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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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THE BIBLE AND THE KORAN.

IN view of the everlasting Eastern question, which is once more in an acute stage, it may be well to state the truth about the Mohammedan religion, as founded upon the Koran, in comparison with the Christian religion, as founded upon the Bible. Ignorance and misunderstanding, not to speak of downright misrepresentation, are extremely common on this subject. The average Christian is very imperfectly acquainted with the contents of his own Scriptures. It is not surprising, therefore, that he believes anything he is told about the Scriptures of the Moslems. His general idea is that everything connected with Christianity is divine, while everything connected with Mohammedanism is devilish; and that Jesus Christ was an absolutely perfect character, while Mohammed was a low, cruel, and cunning impostor.

Charles Wesley, in a hymn which is not included in the modern collections, referred to Mohammed as "that Arab thief." The founder of Islam, however, was not a thief. In a competition of thieving between Mohammed and Wesley, supposing the possibility of such a thing for the sake of argument, it is extremely probable that the Arab would be worsted by the Englishman. "That Arab thief" simply meant that one founder of Wesleyanism was disgusted at the thought that the devotees of the Crescent swept the devotees of the Cross out of Asia and Africa; took possession of Alexandria, Carthage, and Constantinople, three of the four great sees of the early Church; and left to Rome the undivided supremacy over the Christian world. This does not constitute Mohammed a "thief." The Christians were always as ready to fight as the Mohammedans, and if they got the worst of it, their failure does not prove their moral superiority. Nor does the fact that the banner of Christ went down in blood on hundreds of battlefields before the banner of Mohammed, in any way prove the superiority of the carpenter of Nazareth over the camel-driver of Mecca.

Mohammed was a far greater *man* than Jesus Christ. He showed no weakness in adversity. No agony of fear wrung the sweat from his proud brow. He never prayed that the cup of trial might pass from him. He did not cry out that God had forsaken him. When he fled from Mecca, with only one disciple, who complained that they were only two against the world, Mohammed exclaimed: "No, there are three of us; we two, and God." When his companion complained of the heat of the burning sun, Mohammed grimly said: "It is hotter in hell." And if he displayed fortitude in adversity, he also showed self-control in prosperity. When he returned to Mecca, no longer a fugitive but a conqueror, at the head of a victorious army of ten thousand men, he did not sully his triumph with the least excess. Not a house was robbed, not a woman molested. His life as an uncrowned king was one of great simplicity. He mended his own clothes, and milked his own goats. His ordinary food was dates and water, or barley bread. His occasional luxuries were milk and honey. True, he took several wives, but not until the wife of his youth was dead; and he lived in a polygamous age and country, where the practice was orthodox. His form and face were of the manliest beauty. His complexion was fine to the last; for, besides his temperance in eating, he abhorred strong drink; and this abhorrence was made a principle of his religion.

Mohammed did not pretend to work miracles. It is a
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Christian calumny that he kept a tame pigeon to sit on his shoulder and pick peas out of his ear, pretending that the bird whispered divine inspirations. The story is without the slightest foundation in fact.

The reproach that he used the sword to propagate his faith comes with an ill grace from the champions of a creed which has shed more blood than any other on earth. "We do not find of the Christian religion either," sneers Carlyle, "that it always disdained the sword, when once it had got one." Christianity was longer in getting the sword, but it made up for the delay.

No doubt Mohammed had a genuine belief that he was inspired by God. So had Jesus Christ, so had the prophets of Israel, so had all the Popes, and so have a number of mediocrities still living. We must allow for the time and the circumstances. Of course we may smile at the notion that the contents of the Koran were copied from a book supposed to exist in heaven in the handwriting of God. But the Christian has no right to laugh at it; for does he not believe that God gave Moses ten commandments, written with the divine finger on two tables of stone? Both the Bible and the Koran claim to be inspired, and the Christian need not call the Mohammedan credulous. As a matter of fact, the Koran is not disfigured like the Bible with a multitude of often puerile miracles. Mohammed appears to have accepted some of the wonders of the Jewish traditions, but he did not add to the stock with wonders of his own. Nor did he assert, like Jesus, that all who went before him were thieves and robbers. He was more modest. He admitted that Moses and Jesus were true prophets, and only claimed that he himself was commissioned to complete the revelation. That he did not rise to the conception that he also might in time be superseded, is but a proof that he was human, and that he had not grasped the full meaning of evolution.

It is not our object to compare the Bible and the Koran in every respect. The Koran is the work of one man; the Bible is said to be the work of sixty-six men. Naturally the latter is more varied, and in that respect more interesting. But whether the poetry of the one book is finer than the poetry of the other, only experts have the means of judging. The Arabic of the Koran is said to be singularly beautiful and melodious, but the book has not been translated like the Bible. Our Authorized Version is the work of centuries, and was completed when the English language was at the climax of its youthful vigor. Sale was a great scholar, but his version of the Koran is rather wooden. The translations of Rodwell, Palmer, and Stanley Lane-Poole give us a higher idea of the original. Take the following specimen from the chapter on *Light* :—

But those who disbelieve are like a vapor in a plain :
the thirsty thinketh it water, till, when he cometh to it,
he findeth nothing ; but he findeth God with him ; and
He will settle his account, for God is quick at reckon-
ing :—

Or like black night on a deep sea, which wave above
wave doth cover, and cloud over wave, gloom upon
gloom,—when one putteth out his hand he can scarcely
see it ; for to whom God giveth not light, he hath no
light.

But this article is not intended to be a literary criticism. Let us revert to our main purpose, and compare the Bible and the Koran within the more definite range of their teaching.

We will take first the matter of temperance. In my pamphlet entitled *Bible and Beer* I have gone, I believe, with great thoroughness into the question of how far the

Bible favors or discommends drinking. Readers who wish to study the subject carefully should master the information and arguments I have there advanced. For the present, I content myself with remarking how absurd is the attempt to found Teetotalism on the Christian Scriptures. Jesus Christ himself drank wine with his disciples. At a certain marriage feast he is said to have turned a vast quantity of water into a more exhilarating beverage. Saint Paul told Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake. In the Old Testament the Jews are told that they may spend their money on whatsoever their souls lust after, on oxen, sheep, wine, or strong drink (Deuteronomy xiv. 26). Solomon, the wisest of the sons of men, and the supposed author of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, says:—

"Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more" (Proverbs xxxi. 6, 7).

According to this text, the poor and unhappy should drink themselves into a state of oblivion. Nor is the prescription confined to the unfortunate. Here is another text:—

"Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart" (Ecclesiastes ix. 7).

In some respects the Bible might be called the drunkard's text-book. But how different is the Koran! Mohammed put drinking and gambling together as twin curses, and forbade them absolutely. In the second chapter of the Koran he says:—

"They will ask thee concerning wine and lots: Answer, In both there is great sin, and also some things of use unto men: but their sinfulness is greater than their use" (Sale's translation).

Some think that this text only forbids drinking to excess and too frequent gambling. But the general opinion is that even the moderate use of strong drinks by the Mohammedan is absolutely unlawful. There is a more explicit text in the fifth chapter of the Koran:—

"O ye who believe, verily wine and gambling and statues and divining arrows are only an abomination of the Devil's making: avoid them; haply ye may prosper" (Lane-Poole's translation).

To say that a man is a Christian is to tell us nothing as to his conduct. To say that a man is a Brahmin is to tell us, for one thing, that he does not eat anything that is killed. To say that a man is a Mohammedan is to tell us, for one thing, that he does not drink intoxicants. Even the Sultan of Turkey—weak as he is, and therefore cruel—is extremely abstemious in eating and drinking, and never takes any liquor stronger than coffee; while more than half the Christian princes of Europe know what it is to go to bed "elevated," and to wake in the morning with a sour stomach and a heavy head. G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

THE UNKNOWN GOD.*

A NEW ACCOUNT OF JESUS CHRIST.

THREE novelists, Hall Caine, S. R. Crockett, and "Ian Maclaren," are said to be engaged in producing three separate Lives of Jesus. Each, no doubt, will be as true to the life as the rest of their stories, and about as true to historical reality as the remainder of the numerous lives of their hero. It is the natural result of an age that has ceased to believe in miracles that it should attempt to rehabilitate the gospel story of the thaumaturgist teacher by minimizing or omitting his supernatural characteristics and exploits. The result, even in the hands of so skilful a man of letters as Renan, has always reminded me of the fate of putting new wine into old bottles. The old bottles are shattered, and the new wine is spilled. The truth is, there are no materials for a real life of Jesus apart from the miraculous stories of the gospels, and to omit the supernatural from them is like omitting the part of the Prince of Denmark from the play of *Hamlet*.

The novelists in question have been anticipated by the anonymous author of *The Unknown God*, whose work, though

brief, bears trace of acquaintance with much criticism on the life and times of Jesus, and probably also with Palestine. Indeed, in reading it, the thought came to my mind that it might be from the pen of the author of *Rabbi Jeshua* and *Bible Folk-Lore*. But the publisher is devoted to works on Theosophy and Occultism, and from the dogmatic style of the narrative and the declaration on the title-page taken from Paul—"I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For, as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To the Unknown God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you"—we seem to be in presence of a new revelation.

The revelation, or imagination, however, is not very original; nor is the story of great interest apart from the fact that multitudes have worshipped its hero. There is certainly a tragic human interest in the gospel story of Jesus, as there is in that of any gifted young man brought to an untimely end when just entering on the prime of life. Long before the Christian era the Syrian women lamented the young Adonis, the beloved of Venus, slain by the boar of winter.

Thummuz came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties all a summer's day.

But the author of *The Unknown God* gives us no picture of his hero, but only of his misfortunes. In his Prologue he makes Joseph of Nazareth say of him:—

"He was always a biddable and gentle lad, though ever a dreamy one, till one ill-fated day, as we were moving a heavy balk of timber, he slipped and fell, bringing down with him the log, which struck him a fearful blow on the head; long he lay unconscious; many weary hours his mother hung over his senseless form, with a terrible fear at her heart that she would lose him, for she ever loved him the best of all her children—nay, even was he more to her than I, methinks. Then one day his eyes opened, and we saw that he had come back to us at last. But perhaps it were better he had died."

Such an accident, of course, might account for much, just as Paul's sunstroke on the road to Damascus has been supposed to account for his conversion; but it is evidently as much mere imagination as the story of Jesus being taken by the Devil to the pinnacle of the temple. Though the friends of Jesus did say he was beside himself, they gave no indication how it came about. The author of *The Unknown God* gives us no real idea of what his hero was like, but mainly concerns himself with the genesis of the story of the Resurrection.

Charles Christian Hennell, in his able *Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity*, near sixty years ago, said:—

"Joseph of Arimathea, who was able to have the body placed in the tomb, was also very well able to have it removed. If the garden were his own, no one else indeed could do this with equal security. Any watch appointed by the Sanhedrim (which part of Matthew's story, however, appears to be legendary) would probably have obeyed rather than have resisted him. He had the co-operation of another member of the Council, Nicodemus. The complete silence of one who had more power than the disciples both to act and to speak; the absence of his testimony when it ought to have been so useful one way or the other; his retiring suddenly from a transaction in which he had begun to be conspicuous—all this, in his case, is strongly significant. History loses sight of Joseph and Nicodemus exactly at the time when they had embalmed the body of Jesus, and allowed the women to see where it was laid. Thus they were the parties whom we last saw in charge of the body, and it is for them to give an account of it. But as from that moment they have shrunk from public notice, conjecture alone is able to follow up their examination, and to gain an insight into their counsels and doings on the evening of the day of the Crucifixion and the Sabbath which followed it."

I have transcribed this passage at length because it forms the groundwork of the plot of *The Unknown God*. The author does not mention Hennell, though there are many signs that he is well read in the controversies that have gathered round the gospel story. He makes Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus parties to a plot to save their teacher. The sponge offered to the victim on the cross contains a narcotic which gives the appearance of death, the body is secured by Joseph, and placed in his own

* *The Unknown God*. (London: G. Redway.) 1897; 2s. 6d.

chamber, before the Pharisees seal the tomb, and it gradually revives. Here is the author's description:—

"Slowly the heavy lids lifted, and shudderingly Joseph met the gaze of those staring eyes; then the lips moved, and hastily the councillor placed himself by the bedside to catch the hoarsely-whispered words. And as he listened to the sick man's slow and painful utterances, the whole bewildering tragedy burst upon him: the tension of the past few days had been too great for mortal man to bear; something had snapped, and the god had fled from that anguish-stricken mind, leaving a mere Galilean peasant, broken in mind and body—the salvage of the Cross."

Poor Jesus! his own followers had used him badly all through the centuries, and now a rationalist first addles his brain by a blow from a log, and then makes his crucifixion turn him into a complete imbecile; while his disciples, bent on obtaining crowns of glory for themselves, go on preaching the resurrection.

Like all who suppose Jesus not to have died on the cross, the author of *The Unknown God* has to answer the question, What became of the body? Even the gossellers found this difficulty, and had to invent a levitation skywards, with a cloud to receive him out of sight, prior to his sitting on the right hand of his Infinite Father. But our author will have no miracles. So he makes the poor crazed salvage of the cross travel with Mary Magdalene to the Syrian frontier. Mary, overcome by the hurried journey, is unable to proceed, and stays behind and dies. Jesus wanders back after her, and remains an unknown stranger in a village bordering the desert, until death overtakes him, and the jackals scratch and whimper over a lonely grave in the silent desert.

The Unknown God is written with care, and has many touches of local color, which only serve to emphasize how impossible it is to recover lost history. A fallacy underlies all these modern attempts to construct a plausible, credible story out of the old myths and legends. It may be said that the more rational they are, the more irrational are they; for the further removed from the irrationality which is their basis. The very atmosphere of thought which compels the rationalist to get rid of the miraculous element removes him from the conditions of thought under which the miraculous stories were told. The right way to interpret such stories is not to consider them from the point of view of nineteenth-century knowledge, but in the light of the knowledge, the beliefs, and the customs of the time when they took their rise. One might almost as well rationalize the story of *Jack the Giant-killer* as that of Jesus the son of Mary.

J. M. WHEELER.

ARROGANT PRETENSIONS OF CHRISTIANS.

Of all people, orthodox Christians excel in arrogant pretensions. They assume that beyond all doubt their religion is right, and that the other religions of the world must necessarily be wrong. With them it is not even a question of probability, but one of absolute certainty. It is vain to point out that in their system there is nothing unique either in its origin, its nature, or its influence. Christians will persist in the assertion that Christianity is undoubtedly true, and that the power of the Cross is the one regenerating force of the world. It is hardly possible to conceive of more absurd and arrogant pretensions than these are proved to be by an acquaintance with the many religions of the world, and by a knowledge of ecclesiastical history.

That this charge of false assumption against professed Christians is not groundless is evident from the fanatical outery that has been going on for some time against the devotees of the Mohammedan faith. Far be it from me to hold a brief for any of the alleged supernatural religions. I regard them all as being based upon error, and as having a most injurious influence both upon individuals and communities. But when Christians assume, as they do, that their religion is the one source of civilization, and that it has sufficient vitality to crush such a religion as Mohammedanism, it is necessary to remind them that their pretensions are arrogant, and that their efforts in all probability will be futile. In the *Rock* of March 12, in one of its editorial articles, the following appears: "History will repeat itself in the East; and just as, fifteen centuries ago, the political paganism of the Roman Empire fell before the

silent antagonisms of the creed of Christianity, so, too, will the vast structure of Pagan idolatry in the East give way before the same irresistible forces.....The whole progress of modern civilization is indissolubly bound up with the teaching of Christ."

Nothing is farther from the truth than the allegations here set forth by the pious *Rock*. That the "creed of Christianity" had something to do with corrupting the religion of Rome, and thus rendering a change necessary, may be true; but that the "Empire fell before the silent antagonisms" of that creed is not true. James Cotter Morison, in his excellent work, *The Service of Man*, says, in referring to the faith of Rome: "It is often assumed that this proud heathenism and Pagan glory were overthrown by the meek and unlearned disciples of the Galilean prophet of God. Nothing can be less true than this assumption" (p. 174). And the Rev. Freeman Clarke, in his *Ten Great Religions*, shows that the fall of the Roman Empire was caused by the curse of Cæsarian despotism and the increase of philosophy. "So," says he, "ended the Roman religion; in superstition among the ignorant, and in unbelief among the wise." The fact that Christianity destroyed Roman learning, and then plunged Europe into a state of mental darkness, as it did during the Middle Ages, is nothing to be proud of. If this "creed of Christianity" aided the downfall of the "Paganism of Rome," it likewise produced monkish, lying chronicles. Further, it incited Europe to a state of ferment, and also inspired the Crusaders to wage their unholy wars; it lighted the fires of Smithfield and Oxford, and it established the Holy Inquisition and the Star Chamber, wherein human beings were tortured and cruelly put to death. The adherents of the "creed of Christianity" have spread war, strife, and desolation among nations in their attempt to subdue races who were no more savages than were the Christians themselves. Christianity was erected upon the ruins of Greek and Roman philosophy, but it failed to give birth to principles that could be practically carried out in daily life.

The *Rock's* assertion, that "modern civilization is indisputably bound up with the teaching of Christ," is the very opposite of fact. Western civilization is the result of the cultivation of the intellect far more than it is of the fostering of religious emotions. In transforming society from what it was to what it is, the teachings of science have proved more efficacious than the preaching of sermons; and the brain power of such master-minds as Galileo, Newton, Watt, Stephenson, and other secular reformers, has been a greater civilizing factor than all the emotional force manifested by the entire host of divines who have contributed to the history of the Christian faith. It is quite true that history *does* repeat itself, hence we would remind the *Rock* that a similar state of the decay that marked the career of the religions of Greece and Rome is now a striking characteristic of the "creed of Christianity." Although the name is still retained in our midst, its essential principles have become impotent as a factor in daily life. As J. Cotter Morison observes in his work already referred to: "There seems to be no exception to the rule, that the older religions grow, the more infirm do they become, the less hold do they keep on the minds of well-informed and thoughtful men. Their truths, once accepted without question, are gradually doubted, and in the end denied by increasing numbers.....All the chief dogmas of the Christian.....creed have been for several centuries before the world. They were once not only believed, but adored. Now the numbers who doubt or dispute them are increasing every day. Time has not been their friend, but their enemy.....Religious truth begins with undoubted acceptance, and, after a shorter or longer period of supremacy, with the growth of knowledge and more severe canons of criticism, passes gradually into the category of questioned and disputed theories, ending at last in the class of rejected and exploded errors" (pp. 7, 8).

Professed Christians are always advising you to "love your enemies"; but in this, as in other instances, they seldom practise what they preach. For instance, their hatred of Mohammed and his followers appears to have no bounds. In this particular they, it is true, but emulate their Christian predecessors. Luther regarded the "farmer boy of Mecca" as "a devil and the first-born child of Satan," and Melancthon considered that he "was inspired by Satan." Spanheim and Dr. Herbelot applied to him the epithets of "wicked impostor," "dastardly liar," etc.; and Charles Wesley composed a hymn in which occur

the following Christian-like sentiments towards Mohammed :—

That Arab thief, as Satan bold,
Who quite destroyed thy Asian fold.

The Unitarian fiend expel,
And chase his doctrine back to hell.

Christians appear not to recognize that the indiscriminate abuse they heap upon the "Arab thief" recoils upon themselves. If Mohammed were allied with the Devil, it did not prevent his success being greater than that of Christ, who is said to have been a part of an omnipotent God. Even Sir W. Muir admits, in his *Rise and Decline of Islam*, published in "Present-Day Tracts," that "among the religions of the earth Islam must take the precedence in the rapidity and force with which it spread. Within a very short time from its planting in Arabia, the new faith had subdued great and populous provinces. In half-a-dozen years, counting from the death of the founder, the religion prevailed throughout Arabia, Syria, Persia, and Egypt..... In comparison with this grand outburst, the first efforts of Christianity were, to the outward eye, faint and feeble; and its extension so gradual that what the Mohammedan religion achieved in ten or twenty years it took the faith of Jesus long centuries to accomplish" (p. 1). R. Bosworth Smith, M.A., Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, in his *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, bears similar testimony to the fact of the rapid progress of Mohammedanism. He says: "Glance for one moment at its marvellous history. Think how one great truth, working in the brain of a shepherd of Mecca, gradually produced convictions in a select band of personal adherents; how, when the prophet was exiled to Medina, the faith gathered there fresh strength, brought him back in triumph to his native place, and secured to him for his lifetime the submission of all Arabia.....how it crumpled up the Roman Empire on one side, and the Persian on the other, driving Christianity before it on the West and North, and Fire-Worship on the East and South.....how, lastly, when the tide of aggression had been checked, it once more burst its barriers, and, seating itself on the throne of the Cæsars of the East, threatened more than once the very centre of Christendom.....All this is a matter of history" (pp. 25, 26, 27). It is estimated that to-day, throughout the world, Islam claims 173 millions of adherents.

In presenting these facts as to the progress of the Mohammedan faith, it must not be understood that I am at all in favor of that religion. For me it has no charm, inasmuch as in many respects it is, like all other so-called supernatural systems, based upon superstition, and too frequently it has served as an incentive to fanatical conduct. But it should be known that Christians are not exempt from similar faults, therefore they should not indulge in arrogant assumptions as to their superiority in matters of faith. With all its boast of "Divinity," the "religion of Christ" has never made such rapid progress as the Mohammedan faith has done. Of course, it is said that Islam is the "religion of the sword," and that it has been spread by force, while Christianity has been promulgated by love and persuasion. What truth there is in this allegation will be seen in my article next week, when I hope to show that this Christian pretension is the outcome of theological conceit.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

INGERSOLL ON DIVORCE.

At the request of the *New York Herald*, Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll has prepared a signed interview on his peculiar views upon divorce, made public in a recent lecture. It will be remembered that he then expressed the opinion that the law should grant divorces to wives for the asking. The following is the interview :—

Question.—The *Herald* would like to have you give your ideas on divorce. On last Sunday, in your lecture, you said a few words on the subject, but only a few. Do you think the laws governing divorce ought to be changed?

Answer.—We obtained our ideas about divorce from the Hebrews—from the New Testament and the Church. In the Old Testament woman is not considered of much importance. The wife was the property of the husband. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's ox or his wife." In

this commandment the wife is put on an equality with other property. So, under certain conditions, the husband could put away his wife, but the wife could not put away her husband.

In the New Testament there is little in favor of marriage, and really nothing as to the rights of wives. Christ said nothing in favor of marriage, and never married. So far as I know, none of the apostles had families. St. Paul was opposed to marriage, and allowed it only as a choice of evils. In those days it was imagined by the Christians that the world was about to be purified by fire, and that they would be changed into angels.

The early Christians were opposed to marriage, and the "fathers" looked upon woman as the source of all evil. They did not believe in divorces. They thought that if people loved each other better than they did God, and got married, they ought to be held to the bargain, no matter what happened.

These "fathers" were for the most part ignorant and hateful savages, and had no more ideas of right and wrong than wild beasts.

The Church insisted that marriage was a sacrament, and that God in some mysterious way joined husband and wife in marriage—that he was one of the parties to the contract, and that only death could end it.

Of course this supernatural view of marriage is perfectly absurd. If there be a God, there certainly have been marriages that he did not approve, and certain it is that God can have no interest in keeping husbands and wives together who never should have married.

Some of the preachers insist that God instituted marriage in the Garden of Eden. We now know that there was no Garden of Eden, and that woman was not made from the first man's rib. Nobody with any real sense believes this now. The institution of marriage was not established by Jehovah, neither was it established by Christ or any of his apostles.

In considering the question of divorce, the supernatural should be discarded. We should take into consideration only the effect upon human beings. The gods should be allowed to take care of themselves.

Is it to the interest of a husband and wife to live together after love has perished, and when they hate each other? Will this add to their happiness? Should a woman be compelled to remain the wife of a man who hates and abuses her, and whom she loathes? Has society any interest in forcing women to live with men they hate?

There is no real marriage without love, and in the married state there is no morality without love. A woman who remains the wife of a man whom she despises, or does not love, corrupts her soul. She becomes degraded, polluted, and feels that her flesh has been soiled.

Under such circumstances a good woman suffers the agonies of moral death.

It may be said that the woman can leave her husband—that she is not compelled to live in the same house, or to occupy the same room.

If she has the right to leave, has she the right to get a new home?

Should a woman be punished for having married? Women do not marry the wrong men on purpose. Thousands of mistakes are made. Are these mistakes sacred? Must they be preserved to please God?

What good can it do God to keep people married who hate each other?

What good can it do the community to keep such people together?

Question.—Do you consider marriage a contract or a sacrament?

Answer.—Marriage is the most important contract that human beings can make. No matter whether it is called a contract or a sacrament, it remains the same.

A true marriage is a natural concord or agreement of souls—a harmony in which discord is not even imagined. It is a mingling so perfect that only one seems to exist. All other considerations are lost. The present seems eternal. In this supreme moment there is no shadow, or the shadow is as luminous as light.

When two beings thus love, thus unite, this is the true marriage of soul and soul. The idea of contract is lost. Duty and obligation are instantly changed into desire and joy, and two lives, like uniting streams, flow on as one.

This is real marriage.

Now, if the man turns out to be a wild beast, if he

destroys the happiness of the wife, why should she remain his victim?

If she wants a divorce, she should have it. The divorce will not hurt God or the community. As a matter of fact, it will save a life.

No man not poisoned by superstition will object to the release of an abused wife. In such a case only savages can object to a divorce. The man who wants courts and legislatures to force a woman to live with him is a monster.

Question.—Do you believe that the divorced should be allowed to marry again?

Answer.—Certainly. Has the woman whose rights have been outraged no right to build another home? Must this woman, full of kindness, affection, and health, be chained until death releases her? Is there no future for her? Must she be an outcast for ever? Can she never sit by her own hearth, with the arms of her children about her neck, and by her side a husband who loves and protects her?

There are no two sides to this question.

All human beings should be allowed to correct their mistakes. If the wife has flagrantly violated the contract of marriage, the husband should be given a divorce. If the wife wants a divorce, if she loathes her husband, if she no longer loves him, then the divorce should be granted.

It is immoral for a woman to live as the wife of a man whom she abhors. The home should be pure. Children should be well born. Their parents should love each other.

Marriages are made by men and women, not by society, not by the State, not by the Church, not by the gods. Nothing is moral that does not tend to the well-being of sentient beings.

The good home is the unit of good government. The hearthstone is the cornerstone of civilization. Society is not interested in the preservation of hateful homes. It is not to the interest of society that good women should be enslaved, or that they should become mothers by husbands whom they hate.

Most of the laws about divorce are absurd or cruel, and ought to be repealed.

R. G. INGERSOLL.

PETER BAYLE—LIBRE-PENSEUR.

(Continued from page 181.)

AMONG other things Bayle had pointed out in the Dictionary was, that before the Gospels had taught men to renounce the world and its riches, the philosophers of old were accustomed to part with all their earthly possessions in order that they might apply themselves the more freely to the study of wisdom and truth. Bayle cited the examples of Anaxagoras and Democritus. In 1693 he was deprived of his professorship and pension, a misfortune he bore with a "philosophical constancy"; his old foe, Jurieu, that shining light of Christian forbearance and toleration, having worked tooth and nail to procure this dismissal. The enmity between the two had been of a long standing. At first a friend, Jurieu had afterwards, inspired by the "green-eyed monster," been transformed into a bitter and implacable adversary. In 1682 they had both written a confutation of Maimbourg's *History of Calvinism*. Bayle's book was "that of a gentleman, and M. Jurieu's that of an old woman who preaches." This judgment sowed the seeds of jealousy and hatred in the heart of the divine; from that time he endeavored to ruin his rival, and succeeded in materially injuring him on many occasions.

In 1691 Bayle replied to the other's attacks in a book entitled *La Cabale Chimérique*, in which Peter summed up the charges brought against him by Jurieu, under twenty-five heads, the eighteenth of which was that "Mr. Bayle did scarce take any pains to conceal his Atheism; that he did not edify the public by any acts of devotion [!]; that he had no religion, nor love for God; and that his first deity was called Louis IV." "These are such articles," added Bayle, "as my adversary will never be able to prove; the eighteenth only would keep him employed all his lifetime. . . . He must prove this point either by my writings, or by creditable witnesses; or he must show, by clear and unquestionable miracles, that God has given him the gift

of prophecy in such a degree that he can clearly see to the very bottom of his neighbor's heart. . . . *Is not Atheism punished everywhere capitally? . . . Who would not smile at the sight of a minister who is in honor bound to prove that a man who takes the Sacrament four times a year, as is publicly known, who often hears public prayers and the best part of the sermon, does not perform the least act of devotion?*" But, alas! the idea would appear to be deeply rooted in the minds of the multitude, for, in his *Additional Thoughts on Comets*, Bayle felt constrained to "proclaim throughout the whole earth as *Slanderers* those who accuse him of *Deism* or *Atheism*."

How really far in advance of his contemporaries this great Frenchman was is shown by the fact that he published, anonymously, a commentary on the words of Christ—"Compel them to come in"—in which he pleaded for *toleration* in religious matters. A refutation from the pen of the voluminous Jurieu accused the latitudinarian author of maintaining (heinous crime!) "that it is all one what religion a man follows." No wonder, then, that, living in such times, Bayle was forced into a hypocritical acquiescence in Christianity, the tenets of which he must inwardly have heartily hated and despised. The appearance of the Dictionary raised a dispute between its author and the celebrated Le Clerc concerning the punishment of the wicked. The divine had endeavored, in a work entitled *Parrhasiana*, to refute the objections of the Manichees by explaining the existence of evil and the punishment of sinners, etc., according to the existence of Origen.

Le Clerc's arguments have been reduced by his opponent to the three following propositions: "(1) God made us free that there might be room for virtue and vice, commendations and blame, rewards and punishments; (2) that God damns no man merely for his sins, but for his want of repentance; (3) the nature of moral evils, which mankind is liable to, is of so small a continuance, if compared with eternity, that, notwithstanding these evils, God cannot but be esteemed a benevolent Being and a lover of virtue."

It should be borne in mind that Origen (who, before his perversion, had been a Platonic philosopher) did all that lay in his power to commend Christianity to the *reason* of men. This end he fancied that he had accomplished by teaching that hell-fire was not to be eternal. For propounding this doctrine some of the early Fathers did not scruple to declare Origen damned in that hell-fire he had presumed to shorten. Bayle postulated the goodness of the deity to be such as by logical abstractions is conceived to be free from all defects.

"This ideal notion of goodness does essentially and unavoidably exclude all that can belong to a malevolent Being. . . . Now, if we consult that notion of goodness, we do not find that God, who must be a Being infinitely good, could delay the happiness of his creatures till after several ages of misery, nor give them a free-will of which it was certain they would make such a use as would ruin them. . . . But suppose it were consistent with the infinite goodness of the Creator to give his creatures a liberty of which they could as well make a bad as a good use, it must be said, at least, that his goodness would engage him to watch their conduct so narrowly as not to suffer them to sin actually. . . . If the limited goodness of a man, who cannot by invisible means proportionate his assistance to the strength or weakness of his child, engages him always, when it is in his power, to prevent him from falling, or cutting himself with a knife, which he was obliged to give him in order to pacify him, *how much more should we be persuaded that God would have prevented the ill-use of free-will; since he is immeasurably good, of infinite holiness, and can infallibly incline his creatures towards what is good, without infringing in the least the privileges of free-will?*"

"Virtue, praise, favors, may very well exist, though vice, blame, and punishments have no other existence, but is called ideal and objective. The Origenist cannot deny it, since he supposes that an everlasting happiness of all the free beings is to succeed after some ages of suffering. Virtue, praise, and favors will take place in an infinite duration of happiness; but vice, blame, and punishments will then have no real existence out of the mind."

In reply to the second proposition Bayle observed: "That when a Being promises to pardon a sinner, on condition that he will repent, though he be sure that that sinner will not repent, he promises nothing, properly speaking, and he is as fully determined to punish that sinner as though he had made him no offers of mercy; if you designed in

earnest to free him from punishment, you would prevent his being impenitent, which is an easy matter for him who is master of men's hearts."

And in reply to the third proposition our Freethinker declared that "You cannot put it out of a philosopher's head, arguing as a philosopher, that the punishment of a creature being continued for an hundred thousand millions of ages successively is inconsistent with the infinite goodness of the Creator.....You would judge so long a punishment to be cruel. Take, then, but half the duration, and if you pretend to find anything else therein but a diminution of severity, you are much mistaken; for fifty thousand millions of years differ from an hundred thousand millions, only as more differs from less; and it is impossible to pass from cruelty to the utmost goodness only by a bare diminution of cruelty. The qualities *in summo gradu, in the highest degree*, exclude all the contraries; heat, for instance, excludes absolutely all the degrees of cold; whence it follows that goodness *in summo gradu* excludes all the degrees whatsoever of the opposite quality. You cannot, therefore, arrive at the perfect goodness of God, but by suppressing even the very first minute of hell torments. For what God can be one moment, that he can be two hours, and two ages, and during the whole eternity; but what would be inconsistent with his nature eternally must be so in every moment of the duration of things.....A human father will force a child to swallow a disagreeable medicine, but he would not act thus if he knew of another method to cure him..... As he cannot avoid giving him a disagreeable potion, he sweetens the bitterness of it as well as he can by all the little artifices he can invent; and though he looks upon the child's complaints of the ill-taste of the physic as a ridiculous weakness, being persuaded that in a little time the child will lose the taste of it, and that the medicine will prove useful to him. Notwithstanding all this, I say, he would with all his heart spare him that trouble, and cure him by the most palatable liquors in the world, if it were in his power..... One might infer from thence that the notions grounded on experience, and the metaphysical or abstract ideas, concur in teaching us that to make a person suffer, even though it be only for a little while, and with a view to procure him a great good, is a thing inconsistent with goodness, unless it be possible to find a straight way, by which a person may be led directly from good to good constantly and unchangeably.....If, therefore, the Origenists have a mind to disentangle themselves, they must add a new heresy to their former ones; they must assert that it was impossible for God to lead the free creatures to an everlasting happiness without making them suffer beforehand.....It would be declaring the goodness of God at the expense of his power; it would be admitting matter as an uncreated principle, and so essentially evil that God himself could not rectify the defects of it.....Admit that there can be no hell under a God immensely good, then you must account for diseases and vexations among men.

"Thus," wound up the artful Freethinker, "we must teach those their duty who would pretend to subject divinity to philosophy. They must be shown the absurd consequences of their method, that they may be thus brought back to *Christian Humility!*" FLORENCE BRADSHAW.

(To be continued.)

GODIANA.

An awful spell of what we think
We know as "Time" and "Number"
Elapsed ere God began to shrink,
And waken from his slumber.

He had to shrink, to move and think,
And institute "Relation";
And, furthermore, he had to shrink
For room to hold Creation.

When shrunk and fit, he worked away,
And sent Creation spinning;
He kept a time-sheet every day,
And marked the first: "Beginning."

He worked like mad at lightning speed,
Delighted he'd begun it;
But after he had done the deed
He wished he hadn't done it.

Though God was rather smart and deft,
His work was often huddled;
He modelled man in mud, and left
His muddy model muddled.

You'll find, if God's odd book you scan,
Yclept "Jehoviana,"
That heav'n dropped "Bread-of-Life" as man,
And household-bread as Manna.

You'll also find that solid beef
Skipped heav'nward like a rocket—
Don't laugh, my friends! for unbelief
Despoils the parson's pocket.

Elijah drove to heav'n, where God
Is roosting, grim and "buggy";
He drove, with horses rocket-shod,
A pyrotechnic buggy.

Now *man* goes *fishing*; but when Jo
Sailed off to 'scape God's scanning,
Jehovah took a dive below,
And made a *fish* go *maning*.

This *fisherman*-like *manerfish*
Man'd Jonah, as instructed,
And "landed" him, as God did wish,
*Of*shally conducted.

From heav'n Jehovah oft sent fire
To set some rogues admiring;
He now lets decent folk expire
Through cold and lack of firing.

The starving pray for food and coals,
But God has answered never;
Perhaps he'll answer to their souls,
By roasting them for ever.

He made all life to live on life;
Our joy to live on sorrow;
Our weal, on woe; our peace, on strife;
And cheats us with to-morrow.

Mix vilest wretch that kills for wage,
And breathes a pious "Ave!"
With lettered fool, unlettered Sage,
And rabid dog—that's Jahvoh!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

ACID DROPS.

THE Guild of St. Peter, a Church of England body, is formed for the purpose of "stimulating, encouraging, and enlarging spiritual life among teachers in elementary schools." Tea and coffee are provided at its meetings, and gentlemen like Canon Gore are turned on as exhorters. Invitations are sent out to Board school teachers in London, with a "special request for an answer." It is probable that those who do not accept the invitation will be marked men, and liable to the displeasure of the clerical managers of many of the schools.

Dr. Hosker, the Mayor of Bournemouth, presiding at a meeting in aid of the Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen, gave the lie direct to the statement that a large proportion of the medical profession were Atheists. We are not aware that Dr. Hosker has any authority to speak for the whole of the medical profession. We are also of opinion that the number of Atheists in that profession depends on how the poll is taken. If the voting is open, there will not be many; but the number will largely increase if the vote is taken by ballot. Doctors are very much like other men on the side of worldly prudence. They can't afford to quarrel with their bread and butter.

Lord Wolseley presides at this year's dinner of the Omar Khayyam Club. It is a very curious selection. Old Omar, the large Infidel, as Tennyson styled him, would laugh at this pious soldier, who regards fighting and praying as nearly the whole duty of man. Omar had no faith in prayer, and left fighting to fools.

Dr. Johnson said of someone in his day, who was called a pillar of the Church, that he was no pillar, though he might be a buttress, for he always remained outside. Her Majesty is going to be a buttress of St. Paul's on June 22, and it is fortunate she is not going to be a pillar, for the crush to see her is likely to be tremendous. The Thanksgiving for the recovery of the Prince of Wales from fever a quarter of a century ago occasioned the loss of some lives possibly of as much value as his own.

The *British Review*, edited by W. H. Mallock, has, to avoid

extinction, been absorbed in the *National Observer*, which the same Romanist will conduct. Of his last article in the *B. R. the Church Times* says: "Professing to be written from a Gallo-like standpoint, with an occasional dash of ultra-Protestantism, a careful reading between the lines assures us that the article is the work of a crypto Roman propagandist of the baser sort."

The *Tablet* politely tells the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York that they are lying. It says they explicitly declare in the English version of their reply to the Pope that it is a version and not the original, being translated from the Latin published simultaneously. It then goes on to say that but for this explanation it would have thought that it was the other way about, and that the Latin was faithfully framed upon an English model. It gives "a few of the many passages which, in default of the information happily afforded us, would undoubtedly suggest such a conclusion." This occupies half a column, with a note that "others of the same character will be found in abundance throughout the document." As to the Archbishops' Latinity, the *Tablet* says, "perhaps the less said the better"; but it suggests that it "is apt to move with a stiffness that betrays the novelty of the experiment, and suggests the use of the grammar and dictionary."

All the trouble the *Tablet* is taking, however, only reveals to the critic the truth of the charge that the Pope's own Allocution on English Orders was made up in England and English before being put into Papal Latin at Rome. Hence the anxiety of Cardinal Vaughan to address a *Tu Quoque* to his Anglican rivals.

As to the controversy itself, we hold that the archbishops are as successful in upsetting Romanist orders as the Pope was in upsetting Anglican orders. As Voltaire said of the two women who were abusing one another, "I believe them both." Fancy the heads of Christendom quarrelling as to which of their fingers the Holy Ghost oozes from!

Mr. Ellis Griffith, M.P., speaking at Norwich on the Education Bill, said: "The parsons were trying to make up for lost time in the past by trying more and more to prey upon the British taxpayer." Mr. Yoxall, speaking of clerical managers, told of teachers dismissed because they made love to the vicar's daughter, of others dismissed because they would *not* make love to the vicar's daughter, and of others because they were friends with the churchwarden's wife, who was not friends with the wife of the vicar. There was one parish he knew where the school was nominally governed by the rector, but the rector was controlled by his wife, and his wife was managed by his daughter. In that parish the school was said to have a rector, a director, and a mis(s)director.

Switzerland is the only country in Europe which has the sense to spend more per head on education than on preparation for warfare. Of course it has no navy, but it has bad neighbors, and every man has to learn to use his own rifle. Denmark comes next, spending the most per head of any nation in Europe; but it has a navy to maintain. Holland spends double as much on war preparations as Denmark, and in this is only second to England and France, the last named spending most on education. Russia spends least of all on education, and most in proportion on war.

Dr. Lefroy, the Dean of Norwich, was invited by the University authorities to preach in King's College Chapel, Aberdeen, and accepted the invitation. The Episcopal Bishop of Aberdeen, however, remonstrated with him on the sin of countenancing schism by preaching in a Presbyterian place of worship, and, although the Dean of Norwich travelled to Aberdeen to interview Bishop Douglas, that dignitary refused to budge, and the invertebrate Dean gave in. The incident shows how these Christians love one another.

The question of Mr. Carvell Williams relative to the insertion in the demand notes for poor rates at Manchester of the item "Church Ley," which is a voluntary Church rate, has had the desired effect. He has received from the Local Government Board an intimation that the overseers have given an assurance that in future no mention will be made of "Church Ley" in the demand notes. It is by such dodges the unwary are often imposed upon to contribute to Church funds.

We are a moral Christian people, with no sort of hypocrisy about us; yet nearly half of our army in India is suffering from venereal disease. A Parliamentary paper has been issued containing startling statistics. It seems that the proportions per thousand of soldiers who suffer from this malady in various armies are: Germany, 273; Russia, 43; France, 438; England (home), 2037; (India), 438. What an object-lesson for the heathen!

The Bishops of London and Rochester and colonial Bishop Barry, who acts as rector at St. James's, Piccadilly, have issued a manifesto in which they state that in the region of the West London Mission it has been estimated by those who have studied the question that at least from a quarter to a third of the houses are houses of ill-fame.

It appears from the *Allahabad Pioneer* that, whatever native satisfaction there may be with the measures taken for the relief of the famine in India, it is considerably counterbalanced by the activity of the missionaries. It cites a native paper as saying: "They have scattered themselves into every part of the distressed districts, and are picking out the unfortunate orphan children in large numbers. Hardly a week passes when I do not find a batch or two of these unfortunate children being taken away to some orphanage. The orphanages at Mahoba and Lalitpur are now full, and they can hardly accommodate more members." Then follows an earnest appeal to the Hindu public for funds to establish orphanages at the different famine centres, "in order to save these parentless children from forced baptism." The *Pioneer* advises missionaries to be more circumspect, or they may arouse Hindu fanaticism.

The National schools in Ireland are called unsectarian. Yet they use Whately's *Evidences of Christianity*, and extracts from the Bible selected by the Protestant and Roman Catholic Archbishops. Unsectarianism means just what religionists can agree to impose upon others.

The Berlin correspondent of the *Daily News* reports a case of exorcising a devil at Munich, which, he says, "seems scarcely possible at the end of the nineteenth century." In a house in the Parkstrasse the parish priest of St. Benno performed the ceremony of exorcism at the wish of a woman living there. For some time past ghostly noises have been heard in her dwelling. The good woman stated that she and her children were disturbed in their sleep by unearthly rumblings, sighs, etc. Sometimes, also, a lady in black wandered through the room, but she had only been seen by the children, and never by the woman. The priest burned incense in the haunted room, and the noises the following night had somewhat abated. This priest was only continuing the approved theological method of dealing with supposed supernatural visitations. One of the canons of the Church of England recognizes possession by devils, and prohibits exorcism to parties without the licence of the bishop.

Friday's question to Robinson Crusoe, "Why God no kill Debbil?" has never been answered. The best attempt at a solution of the conundrum is probably the guess that his adversary is logically necessary to uphold God's own existence. At any rate, it will be a bad day for sky-pilots when it is universally allowed that there is no Devil. This is, perhaps, why they fight shy of him. There is, however, some man in America who means to bring him to close quarters. He advertises in a journal published at Peru, Illinois, that he will pay a reward of \$1,000 to the sheriff of anyone of the 102 counties in Illinois for the arrest of the "Devil," if he can be found in the State. Chicago is particularly said to be a suburb of hell, so there should be a chance for some enterprising police officer.

The Rev. Charles Stirling, who is a sort of humble imitator of Prophet Baxter, has been lecturing at the Paddington Baths on "The Eastern Crisis in the Light of Prophecy." The Apostle Paul was not referring to present times when he said to Titus, "The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies." But Habbakuk had his eagle eye upon them, and Ezekiel was inspired concerning the Concert of the Powers. Daniel, when he foretold the downcome of the Greeks, did not allude to Antiochus, but to the Greeks coming down to Constantinople. Mr. Stirling has taken warning by Prophet Baxter. He knows the things that shall be, but he declares "he fixed no dates." The prophetic interpretation must be believed in without giving us a chance of knowing when it goes wrong.

A Michigan evangelist is inspiring unwonted zeal for salvation among his multitude of hearers. He portrays hell as a large hall, at one end of which a walking match is going on, while at the other "Bob" Ingersoll is delivering a lecture on "Genesis."—*New York "Tribune."*

The Rev. A. C. Dixon, who refused to preach in a hall where Ingersoll had been, endorses the story of Jonah. He says: "Christ said that Jonah was inside the whale for three days and three nights, and I believe it. God wished that there be more light for Joshua to secure the victory of right, and he had the planetary system to stop. God is the power moving among his servants, and when things are called miracles it is God who has set aside his servants and is doing the work himself. When I read a magazine article I take it into the light of God, and when it does not agree with the light I cast the article aside as untrue. Let God

be true and every man a liar." Dixon would have believed that Jonah swallowed the whale, had it been so written.

The *Vegetarian* offers £20 for the ten best Bible texts in favor of vegetarianism. The person who finds them will earn the money. We would find double the number against vegetarianism for half the amount.

Lent is said to be in commemoration of the fasting and temptation in the wilderness. Only two persons were present at the flights to the exceeding high mountain and the pinnacle of the temple. One of them must have recorded the story. There is no evidence that Jesus ever wrote it, and from the ridiculous character of the adventure it seems likely to have emanated from the other party.

The controversy between Booth and his eldest son is as bitter as ever. In the *New York World* (March 8) Ballington Booth points out that his family had declared that he would "come to the stage, the dunghill, and the devil," and that they had heaped curses upon his head. He is reported, too, as saying that his father has not stuck to the truth.

"The Bible is the best and grandest anti-slavery book ever written," says a reverend Infidel slayer. What, then, did the Lord mean by ordering: "And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money?" Can the gentleman tell us where slavery is condemned in the Bible?

Mrs. Mary Parker left the residue of her small estate to the trustees of the Whalley-road Spiritual Tabernacle, Accrington. Her brother tried to prove that she was of unsound mind. The jury, however, decided otherwise. As the costs of both sides have to come out of the estate, very little will accrue to the Spiritualists. Still, they have established their right, and that is something. It is ridiculous to maintain that people who believe in spirits are insane, while people who believe in angels, holy ghosts, and devils are in the full possession of their senses.

The *Chicago Record* of March 2 contained the following: "Alderman Gazzolo believes that persons who gain a livelihood by dealing in things mysterious should divide their professional fees with the city. In accordance with this belief he introduced an ordinance obliging any person engaged in the business of fortune teller, by card or otherwise—clairvoyant, astrologer, palmist, Spiritist medium, trance medium, occultist, phrenologist, or hypnotist—to pay a quarterly license of \$50, or an annual license of \$200." If Alderman Gazzolo means fair all round, he should propose that the same license be taken out by the mystery men who officiate in churches and chapels.

Simon Emery, a Shaker, writes to the *Universal Republic* that he not only believes, but knows, that Christ has made his second appearance. When he came the true virgins received him, but the earthly wise rejected him, as they did of old, because he came in an obscure manner, and in the female form, making the Godhead complete—Father and Mother of the new creation. Jesus Christ, the carpenter's son, and Ann Lee, the blacksmith's daughter—these are the two anointed ones; the two golden candlesticks; the two olive branches. By their doctrine of celibacy, the Shakers take the most effective means of bring the cult of Ann Lee to extinction.

Mrs. Margaret Buchanan, of New York, brought a suit for fifty thousand dollars against another lady for alienating her husband's affections. The plaintiff, who is a red-hot Presbyterian, admitted that she locked up the stables on Sunday, and would not let her husband take out his horses; that she would not let him have any but religious papers in the house on that day; that she posted the motto, "Prepare to meet thy God," inside his hats; and that on one occasion she poured a bucket of modelling clay over his head. What a pious way of retaining a man's affection. We should think that the other woman hadn't much trouble in "alienating."

A gentleman writes to the *Church Times* that in this Christian land he finds it almost impossible to get a complete Bible. He means the Bible with the Apocrypha. He says he has examined Bibles in clergymen's houses, those given away at Sunday schools, those in use in National schools, etc., and he finds them all incomplete. He thinks the agents of the S. P. C. K. ought to say to every customer inquiring for a Bible without the Apocrypha: "We keep such things in stock, but we do not recommend incomplete Bibles."

The young men who raided the Spiritualistic exhibition

in Boston some time ago, and were convicted of disturbing a religious meeting, have had the verdict set aside by appealing to a higher court, where they had a jury trial. The jury rejected the plea that the meeting was a religious one, and held that the fraudulent character of the performance justified the exposure.

Mrs. Sarah Dietering died in her pew in the German Evangelical Church of Hoboken last Sunday. On the same day Major Nathaniel R. Chamblis, of Selma, Ala., died while listening to Cardinal Gibbons in the Baltimore Cathedral.

The Rev. David M. Kirkpatrick, of Rochester, New York, has lost his pulpit through ministerial conduct. The husband of a lady member of his flock returned home unexpectedly.

The Rev. E. J. Oldknow Millington, of Newark, is missing. So also is Mrs. Dorothy Dickinson, a member of his congregation; but the dominie's friends say there is no connection between the two disappearances. The Rev. Mr. Millington is something of an infidel-smasher, and a year or so ago he came to New York to meet Mr. T. B. Wakeman in debate before the Manhattan Liberal Club. The theory advanced by his friends now is, that he visited this city to study criminology in its haunts, and has met with foul play.—*New York Truthseeker*.

Harry Broughton, who bashed in his father's brains with a coal hammer at Leicester, is said to have been a distinguished member of the Salvation Army.

In describing the recent fight between Fitz-Simmons and Corbett, the *Morning* tells us how "the Salvation Army Barracks are being used as a restaurant, and the churches have been fixed up as lodgings." After this, who can doubt that "Godliness is great gain"? This eruption of publicans and sinners as pew "dossers" will perhaps involve some gospel disinfectant being freely used by the pious sky-pilot who occupies the pulpit on next Lord's Day.

Mr. F. N. Richardson, consulting chemist to the Bradford Corporation, analyzed the covers of a Testament said to have been used in the Ripon Court-house for sixty years. He found seven species of micro-organisms, the only one of a dangerous character being the *pus. cocci*, which is usually found on wounded or sore skin. Mr. Richardson says that, if salivary germs can be left in that manner, other microbes of a more dangerous character could be left. We prefer to affirm.

At Dover the matron of the Home of Rest belonging to the "Peculiar People" was fined £2 for contravention of the Infectious Diseases Notification Act. The case arose out of the recent inquest on the young London hospital nurse who died at the Home from typhoid fever; no medical man had been called in, the matron stating that they trusted in the Almighty to save her.

Dr. Johnston, who held the chair of Biblical Criticism in Aberdeen University, was so old-fashioned in his notions of the old book as to put it to the students as all genuine and divine. They could not stand his backward nonsense, and the authorities, finding he had lost their confidence, requested him to retire. Against this decision he has petitioned the Privy Council.

I cannot believe there's a hell,
That the merciful God made to frizz one;
But I'd like just to send for a spell
To some place as hot, the whole blessed lot,
Of the humbugs who tell us there is one.—*J. H.*

The Rev. Jacob Primmer has carried a majority of an Airdrie meeting with him on the subject, "Rome or Rum: Which is the Greater Evil?"—the meeting deciding that Rome was the greater. Byron says: "There's nothing so consoles the mind as rum and true religion." We suppose that Mr. Primmer and his Airdrie friends were fully competent to discuss the relative demerits of the two great consolations.

La Costanza, of Venice, said in a recent issue, in an article on Papal power: "The Pope blessed us in 1848, and we lost; he cursed us in 1859, and we conquered. He blessed the Dukes and the Bourbons of Naples, and they perished; he blessed the brigands and sustained them, and they perished. In 1870 he blessed France, and she was conquered; he cursed Germany, and she triumphed."

Edgar Fawcett says, in his article on Colonel Ingersoll, which we reprint, that he has slight doubt that Voltaire was both repellent and cold. He seems to have drawn his idea from some Christian account. He should read *Parson's Life of Voltaire*, or, better still, read the works of the man. He will find Voltaire anything but cold, even if repellent to those who differ from him.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, March 28, Friendly and Trade Societies' Club, Northumberland-street, Huddersfield, at 11, "Life, Death, and After"; 3, "The Crescent and the Cross"; 6.30, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. C. WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—March 28, Camberwell. April 4, Sheffield; 10, 11, and 12, Stanley, Durham.—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. BRADY, subscribing to the Lecture Scheme, says: "I certainly think that those of us who cannot afford to take an active part in the movement should provide the sinews of war for those who do the fighting; and I quite endorse your opinion that those who from parsimony, or even carelessness, neglect to do this are no better than Christians."

ADMIRER.—Sale's translation of the Koran can be picked up secondhand for a few shillings, sometimes for less. You would find some useful information on the other matter in Taylor's *Diegesis*. We note your wish that we may have "a hearty response" to our appeal for the Lecture Scheme.

F. S. JACKSON.—Such lectures as the one you send us a report of do a great deal of good. It might be possible to have Coventry visited under Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme, but some one would have to assist locally. You might inform us as to the possibility of this being done. Of course we do not expect heavy contributions to the Scheme from working men, but a shilling once or twice a year is not an intolerable strain even on their pockets.

J. LAWLER.—(1) It only proves that the New Testament contradicts itself. The "preach the gospel to every creature" order is put into the mouth of Jesus after his death. During his living career he told his apostles not to go to the Gentiles. (2) Profane jokes are not philosophical disquisitions. They please the younger members of Freethought families, and some of the adults. If you like the other contents of the paper, you might excuse this part for the sake of the "weaker brethren."

J. DARRER.—All we can recommend you to do is to obtain and read the most suitable books and pamphlets you see advertised in our columns. Cruden's Concordance would help you with references to Bible texts.

T. WATERS.—Glad to hear you were so pleased with Mr. Cohen's lecture at Carlton.

H. B. D.—Mr. Forder has sent you the tracts as desired. Glad to hear that you appreciate what you call "the noble and helpful tone of the *Freethinker*."

POLICEMAN.—A poor man's shilling is often a better proof of conviction than a well-to-do man's pound.

W. ELCOAT.—Acknowledged this week. Ought to have been acknowledged before, but a slip of copy went astray in the office.

T. CRUDDAS notifies that the meeting of the Ox Hill and Stanley branches will in future be held every Saturday fortnight in the West Stanley Board Schools.

J. D.—Should have been pleased to insert, but the watch argument has been refuted so many times already.

G. THWAITES.—All right. See this week's acknowledgments.

S. HOLMES.—We note the wish of yourself and your Bolton friend that Freethinkers will give a hearty response to our appeal for the Lecture Scheme.

J. PROCTOR.—Tracts sent as requested. Thanks for subscription. We are very sorry to hear of Mr. Lovell's death.

T. H. SEYMOUR sends a subscription, and heartily wishes success to the Lecture Scheme.

E. SELF.—Freethought propaganda, as you say, is much needed in Ireland. But the country cannot be worked from England. Irish Freethinkers must bestir themselves, and their English brethren will be very happy to render them assistance.

A. S. COLEMAN.—We think we have been consistent in our attitude towards the Eastern question. When we said "Hands off" we meant, as we explained, that the Powers should do nothing for Turkey and against the freedom of Crete.

T. PERKINS.—We do not know any newsagent who sells the *Freethinker* in Aberdare. Perhaps some of our readers can say.

R. EDWARDS.—We do not know of any Secularist criticism of Tolstoy's *Kingdom of God*. It has for some time been our intention to write at length on the great Russian's religious views, but the opportunity has not yet arisen.

J. SEDDON.—Tuesday morning is the latest time for matter for the next *Freethinker*, but it makes it awkward when "latest" is read also as "earliest." We wish our correspondents would post as long as possible before Tuesday. A frightful rush on one day is unfair to the Life Insurance people.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Our best regards to the Birmingham friends. We hope to see them again before very long.

A. HINDLE.—Mr. Foote writes you personally with respect to the Freethought books you might place in the Co-operative Library.

CHILDREN'S PARTY.—We have received:—T. M. G., 61.

C. BLYTON.—The whole of the present "Shilling Month" subscription goes to the Lecture Scheme.

SHILLING MONTH.—S. Burgon, 2s.; Admirer, 2s.; G. Brady, 10s.; W. H., 2s.; J. Hockin, 1s.; F. J., 5s.; F. Bull, 2s. 6d.; T. Waters, 2s. 6d.; H. B. D., 5s.; Recently Converted, 1s.; J. Chamberlain, 2s.; Bristol Friends (per J. W. Lord), 10s.; Samuel Seal, £5; Policeman, 1s.; W. Elcoat, 5s.; G. Thwaites, 5s.; S. Holmes, 2s. 6d.; Bolton Friend, 2s.; J. Proctor, £1; T. H. Seymour, 10s.; A. W. Marks, 10s.; John Cuff, 5s.; R. Taylor, 2s. 6d.; W. H. Wood, 2s. 6d.; J. H. Ridgway, 2s.; J. Partridge, 1s.; C. Blyton, 1s.; T. M. G., 2s.; T. Hopkins, 1s.; Ex-Ritualist, 2s. 6d.; T. Hopkins, £1; T. B., 2s. 6d.; J. Halliwell, 2s.; W. Fowler, 1s.; F. Knight, 1s. Per C. Cohen:—W. Hawker, 5s. 6d.; Mrs. Jackson, 5s. Per Robert Forder:—G. Mitford, 1s.; A. Brown, 4s.; A. R., 1s.; T. S., 1s.; J. R., 1s.; R. P., 1s.; J. H. S., 1s.; R. Gibbon, 2s. 5d.; J. Hughes, 5s.; J. Warner, 2s.; M. Smith, 1s.; R. Radford, 1s.; A. Radford, 1s.; J. Radford, 1s.; J. Kimberley, 2s. 6d.; J. Edy, 1s.; Simons, 1s.; T. Milward, 1s. 4d.; J. Beazer, 1s. Per Miss Vance:—F. P., 10s.; Medicus, 2s.; A. Jones, 2s.; Ernest, 1s.; No Name, 1s.; Plymouth Branch, 10s. 6d.; F. Thornett, 1s.; J. M., 1s.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: Bristol Branch, 15s.; J. Halliwell, 1s.; J. Warren, 2s. Parcel of cast-off clothing from Mr. and Mrs. J. Samson.

T. HOPKINS.—No.

EX-RITUALIST.—Much pleased to hear from you again after so long a silence.

T. HOPKINS.—Thanks for subscription and your humorous letter. If we ever meet you below, as you anticipate, we will stand you a drink of cold water.

OLD ADMIRER.—There is a constitutional way of ventilating grievances, real or imaginary, and of obtaining redress if necessary. It is a monstrous idea that the President of the National Secular Society is bound to engage in a public discussion of his policy and reputation with every malignant, ill-tempered, or disappointed person who jumps up inside or outside the Society. When the President returned from America, he said that he was present at the last Conference and would be present at the next. He repeats that statement now.

P. W. BALDWIN.—Your questions as to the earliest dates A.D., and the date of the first Christian names taken from the New Testament, are too difficult to answer off-hand.

G. SMITH.—Your notice came too late. It should reach us by Tuesday morning.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Ourselves—Watford Post—Two Worlds—Cheshire News—Torch of Reason—Crowe Observer—Lucifer—Liberty—Firebrand—Reading Observer—People's Newspaper—Sydney Bulletin—Postal Record—Echo—New York Public Opinion—Secular Thought—Freedom—Progressive Thinker—Watford Observer.

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.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

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

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

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. Displayed Advertisements:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SPECIAL.

SHILLING MONTH.

We go to press with another copy of the *Freethinker* before the close of March. Those who have not yet subscribed to "Shilling Month," on behalf of the Lecture Scheme, are invited to do so within the next few days. There are hundreds who can afford to send a donation. I know that the Indian Famine Fund, and all sorts of Jubilee schemes have taxed the public rather heavily; but the object I am appealing for is of very special interest to Freethinkers, and ought to elicit a larger measure of support. Every one of my readers should just ask himself what he can afford; then go to the Post Office and obtain an order, or write out a cheque; and then post it to me in an envelope, addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. Some people hate writing letters, and so put off sending. Some people are lazy; they would give you the subscription cheerfully if you happened to be handy, but they will not take any trouble. We beg them to conquer these aversions for once, and we give them the best part of a week to do it in.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

A GOOD audience assembled at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Bible and the Koran." The lecturer was hoarse in consequence of a cold, but his discourse seemed to be much appreciated. Mr. Schaller occupied the chair. This evening (March 28) the platform will be filled by Mr. A. B. Moss, who is to lecture on "Morality and Evolution." We hope there will be a good attendance.

Mr. Foote delivers three lectures to-day (March 28) in the Friendly and Trade Societies' Hall, Huddersfield. It is a long time since he last addressed a Huddersfield audience, which was always an appreciative one. Friends in the district will note that the Hall is in Northumberland-street, and that the meetings are timed for 11, 3, and 6.30.

The debate at Bristol between Mr. Foote and the Rev. W. T. Lee was well attended on both evenings. After the second evening's debate Mr. Foote met a large number of the members and friends of the N. S. S. Branch in a side room, and had a talk with them about the future of the movement in Bristol. The general feeling seemed to be in favor of raising a guarantee fund, and to arrange for special lectures once a month in the large St. James's Hall. Some were in favor of out-door propaganda during the summer, and perhaps something will be done in this direction. The debate was noticed in all the local papers, and appears to have given an impetus to the Freethought movement there. A fine Branch would exist in Bristol if it were supported by all the persons who shook hands with Mr. Foote at the close of the meetings.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts lectured in the Secular Hall, Camberwell, to a good and enthusiastic audience. His subject was "Sin and Secular Salvation," and it was evident from the frequent and hearty applause that the lecture "caught on." Mr. Watts was in splendid form. There was no debate.

Mr. Watts lectures again in the same hall this evening (Sunday), March 28, taking for his subject "The New Christianity." We hope our South London friends will support the Camberwell branch in the good work upon which they are engaged.

The Annual Children's Party, under the auspices of the National Secular Society, takes place on Wednesday, March 31, in the large hall of the Club Union, Clerkenwell-road, next door to the Holborn Town Hall. Tea for the children at 5.30, to be followed by games and a stage entertainment. Tickets for children (free) can be obtained from Miss Vance, N. S. S. office, 377, Strand, W.C.; from any London Branch secretary, or at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening. Tickets for adults are threepence, admitting them to the gallery to see the fun. Presents of toys, fruit, and sweets are solicited. They can be sent to Miss Vance. More money is wanted also. Donations should be sent to the treasurer, Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C. There really ought not to be any more begging for such an object.

We have received a handbill of lectures to be delivered to-day (March 28), in the Borough Hall Dining Room, by Mr. Harry Snell, under Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme. The name of the town is not given, but we believe it is Stockton-on-Tees. We hope he will have good meetings. The admission is free, with a collection to defray the local expenses.

Mr. C. Cohen has just issued, through Mr. R. Forder (publisher), a bright and telling pamphlet on *Evolution and Christianity*. Mr. Cohen is frankly Atheistic in his concluding paragraph: "From pebble to planet, from moneron to man, nature teaches the great lesson of change. The gods are as mortal as their makers, and sooner or later share the same fate."

Mr. Cohen has just completed a most successful mission under the auspices of the Manchester Branch. The Co-operative Hall, Downing-street, capable of seating six hundred, was engaged for six successive nights and thrown open free to the public. Large audiences attended each lecture, the largest one assembling on the Thursday evening, when Mr. Cohen lectured on "Is there a God?" On this occasion there was an audience of nearly six hundred. The meetings were surprisingly orderly, and the good humor which prevailed was most marked. Good collections were taken, and a lot of literature sold. The success which has attended this experiment will no doubt stimulate the committee to further effort in this direction. The mission was brought to a close by the delivery of three lectures in the Secular Hall on Sunday, when the audiences which assembled

were larger than any Mr. Cohen has had on any previous visit. Several new members have been registered as the result of the week's work.

The National Secular Society's manifesto against the Voluntary Schools Bill is inserted almost verbatim in the Nottingham *Evening News*. We should be glad to receive copies of any other papers that have inserted the document, either wholly or in part.

James Johnstone, C.E., J.P., lectures in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester, to-day (Sunday) at 6.30 on "Children in the Slums and in the Drawing Room." This lecture will be illustrated by a large number of lime-light pictures, and the proceeds are to be given to the fund for the Seaside Camp for Little Slum Girls. The Committee is anxious to make this as big a success as possible, so that there will be a good sum to hand over to the fund. The charge for admission is 3d.

Mr. A. B. Moss will lecture, by invitation of the Rev. Harold Rylett, at the Unitarian Church, Fort-road, Bermondsey, on Wednesday evening, March 31, at eight o'clock, on "Thomas Paine." Discussion is invited. South London friends will do well to attend and support Mr. Moss, if necessary.

The Roman Catholic Church in Canada has provoked a reaction against itself by its unscrupulous use of the spiritual power in politics. The Liberal candidate at Bonaventure, in Quebec, was required by the Catholic Bishop to sign a declaration against the Premier's settlement of the Manitoba schools question. M. Guite, however, refused. And what was the result? In a Catholic constituency he polled five hundred more votes than his predecessor secured at the General Election. The Catholic Church will have to give in.

Obituary.

WE learn from Paris of the death of a once well-known Freethinker there. Louis Auguste Rogeard was born at Chartres in 1820. He became a teacher, but was dismissed for refusing to attend Mass. In 1849 he moved to Paris, and took part in the revolutionary movement. In 1865 he published his most famous book, *Les Propos de Labienus*, a satire on the Emperor Napoleon III., issued immediately after the publication of that monarch's *Life of Julius Caesar*. Rogeard was sentenced to imprisonment, and his book was rigidly suppressed. But it sold largely and made a great stir, for it contained some of the finest French prose of the century. It contributed largely to upset imperialism. In his contributions to papers Rogeard signed himself Athée.

JOHN COVENEY, who died at Buchanan, Michigan, was an ardent follower of Thomas Paine, and never hesitated to express his views. He had a monument erected whereon were carved the following inscriptions:—"Free thought, free speech, free religion, free press." "He died as he lived, a disbeliever in God and the Christian religion." "The more peace the more plenty." "A Freethinker's monument—The world is my country, to do good my religion." Asked on his death-bed to renounce his belief and ask forgiveness of God, he said, almost in a dying whisper, his very last words: "I die as I lived, a disbeliever in God, the Bible, and Christianity."

WE regret to record the death of Mr. Arthur James Lovell, of Sunderland, at the age of fifty-seven. Mr. Lovell was an earnest Freethinker, and was always a ready and generous subscriber to the cause. He was highly respected by all who knew him. The flag at the Liberal Club, of which he was a member, flew half-mast on the day of his decease, which occurred on March 22. The funeral took place on March 26, the Secular Service being read by Mr. S. M. Peacock, of South Shields.

Theology and Madness.

The reality both of witchcraft and diabolical possession had been distinctly recognized in the Jewish writings. The received opinions about eternal torture and ever-present demons, and the continued strain upon the imagination in dwelling upon an unseen world, were pre-eminently fitted to produce madness in those who were at all disposed to it, and where insanity had actually appeared to determine the form and complexion of the hallucination of the maniac. Theology supplying all the images that acted most powerfully upon the imagination, most madness, for many centuries, took a theological cast. One important department of it appears chiefly in the lives of the saints.—*W. E. H. Lecky, "History of European Morals," vol. ii., p. 86; 1877.*

THE MONK, THE MAIDEN, AND THE MONKEY.

PRIESTS have ever kept all learning as far as possible in their own hands. When at length a literary class has grown up outside priestly ranks, there has usually been little love between the men of God and the men of letters. The latter have been able to see how far the former have derived their power and authority from the ignorance of the people. Erasmus, in his *Praise of Folly*, displayed the dislike of the man of learning for the mendicant monk and man of mystery. The novels of Boccaccio and other storytellers of the Renaissance are largely concerned with the misdoings of priests and monks. I have just come across an instance from India, where the Brahmins so long held complete sway over the people. As an illustration of ancient Hindu life it may be worth repeating. The story occurs in the Kathasaritsagara, or ocean of narratives, which was written in verse in the eleventh century, and is in substance as follows:—

In a temple on the banks of the Ganges there lived a religious mendicant with many disciples. He was a great rogue, but, to impress the minds of the credulous, affected to be indifferent to all worldly affairs, to have his mind fixed on heaven, and to have vowed never to say anything but his prayers. Near by lived a wealthy merchant, who was one of his devoted believers. This merchant had a beautiful daughter, with whom a prince in the neighborhood was enamored, and who communicated to her by means of a confidential servant. One day the holy monk came to the merchant's house to beg for the support of his religious establishment, and the daughter came out with a silver cup in her hands, and gave him alms. No sooner did the holy man behold her beauty than he forgot his vow of silence, and exclaimed, "Oh! what a sight!" The merchant having overheard him, when the daughter passed on, asked the meaning of his exclamation. "My dear friend," said he, "the marks on your beautiful daughter reveal to me that her marriage will bring loss and ruin upon you whenever she is married." These words so frightened the foolish merchant that he implored the holy man to tell him if there was any way to avert the catastrophe. "There is one way," said the monk, "but it is a hard one. You must make a box with holes in the form of a boat, and, having given a narcotic to your daughter, you must place her in it, and, closing the box, put it into the Ganges with a lamp burning on it. The waters will carry her beyond the influence of the bad spell, she will be married in a distant land, and her marriage there will not affect you here." Pleased with this disinterested advice, the foolish merchant did as he was told, trusting to heaven and the holy man.

Fortunately, the confidential servant overheard the scheme, and immediately informed the young prince, who, with his friends, watched by the river side, and when the box was put in at once secured the sleeping beauty who formed its contents, and put in her place a large and ferocious monkey. Closing the lid, the barque was again placed on the stream, with its lighted lamp. Further down the monk watched for the floating light with eager eyes. He enjoined his disciples to secure the box, to pay no heed to any sounds they might hear, but to bring it to his cell, where he told his disciples they must not disturb him, as he had various religious ceremonies to perform in order to exorcise the demon within. When they had retired, he locked himself in, and began to open the box. He was soon engaged in a furious conflict with the ferocious monkey, who was exasperated by his confinement. The holy man shouted with all his might, but his disciples thought he was thus exorcising the devil with whom he was engaged, and he began to think it was a demon himself. At last he got his door open, and escaped, all scratched and torn, and with the loss of his nose and an ear. The monkey also escaped, and got to the jungle. The maiden was delighted to have got into the hands of her true lover, and they lived happy ever after.

LUCIANUS.

The great body of men affecting the name of good and pious have unconsciously abnegated the sacred privilege and duty of acting or of speaking the truth, and fancy that it is not truth which is to be acted, but that an amalgam of truth and falsity is the safe thing.—*Carlyle*.

THE KINDLIEST OF MEN.

I DON'T believe that Colonel R. G. Ingersoll cared half as much as I did, the other day, when the Salvationists, in their Fourteenth-street "temple," chose to insult him by burning his portrait there. He could easily have made matters hotter for these impudent fanatics than their own braggadocio bonfire. But Colonel Ingersoll, so utterly misunderstood in character by those who set themselves up as his fierce foes, is almost marvellously amiable in all matters of personal assault. At heart he is the kindest and sweetest of men. His opinions, absolutely sincere, are his own, and I have no intention, in this place, of dwelling upon the question of whether he has a right to them or no. It is almost absurd at the present time to argue such a point, or even to consider it at all. Of course we all know that two or three centuries ago he would very probably have been roasted or drawn-and-quartered.

A certain "General" Sheridan died not long ago, after having spent many days of his life in reviling the tenets of Colonel Ingersoll. I clearly recollect how this Sheridan was wont to declare, both in lecture halls and newspapers, that the discourses of his antipathy were "filth," and how he would add concerning them other civilities of comment equally benign. But he never wrung a word of displeasure from Colonel Ingersoll's lips. All that I ever heard the great orator and thinker say of Sheridan was a sentence or two, half-forgiving and completely humane. I have seen not a little of Colonel Ingersoll in family life, and the adoration with which he is regarded there speaks volumes for his loveliness as a man. "Never," said one of his daughters to me—the beautiful and engaging Mrs. Walston Brown—"have I received from my father the faintest angry word." How many daughters can conscientiously make such a statement, no matter what depths of filial and parental attachment may tempt its avowal? Usually the sceptic is held by orthodoxy to be repellent and cold. I have slight doubt that Voltaire was both. But Ingersoll's, as his detractors will not take the pains to discover, is a nature, a temperament, teeming with sunniest cheer. He may not believe, but he radiantly hopes. So large is his charity, so rich his tenderness, that intimately to know him means an incessant stimulus. One can almost literally warm one's hand at him, as at a great fireplace full of burly and glowing logs. Those who think he has fierce hates and prejudices are right, but unless they know him they cannot realize how tremendously fine and noble these hates and prejudices are, since their direction is always against dishonesty, fraud, and meanness, never against the fellow-creature on whom such faults prey. His philanthropy and loving kindness are limpid accompaniments of his reasoning powers in their astounding clarity. I have never known so much benevolence wedded with so much wisdom. There is not a doubt in my mind that if he had seen the Salvationists burn his picture, the other day, his genial look would have never changed. He might have pitied the raw rancor that had roused such an act, but I am confident that he would have hailed it with no indignant frown. His impulse might have been to say something that this foolish rabble would not soon have forgotten; but you may be quite certain that individual spleen would have played no part in such utterance. Few living men can fling the thunderbolts of sarcasm with so terrific a force; but they are witheringly hurled at the rash, stupid, besotted deed rather than at the doer of it. Bad things are what he loathes far more than bad men. In truth, for bad people of all sorts he has the most opulent sympathy. I should not affirm that in his famous political speeches, great as they sometimes are, this splendidly pardoning form of philosophy is always manifest. But even the statesman finds it hard to preserve a philosophic equipoise, and the politician can ill preserve it at all. Neither as statesman nor politician should I rate Ingersoll as the valid expression of himself. But as philosopher he often reaches, to my mind, the sublimest heights. EDGAR FAWCETT.

—*Collier's Weekly*.

It was at Inverness that, according to the story, a genial Saxon, on meeting a native in the High-street one Sabbath morning, and observing, "It is a fine day, my friend," met with the chilly rejoinder, "Is this a day to be talkin' about days?"

THE TOWER OF BA-BEL—7,000 B.C.

THE New York *Journal* of February 2, 1897, gives some notices and photographs of ruins at Nippur, in ancient Babylonia, and tablets taken from them by the expedition organized by the Philadelphia University. Professor Hilprecht, who has been at work on the tablets for months past, says: "I do not hesitate, therefore, to date the first settlements in Nippur somewhere between 6000 and 7000 B.C., and possibly even earlier." And the *Journal* says: "Scientists have, of course, long discarded the chronology of the Old Testament, as it has been found faulty in many instances. But that Asiatic civilization dated back seven thousand years before Christ, while it has often been advanced as a theory, has never before been proved."

The chief item of interest in the present notice is the large picture of the Tower, which no doubt has served as the basis for the old Biblical legend. It was built in a similar fashion to that of many similar structures in the land from which has come so much of our astrology and legend—a series of seven stories, decreasing in size, with terraces and connecting stairways. Under its base were found the ruins of a great wall forty feet wide, which at one time had encircled the city. Inscriptions showed that this wall had been built by Naram-Sin, son of that Sargon I., long supposed to have been a mythical character, but who really lived about 3000 B.C. Digging down beneath this wall, the expedition found a mass fifty feet thick of *débris* of old buildings, pottery, and tablets, inscriptions on which showed, "not only that Sargon I. had lived and ruled over Babylonia, but that at least four thousand years of history had preceded his reign!" These inscriptions showed the gradual changes made by time in the language of the people.

In its last campaign the expedition discovered at the base of the Tower an arch that must have been in crumbling ruins centuries before the foundations of the Tower were laid. Four hundred tombs were unearthed, besides twenty-one thousand cuneiform tablets, whose inscriptions "bear about the same relation to those of the better-known tablets of earlier discoveries that ancient Latin bears to modern Italian." These inscriptions will be photographed and sent to scholars all over the world, and will no doubt give them work for years to come.

When the publication of the works connected with the present expedition is completed, Professor Hilprecht will accept an invitation from the Sultan to visit his library at Constantinople, and examine the many ancient manuscripts and archaeological treasures stowed away there.

It is rather amusing to see in the middle of the page a space set apart for a sort of apology for the publication of the matters referred to above. It is in the shape of a letter from the Rev. Dr. C. H. Eaton, of New York, who expresses a belief that "all recent investigations have rather added to than taken away from the force of the Scriptures, and that the Bible has more weight to-day than ever before in its history." Dr. Eaton says also: "The Scriptures, *as far as they declare the truth*, are secure. If there is evidence that they are inaccurate or untrustworthy, every honest man should be glad to have such evidence produced."

The unfortunate fact is, however, that many ministers—supposed to be teachers of "the truth"—not content with throwing doubt upon the facts and the honesty of the discoverers, go to the extent of denying them altogether, and misleading their following with the notion that these researches into the history of man are but the work of the Devil, and must be tabooed. Dr. Eaton's deliverance on the subject is sufficiently oracular to "save his bacon" from a charge of heresy; though, when he says that "there never has been produced a book, or a collection of books, equal in principle and motive to the Old and New Testaments," he must be remarkably blind both to the defects of his Bible and to the merits of other literature.

—*Secular Thought.*

E. J. S.

John xii. 6 says of Judas: "He was a thief, and had the bag (purse) and bare what was put therein." John xvi. 30 says the disciples of Jesus said to him, "Now are we sure that thou knowest all things." If these two passages are true, at the very time that Judas was carrying the purse out of which Jesus and all the disciples used the money, Judas was stealing things, and Jesus knew it and did not report on him, and almost certainly used the stolen goods or stolen money.—*C. C. Moore.*

GOD THE DEVIL.

CHRISTIANS who are fond of the Design argument, and who believe that everything that exists must have had a superior original cause—except God, who is, of course, so insignificant that he never needed a cause—must come to the conclusion that God, being the cause of the Devil, and the architect of hell, must be capable of doing things infinitely more wicked than the Devil himself. If he isn't, why did he create the Devil and hell? If this tale were true, God himself would have committed the greatest sin possible. I suppose God felt that he had sinned against man in making the devil and hell, and that he deserved to be crucified for what he had done; so he delivered himself up to man to be punished for his own evil deeds. There could be no other sensible conclusion, if the tale were true.

Jehovah, whose almighty power
Old Mother Nature scorns to own,
Looks down, with blind and sightless eyes,
From his great non-existing throne;
He fumes at what he does not see,
He smiles at what he does not hear,
He wields a strength he don't possess
When parsons howl a blatant prayer.

Imagination's stillborn child,
Offspring of crude and unlearned mind,
Thou bogey of the universe—
Whom none but simple fools can find—
Father of Mary's bastard babe,
Thou who mad'st for us the devil,
Thou who lit the fires of hell,
Thou author of good—and evil,—

What right hast thou to torture man,
And damn his soul to hell of fire?
What has he done to anger thee,
And rouse thy vengeful, murderous ire?
If thou didst make him like thyself,
The blame is thine, not his at all;
If thou hadst made him perfect, Lord,
The Devil could not make him fall.

If thou didst make the Devil, Lord,
Just blame thyself, and don't blame man;
The Devil, too, is not to blame,
For he'd no say in thy great (!) plan.
If thou dost make such great mistakes,
Don't blame either man or Devil—
But then, 'tis sport for thee, no doubt,
To play such pranks and in them revel.

But if the Devil caused it all,
Why didst thou "die" upon the "tree"
Why visit vengeance on *thyself*,
And let the Devil go "scot free"?
And then, again, we simple men
Can't understand so very well
Why thou, a "God of love," shouldst make
Such a loving little place as hell.

If thou didst make the two, dear Lord,
And caused man all this misery,
How canst thou say that man's at fault,
And damn him through eternity?
But off on his steed, the storm, rides God,
And plant's his big feet on the sea;
I daresay, at the "judgment day,"
He'll make it pretty hot for me!

ZAC JORDAN.

MARTIN LUTHER.

THE only way to judge men is to consider them in relation to their age. In Luther's time every one believed in the devil and his numerous bands of evil spirits, and in human agents such as witches, who had made league with them. In our own country the Bible-founded laws against witchcraft were not repealed until last century. Luther was coarse. That also was a characteristic of his age. But he was honest, and he was led into noise and brawl by the necessities of his integrity. He was not a refined hypocrite such as Christian civilization engenders to-day. Where he saw a falsity he denounced it. That we see falsities where he saw truths does not alter the brightness of his example. He who says "that is false" when he knows it to be false, without waiting to see what the world will say, or even till he can affirm that something else is true, is a reformer of the stamp of Luther, and may aid in effecting a new Reformation.

Luther was not original. What he stood for was the views of the many. From the days of Wiclif and Huss the Church had been seething with projects of reform. But Luther stood firm at the critical moment, and thus gathered the force which had been accumulating during hundreds of years. The conspicuous place he gained illustrates the power of moral courage.

PHILALETHEIA.

BOOK CHAT.

A SECOND generation has arisen since Dr. Ludwig Büchner put forward the first edition of his *Kraft und Stoff*. Since then the work has been translated into over a dozen languages, and numerous editions have appeared in every European tongue. When on March 29, 1894, the veteran author celebrated his seventieth birthday, and received the congratulations of many of the ablest European scientists, an eighteenth German edition of 10,000 copies was issued in celebration of the event.

* * *

Dr. Büchner is one of the few men who can boast that he has understood his age and met its requirements. He took for his motto "What I want is facts," and facts he has dealt with in the clear light of science, setting aside the theological and metaphysical speculations of a pre-scientific age. His work, which is a freethought classic, should be in every library. We are pleased to notice that Mr. Forder is now issuing the best edition at half-a-crown, less than a third of the original price.

* * *

The full title of Büchner's work is *Force and Matter; or, Principles of the Natural Order of the Universe, with a System of Morality based thereon: A Popular Exposition*. By Professor Ludwig Büchner, M.D. This indicates its purpose. It is not a mere scientific treatise, but a popular positive philosophy based on nature and reason. It treats the facts around us from the standpoint of observation and experience, and the Materialistic philosophy deduced therefrom is not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose, but musical as is Apollo's lute.

* * *

Materialism sounds horrid to the ears of the prejudiced, but in the person of Dr. Büchner it is alive with regard to human needs and the morality based on sociability. His other works show the veteran Materialist to have been ever active in the cause of progress, and this, his greatest, is instinct with concern for all that makes for human welfare.

* * *

Büchner's friends describe him as unassuming, simple, and entirely free from intellectual arrogance; in personal discussion yielding, and disposed to seek common ground, but decided and uncompromising where falsehood, prejudice, or pretence is concerned. Hence his attacks on "Word philosophy," in which he took for his motto the Arabic proverb, "I hear the mill going, but I don't see the meal." We strongly advise all who have not read *Force and Matter* to do so. Those who know it will be sure to make their friends acquainted therewith.

* * *

Messrs. Longmans, Green, and Co. have in the press a new work by Mr. John Beattie Crozier, the author of *Civilization and Progress*, entitled *History of Intellectual Development*.

* * *

The late Rev. John Owen, author of *Sceptics of the French and Italian Renaissance*, and of *Evenings with Sceptics*, wrote also a work on *The Five Great Sceptical Dramas of History*, which has been published by Sonnenschein and Co. The dramas dealt with are the *Prometheus Vincit* of Æschylus, the Book of Job, *Faust*, *Hamlet*, and Calderon's *El Magico Prodigioso*. His comparison of the first two is particularly suggestive. The last is rather a drama of faith than of scepticism.

* * *

We have received from E. Pickard, High-street, Flushing, near Falmouth, a copy of volume ii. of *The Hat Crusade*, by Samuel Fox (since deceased) and Edward Pickard. It has for mottoes two extracts from the book itself. "Faith is an intelligent faculty, not the result of the quenching of intelligence; and without intelligent activity of mind faith is impossible"; and "It would not be prudent to put off doing right until the opportunity is gone by." The volume continues the narration of the crusade of the young Quakers, Samuel Fox, Edward Pickard, and Edwin Tregelles, dealing largely with the doings of the first-named in London. It reprints the matter which appeared in the *Freethinker* of August, 1893, on that subject, as well as the comments of other papers. It also contains some of Fox's correspondence with Leslie Stephen and Auberon Herbert, as well as with various Quakers, to most of whom his doings were objectionable.

* * *

Marriage Questions in Modern Fiction (John Lane) is from the pen of Elizabeth Rachel Chapman, and is a protest against writers like Grant Allen and Mrs. Mona Caird, who oppose marriages. She regards such books as tending to the degeneration, degradation, and re-enslavement of women.

* * *

The *Athenæum* says that Mr. S. R. Gardiner, the historian,

is preparing a reply to Father Gerard's monograph on the Gunpowder Plot which will blow that ingenious Jesuit's theory to atoms. Mr. Gardiner's title is, *What the Gunpowder Plot Was*.

PAINE VINDICATED.

THE Rev. Samuel M. Jackson, editor-in-chief of the *Concise Dictionary of Religious Knowledge*, says:—

"The time has come for justice to be done to Thomas Paine. That he has been dreadfully slandered should be frankly admitted. The religious public, which has hounded his memory and racks its brains to find epithets picturesque enough to describe his alleged fate, should make confession that it did these things ignorantly. Mr. Conway has done much to hasten the revolution of sentiment which has been silently taking place for some time back. Witness Mr. John Habberton's article upon Thomas Paine in Appleton's *Dictionary of American Biography*. Ten years ago I wrote the article upon him in the *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia*, after reading all the biographies of Paine mentioned in the literature appended to the article.....Paine was through life singularly generous, unselfish, and affectionate. He held his views tenaciously, and defended them valiantly; but he treated his enemies mercifully when he had it in his power to injure them, and he won golden opinions from the many whom he had befriended. His splendid courage in trying to save the life of Louis XVI. was only a specimen of what he could do, and his prior services in the cause of American freedom entitle him to deathless fame. It is plain as anything could be that, if he had not published *The Age of Reason*, he would to-day be in the National Walhalla by the side of Washington; and yet that book, in its audacity and its bravery, was evidence of the devotion he all along evinced to what he considered the best interests of man. It was Paine's greatest achievement. It is a masterpiece. Strange that he should have been called an Atheist. Why, his theology is the most naive Deism; and the book has outlived all its attacks, and is still circulated as unanswerable."

PROFANE JOKES.

THEY have discovered many references to the bike in the Bible, such as "Blessed are the pacemakers," and "There shall come destruction on Tyre"; but the only Biblical reference to golf is said to be in the passage which describes how Ananias lay dead after a very bad lie.

A patriarchal artist's model in Rome was known as "God the Father," because his benevolent aspect and long beard made him chosen to represent the boss of the Trinity in religious pictures. He, however, eked out his living by combining a little brigandage with his deific attributes. An American student, who had been absent from Rome for some time, missed his model, and inquired of an old friend, "Where is God the Father now?" "Alas!" replied the artist, "God the Father has been hanged!" "What an unfortunate family!" exclaimed the American.

"You were chums on earth, were you not?" queried Satan. "Yes," replied the two newly-arrived shades. "Good. You may continue to smoke together." His Majesty chuckled softly as he closed the door of Oven 2,146,783,164 with a bang.

Uncle Silas—"I'd like to b'lieve in the millennium; but I don't see popillation of the airth is goin' to be reduced so much." Uncle Abner—"Who says it's goin' to be reduced?" Uncle Silas—"Well, everybody's goin' to be happy, so it stands to reason that the kickers 'll have to die off first."

A north-side woman, having named her baby Eliza, calls her husband Beelzebub, "because," she says, "he is the father of Lize."

"You say man is a vapor?" "Yes; so the Bible says." "Well, I'm downright glad to hear it." "Why, what difference does it make to you?" "Well, it backs up a remark I made to the parson last night. I told him he was all gas."

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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, A. B. Moss, "Morals and Evolution."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, Touzeau Parris, "The Devil and Where he Came From"; March 30, at 8.30, "Little Faults," by Dramatic Society.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Watts, "The New Christianity."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7, Quarterly meeting.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road: 11.15, Lesson by F. J. Gould on "Honest Work." Children invited. 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Shelley."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "George Eliot."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Stanley Jones will lecture; 3.30, Debate between R. P. Edwards and F. J. Taylor, "Is Christianity the Best Religion?"

COUNTRY.

BRISTOL BRANCH (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Annual general meeting—election of officers and other important business.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, Entertainment—Vocal and Instrumental.

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7, E. Daniel, A reading.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class; 6.30, G. Faulkner.

Huddersfield (Friendly and Trades Club, Room No. 5): G. W. Foote—11, "Life, Death, and After"; 3, "The Crescent and the Cross"; 6.30, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

LEEDS (Crampton's Hotel, Briggate): 7, J. Rushton (Mormon), "Who Preaches the Gospel as Contained in the Scripture?"

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Hammond, A lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, J. Johnstone, J.P., "Children in the Slums and in the Drawing-room." Illustrated.

OX HILL AND STANLEY (West Stanley Board Schools): March 27 at 6, A meeting.

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimble-street): 7.30, Business meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Surprising delineations in Modern Mahatmaism, etc., by two Professional Gentlemen.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, Lantern lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—March 28, Bradford.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—March 28, Athenæum. April 4, m., Hyde Park; a., Harrow-road; e., Hammersmith. May 2, m., Hyde Park; a., Harrow-road; e., Kilburn. 9, m., Clerkenwell. 23, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham-rye. 30, e., Edmonton.

POSITIVISM.

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

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday morning at 11.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

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