

# THE Freethinker

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*The struggle against superstition and ignorance is a fight for civilisation.—HÆCKEL.*

## Losing Old Friends.

It is a penalty of becoming older that one's memory becomes an expanding mausoleum. One outlives more and more of one's contemporaries, old friends keep dropping from one's side, and in the very nature of the case the list of them cannot be recruited. A sense of loneliness creeps over one as old friends disappear, and it is lucky if one finds, as I do, a counteractant in a deathless love for a great cause which cheers and sustains one to the farthest limit of one's energies. "If the truth lives I live," said a nameless seventeenth-century pamphleteer. It was a noble exclamation, and it has often stood out in my recollection. Our friends are mortal, we are mortal; but truth, liberty, and progress are immortal, and in them we may live, if we care to, beyond the dust of death.

Unfortunately I have lost a good many old friends lately. Mr. Bonte was a new-old friend. We both felt as if we had known each other for half a lifetime. Dear old Major Harris was the next loss. Then came the death of Mrs. Donaldson. This was too soon followed by the death of Mr. George Payne. And now I have to suffer the loss of Mr. Frederick Smallman.

My loss is the loss of the Freethought movement too. It was my work for Freethought that brought me the friendship of the persons named. They were good friends of the cause, aiding it with liberal subscriptions as well as lending it the support of their positions and characters.

I had known Major Harris for some twenty years. I had known Mrs. Donaldson for nearly thirty years. It was this journal that made her a Freethinker, and she maintained a generous interest in it to the last. Once or twice in the old days it was saved from bad troubles, that might even have been fatal, if it had not been for her quite unsolicited assistance. My dear old friend and colleague, J. M. Wheeler, felt almost superstitious at the way in which her private donation came now and then in the very nick of time, just as I was at my wits' end how to tide over the day's difficulty. Mr. George Payne was another thirty years' friend. My readers will remember his liberality. Mr. Frederick Smallman was another thirty years' friend. I had a great regard for him, and I have been assured since his death that he had a great regard for me, which he frequently expressed.

Early in the year I had a longish correspondence with Mr. Smallman about the state of his health. He was suffering from more than one malady, including heart trouble, and I was able to give him some hints which he found useful; but he was under no sort of disillusion, he was perfectly conscious that he might die suddenly at any moment under no very great strain, and while wishing to live in his happy home, with his devoted wife and engaging children, he serenely accepted the decree of fate and was ready to meet the stroke of death whenever it might fall. There was not a shadow of melancholy in his letters to me, and

I learn that his attitude never altered. His affairs were in order, he knew what was coming, and he desired to meet it as soon as possible. He had been a strong man all his life, full of energy, courage, and determination; and men of that type hate being a burden (as they think) to anyone, and especially to those they love. When the end came he expired quietly in his wife's arms. He needed no "everlasting arms." He preferred them nearer and dearer.

Mr. Smallman's death occurred early on Thursday morning at Southampton, and the funeral took place at the Woking Crematorium on Saturday afternoon. I had promised him that I would officiate at the ceremony, and I thought it well to take with me a deputation representing the National Secular Society (of which he had been so long a Vice-President) and the Secular Society, Ltd. (of which he was a member, and which he told me he had not forgotten in his will). Accordingly, I got Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd to go with me, and also Miss Kough in place of Miss Vance, who would have attended as Secretary if she had not been incapacitated by illness.

It was a beautiful day. We were going to the cremation of the dead, and the irrepressible life of nature was all around us. May was there with all its charm, and even the solemn dark trunks of old trees sprouted tender green shoots, as if showing that Mother Nature smiles at the dolorous dreams of death. And we four Freethinkers did not sit weeping. We talked rationally—as our dead friend would have had us do. It would have disgusted him to think that we could play the fool or the hypocrite. It would have pleased him to think that we accepted life with all its variety as he did, and death with its eternal sleep.

I uttered no note of sadness as my old friend's corpse rested in its coffin on the slab before sliding into the business part of the crematorium. He had lived out his life of sixty-eight years to the full. He had always been himself. He bowed to nothing but his convictions and his conscience. He had done many deeds of kindness; he was incapable of an act of cruelty. He knew the truth of Ruskin's fine saying, that the greatest of all possessions is self-possession. He was a true man, and he looked it. There was strength and character in his eyes, around his mouth, and in the poise and shape of his head. You saw at a glance that he was no common man. You would never find him leaning on others, but others would be very apt to lean upon him in their extremity. He was honor and veracity incarnate. You could be sure that he would never lie. There was not an atom of cowardice or meanness in his composition. Why should we grieve inconsolably that such a man was dead? We should rather rejoice that such a man had lived. Whether his personality is ended or not it must surely be well with him. If the universe has a jurisprudence it could hardly be so gratuitously infamous as to sentence such a man to pain and suffering; no God could be so base as to punish him for his virtues. If there be another world, he will be welcomed in it—unless it is a mad world. And if there be none, he has reached "the popped sleep, the end of all," with the thought of him like a golden light in the memories of those who knew him. G. W. FOOTE.

## The Oldest Game in the World.

It would not be true to speak of the priest as being as old as man, but he certainly made his appearance very early in the history of the race. One of the earliest problems of man was how to placate the spiritual agencies with which ignorance surrounded him; and in this task some individuals were—for various reasons—credited with greater power than others. Power over the ghost served to give—or at any rate to confirm—leadership over the tribe. The primitive chief and the primitive priest thus became combined in the one person, a reminiscence of which is seen in the doctrine of the divine right of kings, the identification of the king with the headship of a State religion, and, in a milder degree, in the religious adulation paid to monarchs. Social growth leads here, as elsewhere, to a division of labor or function. Gradually chieftainship becomes more concerned with the secular affairs of the tribe or State. Spiritual matters become the concern of specialists in the art—a specialism that involves often great powers of self-deception, and a cunning quick to take advantage of coincidences and of the general ignorance. In this way primitive ignorance creates gods, while primitive fear and credulity credits a class with a more complete knowledge of their desires and a greater influence over their action. And, finally, social growth separates this class into a distinct social group, and a priesthood makes its ill-fated appearance in the theatre of human history.

Social development thus creates a distinct priesthood by separating the secular and religious functions. The former is concerned with matters that all men may understand, the latter with matters of which only a few can claim comprehension. But secular affairs have the inevitable habit of encroaching on what I have called, with a sacrifice of strict accuracy so far as primitive communities are concerned, spiritual concerns. Time after time experience shows that events which have been attributed to the agency of the gods are the outcome of natural and humanly controllable forces. Increasing knowledge gives man a sense of dignity and power that to some extent steels him against the threats of the magic-worker. The priest, on his side, realises that knowledge is the greatest enemy to his pretensions, and hates it with all the virulence of a threatened interest. Knowledge for his own use, and because of the power it gives him over others, he may value, but its manipulation must remain in his own hands. The Genesiac command that man should not eat of the tree of knowledge lest he became the equal of God expresses a truth illustrated by every priesthood that the world has ever seen.

Against the encroachments of knowledge the priest erects barriers of mystery and of fear. Men fear what they do not understand, and venerate a mystery in proportion to their timidity. While developing thought is filling man with a sense of the power of knowledge, the priest is impressing him with the immensity of his ignorance. Knowledge fills man with the desire for more information; the priest dilates upon the uselessness of all inquiry. "Be strong" is the message from the one; "realise your weakness" is the message from the other. One inspires with the tonic of a promised success; the other debilitates with a prophecy of failure.

Every priest is a born mystery-monger; and his success, as a priest, is proportionate to his mastery of the art. Neither time, nor place, nor sect, makes any substantial difference in this respect. The earliest type of medicine-man began the game, and the latest up-to-date parson is still studying its rules and putting it into everyday practice. The primitive medicine-man marks certain things as taboo in order to keep laymen from coming at the truth. Contemporary medicine-men are playing the same game. A church or chapel is a place that one must enter with a certain prescribed air of reverence. The Bible is a book that must be handled in a differer' spirit

to that in which other books are handled. If we talk about Jesus, or God, or a future life, we must not use quite the same freedom of expression that we exercise in talking of other subjects. These are sacred places, or sacred subjects—in a word, they are taboo. And the object of this taboo is the same now as it was in the more primitive times. If we discussed Jesus as we discuss other characters; if we talked about the Bible as we do about other books, people would not be long in discovering how much nonsense is taught them about both. If we entered a church in the same frame of mind that we enter any other building, we should not be long in detecting the unreality and stupidity of the service. In cultivating a stereotyped "reverential" frame of mind, we administer a narcotic to the critical capacity. We acknowledge the taboo and admit the mystery. The priest has substantially achieved his aim. He has induced us to mark off certain things to which we must not apply ordinary rules of reasoning, or deal with in the ordinary manner. There is an unbroken continuity between the methods of the primitive medicine-man and his most modern representative. Whatever difference there may be in form, in substance there is no change.

The special dress, the special manner, the special jargon of the priest, all illustrate this. Forms of speech that are obsolete in other departments of life still flourish in connection with religion. The priest must wear a special dress, whether he be a Red Indian medicine man wearing his sacerdotal paint and feathers, or a clergyman habited in his vestments. As a priest, he claims a distinct place in the social structure, and does this in virtue of a peculiar selection by God. And in this, again, he is demonstrating the continuity of his kind. The savage commences the game with his misunderstanding of simple physical states, and the creation of abnormal psychic states through fasting and the use of drugs. If he proceeds by dreams and visions and supernatural intercourse, he is acting as do our own clergy with their "call to service." Everything that can be done is done to make man feel powerless in the face of an assumed overpowering mystery, and to cause him to turn for help to a body of men whose trade is to create mysteries and who live by their perpetuation.

The game of mystery-mongering is not alone played in this direct form. It meets us in a more indirect manner. In order to prevent life escaping from his control the priest claims a suzerainty over whole branches of knowledge. Science, he has been forced to admit, has shown the priestly explanation of whole tracts of nature to be wrong. So, he says, science may explain the mere mechanism of things, but the deeper and ultimately satisfying explanation of existence lies with religion. Science is, at its utmost development, brought up against a mystery to which religion holds the key. It is sheer nonsense. Nearly all they talk about as mysteries are non-existent, except to the theologian. Science has many problems but no mysteries. And even though mysteries did exist religion gives no solution to them. Nothing but the antiquity of the priestly game, and the solemn manner in which it is played, can account for the acceptance of the absurdity that priests can succeed where men of science fail. Consider the supreme impudence of the claim that a body of men who, except in rare instances, are disqualified by nature and training from exact observation or accurate thinking, possess the key to problems that baffle a body of skilled scientific workers. Once upon a time, the priest claimed some influence in directing weather and in controlling the harvest. The futility of the claim is now plain to all; but it is the assertion of the claim that religion possesses the clue to "mysteries" that baffle science.

As with science, so with life in general. Among savages a war cannot be undertaken, a hunt arranged, crops sown, or the normal affairs of life followed without the priest being called in for his advice. The same thing, in an attenuated form, is still with us. We have special prayers at spring-

time and harvest time. We have armies and ships blessed by our medicine-men, and prayers offered for their success. In peace and war the priest is to the front offering his advice, his patronage, his intercessory power with the deity, with an implied promise of failure if he is ignored. We laugh at the savage for his dependence upon his wizard and priest and for his trust in charms. Are we really any better with our pretended trust in the clergy and their office? Intellectually we are better than the savage, because as a body of people we really do not believe that the clergy have any power not possessed by the ordinary man. Morally, we are worse than the savage because of the widespread hypocrisy that results from seeing one thing and doing another.

The peculiar thing is that with all their boast of being able to solve mysteries, priests never do so. They have been called—by themselves—the guardians of the mysteries, and the title is happy and accurate. Their function is to guard them—that is, to prevent their exposure by critical examination. Under their guardianship mystery does not diminish, it grows. It is a plant they cultivate with the utmost assiduity, and plant cuttings wherever there is a chance of them taking root.

This mystery-mongering is without doubt the oldest and most profitable game on earth. By its aid, all over the world, and from the earliest ages, a numerous priesthood has saddled itself on the people. And they have been at once the least productive and the most expensive of all the interests that have flourished in human society. If one could add together the time and labor and money spent in erecting temples and churches to fabulous deities, the obstruction offered by the priesthoods of the world to advance in knowledge and civilisation, the ill-feeling perpetuated by them between people of different creeds, and the actual bloodshed caused by their influence, the sum would represent a mass of wasted energy, obstruction, and cruelty such as can be placed to the credit of no other order of human beings. It has exacted toll of the living in the name of both the quick and the dead. Nothing has been safe from the rapacity of the priest, nothing secure against his machinations. Against one thing only is he powerless, and that is the slow but inevitable development of the race. Against this even the mystery-monger is ultimately powerless. Human fear and ignorance and credulity are weeds that are most difficult to eradicate, but the weedicide of knowledge is not without its effect. Here and there a part of the garden is cleared and way made for the blooming of more desirable plants. The clearing of the human garden is a slow and lengthy process, but it is being accomplished; and with its completion mystery-mongering will remain only as a traditional memory of an uncivilised past.

C. COHEN.

### Little Knowledge and Atheism.

THE Rev. Dr. Horton, like his Holiness the Pope, always acts on the presumption that, as a religious teacher, he is incapable of error. It must be admitted, at once, that a Bible Christian is fully justified in so acting, and would be guilty of disloyalty to his Lord were he to speak on any other assumption. The Gospel Jesus assured his followers that after his departure they would receive the Holy Spirit, and that "when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth" (John xvi. 13). A Christian, then, is a person who possesses and knows all the truth; and, as Archbishop Tillotson observes, "infallibility is the highest perfection of the knowing faculty." In point of fact, however, Dr. Horton, like the Pope, is one of the most fallible of men. Many of his *ex cathedra* utterances are characterised by great inaccuracy and stupidity. In a lecture, which appears in the *Christian World Pulpit* for May 24, he confidently asserts that "science justifies religion, and even demands it." Such a statement is

so extremely wild and irresponsible that it needs no refutation. It has never entered into the head of science even to attempt the justification of religion, though religion has, of late, made strenuous efforts to justify itself in the sight of science. In the days of its weakness science was systematically persecuted by religion; but now that it has become dominant, religion cringes in its presence, offering to surrender or radically modify this, that, and the other dogma in order to come to terms with it. In the same lecture we come across this other ineffably absurd utterance:—

"The reason why many scientific men are not believers is that they are not scientific enough; they are only the second-rate minds; they can only see a part of the thing and not the whole; but whenever a mind of the first order is discovered at work in science, that mind is always reverential and essentially believing."

That ignorant assertion is flimsily based on the fact that Lord Kelvin, who is said to have been "the greatest man of science amongst us in the nineteenth century, that most scientific of centuries, and yet the century which is considered to be the most sceptical, the most disturbing and the most inimical to faith, was, from first to last, in theory and in practice, a humble Christian man." Lord Kelvin's eminence as a physicist is beyond controversy; but whether or not he is entitled to take rank as the greatest scientist of the nineteenth century is a highly debatable point. Many of us are firmly convinced that the first place belongs to Charles Darwin; but the matter is really of no consequence whatever. What Dr. Horton claims, by implication, is that Darwin had only a second-rate mind, while Lord Kelvin's mind was of the first order; and this distinction between the two great scientists rests mainly upon their difference of attitude to religion. Kelvin's mind was of the first order simply because he was "a humble Christian," and Darwin's was second-rate solely because he avowed himself an Agnostic. Do the working people of Hampstead allow such spurious reasoning to influence their judgment?

This is how Dr. Horton puts Lord Kelvin's Theistic argument:—

"It was Kelvin's teaching that science positively affirms a Creative Power; the fact of a Creator, of a Creative Power, was proved, he maintained, by two points in the inorganic world, to mention only two. First, Fourier's equation for the flow of heat requires a beginning, an initiation; and, secondly, the permanence of the atoms as a vortex of motion could not be produced by any known animate or inanimate agency."

It should be borne in mind that although Lord Kelvin believed that matter owes its existence to the action of a Creative Power, he was yet strongly in favor of seeking natural solutions of the various problems presented to science, and vehemently denounced the pietistic habit of "invoking an abnormal act of Creative Power." In a letter to the *Times* in 1903, he expressed himself thus:—

"I desire to point out that while 'fortuitous concurrence of atoms' is not an inappropriate description of the formation of a crystal, it is utterly absurd in respect to the coming into existence, or the growth, or the continuation of the molecular combinations presented in the bodies of living things. Here scientific thought is compelled to accept the idea of Creative Power. Though inorganic phenomena do not do so, yet the phenomena of such living things as a sprig of moss, a microbe, a living animal—looked at and considered as matters of scientific investigation—compel us to conclude that there is scientific reason for believing in the existence of a Creative and Directive Power; and modern biologists are coming once more to a firm acceptance of something, and that is—a vital principle."

Two statements in that communication arrest attention. The first is that the phenomena of the inorganic world do not compel us to believe in a Creative Power, as it is quite possible that they are all produced by the "fortuitous concurrence of atoms," whatever that may be. The second statement is that while physics knows nothing of a Creative and Directive Power, yet biology renders

belief in it an absolute necessity. Both statements are unscientific, and the second is also false. Three distinguished biological experts, Sir W. T. Thiselton-Dyer, Sir J. Burdon-Sanderson, and Sir E. Ray Lankester condemned them as wholly unworthy of Lord Kelvin. The first-named gentlemen, the well-known botanist, charged his lordship with having endeavored to "wipe out by a stroke of the pen the whole position won for us by Darwin," and Dr. Burdon-Sanderson referred to the demonstration which had already convinced physiologists that "the natural laws which had been established in the inorganic world govern no less absolutely the processes of animal and plant life, thus giving the death-blow to the previously prevalent vitalistic doctrine that these operations are dominated by laws which are special to themselves." Even Sir Oliver Lodge joined his lordship's critics, and deprecated the employment of the two phrases, "fortuitous concurrence of atoms," and "Creative Power."

Surely, nothing is more indisputable than that Lord Kelvin, whenever he undertook the defence of Theism, became unscientific. As Sir E. Ray Lankester said at the time, what is most surprising is that his lordship's "curious conception of the action of Creative Power" should ever have been thought to be of value to religion. Here was a renowned physicist who, while prepared to attribute all the phenomena that came under observation in his own department of science, yet maintained that all the operations of animal and plant life are held by biologists to be due to the action of "a Creative and Directive Power," a representation which the biologists themselves hastened to repudiate with scorn. All this is conveniently ignored by Dr. Horton, who only concerns himself with the simple fact that this great scientist was yet a humble Christian, a fact which is, of course, evidentially of absolutely no value. What throws the reverend gentleman into ecstasy is the wonderful phenomenon of a man of such consummate knowledge of the physical universe being at the same time a Christian believer. Then he adds, on the authority of Bacon: "It is the little knowledge that leads to Atheism; it is the deeper knowledge which leads you back to God." But it was not from the science in which he was a master, but from a science which he had never specially studied, that Lord Kelvin derived his argument for Theism. His faith rested, not upon knowledge, but upon gross ignorance and misrepresentation. It was the little knowledge, or, rather, the false knowledge, that accounted for his belief in God. Dr. Horton calls him "the Newton of the Molecular Theory," a characterisation which we have no desire to question; but "the Newton of Biology," Charles Darwin, whose knowledge of animal and plant life was greater than that of any other man of his day, discerned no trace or sign of the presence of "a Creative and Directive Power" in vital processes. The significant fact here is that when he started on his illustrious biological career he was a zealous Christian, but that in proportion as his knowledge widened and deepened his faith languished; and the process continued until there was not a shred of faith left. To say that Darwin lost his faith because he was not "scientific enough," as Dr. Horton inferentially does, is sheer nonsense. No one could have been more severely scientific than the discoverer of evolution; and yet the more arduously he studied science the more sceptical he became. Less than a year before he died, he wrote thus to W. Graham about his book, the *Creed of Science*, which had just been published:—

"You would not probably expect anyone fully to agree with you on so many abstruse subjects; and there are some points in your book which I cannot digest. The chief one is that the existence of so-called natural laws implies purpose. I cannot see this. Not to mention that many expect that the several great laws will some day be found to follow inevitably from some one single law, yet taking the laws as we now know them, and look at the moon, where the law of gravitation—and no doubt of the conservation of energy

—of the atomic theory, etc., etc., hold good, and I cannot see that there is then necessarily any purpose. Would there be purpose if the lowest organisms alone, destitute of consciousness, existed in the moon?" (*Life*, pp. 63, 64.)

The more knowledge people acquire the less faith they are able to cherish. This is why the overwhelming majority of scientists are unbelievers, and this is why the Churches are ceasing to be a power in the world. Natural knowledge is bound eventually to kill supernatural beliefs; and, then, in the absence of Theism, Atheism shall have done its work and ceased to be. Meanwhile, there is some comfort to be got out of the following estimate of Atheism by the great Bacon:—

"Atheism leaves a man to sense, to philosophy, to natural piety, to laws, to reputation: all which may be guides to an outward moral virtue, though religion were not; but superstition dismounts all these, and erecteth an absolute monarchy in the minds of men. Therefore Atheism did never perturb states, for it makes men wary of themselves, as looking no further: and we see the times inclined to Atheism (as the time of Augustus Caesar) were civil times."

J. T. LLOYD.

### The Future of Freethought in Spain.

AS has been remarked repeatedly, and with very great truth, in these columns, the contest for the possession of the mind of the nations of what is known as the civilised world lies in the future between Rome and Reason.

The Church of Rome, with its age-long and marvellous experience and organisation, is the only form of Christianity calculated to put up a really formidable fight against what Cardinal Newman, in *The Grammar of Assent*, called "the corrosive action of Reason" on faith.

Wherever Catholicism is in power, partially as in England, or entirely as in Spain, she safeguards her children by keeping from them all knowledge of the results of modern research. By her Index of books she limits their literature to the strictest works of orthodoxy or innocuousness. Through that all-powerful engine the confessional she assures herself of their obedience to the decrees of the Index.

And by controlling to the utmost of her power the education of the young, she trains them to regard with pious horror and dread all reading, or even conversation, having the slightest tendency towards heterodoxy.

In such countries as Spain, Portugal, and most of the Central and South American Republics, she has on her side the enormous advantage of the illiteracy of more than half the population.

In such countries she has been able to create a public opinion which renders it highly perilous, and certainly detrimental, to venture on the smallest manifestation of Freethought.

One of the most popular and widely distributed books in Spanish-speaking countries is a work of a Jesuit, entitled *El Liberalismo es pecado* ("Liberalism is sin"), in which it is taught with the fullest of ecclesiastical authority that liberalism, whether in politics or literature, is a sin worthy of eternal damnation.

The effect of such an authoritative denunciation upon minds predisposed to reverence and hold in awe the utterances of the Church from their infancy may be imagined. The author of this book received the special blessing of the late Pope Leo XIII. on himself and his work. It is circulated in editions of all prices, from a penny upwards. To counteract the influence of such liberal literature as is contrived to be disseminated in these countries, those indefatigable protagonists of the Church of Rome, the Jesuits, have founded what is called *El Apostolado de la Prensa* (the Apostleship of the Press), a society which, by means of voluntary subscriptions, is enabled to issue apologetic works and works of piety under cost price—cheaper, if possible, than our Bible

Societies issue the Scriptures. Workmen's clubs have been started, under priestly guidance, where these publications may be read as in a free library. No effort is spared to make these clubs attractive, and they are worked on the most modern lines. Employers are approached to induce them to give the preference to those who are members. Even night schools, where the elements of education are taught free, are often run in connection with them.

The Constitutions of these countries, the outcome of revolution, in which perfect freedom of opinion and State education are decreed, have largely remained a dead letter outside the big cities, mainly through the notorious corruption of public officials and the apathy or bigotry of the people.

Booksellers are still liable to a ruinous boycott if they dare to undertake the sale of literature not approved of by the Church.

It would seem, then, that the outlook for Free-thought in Spanish-speaking countries is a poor one. And so it is if compared with that in other countries. Yet, counting the tremendous obstacles with which it is faced, it is in reality making very encouraging progress.

The writer has lived nearly eight years in Spain, and on one occasion met and conversed with the ill-fated Senor Ferrer. From him he gathered many particulars concerning the advance of Secularism, which seemed practically confined to the towns; but there, by force of organisation, it certainly, by his report, was making steady progress. His death, if anything, gave the cause greater impetus, and a much-needed notoriety. It cannot now, as formerly, be ignored.

The influence and example of France has had a great effect upon Spain of late, and the influx of refugee monks and nuns has greatly tended to turn the minds of the thoughtful against the Church. The secular teachers feel that they have an added and serious grievance against the religious who are competing with them on unfavorable terms, and as many of the houses subsist by commercial enterprises, business men have begun to make similar complaints. All this will undoubtedly bring about repressive measures on the part of the Government such as have occurred in France.

The Church is here making the same fatal mistake she has made elsewhere. In trying to aggrandise herself at the expense of the community and to appropriate the national wealth, she will bring about her own overthrow. Time after time she has been cast out, yet each time she returns, often on sufferance, like the Bourbons to France, having learnt nothing from former disaster.

She is fast coming to that stage when it may be said, "Give her enough rope and she will hang herself." There is, beyond any question, even with the peasantry, a new spirit—and one by no means favorable to the Church—rising among the people. The writer, even though a priest, has been repeatedly told this by Spaniards, and has witnessed it himself and heard its expression among the people. But the great and real obstacle to the progress of Free-thought among thoughtful and law abiding people, is its too frequent association with politics—particularly of an Anarchistic tendency. The writer urged this in the above-mentioned conversation with Senor Ferrer, but with little effect. The answer was, that under the present political conditions in the Peninsula it was hopeless to look for any opportunity of advance, and that only in an alliance with the forces of revolution, pacific or otherwise, may freedom of thought and education be expected.

This obviously raises up a very formidable foe to Free-thought, viz., the spirit of Patriotism, nowhere stronger than in Spain, and subordinately, likewise, the feeling of loyalty to monarchic institutions. So long as the cause of Secularism is identified in men's minds with bomb-throwing and assassination, it will fail to win the support and allegiance of all those who value public order and safety.

It may be easily imagined that the clergy lose no opportunity of drawing the moral; and whilst

extolling the moral force of religion, point out the disastrous qualities of infidel teachings. In such countries as Spain, it is not hard to enforce the conviction that these latter are the inevitable outcome of the abandonment of Catholicism.

It is in all Christian countries a favorite statement that morality is entirely dependent on religion, and that the abandonment of the one necessarily implies the loss of the other.

The task of the Secularist is thus rendered immeasurably more difficult when, in spite of the true state of the case, facts seem to point all against his claims that his cause is beneficial to society.

Although the average Englishman is generally convinced that he enjoys greater liberty than the subjects of other Governments, he hardly realises to how great an extent this is the case.

It has been very truly said that a nation gets the government it deserves. If the continental races, especially the Latin portion, really had the true spirit of independence and liberty, they would, without any bloodshed, be able to vindicate their rights; but, in the writer's experience, they are very much lacking in powers of organisation; and public opinion, that all-powerful factor in reform, scarcely exists for any practical purposes. Only a powerful and really free press can create this latter, and that has yet to come.

One more serious hindrance to the progress of education, and consequently of Free-thought, is the poverty of the mass of the people. Whilst they are continually striving to earn a bare subsistence, they will have neither the time nor inclination to think and read.

Since the Spanish-American War of 1898, Spain has undoubtedly improved her commercial position, and it is in this growth of national wealth and business activity that the writer sees the best and soundest hopes for the future. Commerce is the royal road to freedom. The renaissance was very largely due to the inhabitants of free towns, made so by their commercial wealth; and in proportion as the ancient cities of Spain and Portugal awake from their lethargy and take their part in the list of the world's marts, so will the spirit of liberty and freedom of thought arise and flourish.

W. MORITZ WESTON.

## Religion and Cobwebs.

SPRING has come, and not long ago the gardening instinct led me to open the door of a tool-shed which had been closed during the months of winter. What a disclosure! The spiders had been busy, and a network of dusty cobwebs linked every article together, and filled every crack and corner in the walls.

I was in no mood for reflection just then. I dusted my tools and finished my gardening. But in the pleasant evening, as I lounged lazily in my easiest easy chair, listening to the trilling of a thrush in a neighboring tree, toying with the big ears of a brown spaniel at my side, and sucking affectionately at my sweetest pipe, I became moody. My thoughts wandered back to the unclean accumulations in the tool-shed, and I moralised upon the resemblances between those dusty cobwebs and the many religious institutions that had come within my ken.

Cobwebs and religions are not supernatural phenomena. They have been produced by the labors of spiders and men. They are manufactured articles, designed for specific purposes, and useful only so long as they fulfil those purposes. Their principal function seems to be that of a trap. Both are flimsy artifices to ensnare the simple and unwary. Cobwebs are very beautiful to look upon, and extremely delicate in their workmanship, and some religious institutions are fearfully and wonderfully made; but both are deadly to the flies and men entangled therein. The ingenious spider deposits at intervals

in his net little blobs of gum, and the equally ingenious religionist little blobs of dogma, and it is upon these that the unfortunate victims come to grief.

Spiders and religionists hate disturbances. Their traps most abound in dark corners, in out-of-the-way situations, in places where agitation is not likely to intrude. Light and movement are their deadly enemies. The free circulation of fresh air is as destructive to cobwebs as the free circulation of fresh ideas is to religion.

Examine an old cobweb, and you will find specimens of its victims hung round its walls. They are useless; they have had the life sucked from them; they are dead. Examine a religious organisation, and you will find the same decorations. You will discover dried-up deacons and shrivelled Sunday-school superintendents—mere mental carcasses—hanging in the fabric as honorable certificates of past successes. If only live flies and live men were wise enough to let these ornaments serve as danger signals, spiders and churches would soon become extinct. Even now it is among the young and unsophisticated flies and tender children—captured before they have learnt the ways of the world—that spiders and religionists find their chief prey.

The destruction of cobwebs never fails to cause commotion among the occupants. They rush about in great excitement, and literally tumble over one another in their indignation at what they are pleased to call "unwarranted interference with their rights and privileges." Material sanitary services are as hateful to spiders as mental sanitary services to religionists; but both are highly essential to the sweetness and health of the world. As long as there are spiders we shall need housemaids.

But spiders—both arachnoid and human—are nothing if not enterprising, and the removal of cobwebs and religious entanglements is only the signal for the construction of new ones. For it is argued, with characteristic conceit and blindness, that these gossamers are the most important contrivances in existence.

Yet all spiders and all religionists agree that there are too many cobwebs and too many religions, and every manufacturer is envious of hostile organisations. Every spider wants to reduce the competition for the flies; and every religionist spends the major portion of his time and energy in endeavoring to brush away the nets of his neighbors, while assiduously weaving his own. He is at once a spider and a housemaid! If he is very zealous he will visit every country under the sun in order to spoil the existing cobwebs and replace them by his own manufactures.

There are other analogies which I doubt not the intelligent readers of this journal (and there can be no others) will be able to discover for themselves. And I trust they will permit me one word of advice. The destruction of religious cobwebs is a thankless and well-nigh useless task, and the laws of the twentieth century are too humane to permit the wholesale removal of religious spiders. *But Free-thought should concentrate on the education of the flies.*

R. NORTH.

#### THE ROMANCE OF A SIGN-POST.

"Pray tell me, doves, which is my road,"  
Inquired the supercilious toad.  
Replied to him a cuddling dove,  
"We only know the road to Love."

#### AN OVERSUPPLY.

It is said that never was there a gentler critic than Dr. McClintock of Dickinson College. One day a young orator presented his speech for Dr. McClintock's approval. He evidently did not anticipate adverse criticism.

He received it nevertheless, given in the Doctor's gentle, humorous way, which never could offend.

"It's a good speech," he said, "but there is, perhaps, a little too much of a certain sort of rhetoric. For instance, I find in it two midnight owls, two midnight wolves, three American eagles and four unfurled banners. It seems to me that the supply exceeds the demand."

## Acid Drops.

We understood that Lord Charles Beresford was a teetotaler. But was he so at that dinner the other evening when he told the guests that Jonah navigated the first submarine and that Elijah was the first aviator? These statements provoked much laughter. Had they come from our lips they would have been shockingly blasphemous. Circumstances alter cases.

The General Presbyterian Assembly which met recently at Atlantic City, New Jersey, had a heresy case before it. Rev. Dr. William Grant, of Northumberland, Pennsylvania, was accused of entertaining some horribly wicked opinions. He believed that Satan never sat Christ on a pinnacle of the Temple, as there wasn't room for him there; that the parting of the Red Sea waters was not a miracle, but a natural event; that Christ did not plan the crucifixion, but met death at the hands of a mob of fanatics; that the snake-story is only a parable; that Jonah never existed; and that Ananias and Sapphira died of apoplexy or heart failure because they were caught in a lie. It is really difficult to say what ought to be done with such an infamous heretic as Dr. Grant. Hanging is too good for him. A man who alleges that Jonah never existed is capable of anything.

Rev. Dr. Horton, in a letter to the *Westminster Gazette*, tries to explain "the steady and almost uniform decline of the membership in the Free Churches." He mentions the New Theology—and the Old Theology, Christian Science, Theosophy, and other causes; but he never mentions Free-thought. That is a thing which simply mustn't be alluded to; besides, it wouldn't do to confess that Churches are being deserted because people are ceasing to believe in Christianity.

We don't see that we can very well avoid giving the Rev. Dr. Warschauer what he asks for. What he asks for may be seen from the following paragraph which appears in "Church Notes" in the June number of a program issued in connection with the Horton-lane Congregational Church, Bradford, of which he is pastor:—

"So much interest has been evinced in Dr. Warschauer's recent public debate with Mr. G. W. Foote, the Atheist editor of the *Freethinker*, that Messrs. H. R. Allenson, Ltd., have published an account of the discussion from the pen of Dr. Warschauer, under the title of 'The Atheist's Dilemma.' It will be remembered that Mr. Foote was confronted by his opponent with eight plain questions, to which he declined to give any answer, on the surprising plea that he had not been 'advised' of them beforehand; those who wish to convince themselves of the intellectual incompetence of Atheism will have an opportunity of doing so by perusing this brochure, which reproduces Dr. Warschauer's opening speech, and then proceeds to deal with Mr. Foote's methods and arguments. Copies will be obtainable at sixpence each in the vestibule, and may be ordered beforehand."

It will be apparent to those of our readers who have followed the facts of this case that Dr. Warschauer is guilty of something far worse than "intellectual incompetence." We shall have to show, since he challenges us on the point, that he is deficient in common decency and common honesty. It is he that will be in an awkward "dilemma" when we have done with him. His pamphlet will be dealt with in our next issue. Dr. Warschauer has not had the good taste to send us a copy of his personal attack, and we find on application at the publishers' that it will not be obtainable from them until Thursday, when this week's *Freethinker* will itself be on sale.

*John Bull* calls attention to Archdeacon Hall, of Ripon, who draws three salaries for preaching the religion of poverty; as Canon, £500; as Archdeacon, £200; as Vicar of Methley, Leeds, £900; the total being £1,600 a year. Not bad, for one of the "blessed be ye poor" gentlemen. But this particular case is not so exceptional as our contemporary seems to think.

According to the New Theology organ religion (of some sort) has a great future. "The possibility," it says, "of a synthesis of all religions and a faith that will unite all humanity is more and more engaging the minds of thoughtful people." We gather from the rest of the paragraph that a good deal depends on Mrs. Besant. That shows us what to expect.

May we suggest that the only religion that will unite all humanity is the Religion of Humanity? But that is not what the New Theology people want. They must have the ancient superstitions of God, Immortality, and Free Will, however diluted to make them tolerable to modern palates.

"We have been compelled," a Christian contemporary says, "to hold over till next week our report of Dr. Orchard's address on 'The Origin of Evil in the Cosmos.'" We reckon it will keep. Theologians have been debating and dogmatising about that question for thousands of years, and we don't suppose that Dr. Orchard has received a special revelation. Yes, it will keep.

"What is wrong with the Church?" asks the Rev. J. M. Lloyd Thomas. The true answer is very simple. It can be put in either of two ways, or in both together:—"Found Out" and "Played Out."

One of the pious dodges by which the Christians multiply themselves without increasing their numbers is the Brotherhood movement. How much *brotherhood*, apart from religious bigotry, there is in this movement may be seen by its calling upon its members to "aid the authority in securing the enforcement" of the "new regulations of the L.C.C. for governing Sunday picture shows." Those regulations are perfectly hypocritical. Their object, of course, is to shut the shows up on Sundays. To do that by express order is too bold a step, so the regulations are framed not to make the shows impossible, but to make them extremely difficult. To pretend otherwise is sheer humbug. Who on earth can believe that a lot of men like the Moderate majority on the London County Council really object to money being made on any day of the week? They simply want to oblige the clergy and the Sabbatarians generally. It would look too Sabbatarian to say that picture shows shall not be open at all on Sunday. They adopt the device, therefore, of prohibiting the lessees and proprietors from running their own shows on Sundays. The shows must be run on that day, if at all, by amateur committees in the name of charity. The lessees and proprietors may take rent but not profit. What a ridiculous and contemptible shuffle!

It is a pity that Mr. Keir Hardie cannot leave his dead father and mother alone. He is a professed Christian and they were Secularists. To the very day of their death—both died within a few hours of each other—they were members of the Glasgow Branch of the National Secular Society, and their modest subscriptions used to be seen in the special lists published from time to time in the *Freethinker*. Again and again we have accused Mr. Hardie of insulting his parents. He has a positive itch for dragging their names before more or less orthodox audiences, and making them serve the turn of the religion they despised. He repeated this offence at the recent Campbellite gathering in Manchester. We take the following from the Campbellite organ's report of his speech at the Chorlton Town Hall:—

"I am old enough to remember the time [he continued] when what was called Christianity was just about as repulsive a doctrine as the mind of man ever conceived." He pictured to us a deputation which came to wait upon his father to convince him that God had manifested his greatness by appointing a certain number of people before the beginning of the world to go to heaven and shutting out the rest. Rather than accept that libel upon God, and knowing of nothing else, his father frankly preferred to be called an Atheist. Undoubtedly it was deep religious feeling that drove him outside the churches. We had to thank men like Mr. Campbell for restating in its pristine purity the religion of Christ."

How old Mr. Hardie would have laughed at the idea that it was "deep religious feeling that drove him out of the churches." Mr. Keir Hardie may not know it—and perhaps his ignorance is natural—that his father had a head and thought with it. He worked his way mentally outside all religions. He would no more have accepted the Campbellite faith than any other. Nor was that faith unknown to him. It existed then as it does now; for it is simply Unitarianism under another name. Finally, we beg to tell Mr. Keir Hardie that he insults his father's intelligence by saying that he "knew nothing else" than Scottish Presbyterian Calvinism. He evidently feels that his father's Atheism is a thing to be minimised; so with strange filial piety he makes the old man out to have been a sort of half-witted ignoramus—whereas he was really a man of strong intelligence and most sterling character. He bore himself honestly through life—he had no axe to grind—and if he had he would certainly never have ground it on his father's tombstone.

Mr. Keir Hardie's mind is just suited to the Campbellite theology. He is incapable of detecting its flabby sentimentality. Just think for a moment of his calling it a "libel upon God" to declare that he appointed a certain number of people to go to heaven and shut all the rest out. Why, that is exactly what God does in this world, if he does anything in any world. Does not Mr. Keir Hardie go about complaining that some people enjoy heaven in this world

while other people suffer hell? Doesn't he virtually declare that it is hardly worth while to keep this world going unless the wretched state of things upon it can be radically improved? Doesn't he preach a crusade against the present abominable condition of things? In other words, doesn't he preach a crusade against the policy and program of God? The only possible answer to this is that God is unable to get his own way in this world, and is relying on the help of the Campbell and Hardie syndicate. That answer seems to be gravely entertained by Mr. Keir Hardie. It would have sent his father laughing from one end of Argyl-street to the other.

Is it too much to hope that in any real reform of the House of Lords reformers will keep an eye on the Bench of Bishops? We may be sure that an effort will be made to retain their presence, and Nonconformist hostility could be easily quieted by permitting two or three leading Dissenters to sit by their side. One cannot depend upon any devotion to principle from that quarter. Yet the giving of legislative functions to heads of a Church, as such, involves a principle that is completely opposed to modern and progressive ideas. Originally the king invited the attendance of the bishops, as of others, because they represented a certain section of the community. Then, when Protestantism created a State Church—a phenomenon that we owe to Protestantism—the bishops claimed a legal right to sit. And of course those who believe in the principle of a State Church will still uphold that right. But those who do not believe in that principle ought to make a strenuous fight against its perpetuation in the shape of elevation to legislative power of a body of men who, by nature, training, and self-interest, are pretty sure to be found with the wrong side on critical occasions.

Lord Justice Kennedy says it is necessary that men ordained to the priesthood should be men of intellect and ability such as would guarantee them an average success in any secular profession. Should be! Justice Kennedy has evidently been looking over the clerical profession and noting its deficiencies.

The Dean of Canterbury advises the clergy to teach the people that the Bible is true, and true every bit of it. Excellent advice, from the Dean's point of view. But how if the people will not have it so? What then? We all know the adage regarding the number of people required to lead a horse to the water, and the number required to make him drink; and the Dean seems to be running against a similar proposition. The truth is that the people—or a goodly proportion—rightly regard with suspicion the deliverances of the clergy on such a subject. They know that the clergy are the last people in the world to tell them the truth about the Bible, and they no more expect it from the clergy than they expect a lawyer to tell the truth about his client. And we venture to say that the proportion of lawyers who refuse to take up a case because of their opinion about the proposed client is much larger than the number of clergymen who throw up their jobs because of doubts about the genuineness of their message. We have no doubt that the clergy will go on teaching that the Bible is true, and we are equally convinced that the people will go on disbelieving it.

The Home for (Jewish) Converts and Inquirers (London) reports having trained and helped six hundred young men. We do not question the accuracy of the report, but what we should like to know is—how many of these remain Christians twelve months after help from the home has ceased?

Those who have kept an eye on Mr. R. J. Campbell will have noted that he is returning to the ranks of orthodoxy at a rather rapid rate. He probably lacks energy to maintain his heresies, and in this matter energy is more a matter of brain than of body. Physically weak men have often shown themselves able to maintain their opinions in the face of the bitterest opposition; average intellects, on the other hand, sooner or later submit to the pressure of established opinion. And established opinion tends to conquer average intellects because it is established. Special circumstances rouse some people to revolt, but when these have passed the normal and insistent pressure of opinion exerts itself, the rebel sinks back, almost unconsciously, into the ranks of the reactionaries. We have watched this process so often that we have ceased to be surprised at it.

Mr. Campbell, in his address to the Liberal Christian League at Manchester, dwelt upon what he called a "characteristic fallacy" of non-Christian thought. This assumed fallacy, put plainly, is that is there any reason to work for what we believe to be good if this life is all, or if one day

the human race will come to an end? He claims that he detected the weakness of this argument in his youth, for when he heard Huxley impress upon his hearers the duty of living for an ideal, he said to himself, "Why should I, if the whole thing is going out like a puff of smoke?" Well, we cheerfully agree that the thought is typically Christian, and is part of that intense but stupid egotism encouraged by Christianity. Mr. Campbell adds that the moment you realise that death ends *you*, and that death ultimately ends the race, "the bottom is knocked out of all your philosophising about abstract ideals and glorious futures." Well, it all depends. If the reason for right action is the reaping of a personal reward hereafter for not leading the career of a criminal here, or, as Spinoza put it, restraining our vices in this world in order to indulge them the more surely in the next, that may be true. But the fact is that neither good deeds are done nor ideals worked for from any such motive. Morality did not commence with the supernatural, although supernaturalism has always tried to establish a close connection with it. A parent's concern for children, a husband's concern for his wife, a friend's feeling for a friend, has not the remotest connection with whether they will live for ever, or whether the human race is eternal. It is enough that they are alive now, and that all are linked together by affection. The notion that goodness is worthless unless immortality is assured to all is one of those ideas that could only find lodgment in a brain diseased by supernaturalism. And yet people who argue as does Mr. Campbell have the impertinence to call other people pessimists.

We have before us a printed copy of an "International Hymn" that can be sung to "America" or "God Save the King." The author is George Huntington, and it has been sent round to the press by the Peace Society "at the request of Mr. Andrew Carnegie." A note in the top left-hand corner says: "Please apply for more, if desired." We don't apply for more. This copy is more than enough. The author is not a poet, in spite of a millionaire's recommendation, and there is too much piety in this sample of his handiwork. "God" looms large in the first and last of his four verses. According to the first, Great Britain and America have "one God." We suppose other nations have different deities. And the question arises, If Great Britain and the United States ever do fall out again (for you never can tell) how would they settle their respective shares of that "one God"?

Pope's noble lines, so splendidly praised by John Ruskin as "the most lofty expression of moral temper existing in English words":—

"Never elated, while one man's oppress'd;  
Never dejected, while another's bless'd."

were quoted by "J. B." in his last week's article in the *Christian World* as containing "the very essence of Christianity." What will Christian apologists find out next? "J. B." admits that Pope was "a most imperfect Christian." This is true as far as it goes. But the full truth is that Pope was not a Christian at all.

Rev. Dr. Aked has left New York for San Francisco. The church he has "signed on" to is not a large one—it only seats 700 people, and the pastor's salary hitherto has been only about £800 to £1,000 a year, but that has been doubled for Dr. Aked. His mind is set on doing big things in San Francisco, but he will have to work very hard to achieve any success. "There is probably no city in America," a *Christian World* writer says, "where organised Christianity is in a more depressing condition. It is literally fighting for its life. There are fewer churchgoers to-day than when the city had half its present population." Of the two, Dr. Aked and San Francisco, it is easy to see which is likely to wear out first.

A New York paper the other day referred to the Rev. Dr. Jowett as "Twelve thousand dollar pastor Jowett." The *Christian World* writer just quoted calls that "brutal." Why? Which half of the expression is brutal—the dollars or the pastor? Or does the brutality lie in the accurate linking of both?

The Christian Evidence Society—which is chiefly noticeable for its lack of evidence—held its annual conference the other day. During the course of the discussion Archdeacon Bearar said that "time had shown the failure of public debate as a method of advancing Christianity." We are of opinion that time has shown the failure of *everything* as a means of advancing Christianity. It is to be noted, however, that when Archdeacon Bearar referred to debate as failing to advance Christianity, he did not say that it failed to advance truth. That would have been a much more disputable proposition. As a matter of fact, every Christian

address—when it is not mere sermonising—is in essence a debate. The distinction between this and a formal debate is that in the first case the debate is conducted against an absent opponent, and in the second case the opponent is present, and is able to place his side of the case before the same audience. And Christians have, quite naturally, discovered that this is a game that brings them precious little profit. Their own supporters learn too much of the strength of Freethought, and Freethinkers realise more keenly than ever the weakness of Christianity. A much greater Christian than Archdeacon Bearar asked that truth and error might grapple in fair encounter. Our up-to-date Christian says, "For God's sake keep them apart." Well, well, if we had the misfortune to be a clergyman we might offer the same advice. As we have only the cause of truth at heart, we beg to differ from the worthy archdeacon as to the value of debate in advancing truth, while cordially endorsing its failure as a means of advancing Christianity.

Dr. Clifford has "begun his peace campaign" in America. Just like the Christians. Always behind date. The Arbitration Treaty between Great Britain and the United States is practically settled already. Dr. Clifford marches at the tail of the Peace procession—beating his big drum.

Burglars entered the house of the Rev. Francis Wrigley (Congregationalist), Beeston Hill, Leeds, and stole a quantity of silver, including several wedding presents. If the reverend gentleman had "followed Christ" a little closer he would have had no silver to steal. Nor would he prosecute the two men arrested on suspicion. He would call them into his house and say, "Gentlemen, you have reaped your harvest; now, please, do the gleaming."

Canon Hensley Henson, at a recent Presbyterian Missions meeting, held in the Queen's Hall, London, spoke of "the profound anxiety growing up among thoughtful men as they contemplated with failing heart the menace of a secularised and a westernly civilised East." The most dreadful word in this statement is "secularised"—and if "quaking Christians" be substituted for "thoughtful men" the case is easily intelligible. The only "menace" is the menace to Christianity. There is no menace to Europe as long as it minds its own business. But neither Heathen Japan nor Heathen China will stand any more Christian bullying—not to say Christian robbery.

Dr. R. F. Horton thinks it remarkable that the greatest man of science of the nineteenth century was from first to last, "in theory and in practice, a humble Christian man." We have no wish to contest Lord Kelvin's (he is the one to whom the tribute refers) claims to be considered a great man of science, but *the* greatest is a claim which, if it is to be established, would need much more authoritative testimony than that of Dr. Horton's. He thinks Lord Kelvin was the greatest *because* he was a Christian. Had he been a Freethinker, like so many other great scientists, Dr. Horton would not have been so sure of his greatness. Something might also be said as to the nature of Lord Kelvin's Christianity, and we believe that he was rather keen in securing patent rights, in contrast to the great founder of synthetic chemistry, who lived and died a Freethinker. But Dr. Horton's emphasis of Lord Kelvin's Christianity admits all, or nearly all, that a Freethinker might ask for. It is the rarity of a great scientist being a "humble Christian man" that has obviously led Dr. Horton to emphasise Lord Kelvin's case.

Of Lord Kelvin we may say as we have often said of others. First, his Christianity did not result from his science, it preceded it. Had he paid the same attention to the one that he paid to the other his religion might easily have been a minus quantity. The most that can be said is that he held to his religion despite his scientific eminence. Second, all the scientific learning of Lord Kelvin gave him no more right to speak with authority on the questions of God and a future life than anybody else possesses. Dr. Horton *knows* as much about these things as Lord Kelvin. Lord Kelvin knew as much as Dr. Horton. Anybody else knows as much as either—separately or in combination. Where no data exist, all the eminence in the world does not warrant an affirmation. Dr. Horton says, "The reason why many scientific men are not believers is that they are not scientific; they are only second-rate minds." Dr. Horton says so. It is enough. Our duty is to reverently listen and believe. Darwin, and Huxley, and Spencer, and Haeckel, and Metchnikoff, and Berthelot are only second-rate minds. It is a cocky little Hampstead gospel grinder who decides what place they shall fill in the world's roll of fame.



## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Lectures suspended for the present.)

### To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1911.—Previously acknowledged £240 5s. 9d. Received since:—A. J. Fincken, £5; V. Whitty, 2s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. Jas. Neate, £1; A. P., £2; T. H. Elstob, 10s.

DEBATE REPORT FUND.—T. H. Elstob, 5s.

S. C. CUDMORE (Rio de Janeiro).—You take no liberty. We are pleased to hear from the "saints." We have Father Bowden's book on the *Religion of Shakespeare*. It is not badly written, but its argument is terribly far-fetched. The chapter on Ethics is as loose as the rest of the volume. It is declared that "Shakespeare knew nothing of man's evolution from a brute." Yet on the very same page Hamlet's panegyric on man is quoted, in which he is called the "paragon of animals." We shall notice Father Bowden's book in our own work on Shakespeare.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings, etc.

V. WHITTY.—Number will be sent you if possible.

JAMES NEATE.—Thanks for the kind and encouraging letters from yourself and wife. We will do our best to give you both an opportunity of subscribing to the Fund for a good few years yet.

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

J. W. WHITE.—Pleased to have your thanks for what you call our "brilliant and able defence of Atheism."

J. TOMKINS.—We have been overwhelmed with copy lately—the debate alone blocking the way for four weeks. Your letter shall have attention.

H. HICKSON.—The Government pays for chaplains in the Army and Navy and in Prisons. It also pays considerable sums of money for religious purposes in British dependencies in various parts of the world, of which a return was made to the House of Commons not long ago. We will take the first opportunity of dealing with this matter at length. Of course the properties of the State Church in England, as in every other country, really belong to the State. The Church of England's revenues are chiefly due to Acts of Parliament which turned out Catholic priests and put Protestant parsons in their places.

A. WARNER.—There is truth in what you say. We shall see if the North of England cannot be shaken up a bit next winter.

W. P. ADAMSON.—Too late for this week; in our next.

T. W. HOMER.—Thanks for appreciation and good wishes, though we fear your letter is too flattering. The "Lost Tribes" craze is really too silly for criticism. Christians themselves laugh at it, so we needn't worry.

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.

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.

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.

Delegates and visitors attending the National Secular Society's Annual Conference to-day (Whit-Sunday) at Birmingham, will bear in mind that the Reception Room is at the Colonnade Hotel, New-street. It is quite close to the London and North Western Station and less than ten minutes' walk from the Great Western Station. Stewards, wearing the N. S. S. colors or badge, will be meeting all the principal trains on Saturday, and will do their best to find suitable hotel or other accommodation for delegates and visitors when they arrive. Those will be wisest who have apprised the Committee of their wants beforehand. The address of Mr. J. Partridge, the Branch secretary, is 183 Vauxhall-road. We believe a good many "saints" will be staying at the Colonnade.

The Conference will be held at the King's Hall, Corporation-street. Those attending it should try to be seated in their places by half-past ten, when the President's hammer will strike the table for the commencement of business. At half-past twelve there will be an adjournment till half-past two. At one o'clock the Conference luncheon will take place at the Colonnade Hotel. The evening public meeting starts at seven o'clock, and will probably last till nine—for there is a long list of speakers, such as Birmingham has few opportunities of hearing on a single occasion.

Full particulars of the Whit-Monday excursion to Stratford-on-Avon will be announced at the Conference. Meanwhile we may repeat that the 5s. 6d. ticket covers the return railway journey, a hot luncheon at Stratford, and a visit to

Shakespeare's birthplace and the memorial theatre and museum. Excursionists will obtain tea at their own pleasure.

A report of the Birmingham Conference, and of the excursion to Stratford-on-Avon, will appear in next week's *Freethinker*; that is to say, it will be begun next week, for it is too long for publication in one issue of this journal.

Miss Vance is still on the road to recovery and is making steady progress, but she will not be able to attend the N. S. S. Conference. Her place will be filled for the occasion by her devoted friend, Miss Kough. This is the first Conference that Miss Vance has missed during the twenty years of her secretaryship, and she feels it acutely; but her friends tell her that it may be looked at from another point of view.

A new writer appears in our pages this week. Mr. W. Moritz Weston, the author of the article on the "Future of Freethought in Spain," is a recruit to Freethought from the oldest and greatest of Christian Churches. Less than a year ago he was a Catholic priest. His mind had been outgrowing his faith for a considerable time, and at last, without the slightest bitterness of feeling, he felt obliged to terminate his connection with the Church he had served so devotedly as long as he retained confidence in her teachings. We hope to introduce him to the Freethought platform early in the autumn when the new lecture season commences. In the meanwhile he will contribute articles to the *Freethinker*.

Some years ago, when we were pleading for absolute justice to be shown to the Catholic Church in France under the Separation Act, and protesting against even a shadow of persecution, we were thanked for our impartial attitude by two thoughtful men. One we had known for some time. He had been a Catholic priest, and had served as Catholic chaplain in an English prison, for which he was enjoying a pension in retirement. His name was Frederic Bonte, and he was the author of a striking history of his religious development from Catholicism to Atheism, entitled *From Fiction to Fact*. The other was a Catholic priest in active service. He sent us a letter of warm thanks for our advocacy of fair play, even to our bitterest religious enemies. We printed his letter in the *Freethinker* at the time. His name was W. Moritz Weston. Any other attitude than the one we took might have disgusted him with Freethought. We are glad to reflect that, unknown to ourselves, we were helping to win over a valuable recruit by simply maintaining the unperverted principle of religious liberty. Even on the lowest ground, honesty is the best policy—after all.

We are glad to see that Councillor A. B. Moss, of Camberwell, whose name is known to our readers, has been protesting against the exclusion of a Christian Science book from the Free Library. This action was taken by the Libraries Committee at the instigation of a clergyman. Mr. Moss remarked that they might as well exclude the New Testament which teaches the same doctrine. Anyhow, Mr. Moss, as a good Freethinker, is in favor of equal rights for all opinions.

Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, in his recent speech as the guest of the evening at the Authors' Club dinner, let slip a personal confession. "I have been thinking," he said, "of the serious problems of life and death, and wrote to my daughter, 'I have signed a document which compels me to be cremated, and I will have no mocking ceremony round a claypit.'" If this means what at least ninety-nine people in every hundred will take it to mean, one can understand the great actor-manager's interest in Brieux's *False Gods*—the real title of which in French is *La Foi*, simply *Faith*.

We wish Sir Herbert Tree's statement as to the document he signed were really true. But it isn't. Someone has misled him. A living man can order that his body be given over to dissection, but he cannot order anything else. All he can do is to express a serious wish for his body to be cremated. More than that is "words, words, words." English law at present holds that the disposition of a dead body is a duty (and a right) that belongs to the living. They can dispose of it in any way they please that is recognised as legal.

A lady writes to us from Margate, thanking us for *Bible Romances*, which she has just finished reading. She says that her mind was often troubled about matters that are cleared up in that volume, and she pays us the compliment of saying that "it requires a master mind to see and plainly assert the truth about things that have been taught us from infancy as most holy and necessary for our souls' salvation." The lady informs us that she met with the *Freethinker* quite accidentally. A friend of hers was reading it, and on looking at it herself she found that it dealt with the very questions that had caused her so much perplexity.

## Niemojewski—Freethought Leader, Scholar, and Martyr.

CHRISTIANITY has lately been doing its utmost to keep up its old reputation as a persecuting creed. When, as in Spain, it can kill, it kills; when it can organise pogroms and massacre the Jews, as in Russia, it gladly revives the worst features of the Middle Ages. In Galicia, the tribunal at Cracow has recently sentenced Dr. Emile Bobrowski to fourteen days' imprisonment for "outrages on religion," in a speech in which he attacked the political power of the Catholic Church. In another part of Poland, where the rising sun of scepticism alarms the vision of the obscurantists, the Church has long been battling against the learned and fearless Prometheus, embodied in the person of our friend and colleague, Andrzej Niemojewski, and been endeavoring, *more suo*, to gag his voice with the padlock of prison.

English Freethinkers are not unaware of Niemojewski's work for Freethought in Poland. A sketch of his labors and sacrifices and of his hitherto successful resistance to episcopal and governmental persecutions on account of his views and publications will be found in the *Freethinker* of July 26, 1908.

Since that date Niemojewski has not been idle. In 1909 he published at Warsaw a handy little volume of 112 pages, the Polish title of which is *Commentaries on the Catechism*. It is excellently printed in exceptionally fine, clear type, and though I can make no pronouncement based on an inner knowledge of its contents (as I am unfortunately ignorant of Polish), I am certain by every analogy in history and experience that it must be a good and useful little work, as it has been recently prosecuted on account of its anti-Christian outspokenness, and its author condemned to a year's imprisonment in a Russian fortress. His larger work—*The God Jesus*—has long ago been confiscated by the Russian censor and its author prosecuted for blasphemy. In this case, he suffered a moment's defeat in the courts, and then won on appeal. In fact, he was sentenced to a year's incarceration in a fortress for the crime of publishing in his *God Jesus* a learned defence of the thesis that the whole history of Jesus is nothing more than an astral myth. Niemojewski, like many another Freethought champion in our own history, carried the conviction for appeal to a higher court, and pleaded his own case. The accusation he had to meet was the charge that his book was an outrage on religion. He contended, in defence, that his work was rigorously scientific in tone and treatment, and supported his contention by reliance upon a mountain of books which he brought into court, and from which he cited, by reference to a celestial sphere, in illustration of his contention as to the astral derivation of the Jesus story. His speech was a long lecture, which seems to have won the silent but judicial applause of the Russian judges, for we learn that they gave a verdict in favor of Niemojewski and quashed the sentence.

Now that our friend is numbered—the last to date on the long and glorious list—amongst the victims of this ferocious superstition, which never relents and never repents, but varies its manifestations of cruelty with the changing temper of the times, and knows no shame for its past misdeeds, and is untaught by any of the inglorious lessons of its perennial folly and fatuity, I turn with sympathy to the dedication he made to me of a copy of the offending *Commentaries*. We learn that over 800,000 people have read the incriminated pamphlet, and Niemojewski characteristically writes, as to this, that "although it will cost me a year of my life, it is well worth making this sacrifice for the sake of the intellectual enfranchisement of suffering humanity." In the silent gloom of his prison-house he will hear the voices of that marching host of Freethinkers in every land whose progress is made possible by the sufferings and sacrifices of men like himself, who bear in their body the stripes by which humanity is saved. He will know that he

has the gratitude of Freethinkers in every land, not only for giving us the encouragement of his heroism, but for his devoted work as a lecturer, thinker, and writer, in building up a strong Freethought movement in his native Poland. Already a known and respected figure in contemporary Freethought history, his name will more than ever carve itself in the remembrance and gratitude of the movement in every part of the world where courage and learning combine to illustrate and adorn the glorious principles of Rationalism.

Niemojewski is not without influence in the world outside his Poland and his prison. While his two prosecutions were hanging over his head, he translated into German his closely reasoned work on *The God Jesus*, and was fortunate enough to issue it at Munich in an *édition de luxe*, magnificently printed, and adorned with 150 superb illustrations.

Nothing so sumptuous in the way of definitely Freethought publishing has appeared to my knowledge in the course of my experience of the movement. I do not know the price of the book, which, I fear, is very expensive, having regard to the lavish costliness of its production, but I can most heartily commend it to the student who reads German (the type, thank Beelzebub, is Roman) and to the book-lover who revels in a thing of beauty.\* The title of the book will exhibit its general thesis: "*The God Jesus*, in the light of the investigations of other inquirers and those of the author himself, with an exposition of the astral materials, the astral scenes, and of the astral system contained in the Gospels." The German edition is really more than a mere translation; it is practically a new work, containing five additional chapters. Many other parts of the work were re-written for the German version.

*The God Jesus* is a scientific application of the astral system, worked out by Dupuis in his *Origine de tous les cultes*, to the legends concerning Christ contained in the Gospels. Niemojewski (who, by the way, was the first to translate Renan's *Vie de Jesus* into Polish†) is rather caustic as to the reactionary tendency of Renan's treatment of the Jesus myths: "At the same time that he filches the God-head away from him [Jesus] he seeks to confer upon him the glories of the highest type of humanity." This is precisely the danger of our neo-Christianity: it creates a Christ that never existed in the similitude of a sleek churchwarden, and averts its eyes from the mythical make-up of the deified symbol of the skies. Against this tendency Niemojewski wars with all his might, and brings into the field a lavish display of facts derived from a close study of the origins of the Jesus idea as revealed in the history of the doctrines, documents, ritual, ceremonies, and practices connected with the primitive Christian tradition. No wonder the Catholic bishops in Poland raged and fumed; denounced the scholar as a scoundrel; refuted him by confiscating the book; and sought to smother his learning in the death-like stillness of a Russian dungeon. One only has to handle this erudite volume, and remember the above facts, to be convinced that, all things being equal, it does not matter to the Christian whether his doctrine is attacked by a penny pamphlet or by a veritable museum of erudition like the scholarly disquisition which is now before me. Give the Christian the power to persecute, and, by Jupiter Tonans, he will smite you in pocket, person, and reputation, without stint and without conscience.

There can be no doubt, after the perusal of this volume, that all the essential features of the Christ-myth and of the miraculous and supernatural *corège* of saints, virgins, angels, demons, thaumaturgists, and other attendant characteristics of the idea of a God made flesh, and of a man elevated into deity, were ready to hand before the Star of Bethlehem

\* Andrzej Niemojewski.—*Gott Jesus*, im Lichte fremder und eigener Forschungen, samt Darstellung der evangelischen Astralstoffe, Astralszenen und Astralsysteme, mit 150 Abbildungen und schematischen Zeichnungen im Text (A. u. R. Huber's Verlag, München, 1910). Pp. 577; the book is bound in morocco.

† This translation has already passed into three editions.

beguiled the "wise men" into the worship of the wondrous Babe. Niemojewski shows that all the symbolical paraphernalia of Christianity and its leading doctrinal ideas were the common-places of religion before the time of Christ, and that the supernatural accessories with which the Palestinian God was festooned have their explanation in the *ex post facto* ascription to the new cult of the attributes and glories of the earlier gods. The crusted antiquity of our modern beliefs does not scare this fearless thinker. With fine poetic imagination, he can see science approaching the sepulchre of theology, and hear it crying out to the parchment-bound Lazarus of humanity to lift up the stone of hoary tradition and come forth into the light of day. And, to cite his own illustration, there are still not a few Marthas who may be heard exclaiming with horror, while science issues the command of deliverance, "Behold, he stinketh already." But the putrescence and the decay are not of humanity, but of the gods and their satellites, and the resurrection of humanity from its long sleep in the tomb of theology is made all the more certain when scholars and propagandists like Niemojewski dare to do duty for Freethought.

When one looks at this bold and learned book, which recommends itself not only from the student's and the bibliographer's point of view, but from the point of view of the drastic and cultured Freethinker, one sighs for the lost souls in this country who do not insist upon the Englishing of this spacious treatise. We have nothing like it in our modern English Freethought literature. It is not a frail treatise constructed upon slender reading. From the indication of sources at the end of the volume it is evident that Niemojewski has ransacked the whole range of literature and research, which have grown up in all ages and in all languages, in order to build up his striking presentment of the theme.

He carries the demonstration of his thesis far beyond the stage at which it was left by Dupuis, and this precisely because time in its revolutions has produced a whole army of new workers in the field of religious inquiry, from whose labors Niemojewski has abundantly drawn. In result, he has given us an exhaustive survey of the sources and authenticity of the Jesus story, and, like Renan, went to Palestine to examine the *locus in quo*. The similitude of the God Jesus to his pagan predecessors in all the circumstances of their life and death is shown with great wealth of detail, and the reader is assisted at every stage of the argument with documentary and pictorial illustrations of the process by which a new God was created out of the *dissecta membra* of the old. And all this exposition is made in a style quite refreshingly clear, for Niemojewski knows how to lift his readers into the heavens, without losing himself amidst the clouds. To think that this genial scholar, whose refined features beam before me in the frontispiece of this remarkable volume, is at last clutched by the fangs of the Christian bigots and thrust away in a dungeon because he dared to utter his mind freely about religion, is enough to make one despair of the sanity of the lords and governors of mankind. For a twelvemonth he is shut away and silenced; but I venture to say that in this sumptuous volume, of which German Freethinkers may justly be proud (and for which scholars in all lands should be equally grateful to Messrs. Huber for issuing it with such magnificence), he will commune with choice spirits and leave a landmark for the remembrance of Freethinkers for many a long year.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

## The Apocalypse.—XI.

(Continued from p. 349.)

AFTER the problem to "find the number of the beast" (Rev. xiii.), we have in chapter xvii. a second problem, namely, to find the approximate date at which the additions relating to the beast were com-

posed. In Rev. xvii. 10—11 we are told that "the seven heads" of the beast represented "seven kings"; that "the five are fallen, *the one is*, the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a little while. And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven; and he goeth into perdition."

According to this statement, the portions of the Apocalypse relating to the "beast" were written in the reign of the sixth emperor. The five that had "fallen" were: Augustus (80 B.C.—A.D. 14); Tiberius (A.D. 14—37); Caius or Caligula (A.D. 37—41); Claudius (A.D. 41—54); and Nero (A.D. 54—68). Some of the first and second century writers in Asia, however, reckoned Julius Cæsar, who preceded Augustus, as the first emperor. If such were the case in the Apocalypse, Nero would be the sixth emperor, in whose reign the chapters concerning the "beast" were composed. But this view is negatived by the fact that the recorded death of Nero was known to the Apocalypticist: Nero was the head that had been "smitten unto death, and the death stroke healed"; and the writer certainly knew that his successor was then sitting on the throne. We thus arrive at the inevitable conclusion that Nero was one of the five that had "fallen." Nero died in June, A.D. 68. As soon as this fact became publicly known, Galba was elevated to the throne by the soldiery, and after reigning six months was murdered. Galba was therefore the sixth, and the reigning emperor—"the one that is." Was it in this reign that the "beast" portion of the Apocalypse was written? and if so, how did the Apocalypticist know that the seventh emperor, who was "not yet come," would after ascending the throne "continue a little while"? In order to be able to make the latter statement the writer must have lived to the end of the reign of Galba's successor. Let us pause, then, to look at the events of history for a moment.

Galba was succeeded by Otho, who was crowned Jan. 15, A.D. 69; but on April 15 of the same year he was deposed by Vitellius, who reigned as emperor for eight months. As a simple historical fact, Otho was the seventh emperor, and he certainly did "continue a little while"—exactly three months. The Apocalypticist, then, could not have written the statement respecting the seventh emperor until after that emperor had reigned and had been dethroned; that is to say, during the reign of Vitellius. But Vitellius was the eighth emperor; and the eighth, according to the Apocalypse, was to be Nero Redivivus—a prediction which the Apocalypticist must have seen would be proved to be false by the accession of Vitellius. We thus come to the question, Did the writer of the "Revelation" compose statements in the reign of Vitellius which he and everyone else knew were already falsified by the course of history?

Moreover, a question pertinent to this inquiry here arises: Did the Apocalypticist write *before* or *after* the fall of Jerusalem? For answer we turn to Rev. xiii. 7, in which the war with the Romans is referred to—"And it was given to him [the beast] to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." The Jews were not "overcome" until the holy city was captured, and the latter event did not occur until August, A.D. 70, when Vespasian was the reigning emperor. The sixth and seventh emperors, then, reigned after the time of Vitellius.

After the Jewish war had commenced, at the beginning of the year 66, Vespasian came to Palestine by order of Nero, and took the command of the Roman legions there. After the death of Nero (June, 68) the military operations went on as before; but no orders came from Galba. Upon hearing of the death of the last-named emperor, and that Otho was on the throne, Vespasian sent his son Titus to Rome. But the latter, before reaching that city, heard of Otho's death and of the accession of Vitellius, and with this news returned to his father Vespasian. The army in Palestine, upon hearing it, proclaimed Vespasian emperor; whereupon the latter, after accepting the throne, sent word to Alexandria, Antioch, and other places, informing the governors

of the honor done him by the soldiery. Vespasian was then proclaimed by the Roman legions in Egypt and other parts of the empire, and received congratulations while still in Palestine, months before the deposition and death of Vitellius. Hence, to persons living in a distant corner of Palestine, say to the east of the Jordan or Dead Sea (where many Jews had taken refuge during the Jewish war), the rival emperors who succeeded Nero were probably never heard of, or, if they were, were set down as mere pretenders who could not be regarded as legitimate emperors. Moreover, since Nero died (or was said to have abdicated the throne) in A. D. 68, and Vespasian was crowned in 69, the interval between the two reigns would be considered by many an interregnum, and Vespasian would be regarded as the sixth emperor. The last-named sovereign reigned ten years (A. D. 69—79), and was succeeded by his son Titus, who reigned two years (A. D. 79—81)—the latter being succeeded by his brother Domitian, who reigned fifteen years (A. D. 81—96). Thus, omitting the short-reigned trio, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, we arrive once more at the eighth Roman emperor, who most certainly was *not* Nero Redivivus. What, then, is the solution of the problem?

Upon one point at least, there can, I think, be no doubt whatever: the writer of the "beast" portion of the Apocalypse has stated what he believed were, or would turn out to be, facts; but one of his statements was based upon the appearance of a pseudo-Nero. As already stated, the five emperors that had "fallen" were the five ending with Nero. Vespasian was the sixth—"the one that is"—in whose reign the Apocalyptist *professes* to be writing, probably in order to receive credit for prophetic knowledge with regard to the seventh and eighth emperors. As a simple matter of inference, he *believed* he had good grounds for thinking that Titus, the seventh Roman monarch, would "continue but a little while"; for *he was writing in that reign*, and was expecting daily to hear that that emperor had been hurled from power by Nero Redivivus; that is to say, by the second pseudo-Nero whose appearance is recorded. About a year after the accession of Titus, a pretender, whose real name was Terentius Maximus, appeared on the Euphrates as the revived Nero, and was received as such by popular opinion. His pretensions deceived, among others, Artabanus king of Parthia, who promised to raise an army to reinstate him on the throne. The news of this wonderful event soon spread to Syria and Palestine, and the reinstatement of Nero was considered certain, the only question in doubt being—how soon would the Parthian army be ready to start? This was the position of affairs when the Apocalyptist wrote a few months before the end of the short reign of Titus, and he firmly believed that the resuscitated Nero would once more occupy the throne of the Cæsars. Possibly the writer died about this time; for his statements remain unrevised. However this may be, Artabanus apparently found good reason for postponing the projected expedition, and ultimately gave it up altogether. This is the only possible solution to the second apocalyptic problem, though no Biblical critic, as far as I know, has yet perceived it.

I return now to chapter xiii. in which two "beasts" are described—the principal beast and his subordinate. Respecting the latter the writer says: "And I saw another beast coming out of the earth; and he had two horns like unto a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." From the words italicised it is to be inferred that the Apocalyptist was acquainted with the language of dragons. Apparently he did not know that those creatures were as purely imaginary as the Jabber-wock. Continuing, he says of the second beast:—

"And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight. And he maketh the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast.....and he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by reason of the signs which it was given him to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast," etc.

The identity of this second "beast," who is afterwards called "the false prophet" is not a matter involving doubt; he simply represented the Pagan priesthood that upheld the Roman emperors, and set up their images as gods to be worshiped. One of the seven emperors, Caius or Caligula, ordered his statue to be set up in the Jewish temple at Jerusalem; but the opposition of the Jews was so great that it was never carried out. Moreover, the name of this emperor, Caius Cæsar—in the Greek Gaios Kaisar—gives the total 616 (the number found in some copies of the Apocalypse) according to the numerical value of the Greek letters.

The Apocalyptist, it will be seen, believed that the Pagan priests possessed the power to work miracles—"the signs which it was given him to do in the sight of the beast"—as did also the Gospel writers (Matt. xxiv. 24; xii. 27; etc.) and the Jews, Christians, and Pagans of the first two centuries. This amazing credulity accounts for the fact that the miracles ascribed to Jesus Christ were never questioned by the early opponents of Christianity, since in their opinion the performance of such works proved nothing.

Upon one point the writer of the "Revelation" appears to have been original. He represents the worshipers of the "beast" as having "a mark on their right hand, or upon their forehead"—a representation which is manifestly absurd.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

### The Christian "Day of Rest."

THE increasing secularisation of Sunday has, as was expected, provoked the clergy into demonstrations of those extreme opinions on the subject which are very generally received with derision, if not with contempt. Apparently, their chief efforts have been recently directed towards the restriction of the licenses of places of entertainment to six days. The most low varlets of the Most High God recognise that under modern conditions it is useless to expect the democracy to be content to spend their only free day in the midst of the scene of their work, and faced by the alternatives of spiritual or spirituous intoxication provided by the gospel shops or the public-houses. The clergy do not venture to propose attacking Sunday excursions. It is recognised, we suppose, that this is too strong and powerful an institution to attack, and if a serious attempt were made in that direction the Sunday Observance movement would lose what little influence it possesses in the cloud of public disfavor which would envelop it.

Despite their hypocritical plea for a day of rest, religious people largely delight in noise and, what is more, inflict their barbaric taste upon the more civilised members of the community. Acts of Parliament give local authorities the power to suppress unnecessary ebullitions of noise, and the peripatetic vendors of milk, watercress, muffins and crumpets have, here and there, been compelled to desist from giving utterance to their raucous cries. Also, a man may proceed against his neighbor if he has a dog that bays the moon, or cocks that challenge the dawn with clarion call. Even alien organ-grinders may be "moved on." But the "unco guid" turn the "day of rest" into a veritable pandemonium, and the peaceful citizen does nothing because the noise is associated with religion. We do not discriminate between any sect, and equally criticise the State and fancy religions. We object as much to the clanging of bells in church steeples and tin tabernacles as we do the ear-splitting noises of Salvation Army, Church Army, and side-street mission bands. Leather-lunged preachers, with throats of brass, are equally distasteful to our ears, whether dressed in scarlet, corduroy, or shiny black. It is not a question of prejudice, but of noise. The banging of drums,

the blare of brass instruments, and the bellowing of pietistic platitudes prevalent on Sundays, is sufficient to bring blood from the ears of a bronze statue.

Of all these noises peculiar to the "day of rest," bell-ringing is the most perfect anomaly. People no longer believe in evil spirits, hence there is no necessity to ring bells to drive them away. This was the original purpose of church bells, and since none are so poor as not to possess a watch, the secondary purpose of the Sunday cacophony is a necessity of the past. As for the Salvation Army, it is true that it banged and brayed itself into notoriety; but the time has gone by for such methods to be effective since the "General" was canonised by Oxford University and the Army patronised by royalty.

A final word is in respect to the hypocritical mendicants who parade the streets on Sundays in the rags of simulated poverty, catching coppers from the unwary, by droning hymns, whose cash value is seen when the public-houses open their hospitable doors. And neither would the Salvation Army send detachments into the streets if the door-to-door collection, which invariably follows, failed to provide the sinews of war for the flat-chested warriors of Jesus.

Unless the pious humbugs who profess to care so much for the day of rest are prepared to grapple with this problem of noise we cannot see that they can escape the accusation of hypocrisy. If they attacked the Sunday noises made by their co-religionists they would probably not succeed, but they would persuade people much more surely of the sincerity of their crusade. The modern idea of Sunday is broadening, and, whether they like it or not, religious denominations must adapt themselves to the changing conditions. The time has gone for ever when the democracy of this country can be fobbed off with the sole resources of the public-house as an alternative to the ritual of an outworn creed. No longer will the working man consent to wallow in such kennels, and so give excuse for saintly humbugs to call aloud for more laws which shall convert a day intended for rest and recreation into one of gloom, bigotry, and persecution. Let those who have six days in the week for all the world's pleasures appropriate Sunday to gloom, but let those who employ their six days in honest toil devote their Sunday to a different purpose.

MIMNERMUS.

### Russian Jews.

#### INFAMOUS REACTIONARY CAMPAIGN.

(From the "Daily News" Correspondent at St. Petersburg.)

This country seems to have returned to the darkest middle ages if we are to judge by the wild campaign which is now being waged by the reactionary Press, from the *Novoe Vremya* downwards, on the subject of the so-called Jewish ritualistic murders.

It will be remembered that on March 25 the Kieff police discovered the mutilated body of a boy named Yustchinsky. A month later the Black Hundred organ, the *Semstchina*, came out with the sensational statement that the boy had been tortured and killed by the Jews with a view to using his blood for the Passover cakes. Other papers of a similar kind caught up the legend, and lastly the foremost reactionary publicist, M. Menshikoff, of the *Novoe Vremya*, wrote a ferocious article, repeating the charges and giving full particulars of the alleged atrocity on the authority of the investigating magistrate and Professor Obolonsky, who are conducting an inquiry into the case.

Professor Obolonsky at once publicly repudiated all responsibility for M. Menshikoff's statements. Nevertheless, the reactionary Press has continued the infamous campaign with unabated vigor, threatening the authorities with a massacre of the Jews, should they fail to place the guilt on the right persons.

Finally, an interpellation was introduced in the Duma by the notorious fanatic, M. Purishkevitch, calling upon the Government to take measures against the practice of ritualistic murder by the Jews. Although the parties of the Extreme Left voted at once with the reactionaries in favor of the interpellation, in order to have the matter discussed openly and to calm public opinion, the majority of the Duma rejected the motion, thinking that the mere dis-

cussion of this subject would discredit the Russian Parliament in the eyes of the civilised world.

It is scarcely worth while refuting this sinister though extraordinarily wide-spread legend of ritualistic murder.

Here in Russia the people's memory goes back to the case of the Velizh Jews, who at the beginning of the nineteenth century were accused of a ritualist murder, but were acquitted after a trial which lasted eleven years, all the witnesses being at the same time deported to Siberia. The Council of the State then issued a strict order, signed by the Tsar, forbidding the circulation of such charges against the Jews and rendering it an offence punishable with a long term of imprisonment.

What was found worthy of heavy punishment a hundred years ago is now being openly propagated by countless news-sheets and in innumerable manifestoes. The object is clear. It is to divert the rising tide of Liberal sentiment by provoking the worst and lowest passions of the ignorant masses of the people. The device is as old as tyranny itself.

### Intellectual Hospitality.

(Reprinted from the New York "Truthseeker.")

To have some intelligent appreciation of how much of the knowable is yet unknown conduces to that humility which is the beginning of wisdom. To know something of the past struggles for human progress conduces to an appreciation of how little is probably true of what we think we know. Thus to see our attainments in their true relations to the past beliefs and their probable relation to future knowledge conduces to a true measure of our great ignorance. To have this is to be without censure, because without a stupid pride; to love truth more than our vain predispositions; to love harmlessness of life more than moral sentimentalism; to be free from phariseism, because knowing the diversity and uncertainty of standards; to be unafraid of new evidence, and unoppressive to new allegations of truth; to be controlled by a selfishness of so high an order that your greatest happiness comes from studying all problems from the impersonal viewpoint, and making all judgments by impersonal standards; to have the desire to be right always overpowering the desire that others esteem us to be so; never to impose one's opinion by invasive force; never to be impatient, except, perhaps with dogmatism and intolerance—this is the essence of intellectual hospitality. In addition to this, if you have that rare disposition to make a substantial sacrifice for defending the right to be heard, of those whose opinions you disapprove, that would be so rare a virtue as to be almost heroic. To promote such intellectual hospitality is the mission of the Free Speech League.

THEODORE SCHROEDER.

### POWER OF EDUCATION.

The scientific development of education is one of the greatest tasks of modern civilisation. The ideas that are impressed on the mind in early youth are most persistent, and generally determine the direction of thought and conduct for the whole life. Hence we find the struggle between the two philosophic tendencies assuming the greatest practical importance in this department. As the priests were, thousands of years ago, in the first stages of civilisation, the sole trainers of the growing mind, they had the charge of the school as well as of medicine. Religion was made the chief foundation of instruction, and its doctrines were the moral guide for the whole of life. The isolated attempts that were made by monistic philosophy in ancient times to destroy this theistic superstition had no effect on the education of the young. In this the dualistic principles of Plato and Aristotle prevailed, their metaphysical theories being blended with the teaching of the Church. In the Middle Ages the power of the Roman priesthood enforced them everywhere. And, although a good deal of this teaching lost its prestige at the Reformation, the influence of the Church on the school was maintained down to our own time. The spiritual power of the Church finds a useful ally in this in the conservative attitude of most Governments. Throne and altar support each other; both dread the advance of scientific inquiry. In face of this powerful dualistic alliance, supported by the mental apathy of the masses and a convenient blind submission to authority, the monistic system has a difficult position to maintain. It will only gain solid ground in education when the school is divorced from the Church and scientific knowledge is made the foundation of the curriculum.—Haeckel.

**SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.**

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

**LONDON.****OUTDOOR.**

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): J. Rowney, 3.15, "Bible Prophecies"; 6.15, "Holy Moses and Company."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): W. J. Ramsey, 3.15, "By their fruits shall ye know them"; 6, "Why I Reject Christianity."

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7, Debate between Mr. Warry and Mr. Hecht, "Creation or Evolution?"

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 noon, Ivan Paperno, a Lecture. Newington Green: 7.30, Ivan Paperno, a Lecture. Highbury Corner: Wednesday, at 8, Ivan Paperno, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, E. C. Saphin, "Christ the Sun."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7, Mr. Davidson, "The Tercentenary of the Bible."

**COUNTRY.****INDOOR.**

WEST STANLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (Co-operative Ante-Room): Saturday, at 7, Business Meeting.

**OUTDOOR.**

ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates—Sunday, "The Philosophy of Materialism"; Tuesday, "Death!" Wednesday, "Adventures of the Gospel Jesus"; Thursday, "A Short Way with Christians." At 7.30.

CHORLEY (Market Square): Friday, June 3, at 7.30, Joseph A. E. Bates, "Gods—Ancient and Modern."

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Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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