the *only* issue of vital significance. All the other issues discussed by the churches and chapels are of trifling importance by comparison, and are often given prominence with the obvious hope of distracting attention from this one. The Caxton Hall Meetings should have been enough to prove how vital this issue is, and how the cause of Atheism has grown. This was shown not only by the enthusiasm of Atheists, but also by the chastened temper of Theists. That these debates do advance the cause of *truth* is self-evident. Everyone is the better for having his or her opinions

subjected to authoritative criticism. Whether they advance the cause of Christian Theism is another question. We have our own opinion on that point, and so have Christians; and their opinion is indicated by their unwillingness to engage in discussion with properly qualified opponents.

C. C.

The Apocalypse.—V.

(Continued from p. 230.)

THE author of the grand apocalyptic vision commences by stating that he saw "a door opened in heaven" and heard a voice, "as of a trumpet," saying "Come up hither, and I will shew thee the things which must come to pass hereafter" (Rev. iv. 1). If we believe the writer, that favored individual saw all he describes in the book as scenes in a kind of drama that took place in heaven, the performance being for his own especial benefit. Not only so, but he wrote down all he saw and heard on that celestial stage *then and there* (see Rev. x. 4): this must be distinctly understood. At the end of his account the writer further says: "And I John am he that heard and saw these things" (Rev. xxii. 8). There can therefore be no doubt as to what the author intended his readers to believe. But, before going further, we must see what Josephus has to say upon this matter. That historian says of the Essenes:—

"There are also among them who undertake to foretell things to come by reading the holy books, and using several sorts of purifications, and being perpetually conversant in the discourses of the prophets."

The "holy books" were the Jewish scriptures, which, of course, included the "Prophets," the latter being believed by all pious and patriotic Jews to contain predictions inspired by God, which would undoubtedly, some day, be fulfilled. And, this being the case, it would not be very difficult for an educated Jew who was "perpetually conversant in the discourses of the prophets" to draw from that source materials for a narrative which the majority of his countrymen would receive as "things which must come to pass hereafter." The question therefore arises: Is the "Book of Revelation" a work of the character suggested? We shall see.

To return to the narrative in the Apocalypse. The writer says:—

"And behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and one sitting upon the throne; and he that sat was to look upon like a jasper stone and a sardius: and there was a rainbow round about the throne" (Rev. iv. 2—3).

The question now is: Did the writer see what he here describes? or had he read something like it in one of the "holy books"? For answer I turn to one of "the discourses of the Prophets" in the holy book of Ezekiel.

"And above the firmament.....was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of a throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man upon it above.....As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about" (Ezek. i. 26, 28).

This really looks as if our friend "John the Essene" had employed the method mentioned by Josephus. In the "holy book," however, it was the throne—not the Lord God—that had the appearance of jasper or sapphire stone.

Continuing, the writer goes on to say that "round about the throne were four and twenty thrones," upon which were seated four and twenty elders in white garments, and that standing before the Almighty's throne "were seven lamps of fire burning.....which are the seven Spirits of God" (Rev. iv. 4—5). Next he says:—

"Round about the throne were four living creatures.....the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face as of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying

eagle. And the four living creatures having each one of them six wings, are full of eyes round about and within: and they have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, which was and which is and which is to come" (Rev. iv. 6-8).

Turning again to the same discourse in the "holy book" of Ezekiel, and to a second discourse in the "holy book" of Isaiah, and to a third discourse in the "holy book" of Enoch, we find the following:—

"Out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures.....and every one had four faces, and every one had four wings.....they had the face of a man; and they four had the face of a lion on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four had also the face of an eagle.....and they four had their rings full of eyes round about" (Ezek. i. 5, 6, 10, 18).

"I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne.....above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings.....and one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. vi. 2-3).

"Then the Seraphim, the Cherubim, and the Ophanim surrounded it: these are they who never sleep, but watch the throne of his glory" (Enoch lxx. 9).

Here, beyond the smallest shadow of a doubt, are the passages from which the writer "John" took his ideas. His so-called vision was a pious fraud. Knowing nothing of heaven, he copied the nonsensical statements he found in the "holy books," and fitted them into his Apocalypse. His twenty-four elders sitting upon thrones around that of the Almighty is the only portion, so far, that may be called original. He probably thought that a Jewish council of twenty-four upright elderly men, all well versed in the Jewish laws, merited such a position, and that their presence would add dignity to the judgments of the Almighty. But how any sane man could imagine that the Lord God was attended by such hideous "living creatures" almost passes understanding. The only excuse for the writer is that he found them so described in writings which he believed to be the inspired Word of God, and having no knowledge of how the Almighty lived in heaven, he thought he could not be wrong in reproducing what three crack-brained prophets had declared they had actually beheld. But, even in the case of the latter, there might be pleaded "extenuating circumstances"; for had not the Lord God two man-headed winged bulls, called Cherubim, in the inner compartment of his holy temple, placed with their wings extended over the holy ark of the covenant. It was, therefore, not unfair to infer that the Lord delighted in such monstrosities, and always had some of them around him as a guard of honor in heaven. The only charge that might be brought against these prophets is that one of them, Ezekiel, had taken the liberty of inventing a new variety of the genus Cherub.

In the next chapter we have the scene in which "the Lamb" first appears, which was noticed when dealing with interpolations. The Lamb has taken the place of "the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. v. 5), the only one accounted worthy "to open the book and to loose the seals thereof." This "Lion," as then stated, was borrowed from 2 Esdras; but why he does not appear in the drama I cannot imagine—unless, indeed, the Christians who took over the book changed his name into that of "the Lamb."

In verse 11 of this chapter the writer says:—

"And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne.....and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands."

If we turn now to the "holy books" we find the following:—

Enoch xl. 1.—"After this I beheld thousands of thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, and an infinite number of people standing before the Lord of spirits."

Dan. vii. 10.—"Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him."

In verses 13-14 of the same chapter the writer of the Apocalypse says:—

"And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, Unto him that sitteth on the throne be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said Amen. And the elders fell down and worshiped."

The idea of "every created thing" in heaven and earth simultaneously praising the Hebrew deity is even more absurd than the Lord's "four living creatures"; but the statement was suggested to the writer by the following passages in the "holy books":—

Song of the Three Children.—"O ye angels of the Lord, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.....O ye whales, and all that move in the waters, bless ye the Lord, praise and exalt him, etc..... O ye fowls of the air, bless ye the Lord, praise and exalt him, etc.....O all ye beasts and cattle, bless ye the Lord, praise and exalt him, etc.....O ye children of men, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever" (verses 37, 57-60).

Psalm cl. 6.—"Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord."

This universal praise of the Creator by creatures lacking intelligence concludes the chapter. In chapter vi. "the Lamb" is represented as opening the seals of the scroll or book he had taken from the hand of the Almighty, the unfastening of each seal being followed by some unusual occurrence. At the opening of the first seal, there appeared a man upon a white horse; at the opening of the second, a man upon a red horse; at the opening of the third, a man upon a black horse; at the opening of the fourth, a man upon a "pale horse," whose name was Death, "and Hades followed with him" (Rev. vi. 2-8). The idea of the opening of the seals appears to be original; but the horses were suggested by the following passages in one of the "holy books":—

Zech. i. 8-10.—"I saw in the night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse.....and behind him there were horses red, sorrel, and white.....These are they whom the Lord sent to walk to and fro through the earth."

Zech. vi. 2-3.—"In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; and in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grised bay horses."

After the appearance of the black horse the writer of the "Revelation" says: "And I heard as it were a voice.....saying, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny" (Rev. vi. 6). The writer also says of the riders Death and Hades: "And there was given unto them authority.....to kill with sword, and with famine, and with pestilence, and by the wild beasts of the earth." These statements would seem to have been suggested by the following passages in the "holy books":—

2 Esd. xvi. 21.—"Behold, victuals shall be so good and cheap upon the earth, that they shall think themselves to be in good case, and even then shall evils grow upon the earth, sword, famine, and great confusion."

Ezek. xiv. 21.—"For thus saith the Lord God.....when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beasts, and the pestilence," etc.

The further elucidation of this subject I must leave to the next paper; but, even without pursuing the matter further, there cannot, I think, be much doubt as to the method employed by the writer. He did not see and hear the matters he describes when "in the spirit" (Rev. iv. 2); neither did he become acquainted with them through the medium of a heaven-sent vision. He was wide awake when engaged in the composition of his so-called "Revelation," and, like most of the educated Essenes, he had by continual reading of the "holy books" acquired an intimate knowledge of the contents of all the so-called Jewish sacred writings, apocryphal as well as canonical.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

"THE LAND O' THE LEAL."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your correspondent, "E. B.," evidently animadverts on what he regards as my blunder in supposing that the "Land o' the Leal" depicts a dying wife addressing her husband, and not a dying husband addressing his wife. I am not a Scotchman, but I based my interpretation on two things. First, "Jean" is usually the Christian name of a man, such as Jean Paul Richter; while "Jeanne" is the Christian name of a woman, such as Jeanne d'Albert or Jeanne d'Arc. I am aware, however, that Burns calls "the bonnie lassie," "the lassie I lo'e best," "Jean." In the second place, what suggested my article was an address on the pathetic lyric by Mr. Charles Jordan, M.A., LL.B., of Greenock, who, referring to Lady Nairn's eighty-seven songs, says: "The Land o' the Leal' is, without doubt, the finest of them all, for it belongs to the universal human heart. It represents a Scottish matron who is on her death-bed, and soon about to pass away, taking a last farewell of her beloved husband, with whom she has lived happily for many years." I may say, further that, in reciting the verses, Mr. Jordan translated "Jean" into the English "John." If Mr. Jordan, Webster's Dictionary, and I are mistaken, I should dearly love to be convinced of the fact.

J. T. LLOYD.

THE BISHOP OF LONDON.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have been following the course of the Bishop of London's "Lenten Mission" as reported in the columns of the *Church Times*. As is his habit, he has been making some extraordinary statements, to one of which I should like to call your attention in case you have not seen it.

The Bishop makes a practice during this Mission of inviting the sending in to him of questions, which he "answers" from the pulpit.

Last Wednesday week, at St. Stephen's Church, Twickenham, the following question was put to him: "How can Almighty God allow a villain to misuse a young child?" After observing that this was "a terrible question which cuts at one's very heart," the Bishop proceeded:—

"I can only answer that by saying that when God endowed man with freewill he knew the risk he was running, and he, in his wisdom, thought it worth while to run the risk. He knew there was the risk of some devil in human form using his freewill to do a thing like this. But God, of course, cares for the child, and in some way or other, perhaps by his agencies which are at work among us—preventive and rescue agencies—he will try and restore that child. We must, however, face this fact that we are free to do the worst thing, and we must not blame God if a man uses his freewill for the most dastardly purpose."

I would only say that the Bishop's language is as gross a specimen of anthropomorphism as I remember to have seen. Fancy God knowing he was running a risk, and thinking it worth while to run it, and then trying to restore the child. And how patronising of Dr. Winnington-Ingram to say that we must not blame God.

By the way, the Bishop has himself answered the question put in your "Acid Drops" as to his choice of a doctor or a priest in the case of illness. He says (*Church Times*, March 10):—

"In my case, I should send for the best doctor or surgeon, and I should believe he came to me from Jesus Christ, because he is inheriting or carrying on one great branch of our Lord's work on earth.....I should also send for the most faithful priest—if I were living in a parish, the one who was in charge of my soul—and ask him, *pari passu*, with the work and skill of the doctor, to pray earnestly for my recovery. I should believe that he was carrying on the other side of our Lord's work."

But the best doctor could hardly be got to attend a poor man with a wife and family to keep.

J. TOMPKINS.

Camberwell Branch N. S. S.

A GENERAL MEETING of the members of the above Branch will take place at the Lambeth Baths Committee Room, Kennington-road, S.E., on Friday, April 21, at 8.30 p.m., the new committee being anxious to reorganise the Branch and discuss the arrangements already made for the outdoor propaganda in Brockwell Park, commencing on May 7; also to receive any suggestions or offers of help at these meetings. A full attendance is earnestly requested.—H. SAILL (Hon. Sec.), 11 Burton Houses, Brief-street, Camberwell, S.E.

WORKING CLASSES AND SECULAR EDUCATION.

The working-class leaders, who really value education as the best friend of their order, are anxious to see the religious quarrel in the schoolroom ended. They know that it stands in the way of the educational improvement they desire. It is quite beyond question that the religious quarrel has been a serious hindrance to the development of national education. England will never take her proper place in the van of educational progress until the State leaves religion in the hands of those who should care for it, and organises education on a scientific and civic basis. The Labor leaders see this quite clearly; they are prompted by interest as well as by principle in their support of secular education. In the second place, the triumph of secular education is certain, apart altogether from its justice. No other solution of the religious difficulty is possible. Ecclesiastical quarrels end when public interest in them ceases, or when there is only one side left in consequence of the most powerful sect having destroyed or swallowed its rivals. Such a conclusion is inconceivable in England. There is no one Church powerful enough to end this controversy. The rivalry has continued ever since the Education Act of 1870; it has grown more bitter every year, and the relative strength of the Churches remains practically unchanged. It was that rivalry, even more than the formal vote of the House of Lords, that killed Mr. Birrell's Education Bill, and it was owing to that rivalry that the Bills of Mr. McKenna and Mr. Runciman were still-born. And as the bitter rivalry shows no signs of ceasing, or even abating; and as the Government has learnt already, through three futile Education Bills, what this really means in practice—and the English public have learnt it too—it is hardly probable that any fresh effort will be made by the Government to carry a Religious Education Bill in the midst of sectarian contentions, with the certainty of gaining more hatred from those it displeases than gratitude from those it only half satisfies. Some day or other—and sooner, as Dr. Inge and Dr. Sadler perceive, rather than later—the Government will be driven into introducing a Secular Education Bill (though probably not under that name) as the only way out of an intolerable situation.—Halley Stewart, "The Policy of Secular Education," *Nineteenth Century—and After* (April).

Experience taught her [Alison Cleave] that in their relation with an Everlasting Father, men and women have to do most of the work, if the friendship is to succeed. She asked less and less of her guides, trusted herself more and more. She believed that God helps those who help themselves; but life seemed to show her that He was just as ready to help those who did not. That was called luck.—Eden Phillpotts, "Demeter's Daughter."

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON APRIL 6.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, occupied the chair. There were also present: Messrs. Barry, Cohen, Cowell, Davies, Hoaford, Neate, Roger, Samuels, Thurlow, Rosetti, and Davidson.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed, and the monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were received from the following Branches: Birmingham, Edmonton, Islington, Liverpool, and the Parent Society.

The President reported the attendance of the delegates at the meetings of the Rationalist Peace Society and the Secular Education League.

Re the Annual Conference, the Birmingham invitation was accepted, and it was resolved that the Conference be held this year in Birmingham.

The Secretary was instructed to send out the usual circulars asking for notices of motion for the Agenda, etc.

The Secretary reported a grant of £20 from the Secular Society, Ltd.

It was decided that the next Social Evening should be held at Anderton's Hotel on the first Thursday in May.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

Obituary.

It is with deep regret that I have to record the death of Mrs. Isabella Henderson, wife of Wm. Henderson, at the age of 56. She was a devoted member of the Glasgow Branch of the N.S.S., a grand woman, and a noble Freethinker. Our sympathy goes out to the bereaved husband, who has lost his wife and two daughters within the last few months. Mr. Turnbull carried out the Secular Burial Service.—JOHN F. TURNBULL.

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.

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): Good Friday, April 13, at 7.30, "Jesus Christ in the Light of Higher Criticism"; Sunday, 12 noon, Ivan Paperno and Walter Bradford.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "The Insane Christ."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

RHONDDA BRANCH N. S. S. (Parry's Temperance Bar, Tony-pandy): 3, Thomas Evans, "The Origin and Evolution of Music."

OUTDOOR.

BURNLEY (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates—Thursday, April 13, at 7.30, "Jesus Christ in the Light of Higher Criticism"; Friday, April 14, at 7.30, "Credulities in Decay"; Sunday, April 16, at 2.45, "The Influence of Paganism on Christian Teaching"; 7.30, "Some Chapters from Christian History."

NELSON (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates—Tuesday, April 18, at 7.30, "Gods—Ancient and Modern"; Wednesday, April 19, at 7.30, "Death—and After?"

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Chairman of Board of Directors—MR. G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Society's solicitors are Messrs. Harper and Battock, 23 Rood-lane, Fenchurch-street, London, E.C.

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

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

Principles and Objects.

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