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PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE SORROWS OF SATAN.

(Concluded from page 50.)

DEPRIVED of its padding and its supernatural suggestion, the *Sorrows of Satan* is a story of very slender interest. It is really little more than a vehicle for the conveyance of Miss Corelli's jejune opinions. The first chapter opens with a dissertation on hunger, which is probably an effort of imagination. Geoffrey Tempest, the gentleman in this distressing situation, is a literary man, who does reviewing for "a well-known literary journal." Thirty novels a week are sent him to criticise; he cuts up eight or ten of them, and receives as payment for his labor the sum of fifteen shillings a week. This is an excellent beginning, and shows Miss Corelli's profound and accurate acquaintance with modern journalism.

Geoffrey Tempest loses his fifteen shillings a week by praising a book which he ought to have slated. One bitter night he returns, cold and hungry, to his fireless lodging; and, as luck would have it, his landlady asked just then for the rent. Believing neither in Christ nor God, nor in anything supernatural, he is without the consolation experienced by believers when they have "rats" in their stomachs; so he sits down and swears—which is, after all, a more manly pastime than praying. Suddenly he notices three letters lying upon the table. Had he noticed them sooner, there would have been a page less of Miss Corelli's "eloquence." One letter was from an old college friend in Australia, and contained a banker's draft for fifty pounds. The second was from a firm of solicitors, saying that he had just come into a fortune of five millions. The third was from the Devil. His Satanic Majesty, however, was using the alias of Prince Lucio Riménez. His identity is not disclosed before the fifth act, though his incognito is as open as a hat to the least perspicacious reader. Of course he is tall, dark, and commanding, with wonderful eyes, and a face of astonishing beauty. He is also preternaturally clever; that is, if you take him on trust from the lady novelist; but when she makes him speak—and he is nearly always at it—his talk is pure Corelli, which is generally nothing but rhetorical fustian.

Miss Corelli has her own theory of the fall of Lucifer, at least for the purpose of this romance. Satan once stood at the right hand of Deity, but the creation of man upset his equilibrium. Falling into a passion of anger, he protested against this blunder, and swore he would do his best to "destroy him utterly." Now it appears that angels, like men, have "free will," and this means—in the Corelli philosophy—that no one can ever change his mind; when he once says a thing, he must stick to it for ever and ever. "What thou sayest," God remarked to Lucifer, "thou must needs do." Accordingly he was subjected to the following curse:—

"Fall, proud Spirit, from thy high estate!—thou and thy companions with thee!—and return no more till Man himself redeem thee! Each human soul that yields unto thy tempting shall be a new barrier set between thee and heaven; each one that of its own choice doth repel and overcome thee shall lift thee nearer thy lost home! When the world rejects thee, I will pardon and again receive thee,—but not till then!"

Evidently the poor Devil is booked for a long innings. The last words of God, which are italicized in the original Corelli scripture, are terribly sarcastic. It must also be observed that the Corelli deity is just like the orthodox

one in his moral characteristics. He has a long memory and an implacable temper. He passes draconian sentences on first offenders, and only gives them another chance when they catch him napping. And, indeed, he must have been napping badly when he created man, who is bad enough in the light of history, but far worse in the light of this romance. There is not a single good man in the whole book, and only one good woman. This exceptional lady is a gifted writer, who believes in God and a future life, and in other articles of religion; she is unmarried, and, of course, she is perfectly true and pure—in short, she seems a study of Miss Corelli by Miss Corelli, no doubt with the usual accuracy of self-portraiture. Only one good woman in a big gallery! All the rest are empty egotists or voluptuous harlots. And the men are made to match! Yet this pious lady novelist rails at all unbelievers in her God. Surely she should explain the creation of such a wretched human race by a deity, who knew what he was about, being also all-wise, all-good, and all-powerful.

The story of this book is really very commonplace. Geoffrey Tempest, having five millions, becomes a howling swell, and marries an aristocratic beauty, who is an unbeliever, and whose cold exterior hides a volcano of sensuality. He overhears her making love to the Devil—that is, to the handsome Riménez, who repulses her with disdain. Then she poisons herself. Geoffrey Tempest falls into the dumps, goes on a yachting trip with Prince Riménez, has some wonderful experiences in a part of the world which is not on earthly maps, is horrified by the disclosure of his friend's identity, makes choice of God instead of the Devil, and is thus spared for another probation. The yacht sinks, but Geoffrey Tempest is picked up by a steamer. He soon learns that he has lost all his fortune, but he rejoices instead of mourning, for now he believes in the glorious gospel of Work—with or without fifteen shillings a week.

Really, as we have said, the book is chiefly a channel for the conveyance of the Devil's (that is, Miss Corelli's) views and opinions, which are those of a female Lord Byron, minus the scepticism—and the poetry and wit. Miss Corelli's devil damns the entire human race as scoundrels. In the whole course of his career he only found one person of unpurchaseable integrity. He is especially severe on women, whom he declares to be the cause of all his misfortunes. "They have made me what I am," he says, "and they keep me so." "They are much less sensitive than men," he says, "and infinitely more heartless. They are the mothers of the human race, and the faults of the race are chiefly due to them. That is another reason for my hatred." Miss Corelli may fill books with this stuff, and suppose it to be virtue as well as philosophy. She may also make money by it. But she will not gain any valuable applause. The woman who runs down her own sex is not the best of them. She is only pandering to masculine prejudice and feminine slavery. Indeed, there is one passage of "fine writing" (on p. 303) which must excite any self-respecting woman's disgust. It is about "the libertinage of a man," as though it were somehow more excusable than that of a woman, and even the raw material of virtue, under the providentially ordained influence of "some pure, true-hearted woman."

Miss Corelli, like the Devil—we mean *her* Devil—is very religious. She loathes Mr. Swinburne for the "hideous blasphemy" of his *Before a Crucifix*. Perhaps it will console Mr. Swinburne to know that Miss Corelli admires

the Prince of Wales, and that her Devil regards him with "the greatest respect."

This is how Miss Corelli and her Devil combine to uphold the sacred cause of religion. Satan arranges a series of tableaux for a grand party at the wedding of Geoffrey Tempest. One of them represented Faith and Materialism. Faith is "one of the loveliest creatures ever dreamed of by a poet"—a floating angel, with lilies clasped to her breast, and eyes full of joy, hope, and love; while Materialism is a human skeleton, white and grinning, with worms wriggling through its eye-holes.

But enough of this trashy book. We have only noticed it because it has been puffed in religious circles. We like our readers to see now and then what is admired in the Christian world. It will fortify them in their Freethought, and show them that Christianity is indeed in its dotage.

G. W. FOOTE.

TACITUS AND POGGIO.

EVERY student of Christian evidences knows the passage in the Annals of Tacitus, telling of the horrid tortures of Christians under Nero, and saying that the "author" of their name was Christus, who, in the reign of Tiberius, was put to death by the procurator, Pontius Pilate.* Gibbon said, and gravely too, that the most sceptical criticism must respect the integrity of this passage. Freethinkers usually have been content to point out that it does nothing to confirm the miraculous character of Christianity, which alone they dispute. They may add that the absence of the name of Jesus indicates that Tacitus was speaking rather from report than knowledge, and that, so far from describing Christianity as divine, Tacitus calls it a pernicious superstition, and says that its disciples "deserved exemplary punishment." But sceptical criticism has been forced onward since the days of Gibbon, and, from the passage being suspected as an interpolation, it has come that the entire Annals has been challenged as a forgery. The first to oppugn this passage, so far as I am aware, was the Rev. Robert Taylor, in his *Diegesis*, 1829. Examination of Christian evidences had made him cautious as to their claims. He points out that this passage was never once quoted by any of the early Christian fathers. It is not mentioned by Tertullian, though he had read, and largely quotes, from Tacitus; nor by Clement of Alexandria nor Eusebius, who set themselves to collect all Pagan testimonies. There is no vestige nor trace of its existence anywhere in the world before the fifteenth century, while its testimony is falsified by that of Melito, Bishop of Sardis, who says that the Christians had never been persecuted before his time—the third century.

Robert Cooper† and Judge Strange‡ took the same position, which was carried a little further by T. L. in his *First Seven Alleged Persecutions*, some of whose points I epitomize. There are no known Roman laws or edicts directing persecution on account of religion. This persecution was unknown to the author of the Acts of the Apostles, who (xxviii. 30, 31) represents Paul as dwelling two whole

* Here is the passage in Gibbon's translation: "With this view he inflicted the most exquisite tortures on those men who, under the vulgar appellation of Christians, were already branded with deserved infamy. They derived their name and origin from Christ, who, in the reign of Tiberius, had suffered death by the sentence of the procurator, Pontius Pilate. For a while this dire superstition was checked, but it again burst forth: and not only spread itself over Judæa, the first seat of this mischievous sect, but was even introduced into Rome, the common asylum which receives and protects whatever is impure, whatever is atrocious. The confessions of those who were seized discovered a great multitude of their accomplices, and they were all convicted, not so much for the crime of setting fire to the city as for their hatred of human kind. They died in torments, and their torments were embittered by insult and derision. Some were nailed on crosses; others sewn up in the skins of wild beasts, and exposed to the fury of dogs; others again, smeared over with combustible materials, were used as torches to illuminate the darkness of the night. The gardens of Nero were destined for the melancholy spectacle, which was accompanied with a horse-race, and honored with the presence of the emperor, who mingled with the populace in the dress and attitude of a charioteer. The guilt of the Christians deserved, indeed, the most exemplary punishment, but the public abhorrence was changed into commiseration, from the opinion that those unhappy wretches were sacrificed, not so much to the public welfare as to the cruelty of a jealous tyrant."

† *Infidel's Text Book*, p. 60.

‡ *The Bible: Is it the Word of God?* p. 352.

years in Rome, preaching freely at that very time and after (63-65), and who drops no hint of his having suffered persecution or martyrdom there. There is no evidence that the followers of Christ called themselves Christians at Rome then, and it is most improbable that there was a "vast multitude" of Christians at Rome A.C. 64, since there was not a vast multitude of them at that time even in Palestine; and Josephus, who is said to have lived at Rome from the year 70 till the close of the century, knew nothing of them. It is still more improbable that, if numerous, the Emperor would seek to shield his own infamy by casting it on the most innocent persons, and himself preside at atrocious tortures directed against this particular sect. Some stories are too thin, but here the colors are laid on too thick.

It is, however, to a Scotsman of the name of Ross that must be ascribed the merit of having revealed the forger in the person of Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459), the alleged discoverer of the manuscript, which was said to be found, at first vaguely, "in the forests of Germany," and afterwards located at the abbey of Corvei. The work by Mr. Ross is entitled *Tacitus and Bracciolini: The Annals Forged in the XVth Century* (1878). It was severely criticized by a writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, but the reviewer by no means answers the points raised by Mr. Ross. Nor does he note how all literary genius at the time of the Renaissance was bent on recovering and rehabilitating the old Roman grandeur, which at this era animated the humanists of Europe, was checked by the want of documents. The Christian monks destroyed, as far as possible, the remains of heathen learning, and now a new order of men found fame and fortune in refinding them. Demand begets supply, in literature and Christian evidences, no less than in pork and potatoes. Poggio was apostolic secretary under nine popes, from Innocent VII. to Calixtus III. He was a thorough man of the world, and Latin was native to him. Such men then held the veritable keys of the kingdom. Luther said, a century later, that in Rome everything was permitted save honesty; and this was as certainly true in the time of Poggio, who personally witnessed the burning of Jerome of Prague in 1416. He has left a vivid description of this martyrdom, which Mr. Ross finds to be very similar in its Latinity to that of the Annals ascribed to Tacitus.

In Poggio's own correspondence with Niccoli may be traced the evidence that he was, from 1423, engaged in some underhand work. He notes that "what the ancients did quickly and easily was to him tedious and burdensome"; but *labor omnia vincit improbus*. We find him asking for Ptolemy's Geography, Plutarch, Suetonius, and other historians, for the purposes of his own work. It should be noted that the passage in question is mainly an amplification of what is narrated concerning Nero and the Christians in the chronicle of Sulpicius Severus, dated about B.C. 422, but possibly itself a monkish forgery. Poggio's discovery of Tacitus, when first announced, was continually asked for, and as constantly put off.

Of course, if the Annals is forged, one expects to find slips and anachronisms betraying the fact. Mr. Ross notes many such, into which it would be tedious here to enter. One instance that may be briefly mentioned is the statement (xiv. 33) that London was famed for the great number of its merchants and its commerce. In the time of Julius Cæsar Britain was so barbarous and obscure that even merchants only knew the regions opposite Gaul. That London was really an important town, or known at all in Rome, in the time of Nero, is wildly improbable; but it was natural that Poggio, who had visited and knew its importance in his own day, should make such an error.

In 1890 P. Hochart threw further light on the question in his work entitled *De l'Authenticité des Annales et des Histoires de Tacite*. It was by his study of the question of the persecution of Christians under Nero, *Etudes au sujet de la persécution des chrétiens sous Néron*, that he was first led to see that this particular passage was, at any rate, an interpolation. An examination of the evidences showed their entirely dubious character, and enabled him, following Mr. Ross, to bring the charge of forgery home to Poggio. He examines the manuscripts, of which he gives photographic reproductions. He finds their history suspicious, and their caligraphy spurious.

He holds they contain much Tacitus could not have written. He shows how the book was composed, Poggio using the remains of Dion Cassius, Plutarch, Suetonius, Josephus, Tertullian, Orosius, and Sulpicius Severus, to which he added from his own invention and his wide reading and knowledge of the human heart and human affairs. Mr. Hochart points out an absence of a knowledge of war, inexplicable in Tacitus, but natural in Poggio, who makes Mithradates follow exactly the same route as that which the Emperor Julian describes as his own. The full weight of such arguments it must be left for scholars to decide; but, assuredly, there are few great works now under a heavier load of suspicion than the Annals of Tacitus.

A surmise may be made that Poggio had as model for the character of Nero the real character of his master, Pope John XXIII., and that the real martyrdoms of Huss and Jerome may have suggested those of the early Christians. M. Hochart, while finding the original of the story in the chronicles of Sulpicius Severus, thinks the details of mockery were supplied from the execution of Jerome. The refinements of cruelty attributed to Nero were less known in the Pagan Roman world, but were to be found in the annals of the Inquisition. M. Hochart holds that the merits of Tacitus have been much exaggerated. This may be; yet it must be confessed that, if a forgery, the forger was no common man. Poggio was assuredly a man of great erudition and industry. He was certainly avaricious and entirely without scruples. His heart was in antiquity, and he was a Latinist of many styles by profession. Of his *History of Florence* L'enfant says: "*On ne saurait le lire sans y reconnaître Tite Live, Salluste, et les meilleurs historiens de l'antiquité.*" One cannot read it without recognizing Livy, Sallust, and the best historians of antiquity.

I do not pretend that the question of the forgery of the Annals is by any means as clear as that of the passage in Josephus, which bears the mark of the Christian so legible on its face. But this I do say, that this passage is of so dubious a character as to render it quite unfit to be cited as evidence of an infallible revelation. Christianity, if from God, should be so clear and convincing that there could be no gainsaying its evidences. Like Caesar's wife, it should be above suspicion. As a matter of fact, there is not a single item of Christian evidence untainted.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE NEW CLAIMS FOR THE BIBLE.

DURING the last two thousand years professed Christians have made many endeavors to harmonize their faith with reason and common sense. One by one doctrines, which were once regarded as being essential to the belief in Christianity, have been given up as untenable. It is true the name Christianity is still retained to represent certain religious views, but those views have little in common with what the name represented in former times. The Church has changed or modified its teachings in almost every decade within the last half century. With this fact before us, it is extremely difficult to understand the consistency of the claim that Christianity is a "divine" system. Its entire history is a record of human imperfections, and of constant endeavors to cover the weaknesses of the faith by imparting to it new interpretations and fresh explanations, which alter its very nature. The notions held by the primitive Church in reference to miracles, prayer, original sin, the vicarious atonement, hell and the Devil, now find no supporters outside the narrow orthodox school—a school which, we are glad to know, is rapidly diminishing both in numbers and in authority. Amid all these variations and these departures from the "faith once delivered to the saints," persistent efforts have been made to preserve what is termed "the spirit of Christ." If, however, by this phrase is meant the recognition of, and obedience to, the teachings of Jesus, the efforts have been a complete failure, inasmuch as what Christ is supposed to have taught is not acted upon in daily life either within or without the Church. From the Archbishop of Canterbury down to the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, the real essentials of Christianity are practically ignored. The principal consideration with such "servants of the Lord" is, not how to secure the promised blessings

of another life, but which is the best way to obtain the secular advantages of the present existence. The endeavor to hold on to Christianity, while giving up many of its distinctive teachings, must prove futile; hence it is that the profession of the Christian faith to-day is a colossal sham.

Last week we drew attention in these columns to the attempt upon the part of several high dignitaries of the Church, in a book recently published, to reconcile the Bible with the advanced thought of the present time. The position taken by these eminent Christian writers is this: That, although the Bible contains many errors, it is in many respects misleading in its statements, that it is unscientific in its teachings, and that much is attributed to certain writers which they did not write; yet it is claimed that the Bible is unique, that it is the "Book of books," and that it is "above all other books"—in short, that it is "God's Bible." Now, we submit that this endeavor, on the part of these "lights of the Church," to save the Bible from its legitimate fate must prove utterly vain. It is a false position to take up, and it tends to mislead the thoughtless and the credulous. The Bible is admitted by the new defenders to be doubtful in much of its history and erroneous in many of its teachings. It must therefore be a human production, and as such it should be judged. No amount of special pleading will prevent the book from being estimated by intelligent persons according to the nature of its contents rather than by teaching that it is the "word of God." If it were that, it should be free from error; but it is not so, and it is a mere jugglery of words to apply to the book terms of a deceptive character. The orthodox and the Secular views of the Bible we can understand, but this go-between theory is to us incomprehensible. These dignitaries of the Church are severe upon their orthodox brethren for clinging to the old ideas of the Bible, because it is alleged that such ideas cannot be maintained in the presence of modern thought. This is quite true; but can this new view be reasonably vindicated? Let us glance briefly at a few of the assertions advanced by these latest defenders of the Bible.

Arthur S. Peake, M.A., in his contribution to the book entitled *The Bible and the Child* (which we dealt with in our article last week), congratulates himself that his fresh mode of dealing with the Bible "has drawn the fangs of the Secularist lecturer," and that such criticism "has swept away many of the things most chosen by the Secularists for attack." This is not so, for to the Secularist the new position is as vulnerable as the old. It is still claimed that the Bible contains "God's word," and that on this account the book has special demands upon our attention. We deny that man is able to decide what is or what is not "God's word," and, therefore, the Bible has no more claim upon us than its moral teachings justify. Secularists have always regarded the book as they would any other volume, estimating its worth by what it says, not by what others say of it. The new style of criticism has in no way altered our attitude upon this point.

The Rev. R. F. Horton, M.A., D.D., writes that "the baseless dogma about the nature of the Bible must not be given to the children; the Bible itself must be given with clear and convincing explanation of what the Bible actually is." But who is to give this "explanation"? Why, we are told, "the minister." Now, where is the consistency of such a plan? No minister of the Christian religion will give an "explanation" of the Bible without attaching to it some "dogma" as to its nature. Even the exponents of the new criticism are doing this, for they are not content with teaching that the book is merely a human production. And, be it remembered, whatever dogma may be so attached by any minister, other ministers will condemn as being "baseless."

We are further told that "inspiration does not depend on perfect historical accuracy." The truth of this allegation must be decided by the meaning given to the word "inspiration." If a God, possessing the attributes generally assigned to him, inspired the writers of the Bible, then what they wrote should be accurate. If not, where is the advantage of what is called "divine influence"? Besides, if the Bible, from whatever cause, is historically unreliable, does not that detract from its value as a work of instruction? Moreover, it is not only in reference to history that the Bible is misleading; it is erroneous to some extent upon every topic of human knowledge. We are reminded that we should not "jump to the conclusion," in reference to

the Bible, that, "If all of it ain't true, there's none of it true." We know of no Secularists who do such a foolish thing. What we do say is, that all in the book which is true must have emanated from the brain of man, and was not given by the inspiration of any God; and we further say that we should not be expected to accept as true to-day all that was thought to be correct by writers who lived centuries ago. That which is taught as truth in one age may not necessarily be so regarded through all time. Herein lies the mistake of most Christians in their view of the Bible; they endeavor to regulate modern thought by the intellectual limitations of the long past. We quite agree with the Rev. Dr. Farrar when he says: "A study of the past shows us that it has been one of the chief duties of each age in succession to cast off the slough of old ignorance."

This new endeavor to redress the Bible reminds us of the words ascribed to Christ: "No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment; for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse." Without committing ourselves so far as to say that these words are strictly accurate, they remind us of the folly of trying to perpetuate the old superstition that the Bible is in any way the "word of God." By engrafting a new superstition upon the old the "rent" of the original folly is "made worse" from a logical standpoint. The question here is not if a God exist, but, supposing he does, is there any evidence that the Old and New Testaments represent his will or contain his commands? In our opinion there is not, for, even if it were admitted to be possible that in remote times such a being recorded through human agency his will and desires, certain it is that *we* have not that word in its genuine form.

To us it appears the height of absurdity for these new Bible defenders to denounce the old orthodox notions of the book, and at the same time to claim for it a "divine" or "supernatural" character. Is it not more compatible with the intellectual status of the age to value all literature according to its merits, apart from any fictitious or doubtful authority? Adopting such a course, the Bible would have its use in presenting to us a record of the sayings and doings of men who lived at periods of the world's history which were as ignorant as they were superstitious.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS.

THE NAMES OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

WE come now to the three Synoptical Gospels which Christian commentators and apologists tell us are independent accounts of the sayings and doings of Christ. Matthew, we are told, was an apostle, and therefore a witness of what he relates; Mark was the companion and "interpreter" of Peter, and Luke was a fellow-worker of Paul; the last two committed to writing the gospel preached by Peter and Paul respectively, so that Mark's Gospel is virtually that of Peter, and Luke's that of Paul. A portion of this statement has already been shown to be false—Luke was not a fellow-laborer of Paul, and the Apostle of the Gentiles did not in his teaching narrate the sayings and events which are recorded in the Third Gospel, nor have we any reason for supposing that he had ever heard of them.

The Synoptical Gospels relate a great deal of the same matter in common; hence we have three versions of the greater part of the sayings and doings ascribed to Christ. At the same time, each of the three Gospels records many circumstances which are not found in the other two. The latter fact, we are assured, is a proof of the genuineness of the Synoptical accounts; for, it is said, if three men undertook to write independent accounts of certain events of which they had all three an actual knowledge, there would be found many particulars in the narrative of each which had not been noticed by the other two writers. This is true in certain cases; but it does not apply to the Synoptists. The reason will be apparent when we notice the matters recorded by Matthew only. That evangelist gives a parable, and mentions some circumstances connected with the alleged resurrection of Christ, which, if true, he might have known. But he also relates the following circumstances, which, if true, occurred thirty years before he was

called to be an apostle: The appearance of an angel to the betrothed husband of Mary; the Magi led by a star to Jerusalem; the flight of Joseph and his family into Egypt; the massacre of children in Bethlehem by order of Herod the Great; the return of Joseph from Egypt; and the genealogy of Joseph the carpenter. Matthew could have no knowledge of any of these matters. The fact, then, of there being a number of circumstances peculiar to each Gospel is no proof of the independence of that Gospel. On the contrary, we have found that the matters peculiar to the Third and Fourth Gospels are fabrications.

The question we have now to consider is that of the alleged independence of the narratives common to the Synoptics. This I will illustrate by a simple example. Matthew, in naming the twelve Apostles (x. 2-4), gives the first six in this order: Simon Peter, Andrew, James of Zebedee, John, Philip, and Bartholomew. Luke, also, in naming the Apostles (vi. 14-16), gives the same as the first six, and places them in the same order. Now, the full significance of this fact may not, perhaps, be perceived until it is stated that the six names can be written down in 720 different ways—that is, as regards the order in which the names are placed. The number of changes or permutations is found by simply multiplying the number of names or things together; thus, $1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5 \times 6 = 720$. Hence, 3 names can be written in 6 different orders, 4 names in 24, 5 names in 120, 6 in 720, 7 in 5,040, etc. If the letters A, B, C, and D, for instance, stand respectively for the names, Andrew, Bartholomew, Cephas, and Didymus, they might be written down in any of the following orders: ABCD, ABDC, ACBD, ACDB, ADBC, ADCB, BACD, BADC, BCAD, BCDA, BDAC, BDCA, CABD, CADB, CBAD, CBDA, CDAB, CDBA, DABC, DACB, DBAC, DBCA, DCAB, DCBA.

Returning now to our first example, there are 720 different ways in which the names of the six Apostles mentioned can be written. Yet Matthew and Luke, by a wonderful coincidence, have selected the same, though there were 719 chances to 1 against the likelihood of their doing so.

Again, Mark, in giving the names of the Apostles (iii. 16-19), agrees with Luke in placing the following in exactly the same order: Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, and James of Alphaeus, though we know there were 120 different ways of arranging the names, and 119 chances to 1 against the probability of any two people hitting upon the same order.

Once more, Matthew and Mark coincide in thus naming the last four of the Apostles: James of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot; though we know that these four names might be written in 24 different orders.

Now, these wonderful coincidences prove, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the three Synoptical writers knew nothing whatever of the so-called Apostles of Christ; they knew nothing but the names, and these they copied from a common document.

ORIGINAL.	MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
S. Peter	S. Peter	S. Peter	S. Peter
Andrew	Andrew	—	Andrew
James (Z)	James (Z)	James (Z)	James (Z)
John	John	John	John
—	—	Andrew	—
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew
Matthew	—	Matthew	Matthew
Thomas	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas
—	Matthew	—	—
James (A)	James (A)	James (A)	James (A)
Thaddeus	Thaddeus	Thaddeus	—
Simon Z.	Simon Z.	Simon Z.	Simon Z.
—	—	—	Judas (J)
Judas I.	Judas I.	Judas I.	Judas I.

In the foregoing table the first column represents the original list of twelve names. Now, if we compare the order in which these names are given by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, we shall find that each evangelist (or some early copyist) has changed the position of one name, and one only. In the First Gospel the name "Matthew" has been moved down one place; in the Second Gospel the name "Andrew" has been moved down two places; in the Third Gospel the name "Thaddeus" has been changed to "Judas," and then moved down one place. If these three names—

only one in each list of twelve—be put back in their original places, the names of the whole twelve Apostles will be in exactly the same order in each Gospel. Now, the chances against two independent writers placing twelve names in exactly the same order are 479,001,600 to 1; but that three independent writers should do so would be many million times more improbable. Should there, however, be any reader who will not admit the probability that the position of one name in each list of twelve may have been changed either by inadvertence or design in copying, I call upon him to explain how it happens that in all three Gospels as they stand Peter comes first in order, Philip fifth, Bartholomew sixth, James of Alphæus ninth, and Judas Iscariot last.

But that the names Matthew, Andrew, and Thaddeus (one in each Gospel) have been moved from their original positions, and that each list of twelve was copied from the same original document, can be seen from the fact that, if these three names be removed from each list, the remaining nine are in exactly the same order in each Gospel—viz., Simon Peter, James of Zebedee, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, James of Alphæus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot. In other words, there were 362,880 different ways of arranging these nine names; yet Matthew and Mark without collusion intuitively selected the same; also Luke, with the same tremendous odds against his hitting upon the order in which Matthew arranged them—362,879 to 1—by a happy chance selected that very order, and no other.

If further proof of copying these names from the same document be needed, we have it in "Bartholomew." This is no name at all; it is merely "the son of Tolemæi" or "Ptolemy." Not one of the three evangelists, though each professes to give the names of all the apostles, mentions the name of this particular apostle; they all call him "the son of Ptolemy." Yet, if he be not a myth, he must have possessed a name, and must also have been known among the apostles by that name. Matthew, at least, would have known it; but he, like the other two Synoptists, calls him only "the son of Ptolemy." It is clear, then, that the three Synoptical writers had no knowledge of any of the reputed apostles of Christ; they simply copied the names from some pre-existing document.

Now, the only apostles whom we have reason for believing historical are those mentioned by Paul—"James and Cephas and John," who "were reputed to be pillars" (Gal. ii. 9). The writer of the Fourth Gospel has attempted to identify Cephas with Peter (i. 42); but, besides there being no corroboration of that forger's word, his statement is contradicted by the accounts in the Synoptics. Further, if Paul knew an apostle by the name of Cephas, that apostle could not at the same time have been known as Peter or Simon Peter. This fact is unquestionable. Hence, also, the name Peter in Galatians ii. 7 and 8 is an interpolation. In a genuine list of apostles the name of James would stand first, and Cephas or John next. James was the head of the Church in Paul's time, and he was the most important character in the earliest written Gospel—that "according to the Hebrews." This James, too, was not "the son of Zebedee" nor "the son of Alphæus," but "the Lord's brother." His name has even been preserved in an anecdote recorded by Matthew and Mark. In the latter Gospel we read (vi. 3): "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses and Judas and Simon?" This James was Jesus's own brother, the son of Joseph the carpenter. He was in Paul's time the chief of the apostles (Gal. i. 9; ii. 12); yet his name, as well as that of Cephas, is omitted in the documents from which the Synoptists at a later day took the names of the twelve apostles.

ABRACADABRA.

Pious Frauds.

The Fathers laid down as a distinct proposition that pious frauds were justifiable, and even laudable; and, if they had not laid this down, they would nevertheless have practised it as a necessary consequence of their doctrine of exclusive salvation. Immediately all ecclesiastical literature became tainted with the spirit of the most unblushing mendacity. Heathenism was to be combated, and therefore prophecies of Christ by Orpheus and the Sibyls were forged, lying wonders were multiplied, and ceaseless calumnies were poured upon those who, like Julian, opposed the faith. Heretics were to be convinced, and, therefore, interpolations of old writings or complete forgeries were habitually opposed to the forged gospels.—*Lecky, "History of Rationalism."*

MATERIALISM AND IDEALISM.

MATERIALISM and Idealism are usually regarded as absolute opposites. Materialism is represented as a miserable, comfortless, hopeless, sad, and empty theory, fit only for hypochondriacs, misanthropes, or pure rationalists; while, in opposition to this, the so-called Idealism professes to satisfy the higher intellectual and spiritual necessities of man, and to raise him, by a higher conception of the world and of life, above the deficiencies and nothingness of this early life. In truth, however, this is so incorrect that the materialism of science may rather with perfect justice be described as the highest idealism of life. For the more we free ourselves from all delusive imaginations of a world above us and outside of us, or of a so-called future, the more do we find ourselves naturally directed with all our forces and endeavors to the present, or to the world in which we are living, and feel the necessity of arranging this world and our life as beautifully and advantageously as possible, both for the individual and for the whole.

It is clear that thus a perfectly immeasurable field of exertion and action is opened up for the idealism or the idealistic striving of human nature—a field, it is true, which no longer lies beyond the stars, but under our feet, and sets reality in place of imagination. There are consequently no more zealous pioneers of progress, no greater friends of freedom, and no more spirited defenders of the general equality of mankind in rights and happiness, than the Materialists and Freethinkers. Their faith (for even the Materialists have a faith) is, that man is better than he seems, that he can do more than he thinks, and that he deserves to be happier than he is. Heaven and hell, those primæval bugbears of spiritual despotism, exist also for the Materialist; but he seeks and finds them, not, as of old, outside of man, but within him, and shows that it depends solely upon man himself and his conduct whether he shall have a heaven or hell upon earth.

This striving for human perfection, or for earthly improvement and felicity, has given rise to the further objection to Materialism, that its sole object is sensual satisfaction and enjoyment, and that therefore, in the satisfaction of mere animal impulses, it neglects the higher spiritual needs of man—the interests of his soul. This objection rests upon so absurd and evident a confusion of scientific or theoretical materialism, with practical materialism or the materialism of life, that it scarcely deserves serious refutation. The materialism of science and the materialism of life are things which differ *toto coelo*, and which can be confounded with each other only by malevolence or incompetency. Whoever sacrifices his life to investigation, his personal interests to the truth, and the fact of his activity to the improvement of the lot of humanity, has no leisure to run after sensual enjoyments, and is in reality a far greater idealist than those who find in their idealism a means of obtaining great offices, fat livings, rich salaries, or brilliant distinctions. But even should Materialism, when more widely diffused among mankind, contribute (except among its scientific supporters) to strengthen the striving after the enjoyments of this world, which, indeed, is already sufficiently strong, this could only be greeted with satisfaction in the interests of progress—always supposing that the kind of enjoyment was such, in the sense of scientific-materialistic conception of the universe, as did not merely satisfy the gross and animal impulses, but at the same time acted ennoblingly upon the body and mind.

By this means we should again approach that cheerful and joyous conception of the universe which was held by classical antiquity, from which we have been, unfortunately, carried far away by monkery and ecclesiastical greed of power; and those innumerable and immense aids to civilization, which we have and the ancients did not possess, would incalculably facilitate, increase, and ennoble our enjoyments.

All this shows that Materialism and Idealism are not, as so many suppose, born enemies, but that at the bottom they are only different expressions for one and the same thing. In theory, Materialism far exceeds the old idealistic philosophy in ideal value, inasmuch as it does not, like the latter, assume a multitude of observational facts as inexplicable, and therefore deduce them from supernatural or innate causes (*e.g.*, the mind), but it goes to the bottom of things and seeks to embrace their most intimate and final

connections. In practice it exceeds all other systems and conceptions of the universe by setting the ideal world within us in place of the ideal world without us, and endeavors to guide it towards realization. No other philosophy has ever stood like this in the closest connection with life itself, and the best touchstone of its value and correctness will be found in the influence which it has yet already exerted, and will yet exert, upon life and its forms. Just as its theory is simple, unitary, clear, and definite, so also is its practical tendency; and its whole program with regard to the future of man and of the human race may be expressed in six words, which contain all that can be theoretically or practically required for this future—namely, Freedom, Culture, and Prosperity for all.

F. L. BUCHNER.

THE GOOD GOD.

ONE day the good God got out of bed
In a very good humor for us, 'tis said;
He put his nose to the window light—
"Perhaps their planet has perished quite."
Not yet; in its corner very far
He saw it twinkling, our little star.
"If I can think how they get on there,"
Said he, "the Devil may take me, I swear;
The Devil may take me, I swear."

"Black or white, frozen or broiled
(He said, like a father to children spoiled),
Mortals whom I have made so small,
They pretend that I govern you all;
But, God be praised, you shall also see
That I have ministers under me.
If I don't give the sack to one or two pair,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear;
The Devil may take me, I swear."

"To make you live in peace divine,
Have I not given you women and wine?
Yet in my teeth with prayers and boasts
The pigmies call me the Lord of Hosts;
And even dare to invoke my name
When they light the murderous cannon's flame!
If I ever commanded column or square,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear;
The Devil may take me, I swear."

"Who are these dwarfs so richly drest,
On gilded thrones in sumptuous rest?
The head anointed, so proud and pert,
These chiefs of your insect-swarms assert
That I have blest their rights of place,
That they are kings by my special grace.
If it is by me that they reign thus there,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear;
The Devil may take me, I swear!"

"Then these other dwarfs, all black, of whom
My poor nose hates the incense fume?
They make of life a dismal fast,
And in my name fierce curses cast
In their sermons— Very fine, said he;
Only, by gad, they're Hebrew to me:
If I believe anything they declare,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear;
The Devil may take me, I swear!"

"Children, enough of this: no sect
But the good kind hearts shall be my elect.
Make love to each other and live in joy,
Without any fear that God will annoy;
Laugh down the great and the canting crew—
But suppose the *mouchards* should hear me? Adieu!
If into heaven those fellows fare,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear;
The Devil may take me, I swear."

—JAMES THOMSON, from BERANGER.

The golden rule is, Give unqualified assent to no propositions but those the truth of which is so clear and distinct that they cannot be doubted. The enunciation of this great first commandment of science consecrated doubt. It removed doubt from the seat of penance among the grievous sins to which it had long been condemned, and enthroned it in that high place among the primary duties which is assigned to it by the scientific conscience of these latter days.—T. H. Huxley.

An actually existent fly is more important than a possibly existent angel.—Emerson.

ACID DROPS.

It is evident that the so-called Education Act is to be neither more nor less than another substantial endowment to the State Church, in the guise of aid to the denominational schools under control of the State-maintained parsons. The Board schools are not to participate in the dip into the taxpayer's pocket, so it is manifestly an attempt to exploit one section of the community for the benefit of another.

Gambetta's famous words are especially true with regard to education. Here, ever, "clericalism is the enemy." When we see the Anglican Bishop of Chester and Cardinal Vaughan fraternizing in their efforts to use the schools for religious purposes, we may guess what a short shrift Freethought would have could these priests obtain complete control over education.

No doubt the Nonconformists have brought their troubles on themselves by deserting their good old principle, that the State has nothing to do with the teaching of religion. Twenty years before the passing of Mr. Forster's Act the Rev. Thomas Binney, author of *How to Make the Best of Both Worlds*, wrote that "the best system of national education would be for the schools to be purely secular schools; for the children of all denominations to learn together on an equal footing; for them not to be known in the school as belonging to either one Church or another; and for neither priest nor presbyter to have anything to do with the schools."

Now, some Noncons. are even willing that the Apostles' Creed shall be taught. Yet it is no more wrong to teach the creed ascribed to Athanasius than to teach that ascribed to the Apostles. The one is as much a forgery as the other. If public time may be taken in children offering up prayers, it is a question for the parents whether they pray to God, Jesus, Mary, or the saints. If the duty of prayer may be taught, why not also confession? Once admit religion into the schools, and the only line of demarcation will be that drawn by the will of the majority.

The Noncons. will have to get back to their old position, that religion is a private affair, with which the State, representing men of all beliefs and of no belief, has nothing to do. On this ground they triumphantly opposed Church rates and tests in universities. They deserted it when they saw that Board schools might be manipulated in Nonconformist interests, and that they could have what is practically their religion taught in public buildings, by public servants, at the public expense. They have been willing that the State should teach just so much religion as they approve, while protesting against the specific creeds and catechisms of which others approved. To find these further endowed is a just retribution.

The Government may carry their measure, but we shall not relax our efforts in the cause of secular education. The present *régime* will not last for ever, and in the long run the good old rule, that he who pays the piper shall call the tune, will come to the fore. Schools supported almost entirely by public funds will have to pass from clerical mismanagement to popular control. Meantime, the way to promote Secularism in education is to make Freethinkers in religion.

The Rev. R. T. Gardner, of Garstang, Lancashire, is the proud possessor of a hoopoe, a lovely but exceedingly rare bird on our shores. The reverend gentleman would do better to lay his gun aside, and read to his flock Ruskin's noble words against slaying or hurting any beautiful living thing.

We have had occasion before to draw attention to the Rev. John Vallancey, perpetual curate of Rosliston, Derbyshire. This *locum tenens* of God Almighty objected to a Mrs. Wright placing flowers on her sister's grave in his—that is to say, the parishioners'—churchyard. In 1893 he brought an action against Miss Wright for having trimmed the grass above her sister's grave. The judgment was against him. Last June he ordered his sexton to remove the mound. Miss Wright came into the churchyard, and, on her protesting, he ordered her to go home. The sexton said he would "have up every bone." Two men interfered, and the curate directed the sexton to get on with his work, saying he would protect him. The sexton repeated the expression, and also said if the lady would wait a minute or two she might perhaps "be able to see her." Miss Wright's mother struck the sexton with an umbrella. The scene caused a crowd. The curate stood with a revolver in one hand and a stick in the other, and he pointed the revolver at Miss Wright's brother and said he would shoot him. The curate was subsequently convicted for violent and indecent conduct. Against this he appealed. The judges dismissed the appeal.

Is it not time that men like the Rev. Mr. Vallancey were removed from the position they disgrace? The judges who refused to sanction his attempted control over a grave, however, could not dismiss this perpetual curate; and probably the whole bench of bishops would be unequal to the task. Once a priest always a priest, unless there is a long and expensive process of unfrocking.

According to an article in *Belgravia*, superstition is still rife in Cornwall, as, indeed, where is it not? But in Cornwall they still try love-charms on St. John's Day, and a little while ago they used to light bonfires and carry torches through the streets on the eves of the festivals of St. John and St. Peter. The Logan rocks used to be held to be the rendezvous of witches, who had power to enter into animal shape. This Bible-sanctioned belief is not yet extinct.

Belgravia says that in Cornwall they still credit the parochial clergy with the ability to exorcise evil spirits. This is backed up by the Canons of the Established Church, the 72nd Canon prohibiting unlicensed ministers from exorcising devils. The famous John Wesley was a firm believer in witchcraft, and said that giving it up was in effect giving up the Bible. *Belgravia* tells a story of how he visited a haunted house in the neighborhood of St. Agnes, Cornwall. The evil spirits kicked up a frightful din till Wesley offered to say grace—which proposal was met with peals of laughter. He said, "Jesus, the name high over all," and before he could add a word they vanished. Nor, adds the story, was the house ever again haunted.

One of the most ancient churches in Derbyshire—that dedicated to Saints Mary and Lawrence—at Bolsover, was completely destroyed by fire on Sunday morning. It will take £10,000 to replace it.

The *Rochdale Observer* says: "The vicar of Castleton has invited the licensed victuallers to assist in keeping out a School Board by providing a stall, to be called 'The Licensed Victuallers' Stall,' at his forthcoming bazaar. This is said to have evoked an effusion from Sir Wilfrid Lawson, from which we quote some stanzas:—

Down with the Board schools, where they teach
Astronomy, Geology,
And let us have one where we preach
The liquor trade's theology.
There shall the youthful mind be taught
On proper lines to think,
And thore by sure degrees be brought
To learn the worth of drink.
Thou come and patronize our stall,
With jugs and bottles hung,
And pay your cash, whate'er befall,
For Bible, Beer, and 'Bung.'"

A letter lately posted at New York bore this address: "Mark Twain, God knows where." The missive thus consigned to Providence found the local agent of Providence at the desk of Defective Addresses, and was duly forwarded and delivered.

Give a poor gipsy sixpence to tell your fortune, and you are a fool and she an impostor; give £10,000 to a Romish impostor to pray or mass you out of a Purgatory you can never enter, and you are wise and the rogue is perfectly honest.

We find that Mr. Percy Sinnett's Theosophic revelation, that we were previously incarnated on the planet Mars, is not so original as we imagined. The source, like his revelations, plagiarized from Professor Kiddle, is American, Messiah Thomas Lake Harris having given currency to this idea.

Messiah Harris holds that both Jesus Christ and the present earth's inhabitants have been incarnate on Mercury, Venus, and Mars, their present dweller being the "other sheep not of this fold" spoken of in John, while Satan is the world-soul of a lost planet. Messiah Harris does not say if Jesus has to be crucified on every planet he visits.

The official reports of the British Consuls in Armenia have now been printed in a Blue Book. The most striking is that of Mr. Hampson, who states that no Christians remained in the district of Sairt. About 15,000 had been killed there, 19,000 converted to Mohammedanism, and 2,500 women carried off. An intense fanaticism prevailed. There were no consuls and few reports when Saxony was converted to Christianity by the sword of Charlemagne, and the whole of northern Europe became Christian at the "persuasion" of the Teutonic Knights.

Crowds of Parisians have been going to the Seine, near the Corps Legislatif, to see the converted Moslem Deputy, Dr. Grenier, perform his ablutions in the flowing stream. The Doctor, it seems, reads the Bible almost as much as the Koran. He says: "Islamism, as I understand it, has much in common with Protestantism. Like the latter, [it is a

reasonable religion freed from superstition and human accretions. The Protestant has his Bible, and I have my Koran; I recognize no other religious authority. In fact, the Koran is the continuation of the New Testament, as truly as the New Testament is the continuation of the Old."

The Rev. Dr. Sheehan, Bishop of Waterford, was appointed referee in the dispute between pig-sellers and pig-buyers. But neither of the parties would accept his ruling, and he found it necessary to pray for both of them.

Three millions are said to be annually subscribed in Britain for Christian missions; while the London hospitals complain that their funds are stationary and totally inadequate for their needs.

Dr. Hippolite Baraduc, of Paris, says he takes photographs by the soul's light. The soul, it appears, is a shining body in a constant state of vibration. If Dr. Baraduc would only photograph it and convince all scientists that he had done so, he might make a name.

This reminds us of a sky pilot who called on a publisher and asked him to issue a lengthy demonstration of the existence of God. The publisher told him his volume need not be so bulky if he got God to sit for his photograph as a frontispiece.

Chaplains of workhouses, if they receive no pay, may belong to any denomination. If there is any salary, the chaplain must be a clergyman of the Church of England. Nothing a year is open to anybody; when there is money it must go to a parson.

Christopher Crayon, in the *Christian World*, gives a long account of "The Jew in Jerusalem." "No Christian food," it appears, "on any account may be consumed; even eggs cooked in Christian pots are refused. Only Jewish wine may be drunk, and if a bottle of it is only touched by a Christian, it becomes unclean." How funny, to be sure! And does not the Christian, on the other hand, speak of "the dirty Jew"? There seems nothing like religion for making men hate and despise each other.

Evangelist Moody's sixtieth birthday is approaching, and £2,500 is being raised in England as a gift to him on that occasion. Lord Kinnaird and Prebendary Webb-Peploe are receiving the subscriptions. Moody will probably smile when he gets the money. He is said to have a sense of humor.

There are 283,837 Muslims in the City of Calcutta (India) as against 32,367 Christians.

The Rev. J. W. Lachany, a Campbellite preacher of Lexington, Kentucky, says that Infidels "deserve to be cremated alive rather than after death." The sentiment shows the humanizing effect of this sky-pilot's Christianity.

The *Consett Guardian* appears aware that Mr. Cohen did not come off second best in his encounter with the Rev. W. Gellay, for it observes: "It has long since been accepted that it is useless to publicly debate with anyone of a negative creed." Does the *Consett Guardian* mean useless for the purpose of bolstering up Christianity?

The Rev. E. Lloyd Jones, of Rhyl, preaching in Watford Wesleyan Church last Sunday evening, declared that the Church had always treated sceptics and speculative thinkers with great cruelty. He instanced the cases of Mrs. Besant and Dr. Pusey. The Church damned men for the shape of their foreheads. Some men were born sceptics; they would ask questions, and turn things inside out. Some men were nobler by nature than a great many would ever be by grace, and he would sooner stay with them from Saturday to Monday.

Some men, said Mr. Jones, prayed, "Oh, God, make me a burning and a shining light." He always felt he should like to suggest they say, "Oh, God, make me a farthing candle!" Some men cannot believe; others will believe anything. He heard a preacher declare that if the Bible said Jonah had swallowed the whale he would believe it. Mr. Jones went into the vestry after the service and said to the preacher: "And if the Bible said, 'And after the whale Jonah swallowed a haystack,' you would believe it?"

Mr. Jones maintained that Job was a sceptic. "He questioned God, which some good people would call blasphemy. There isn't an Evangelical church in the country that would have Job for a member. You in the pew can believe anything, nine articles or thirty-nine, or 139, according to your power of swallowing; you are not asked your theological belief, it is we who are muzzled; we have to be orthodox." How it is that such a man can retain his position as a Wesleyan minister, while kicking over the traces in this

fashion, is doubtless one of those mysteries that angels desire to look into and are not able.

Bishop Wilberforce was honest enough to declare that the story of the Redemption depended on the prior story of the Fall. Now Dean Farrar, and the other writers in *The Bible and the Child*, say that even children should be taught that the first chapters of Genesis are not history. Dean Fremantle even says: "There are, we must admit, some stories in the Bible which we cannot take literally, such as that of the axe head swimming at the word of Elisha, or the three children in the fiery furnace." Surely the world is moving. The men in the pulpits are beginning to say what Thomas Paine said a century ago.

The Rev. Master of Salisbury Training College is disgusted because the National Society no longer requires teachers to be examined in the Athanasian Creed. This bogus creed, which Athanasius never saw, was declared by Disraeli, perhaps in sarcasm, to be an inspired lyric. Porson, who understood such matters, gave his opinion that the pseudo-Athanasius must have been drunk when he composed it.

Varley's *Searchlight* is reported to be dead or dying. It was a desperately pious little paper, which saw incurable wickedness in everybody except Varley and his little crowd of saints, and its whole story was that everybody was lost. When the public ascertained, on reading the first number, that everybody was lost, interest waned. Nobody could be more lost than he was in the first issue, and the subject was exhausted, and Varley's mission was used up. When a paper damns everybody in one number, it leaves nothing to say in the next one, except that everybody is still keeping that way.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

The Rev. E. E. Knapp, pastor of a leading New York Baptist chapel, recognizing that the people will not go to chapel, has determined to take the chapel to them, and has started a Horseless Gospel Motor Waggon, propelled with gasolene to take it about the country. A gospel without life, but propelled by gas, is certainly appropriate.

The choir-singers in New York know their value to the churches. Miss De Vere, at the Paxton Church, receives £900 a year, and Miss Dutton, at a Baptist church in the same city, receives £600.

After the farce of bishop-electing comes the comedy of Convocation. The dean and chapter pray for the Holy Ghost, and then elect a bishop who has previously been appointed by the Crown. Convocation meets and passes laws which no one is compelled to execute. The unbeneficed clergy have no part in this comedy, and the Curates' Union has been petitioning for representation.

Daylight, of Norwich, gives the following lines on "The Bishops":—

Who follow Christ with humble feet,
And rarely have enough to eat;
Who "Misereres" oft repeat?—
Our Bishops.

Who, like the fishermen of old,
Care not for house, nor lands, nor gold,
But boldly brave the damp and cold?—
Our Bishops.

Who preach the Gospel to the poor,
And nurse the sick and teach the Boor;
Who faithful to the end endure?—
Our Bishops.

Who give up all for Jesus' sake,
And no thought for the morrow take,
But daily sacrifices make?—
Our Bishops.

And who count everything a loss
Except their Lord and Master's cross,
And reckon riches as but dross?—
Our Bishops.

The Rev. Luke Rivington, a convert to Romanism, stated, in a lecture at the Hove Town Hall, Brighton, that "Lord Halifax would not deny that on his bended knees before the Holy Father he begged him to give a judgment on the Anglican Orders." A painting of this scene, representing their president on his knees before the Pope, ought to adorn the walls of the English Church Union.

The Rev. C. E. Butler, Vicar of Hotham, and formerly headmaster of Hull Grammar School, suddenly disappeared from the village, and was followed by an archiepiscopal sequestration order for £460 due from him to Queen Anne's bounty.

Mr. O. J. Simon, a reforming Jew, proposes to so modify Synagogue services that Liberal Christians, Unitarians,

Theists, and even Agnostics, might be drawn into the wide fold of Judaism. The Chief Rabbi objects from the standpoint of orthodoxy, and Mr. Langwile and Mr. Henriques from that of heterodoxy. Mr. Montefiore, too, wants to know what would be the attitude of the New Judaism towards the Pentateuch and the Bible generally. Mr. Voysey commends the proposal. The discussion shows that a forward movement of Judaism is going on here as well as in America. Where the Jew is free he tends to Free-thought, where he is persecuted he holds back on his old religion.

Among the tales of a printing office is one of a pious Scotch compositor, who came to the manager in concern about his copy, in which the writer had very frequently used the words "Lord" and "God," and not always reverently. The man looked very serious indeed as he pointed them out to the chief, and inquired: "Dinna ye think, sir, we'd better delete the Deity?" "Well, I don't know," said the other, "but I've noticed that whenever you see the name of God in a book it's pretty sure to be trash."

More miracles are announced as having been performed by the remains of the bone of the arm of God's grandmother, St. Ann, at Beaupré, Quebec. How the holy relic got preserved and brought from Palestine to Canada is one of those things which the late Lord Dundreary used to say no fellow can understand. Like the miracles, it is a subject for faith.

The Canadian Protestants sneer at these relics, and laugh at the miracles. They should remember how the woman was cured by touching the hem of Christ's garment. Even the handkerchiefs and aprons of Paul cured diseases and drove out evil spirits, according to the veracious Acts of the Apostles (ix. 12). St. Chrysostom adduces this as sufficient proof that a blessing is certainly derived from relics. The pious, patriotic, and perfidious Philip II. of Spain collected 7,421 relics, which were preserved in 515 handsome shrines in the Escorial. One was the Virgin's handkerchief, with which it was said a blind boy's sight had been restored. Some of the vouchers for the cure were written in Spanish; and Aldrete, the antiquary, narrowly escaped being burnt to death for having the temerity to say that the Spanish language did not exist in the first centuries.

The *Presbyterian* inserts a letter from "An Irish Elder," who protests against Professor Bruce's taking the Sabbath for the delivery of a Gifford Lecture, "even if it be on God's Providence," and wonders if this is another of the ways in which Professor Bruce chooses to run across old-time theology.

A dressmaker summoned her vicar at the Bloomsbury County Court for a sovereign which she, in a moment of forgetfulness, put into the plate at church. The judge held that a gift in the plate was a gift, and the vicar does not seem to have been sufficiently generous to return the dressmaker any part of her hard-earned money.

The *Illustrated Church News* asks if the Roman Church is gaining ground in England, and answers the question in the negative. The statement is made that the Registrar-General's reports show that in 1853 Roman marriages were 51 per 1,000 of the general population. This figure was never reached again, and in 1893 and 1894 it had fallen to 41 per 1,000. The 1895 report is not yet out.

Marriages seem to be a fair test in this matter, as a Catholic marriage is insisted on in the case of the faithful. But marriages are hardly a test of the strength of the Church of England, as even Dissenters like the *clat* of marriage at church, and on this occasion claim their parishioners' rights, even though the church may hear no more of them. With respect to its marriages the Established Church comes out a long way ahead, although the number of its confirmed members shows it to be but one of many sects.

Canon Benham, who writes as "Peter Lombard," has unearthed the following note to a schoolmistress in charge of an elementary school not twelve miles from Charing-cross: "Miss — Please to excuse B — not attending prayers, as I don't think it agrees with her.—Mrs. B—."

And in these Four things, Opinion of Ghosts, Ignorance of Second Causes, Devotion for what men fear, and taking of things casual for Prognostiques, consisteth the Natural Seed of Religion, which, by reason of the different Fancies, Judgments, and Passions of severall men, hath grown up into ceremonies so different that those which are used by one man are for the most part ridiculous to another.—*Thomas Hobbes, "Leviathan."*

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 31, Liverpool; subjects: 11, "Here and Hereafter"; 3, "The Woman's Bible"; 7, "Colonel Ingersoll and Freethought in America."

February 7, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—January 31, Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road, London. February 7, Athenæum Hall, London; 14, Leicester; 21, Liverpool; 23, Paisley; 24, Greenock; 25, Motherwell; 26, Dunoon; 28, Glasgow. April 4, Sheffield.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

G. CRUDDAS.—Pleased to note that Mr. Cohen has made a sensation in your district.

MANY letters remain unanswered in consequence of Mr. Foote's absence in the North.

S. ABBOT.—Psalm cix. is known as the cursing psalm, containing as it does such divine sentiments as "Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow."

J. DAVIDSON.—That one does not acknowledge creeds or dogmas as hindrances to thought does not imply there are no limitations. See Collins on *Free-will*.

ALERT.—Secretary, Anti-Vaccination League, Brixton, London, S.W.

P. PEARSON.—Irenæus cites Papias as saying that "the elders who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, related that he taught that the days would come when vines shall grow, each with 10,000 branches, in each branch 10,000 twigs, and in each twig 10,000 shoots, and in each shoot 10,000 clusters, and on each cluster 10,000 grapes." It is calculated that the wine would keep all earth's inhabitants dead drunk for 30,000,000,000 years.

ATHEIST.—The letters on the Presidency have been very one-sided, and stand over until Mr. Foote's return from Scotland.

NEWCASTLE FREETHINKER.—You will find all the information you require in the *Secular Almanack*, issued by the National Secular Society, and edited by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler. Its price is only threepence. The publisher is R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

L. GREENFIELD.—Bichner's books are all well worth reading. We understand that the latest English edition of *Matter and Force* was translated by Mrs. Besant. Books on Socialism are now so numerous that it is difficult to keep pace with them all. Belfort Bax's volumes are well written, and his work on Socialism, in collaboration with the late William Morris, is able and instructive. The volume of Fabian Essays on Socialism has had a good circulation. There is a cheap, paper-covered edition in the market.

K. W. B.—We are always glad to have good "bits" for our columns. Thanks for your judicious efforts to promote our circulation.

OUR editor, who is away lecturing in the North—somewhere near the North Pole, judging by the weather—has just received a most delightful letter from Colonel Ingersoll, who says he has "fully recovered" from his recent illness. This will be very welcome news to thousands of Freethinkers in the old country. "I hope some fine day to see you all," the Colonel says. This is, of course, an allusion to his intended visit to England, which we shall now urge him to make soon—this year if possible. Our editor prefers to keep to himself the pleasant things that Colonel Ingersoll says about his visit to America.

D. HUGHES.—Mr. Foote's absence from London accounts for correspondence standing over till next week. Your letter shall appear with others in our next issue.

GATESHEAD FRIEND.—We cannot send a reporter to the Rev. R. A. Aitken's lecture this afternoon (January 31), in St. Columba's Church, on "The Difficulties of Doubt." Of course, we should be pleased to receive a good account of the reverend gentleman's discourse, with a view to criticising it in these columns.

H. A. HOPKINS.—We have always encouraged the sending of letters by Freethinkers to the local press. We quite agree with you that there is a large field for active Freethought workers in South London. If all did their duty, the movement would make more progress there. We hope to see a very energetic outdoor propaganda during the summer.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—*Consett Chronicle*—*The Torch of Reason*—*The Little Candle*—*The Vegetarian*—*Consett Guardian*—*Isle of Man Times*—*Daylight*—*Freedom*—*Truthseeker*—*New York Sun*—*Secular Thought*—*Independent Pulpit*—*Brann's Iconoclast*—*Liberator*—*Echo*—*Blue Grass Blade*—*Crescent*—*Islamic World*—*Christian Life*—*Freidenker*—*Public Opinion*—*Two Worlds*—*Progressive Thinker*—*Nya Sanningar*—*Sydney Bulletin*—*Reynolds's Newspaper*.

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

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.

MR. FOOTE'S morning and afternoon meetings at Glasgow were somewhat affected by the disagreeable weather. In the evening, however, the hall was crowded in every part, and the lecturer received a most enthusiastic welcome. Prior to the lecture Mr. Foote performed the interesting ceremony of "naming" a baby boy—Alfred Claude Victor Walkley. Mr. Thomas MacLeish occupied the chair in the morning and afternoon, and Mr. D. Black in the evening. A collection, yielding £1 14s. 7d., was taken up for the Lecture Scheme, under which meetings are being held in smaller towns in the south-west of Scotland. Mr. Foote has lectured himself during the week at Dunoon, Paisley, Greenock, and Motherwell. Mr. Watts delivers a similar course of free lectures next month. Mr. Cohen worked the district in October, and will work it again, we believe, in March.

Mr. Foote delivers three lectures to-day (Jan. 31) in the Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street, Liverpool. Large meetings are expected if the weather is not too severe.

Harry Alfred Long, the comical Glasgow infidel-slayer, has for some time been "going" to Australia, but he is not yet "gone." A subscription has been raised to recoup him (and more) for his losses in the libel suit with another infidel-slayer. A considerable amount has been realized, and if it gets much bigger the great H. A. L. may never go at all. Those who want to export him should now keep their hands in their pockets. Of course the great H. A. L. is in a very boastful mood just now. He tells the public how he vanquished Bradlaugh in debate, though he never debated with Bradlaugh in his life. All he did was to say a few words after one of Bradlaugh's lectures at Paisley. Hundreds of people, in various parts of the country, had a short innings after Bradlaugh's lectures; but they lacked Harry Alfred's imaginative powers, and never fancied that they had "debated with Bradlaugh." All this is well pointed out by Mr. Thomas MacLeish, the corresponding secretary of the Glasgow Branch of the National Secular Society, in an admirable letter to the *Evening Citizen*. Mr. MacLeish also shows the absurdity of Mr. Long's boasts of having settled Glasgow Secularism. "Secularism," he says, "is a stronger force in Glasgow to-day, and has more adherents at the present time than it ever had before. During the last sixteen months upwards of 130 lectures have been delivered under the auspices of the Glasgow Secular Society, not to speak of close on thirty lectures organized by the Society and delivered in the neighborhood of Glasgow.' We are happy to add that during the present winter the Branch has been particularly successful in every part of its work. There is now a zealous and harmonious committee, well supported by the members and friendly sympathizers.

The terrible weather of last Saturday and Sunday will not soon be forgotten. It was not surprising, therefore, that it interfered somewhat with the audience on Sunday evening at the Athenæum Hall, where Mr. Charles Watts lectured. Considering the extremely bitter and rough night, the gathering was larger than many expected. Mr. Schaller made an excellent chairman, and, Mr. Watts being in good form, his lecture was most enthusiastically received.

This evening, Sunday, January 31, Mr. Watts will again occupy the platform at the Athenæum Hall, taking for his subject, "Abraham, Moses, and the Jewish Religion." In this lecture Mr. Watts deals specially with the Ten Commandments.

Mr. Cohen seems to have made a considerable stir in the Durham district. The *Consett Chronicle* gives five columns to a report of his lecture on "The Philosophy of Secularism," and the discussion with the Rev. W. Gellay which ensued.

Mr. Symes still maintains his gallant fight in the *Liberator*. The number before us (Dec. 19) reprints Mr. Wheeler's paper on "Carlyle's Assistants" from our columns, and also extracts the article entitled "Inspect the Nunneries."

Good old Sir Isaac Pitman, the inventor of phonography, has left a good example even in his death, by ordering his body to be cremated at Woking.

The February issue of the *Literary Guide* is a capital number. Among important books reviewed are Clodd's *Pioneers of Evolution*, Harnack's *History of Dogma*, and Merz's *History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century*. The usual features of "Rationalism in the Magazines," "Reviews in Miniature," etc., sustain their interest.

The *Academy* says of Mr. Clodd's *Pioneers of Evolution*, which we shall notice in our next number: "This is a book which was needed. It supplies an unfelt want. And unfelt wants are always the deepest."

The *Progressive Thinker*, which is the most Liberal and the widest circulated of the American Spiritualist papers, reprints Mr. Foote's counsel to the United States Liberals to "keep your Freethought organization free from all other questions," etc., and heads the reprint "Sound Advice."

With the *Torch of Reason*, of Silverton, is now issued a small children's paper called the *Little Candle*. It is edited by Nettie Olds, and will be interesting and instructive to juvenile Secularists.

Public Opinion, of New York, inserts an extract from "Moody on Infidelity," side by side with an extract from Mr. Foote's reply to Moody, taken from the *Freethinker*.

W. C. Brann, who is certainly a "forceful" writer himself, devotes five columns of his January *Iconoclast* to a notice of Mr. Wheeler's *Bible Studies*, which is, he says, "well worth reading," and "in which he waltzes into the Jewish religion with the vigor of a Titan, taking a fall out of the Olympian gods." Mr. Wheeler is, indeed, called "one of the most forceful of England's Atheistical writers," and the *Freethinker* is described as "perhaps the ablest of those journals that are hammering away, with more or less effect, at the Christian cultus." Of course Mr. Brann's plums are preserved in a little vinegar.

The treasurer's list of subscriptions for the National Secular Society received or promised at the Freethinkers' Banquet is as follows:—Paid at Banquet: Mrs. Henderson, 2s. 6d.; A. F., 2s. 6d.; Jenny Wheeler, 2s. 6d.; E. Bater, 5s.; R. McKirdy, £1 1s.; T. R. Gorniot, 5s.; A. Finken, 10s.; Martini, 5s.; Major F. Pawley, £1 1s.; Mr. and Mrs. Miller, 5s. Promises since paid: J. Embleton, £1 1s.; T. Yeomans, £15; Cottrell, 5s.; S. Hartmann, £5; C. Scullard, £20. Promises still unpaid: S. Hartmann (balance), £10; Charles A. Watts, 10s.; Arthur B. Moss, 10s.; Harry Snell, 5s.; W. Leat, 5s.; A. Stanger, 5s.; H. J. Sesemann, £5 5s.; A. Sumner wired Charles Watts, 10s. It is now time for friends who could not be present at the dinner to add their quota to the sinews of war. The address of S. Hartmann Esq., the treasurer, is 29 Gubyon-avenue, Herne-hill, and he will be happy to receive remittances to any amount.

HUMAN NATURE.

ONE of the greatest men of the nineteenth century was Theodore Parker, a preacher of the Unitarian church, who outgrew his creed, and set up for himself upon the basis of free thought and free speech, in Boston, about 1845. His great learning and ability soon gathered the largest and most intelligent society in that city. His immense audiences every Sunday crowded Music Hall—the largest hall in the city—and, without any of the charms of oratory, he held it spellbound by the depth of his thought and the power of his logic. He repudiated the Bible as a book of authority, denied all miracles, and disbelieved in the supernatural character of Jesus; but his youthful training and hereditary bias led him to cling to a belief in some sort of a God, notwithstanding the absence of all proof of such a being. When pressed for a reason for his belief on this point he said that "there seemed to be a religious element in man—a something in human nature that prompted him to look up to and worship some being greater than himself." And on this trait in human nature alone he built his belief in the necessity of a God, to furnish an object for the action of that supposed natural tendency. This suggestion of Theodore Parker has become the last and almost the only argument of religionists of the present day for the existence of a supreme being.

It must be remembered that Theodore Parker lived and died before Charles Darwin published his *Origin of Species*. He did not have the advantage of that marvellous exposition of hereditary influence in the development of physical and mental traits; if he had, he would have seen—as we now see—that what he called "the religious element in man" is the result of growth—a development through the influence of circumstances surrounding him. That which we call human nature is but the aggregate of all the habits of thought and action of the countless races, forms, and organizations through which man has been developed, from the simple moneron, or single sack in which he started, up to the complex organization of the human being as we now know him. Human nature is not, and could not be, a fixed method of thought or action—a constitution given to man at the start, always and forever to remain the same; but every faculty and

power of mind and body has been slowly evolved, cultivated, modified, and changed during the countless ages during which man has existed as an organized being on the earth. Every faculty acquired became a habit, and was transmitted to his descendants as hereditary impulses and characteristics. These hereditary characteristics in the descendants were instincts, and constituted that which we call human nature. As man progressed in knowledge, he changed his habits; and as these changed habits became hereditary traits, so human nature became changed.

Man, in his ignorance, had many fancies that had no basis of fact to support them, but they became firmly fixed in the beliefs of their descendants by hereditary transmission, and thus became traits of human nature.

Out of man's ignorance grew the beliefs in supernatural beings. He saw the manifestation of powers in nature that he could not comprehend, and his imagination conjured up personal beings like himself, who had power to produce them; and so gods were born. Fear led him to seek to placate the wrath of such powerful beings, or to win their favor by such acts of worship; and so, by the combined influence of fear and hope, "the religious element in man" became fixed as a part of his nature. No trait of human nature has been so assiduously cultivated as this. What wonder is it that it occupies so large a place in the nature of man?

As ignorance produced the religious trait in human nature, so the increase of knowledge has tended to eliminate it. All the phenomena of Nature that seemed to our ignorant ancestors to show the work of supernatural agencies have been traced to natural causes. They have been found to be but the natural effects of causes that lay within the powers and properties of matter itself, without any need or use for any supernatural influences. It has always been a favorite argument with theologians that the belief in gods of some sort has been universal among men of all races and conditions on the earth.

While this is perfectly true, it is also true that ignorance has been as universally prevalent; and these two facts stand to each other exactly in the relation of cause and effect. Where ignorance is most prevalent, there the belief in gods is the strongest; and the same rule holds good among individuals as among peoples. The men who stand highest for brain power and scientific attainments are the men who have discarded belief in gods and all other supernatural paraphernalia. The men who still hold to the old superstitions that have been handed down to us from the ignorance and barbarism of prehistoric times are men of small calibre and little information. It is notorious that religion is kept alive in this age of opportunities for knowledge only by preventing people from inquiring into the truth of it. The greatest sin a man can commit—in the eye of the theologian—is to seek to know the truth about the creed that has been crammed into his head from infancy up. And every man who has, by lucky chance, or by his own mental independence, been enabled to learn the truth, and see the hollowness of the sham upon which all religion is founded, is denounced as maliciously wicked, an emissary of the Devil, a man to be avoided by everyone who would not wish to be led astray. His motives are impugned, his moral character blackened by lies; and because, perhaps, of some doubt whether God will punish him enough in the next world, the priests damn him all they can in this one.

The ecumenical council of the Methodist church, held in Washington in 1892, brought together the ablest men they could muster from all the world where Methodism has been established. The discussions, which were published in the daily papers from day to day, showed how narrow and ignorant these ablest men of the Church were. One day was devoted to the discussion of how to stem the tide of Agnosticism and other forms of Infidelity that threaten to overwhelm the civilized world. Not one of the speakers showed any comprehension of the question; not one of them knew the ground upon which Infidelity stands, or the arguments and reasoning by which it is sustained. Not one of them had any idea that a person who doubted their dogmas might possibly be honest. The whole talk went upon the theory of the wilful and malignant enmity of Infidels to everything good and everything true. One speaker thought that the Infidels were doing much harm through the false and malignant heresy of evolution, and exhorted his brethren to put down Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Haeckel, and all those wicked men who were leading the people astray. He might as well have included the

Copernican system of astronomy in his denunciation, and as well all that has been learned since the fifteenth century. No suspicion seems to have entered his mind that he was furnishing a parallel to the Pope who issued his bull against the comet. The Rev. Mr. Jasper, of Virginia, the colored clergyman, is more consistent. He goes the old hog. He knows that the world is flat, and that the sun moves around it; otherwise how could Joshua have stopped it?

To come back to the question. That the religious nature of man originated in ignorance, that it grew by cultivation, and that it is destined to die by the increase of knowledge, has been made evident by the history of the past and the enlightened reason of modern times. Suppose Adam and Eve to have been made, as the Bible says, full grown, and left to their own discretion. What was their human nature? They had no reason, because reason is nothing but the comparison of present facts with past impressions. Memory and comparison comprise the whole of it; and Adam and Eve had no memories to recall for comparison. They had no instincts, because instinct is but the inherited habits of a long chain of ancestors; and they had no ancestors. They could have no impulses except that which belongs to the lowest primitive form of life, a chemical affinity for such nutriment as, without their help, floated into their mouths. Human nature begun with their experiences, and grew with their habits; and the same process, with all their descendants, must have continued to make and modify, or change, human nature, down to their latest human posterity.

I use this illustration only for the purpose of showing the changeable character of human nature. There is nothing more absurd in human imagination than the supposition that this complex animal, man, started into being full grown, equipped with its various organs, each one with its separate function, the product of long generations of adaptation to the environment of the race.

To sum it up, human nature is what it is from the influence of the past habits of thought and mode of life of those who have gone before us. Human nature in the future will be what we make it. If we bind ourselves to the ignorance of the past, and continue to cultivate the creeds that barbarism has formulated and transmitted to us, then human nature will be religious. If, on the contrary, we hold fast to truth, for truth's sake, and seek for knowledge through scientific methods, even rising to the highest and best thought of our age, then human nature will grow better and better, till all tendencies to superstition are eliminated, and reason shall reign triumphant over the traditions of ignorance and barbarism.

—Independent Pulpit. J. P. RICHARDSON.

LOURDES PILGRIMS.

*Vivent les lourdauds! La ville leur appartient, et ils y tiennent boutique, ils y vendent Dieu, en gros et en détail.**

The first miracle-mongers of Lourdes were not the priests, but the credulous country bumpkins. A little shepherdess, Bernadette Soubirous, aged fourteen, fancied she had seen the Virgin Mary at the rock of Massabielle, who announced herself, saying: "I am the Immaculate Conception." She might as well have told the illiterate child, "I am the Indivisible Nucleated Protoplasm." The peasants of Lourdes and the immediate neighborhood believed the story told by little Bernadette, and worshipped at the grotto from which a spring of pure water suddenly bubbled forth, making a faint musical noise—angel whispers, no doubt. The priests, by order of Monseigneur Laurence, Bishop of Tarbes—a sensible man—were told not to encourage the miracle business. The pious mob increased rapidly, assembled at the grotto, and indulged in pious orgies. The Prefect, by order of the Government, put a fence round it, to prevent worshippers from getting at the wonderful spring. This caused general discontent. The people became exasperated, and it was feared that they, like all religious fanatics who sink their reason, might resort to violence. Napoleon III., who had been approached on the subject by the Empress and other pious ladies, after hesitating a long time, suddenly gave way, and in a *mauvais quart d'heure* sent an order to the police at Lourdes for the removal of the fence (palissade), when a

* "The town belongs to them (the priests); here they keep shop, and sell god wholesale and retail" (*Lourdes*, by Emile Zola; 5ième Journé). That has been the business of the clergy from time immemorial.

flood of superstition swept over France. The people, hearing that the grotto was free, intoned a *hosanna*, and went to drink health and new life at the sacred fountain. From that moment the priests sided with the mob, and took the Holy Virgin under their wings. It is a pity that Madame Bonaparte, who urged the Emperor to declare war against Prussia, did not go to Lourdes to invoke the aid of the Holy Virgin in favor of the French arms. Once again God was on the side of the big battalions, and the Protestant victory of Sedan opened the gates of Rome to the excommunicated Italian monarch. Emile Zola speaks of the ignorance, superstition, beatitude, and fanaticism which bear a fatal resemblance to the impostures of the dark ages of religious belief. Only an insignificant number of devout believers follow the pernicious example of the priests at Lourdes. The town was highly respectable fifty years ago. Since then, in consequence of the so-called miracles, superstition has engendered corruption. "Bethlehem gave birth to Sodom, after an innocent peasant girl had seen the Virgin Mary" (Zola).

Reading the life of poor Bernadette Soubirous, one is alternately moved by pity and disgust. If she had been a criminal instead of a chaste, simple, honest, devout, and exalted maiden, her last moments could not have been more frightful. A large crucifix was attached to her body. The head of Jesus—probably the nose—penetrated her neck. She delighted in this torture, wishing for close communion with Jesus (*sic*). About to expire, she exclaimed: "Be off, Satan! touch me not, take me not!" Then she said in her delirium that the devil wished to throw himself upon her, and that she felt him blow all the flames of hell upon her feeble, tortured body. (*Appropos*, how nice and cool it must have been in hell at that moment!) Poor mad wretch, it is absurd to ascribe the sudden cures to the direct action of the late Virgin Mary. Why should she or any saint work miracles in an obscure part of France? Why not appear in Paris in the Rue Mouffetard to heal the sick and destroy the bugs? Are there not Catholics afflicted with maladies in all parts of the world? Why not display a cosmopolitan, benevolent disposition in relieving pious sufferers? Why this strange spirit of mysterious love and compassion after a masterly inactivity and indifference of many centuries? If the Virgin Mary, who, we may take it for granted, has been a mother—probably more than once—had had any sympathy with her *own sex* (sorely afflicted through the peccadillo of Eve), why does she not mitigate the sufferings of poor women in child-bed, and try to expunge the horrible curse uttered by Jahveh—her not very obedient son's papa? Ah! there's the rub, in spite of miracles at Lourdes! The Holy Virgin must be greatly shocked at many things that occur in Lourdes before and after dark, particularly during the height of the season, when the town is crammed with visitors—well and ill. Priests and laymen intrigue with the pretty saleswomen in the shops where chaplets, rosaries, crucifixes, medals, and statuettes of the Virgin are sold, and, under the ægis of the Virgin, virgins conceive who have no right to do so. "*Exempla sunt odiosa*," the Virgin must also be sadly puzzled. One lady prays to the mother of Jesus to get her a baby; another lady who has had too many humbly beseeches her to stop the supply. We hear it asserted that the religion of Jesus Christ, in which his mother is a potent factor, has a basis no other religion can boast of—"love of enemy and neighbor." That God loves us, *cela va sans dire*. Proof, we suffer so much. With all due respect to the Virgin Mary, I take the liberty of giving her a hint, which, if acted upon, will render her immensely popular with ladies of all colors, and wipe out one of the gravest blunders that disgrace the Bible God. Let her coax Jahveh to revoke his infernal curse against Eve, and adopt in its place the beautiful sentiment of the heathen Horace—dear old Horace: "*Ritè maturos aperire partus Lenis Iliithya, tuere matres*"—"O Iliithya, of lenient power to produce the timely birth, protect the mothers in labor" (*Carmen Seculare*), and I shall sing the praises of the Bible God, feeling assured that he will relent altogether, and deeply regret that he ever cursed anybody or anything. *Cui bono?*

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

How to Help Us.

- (1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.
- (6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

COMPLIMENTED AN ATHEIST.

IN spite of continued efforts to the contrary, religionists occasionally tell the truth about those they generally falsify. Their province is to make unbelievers abhorrent in public estimation, so their own mothers will disown them. They exhaust their vocabulary of invective when they have pronounced an opponent an Atheist. Indeed, they have taught that this class of anti-believers are the vilest of the vile, without the possibility of a single redeeming trait.

It is not our province to defend those who reject belief in a Supreme Being; but it is our duty to tell the truth at all times, and to vindicate the character of those unjustly assailed because of differing religious opinions. We have no more right to place a sceptic in a false position than we have to place the most intolerant, oppressive, or bigoted Churchman, or the best of them, in a false position.

Some fifty-four years ago a Miss Jane Kelley, from the State of Maine, set out on a missionary tour to the Indians in Kansas. She was under the patronage of the Baptists. She became acquainted with an educated Indian of the same faith, by the name of Jones. She married him, and finally settled among the Ottawa and Pottawotomie tribes, where is now Ottawa, Kansas. The writer has known of this good woman, now in her eighty-sixth year, and her late husband, for more than fifty years. During all this long period she has been a model woman, devoted to her faith, and to the cause which led her in her girlhood to accept life among the Indians for their elevation.

Mrs. Jones was recently interviewed by a reporter for the *Kansas City Star*, as she was about to leave her magnificent home in Ottawa to visit the scenes of her childhood, probably never to return to the West. After telling of her rough adventures with "Border Ruffians," who sought to kill her husband, and did burn their home, because of his Free State views, she then tells of the building of their fine mansion which took the place of the one destroyed, costing nearly \$30,000. After describing the fine structure, she goes on to say: "I recall the man who built it. His name was Damon Higbee, and he was an Atheist. But he built that house on honor, and it stands to-day as good as the hour it was finished. Higbee, although an Atheist, was a remarkably just and generous man. He grew rich. He had his cribs full of corn when there came a bad year, and the poor farmers, and those just starting, were in a bad way. Higbee sold them corn in preference to shipping it, although prices were high. The next year there was a great crop and corn was cheap. But Higbee allowed the farmers to pay him back the corn he had loaned them, bushel for bushel, regardless of price."

Would the saints who claim to inherit the earth, and think they should run its governments, have acted as nobly as did this earnest disbeliever, who rejected every feature of their creeds?

—*Progressive Thinker.*

WORSHIP.

THE very idea of worship implies abasement of the worshipper, and is, therefore, incompatible with the true dignity of manhood. Worship is a relic of the past, a survival of savagery. Away in the dim recesses of antiquity, Isis and Osiris sat on the thrones of Egypt, and stamped their worship on the granite monuments of the Nile. Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva arose in India, and swayed the destinies of the human race. Majestic Jove and lovely Juno, from the summit of Mount Olympus, flung the silver fetters that bound the intellect of polished Greece and martial Rome. For untold ages the gods have squatted like toads upon the world, and dwarfed the minds of men. But each, in turn, has joined "that innumerable caravan that marches to the pale realms of shade, where each shall take his chamber in the silent halls of death." To-day the Christian gods, Jehovah, Jesus, Mary, Satan, and the Bible, are on trial. Shall they be found an exception to all who have gone before? They are weighed and found wanting, and they, too, must "fold their tents like Arabs, and as silently steal away." And when the gods have all gone, have flitted away like birds of the night before the dawn, been banished to the Siberia of Oblivion, what then? Man will still be here. Slowly struggling up from the mephitic atmosphere of ignorance, the slimy pool of superstition, and the bloody morass of religion, he will stand erect and cease to worship—even himself.

In that good time coming, man will no longer kneel in the dust before heavenly tyrants of his own creation; but, emancipated, redeemed, and disenthralled, will stand firmly upon the apex of the world; woman, the queen of his heart, his equal, by his side; himself king of kings, lord of lords, and god of gods.

HARRY HOOVER.

TWO STRONG MEN STRUCK DOWN.

MR. BRADLAUGH possessed no sturdier supporters, and the Freethought cause no has heartier friends, than Mr. John Edwin Brumage, of Portsmouth, and Mr. "Toby" King, of Hastings. Both were men of splendid physique, true British oak; and it was with a sad heart that, hearing they were in grave danger, I went to Hastings to visit them.

Mr. Brumage I found quite prostrate, but without pain. He had a complication of disorders—a congested liver and threatened cancer of the stomach. Unable to take anything but a little arrowroot and peptonized milk, he is apparently being slowly starved, despite the constant attention of his good wife and daughter-in-law. Yet he was pleasant as ever even jocular, comparing himself to a stranded turtle, and always patient and considerate of others. He was pleased to see me, and sent his love to all Freethought friends. There were tears in his eyes and mine as we grasped hands to say good-bye, probably for the last time.

Of "Toby King" there were alarming reports in Hastings, where he has long been a conspicuous figure, as he was at all Bradlaugh's London meetings. It was said his fingers and toes were dropping off, and that he had recanted his Atheism. He laughed when I told him this. He, too, has a complication of disorders—weak heart, rheumatic gout; purpura and gangrene took his foot, upon which, some time ago, a rock had fallen in a quarry. Chloroform being dangerous to his heart, he bore the pain of having his toes cut off. Happily, the doctor thinks the gangrene has stopped, and, all going well, he may see me out yet. Well might the doctor remark he had never seen such a man. He was as spirited as ever, and glad to see "Joe." Possibly the reports of his conversion arose from his having many visits from the Dean of Battle and a curate; the former a gentleman, the latter having eventually to be ordered out. "Toby" pleasantly recounted to me his encounters with these worthies, who have not yet convinced him that there is intelligence without matter, or that God was born in Palestine. Indeed, "Toby" is studying Greek, to further do battle with the Dean. Truly a wonderful man. I happened to ask him his exact age. He requested his son to show it me "on that box." Outside in a shed I was shown a handsome coffin "Toby" had ordered a carpenter out of a job to make for him. There was no black about it, and on a plate in white letters I read, "Alfred King, born December 1st, 1836." May it be long ere the other portion has to be filled in.

J. M. W.

ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE.

A "CERTAIN MAN," the Bible says,
There was in olden times;
His ways were sure, he never erred,
Nor tempted was to crimes.
His promises he always kept,
Though others did him scan;
They never found him wavering,
There was a certain man.

But you may search the Bible through
From Genesis unto
The Revelation's final verse.
And, mark me, if you do,
Of certain men you'll find enough;
Indeed, there's more than one;
And yet of certain women there
Mention is made of none.

This set me thinking, and, of course,
I wondered why it was
That men had the monopoly
Of certitude. I pause
For you to guess it. Can't you guess?
Why that perplexed look?
It's simply this: that men, you know,
Were writers of the book.

JONATHAN MAYO CRANE.

Religion makes enemies instead of friends. That one word, "religion," covers all the horizon of memory with visions of war, of outrage, of persecution, of tyranny, and death. That one word brings to the mind every instrument with which man has tortured man. In that one word are all the fagots and flames and dungeons of the past, and in that word is the infinite and eternal hell of the future.—*R. G. Ingersoll.*

New occasions teach new duties,
Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still and onward
Who would keep abreast of truth.

BOOK CHAT.

AMERICA has been reproached with the want of originality of its authors. The charge cannot be brought against Dr. J. Fletch Woodward, of McMinnville, Tenn., who sends us vol. i. of *The American Scriptures*. The first part of "Uncle Sam's Bible" contains much original matter by the author, dealing with religion and other diseases; original poems in original metre, bound up with the "Declaration of Independence," "The United States Constitution," "Washington's Farewell to the Army," "Pope's Essay on Man," and other more or less curious matter, printed in an original style on various colored papers, illustrated with original cuts. As an unique book, *The American Scriptures* fairly takes the cake.

* * *

Superstition dies hard. An illustration of this trite truth comes to us in the shape of *The Magical Ritual of the Sanctum Regnum, interpreted by the Tarot Trumps; translated from the MSS. of Eliphaz Levi, and edited by W. Wynn Westcott, M.B., Magus, of the Rosicrucian Society of England*. We can hardly wonder that a London coroner should have been accused of devil-worship by the mythical Diana Vaughan, when one seriously gives so much attention to the unpublished MSS. of such a charlatan as Alphonse Louis Constant, the unfrocked French priest and platonic lover of Flora Tristan, whose mantle, inherited from Joseph Balsamo, descended on the late Helena Petrovna Blavatsky.

* * *

Acquaintance with tarot cards is necessary before this farrago of French occultism can become intelligible, and then the student has the satisfaction of learning from the editor that the attributions given "are incorrect, presumably by design." So, if the reader does not understand, he may console himself with the reflection that this was the author's intention. When Theosophic initiates lamented that they could not attain the supernatural powers of the Mahatmas, H. P. B. used to ask them to reflect if they had never been unchaste, never eaten killed animals, or partaken intoxicants or narcotics. She smoked like a chimney, swore like a trooper, and indulged in all the pleasures she reprobated; but the explanation was held to be satisfactory. So Constant Levi, when asked to work magic, of which he gave directions to others, used to say he had exhausted himself in efforts to obtain power, which came too late to use. To follow out the direction of the *Magical Ritual* would be rather expensive. It needs a magical wand, sword, cup, and other articles. On Sunday you must wear a purple robe, a tiara, and golden bracelets. On Monday you should wear a white robe with silver ornaments, with a collar of three rows, consisting of pearls, crystals, and selemtes, etc. Equivocation is the besetting sin of charlatans, and we are not surprised that Levi's book "concludes with a passage which appears to retract the whole of the foregoing instruction." He says: "Glory be to the Christ; you can be greater than all the Magi by becoming a simple and docile Christian. Be a faithful servant of the Church, believe, mortify yourself, and obey." Like all of Mr. Redway's publications, the book is produced in a good style, and we dare say will be sought after by students of the occult. Human curiosity and credulity are boundless.

* * *

No. 23 of the Humanitarian League's twopenny brown-paper covered publications is entitled *The Humanities of Diet*, and is a reprint of a paper contributed by Mr. H. S. Salt to the *Fortnightly Review* of September, 1896. Mr. Salt writes in favor of vegetarianism with a delicate and cultured touch, and argues that its moral basis is the one that sustains the rest. In his preface he states that "the League does not pledge its members to 'vegetarianism,' but it recognizes that the gradual humanizing of the present barbarous diet-system must be an essential part of a genuine humanitarian principle."

"When a preacher goes beyond his knowledge in preaching," says the *Texas Baptist Standard*, "he is inviting confusion and shame." Well said. Now stick to it, and you will rid the country of much intolerable bosh about God and Christ and the Holy Ghost and the Devil and heaven and hell and regeneration, the witness of the spirit and sanctification. When you require a preacher to talk only of what he knows, you shut his mouth to all that is distinctively religious. This we know by experience. We were once a preacher, and, observing the confusion and shame of theological differences, we at length formed the resolution not to go beyond what we knew to be true, or for which we had the warrant of reason. That resolution brought us out of the ministry and into Liberalism—a step that we do not regret, and one that we recommend to other ministers.—*J. D. Shaw.*

SELECTIONS FROM INGERSOLL.

To plough is to pray; to plant is to prophesy, and the harvest answers and fulfils.

Give me the storm and tempest of thought and action, rather than the dead calm of ignorance and faith.

If the people were a little more ignorant, astrology would flourish; if a little more enlightened, religion would perish.

I want no heaven for which I must give up my reason, no happiness in exchange for my liberty, and no immortality that demands the surrender of my individuality.

Arguments cannot be answered with insults. Kindness is strength. Anger blows out the lamp of the mind. In the examination of great questions every one should be serene, slow-pulsed, and calm. Intelligence is not the foundation of arrogance. Insolence is not logic. Epithets are the arguments of malice.

Across the highway of progress the Church has always been building breastplates of bibles, tracts, commentaries, prayer-books, creeds, dogmas, and platforms; and at every advance the Christians have gathered behind these heaps of rubbish and shot the poisoned arrows of malice at the soldiers of freedom.

Conscience.

Men speak of conscience as an inward guide

Intelligence possessing, to decide

What's right, what's wrong, what's false, and what is true;

What they ought not, and what they ought to do.

He has done right, 'tis said, who has obeyed it;

Yet conscience is but that which man has made it;

'Tis educated with us, and we find

Its teachings but the echo of the mind.

"Do as your conscience teaches you to do"

Is not the maxim to adhere to.

A better one would be, "Do as you ought";

For conscience only teaches what it's taught.

CARLOS.

PROFANE JOKES.

THE small boy was taken to church for the first time. The beauty of the altar adornments attracted his attention at once. "Who do all those things up there belong to, mamma?" he queried, in a loud whisper. "To God. Don't whisper," said mamma. "But, mamma," he said, in a moment, "where does God live?" "Up in the sky; now, do keep quiet," pleaded mamma. "Well," said the small boy, after a little thought, "I won't talk any more; but don't you think he is a good way off from all his things?"

She attended a spiritist séance

Soon after her poor husband died,

And to find out if he were in heaven

She called on his spirit and cried,

"Oh, John! are you here, John?" "I am, Jane,"

A voice that she knew well replied.

"Dear John, I've a question to ask you.

Say—if you're permitted to tell—

Are you happier now where you are, John,

Than when upon earth you did dwell?"

"Yes, Jane, I am happier far, Jane."

"In heaven, John?" "No, Jane, in hell."

Father—"What was the sermon about to-night?" Daughter (who went for walk with her boy instead of going to church)—"Oh, about the debt on the church and collecting money for the heathen."

By Scripture readers 'twill be seen,

Quite clear it seems to me,

Elijah's hunger must have been

Raven-ous in degree.

The Sorrows of Satan.

That Hugh Price Hughes is not Archbishop of Canterbury.

That the Church takes about only seven millions a year.

That the Christian Evidence Society is not better endowed.

That Prophet Baxter is not made a bishop.

That Sir William Harcourt isn't fatter.

That W. T. Stead is losing his hold on the Nonconformist conscience.

That Kernahan's *Child, Wise Man, and Devil* is not published as a penny novel.

The the Rev. H. Horton's views on Inspiration are not better appreciated.

That Prince Lucio Romanez is not the talk of the town.

That Marie Corelli is such a mighty atom.

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 post-card.]

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, O. Watts, "Abraham, Moses, and the Jewish Religion."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): Paine's Birthday. Tea party at 6. Speeches, songs, and dancing at 7.30.
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, A. B. Moss, "The Morals of Evolution."
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7, F. J. Gould, "I Myself."
NORTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Athenæum, Camden-road, N.W.: 7, Mrs. Gilliland Husband, "Ethics and Social Reform."
NORTH LONDON ETHICAL SUNDAY SCHOOL, Leighton Hall, Kentish Town: 11, Lesson by F. J. Gould. Children invited.
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road: 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Religion or No Religion."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "William Morris."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3—weather permitting—H. P. Ward, "A Plea for Secularism."

COUNTRY.

BRISTOL BRANCH (Shepherd's Hall): 7, A discussion—Mr. Hawker.
DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7, A debate—Messrs. Kirkman and Briggs, "Flesh-eating v. Non-flesh Eating: Which is the Better System?"
GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class—W. Gilmour, "Natural Food Propaganda"; 6.30, Social meeting.
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, A lecture.
LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): G. W. Foote—11, "Here and Hereafter"; 3, "The Woman's Bible"; 7, "Colonel Ingersoll and American Freethought."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, W. Stanley, "A Glimpse of Switzerland." Lantern views.
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): 3, Members' meeting.
PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, A business meeting.
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Hockingham-street): Hospital Sunday—3 and 7, Musical and other Recitals by a number of talented ladies and gentlemen, who will give their services free. Collections for hospitals. Tea at 5.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, W. Cook, "Branch Federation."

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—January 31, Edinburgh.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—February 21, Leicester. March 7, New Brompton.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Conversational meetings, open to all, at Mr. Coates's, 13 Derby-street, every Sunday, at 7.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

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