

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

IS FREETHOUGHT DESIRABLE?

THIS question is the title of a discourse by the Rev. John Clarke, of Mossgreen, delivered in the Free North Church, Dunfermline, and reported at great length, perhaps *in extenso*, in the local *Journal*. Criticism is not allowed in churches, and probably Mr. Clarke's congregation would not have offered any if it were permitted. No doubt they were all satisfied that Freethought was *not* desirable, and a very slender tax was made on his powers of persuasion. At least it is charitable to suppose so, for Mr. Clarke's discourse would have made anything but a serious impression on an audience of Freethinkers. He began by dividing Freethinkers into three classes. The first consisted of those who "openly scoff at the Bible." The second class consisted of indifferents, and the third of the formalists. Now this is surely a monstrous classification. Only the first lot could make any sort of claim to be Freethinkers. And if they scoff at the Bible it could easily be shown, though not in a church, that they have plenty of justification. Certainly the Bible is not meant to be a funny book; its humor is mostly unconscious; yet it is intensely diverting. Few stories in ancient or modern literature equal those of the Bible in comicality. How is a man gifted with a moderate degree of common sense to help laughing when he reads of conversing serpents, talking jackasses, and whales that carry passengers on submarine excursions? Mr. Clarke should really tell us how he manages to keep a long and solemn face himself in the presence of such grotesque wonders.

We do not know that Freethinkers are bound to accept Mr. Clarke's invitation and tell him how the belief in God and a future life originated. Those beliefs are doubtless widespread, but so is the belief in witchcraft. Is it meant that no man has a right to disbelieve any fable unless he is able to give a full and accurate account of its origin and development? In that case the majority of us would have to believe in witches and wizards. Mr. Clarke forgets that the onus of explanation and proof lies upon the assertor, not upon the doubter; and that one need not be a profound astronomer, for instance, to laugh at the fable that eclipses are caused by a dragon swallowing the sun.

Some time ago a Christian speaker wanted us to discuss this question:—If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, what happened? We replied that if he *did* rise from the dead it was very wonderful, but it had to be proved; and if he *did not* rise from the dead, it did not matter a bronze farthing what happened.

Mr. Clarke has discovered that Atheists call themselves Agnostics because of their inability to disprove the existence of God. Will he allow us to tell him that Atheists never thought they could prove a universal negative? Will he also allow us to tell him that the difference between the Atheist and the Agnostic is merely verbal. Both are "without God" because they know nothing of his existence. Will he further allow us to tell him that he does not understand the Atheistic criticism of the Design Argument? Mr. Clarke relates a story of an astronomer who placed a handsome globe in his room, and then invited in a friend who was an Atheist. His friend admired the globe very much, and asked to whom it belonged. The astronomer said it belonged to no one, and no one put it there, in fact it came by chance. His friend told him he jested, whereupon the astronomer asked him if he did not jest in affirming that all the mighty

globes of the universe came by chance instead of design. This was very ridiculous, for we know that globes are made, which we do not know of worlds. Nevertheless, it converted the astronomer's friend on the spot; he then and there began to worship God. But, of course, he was not a live Atheist; he was only the Atheist of a pious fiction.

Mr. Clarke repeats that feeble, silly joke about the ignorance of Agnostics. "They confess it," he says, "by the name they bear." Yes, they confess their ignorance of what cannot be known. They are not ignorant, however, where knowledge is possible. The late Professor Huxley coined the word "Agnostic," and to fancy him "ignorant" in comparison with the Rev. John Clarke, of Mossgreen, is really too difficult for an uninspired imagination.

It may be said that Mr. Clarke is on more solid ground when he asks whether Freethought helps men to conquer their evil passions. Here, at least, is something definite. And, fortunately, we are able to give a definite answer. We reply, in the first place, that *all* thought tends to conquer passion, and that nothing else does; and, in the second place, that experience, either personal or public, does not favor the idea that Freethinkers are more prone than Christians to fall victims to the temptations of greed and lust. Mr. Clarke may thrust out protesting hands, and turn up pharisaic eyes, and exclaim: "I am holier than thou." But assertion is not proof, and *such* an assertion is rather evidence to the contrary. Christians are *not* "holier" than Freethinkers. They go to gaol more frequently. It is admitted that ninety-five out of every hundred prisoners in England—which is pretty near Scotland—were trained in Sunday-schools. Mr. Clarke asserts that "when scepticism prevails wickedness is rampant." But this is a general assertion, which can be met by a general contradiction. What is wanted is evidence, and this is not given. Mr. Clarke does not appeal to any particular age or any particular country. When he does so we will take the trouble to follow him.

In the same general way Mr. Clarke tells Freethinkers of what he calls the practical results of Christianity. He says it has proved "a priceless blessing to the world," it has "reclaimed the most degraded of mankind," it has "made the drunkard sober and the profligate virtuous," it has "abolished slavery and other horrible cruelties," and it has "promoted the progress of mankind in everything that is good."

This is all very pretty, but it is all very untrue. Where the Christian religion has gone "reclaiming" it has also gone annihilating. Mr. Clarke refers to Madagascar. Well, after all those years of missionary work, that island has been stolen from its inhabitants by a Christian nation called France. English missionaries have converted the inhabitants of the Fiji Islands, and now those islands are nearly depopulated. Germany sends missionaries to China, and compensates herself for the loss of two of them by appropriating Chinese territory. Then, with respect to drunkards, is it not a fact that the Christian nations are the greatest drunkards on earth? And is there half as much sexual vice in heathen countries as there is in Europe and America? Nor is it a fact that Christianity abolished slavery. Christianity has been in the world for nearly two thousand years, and slavery existed in Christian countries until the second half of the present century. Mr. Clarke simply does not know what he is talking about.

G. W. FOOTE.

CHILDREN AND THE BIBLE.

G. BERNARD SHAW, in a most interesting, witty, wise, incisive, and humane discourse on "Flagellomania," which he delivered under the auspices of the Humanitarian League on March 24, remarked that, although Solomon's words in the Bible were quoted in favor of not sparing the rod, its true lesson was adverse to flagellation. Solomon presumably carried out his recommendation in his own family, and it turned out very badly indeed. It was Solomon's son who said: "My father hath chastised you with whips, and I will chastise you with scorpions"; and he it was who brought the greatest trouble on Israel. Now, though it is quite true that the lesson of the Bible, when read in the light of history and common sense, is by no means in favor of the virtue of flagellation, nonetheless Mr. Shaw is well aware that Bible believers are far more guided by definite Bible texts, such as Deut. xxv. 2-3, which allows forty stripes, than by any deductions which reason may derive from its history; and Mr. Shaw admits that Bible history affords by no means a suitable guide for modern times. On this very question of the treatment of children the Bible represents a semi-savage stage in evolution.

Parents in patriarchal times had absolute power over their children's lives. This is illustrated in the story of Abraham, God's favorite and the father of the faithful. Abraham turned one wife and child out into the wilderness. Another child he took to offer as a burnt sacrifice. We read in Gen. xxxviii 24: "It was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter-in-law hath played the harlot. . . . And Judah said, Bring her forth and let her be burnt." Exod. xxi. 15-17 enacts that children who smite or curse their parents shall surely be put to death. Deuteronomy xxi. 18-21 declares that, if a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, "all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die." Moses, who might have spent his time to better purpose in teaching parents their duties towards their children, has no instructions whatever on that head. But it is laid down in the Decalogue: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." A little girl said she could not understand this. She honored her father and her mother, but her days were not a bit longer. She was sent to bed every evening at seven. Had she been well versed in the old fetish book, she might have understood the passage, as few grown-up people do. The children who in Bible days did not honor their parents stood precious little chance of having their days long in the land. Parents might settle them without any fear of a Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Children were often taken as slaves for debts contracted by the father (2 Kings iv. 1; Is. l. 1; Neh. v. 5). Parents selected wives for their sons (Gen. xxi. 12; Ex. xxi. 9-11; Judges xi. 2); and, in short, children were at the complete mercy of those who, *nolens volens*, had brought them into the world.

Although the favorite and oft-repeated maxim of religious flagellomaniacs, "Spare the rod and spoil the child," does not appear in so many words in the Bible, it is a mere condensation of Biblical doctrine. Flogging may, indeed, be termed a Bible duty. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Proverbs xiii. 24). "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying," is another amiable injunction (Prov. xix. 18). Again: "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Proverbs xxii. 15). The rod seems to have been, in the old dispensation, the divinely-appointed method of salvation. "Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beatest him with the rod he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell" (Proverbs xxiii. 13, 14). The infliction of pain is the only motive the divine book appeals to in the task of bringing up children.

Take such a story as that of the holy prophet Elisha, who cursed some "little children" who called after him "baldhead"; whereupon the Lord sent she-bears out of a wood, who destroyed forty-two of them. What a pretty lesson in religious terrorism! But this pales into insignificance before the Christian doctrine of eternal torment. I ask those Humanitarians who disapprove our warfare on superstition to reflect upon what the influence of belief in the infallibility of Bible texts has been. Consider how the doctrine of future punishment has encouraged and

enhanced earthly cruelty. If, as Cardinal Newman lays it down, for the slightest sin everlasting torment may be our portion, any infliction of pain that may hinder that awful doom is fully justified. In my young days Sunday was a day of gloom to children, and any infraction of its sacredness by play was visited by punishment. Freethinkers have done much to improve this, but still I find that the children of religious parents envy those who spend the Sabbath among Freethinkers. It is then, I claim, a part of the work of human civilization to remove those superstitions which have led to every kind of cruelty to the body under pretence of saving the soul. Children are still worse treated by the most religious. An American at Mr. Shaw's meeting testified that there was more flogging and worse instruction in the Catholic than in the public schools, and that experience might be paralleled elsewhere. Even the good Wesley established a school in which he allowed no play whatever, and pointed to the Bible as his authority. Dean Gregory publicly defended corporal punishment. One of its defenders at the meeting was a clergyman, and, indeed, pious people—especially pious military officers—are usually the advocates of the lash.

To weak and nervous children religion comes as a blight. They cannot grasp its hopes, but they can apprehend its terrors. Hell is vivid, heaven faint. Faith tells them only of their duties, nothing of correlated rights. It rules by appealing to the fear of punishment or the selfish hope of personal salvation; and, while it rules by these means, we may as well look for grapes from thorns as expect children to grow up devoid of selfishness and brutality.

Let us be done with religious terrorism, and I venture to say we shall soon be done with the lash and the rod, which are wholly unnecessary even for animals. The tone of voice is quite sufficient for horses or dogs, and praise and encouragement will go much farther than blame and harsh treatment. Since this is so with domestic animals, *a fortiori* it is so with children. It is far more necessary to inculcate parental responsibility than parental authority. Restraint is not education. Punishment is not reformation. "Hands off"—instead of hands, hearts.

J. M. WHEELER.

"THE MOTHER CHURCH."

PROFESSED Christians present a curious specimen of a "happy family." They are split up into numerous sects, each entertaining different views from all the others as to what Christianity really is. The principal rival expounders of the "true faith" are the Roman Catholics and the orthodox Protestants, and these are at "daggers drawn," each indulging in the worst kind of abuse and denunciation towards the other. The "spirit of Christ" has evidently failed to inspire within these "brothers in the Lord" love and goodwill for each other. The Catholics urge that theirs is the only true religion, and that those who deserted their Church in the sixteenth century were "heretics," who deserved severe condemnation; and the Protestants protest that the Romish Church is the very hotbed of the "vilest abominations," and that its teachings are "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits." Christ, it is said, prayed that his followers should be united, and that they should love one another; and yet, although nearly two thousand years have passed since the supplication is supposed to have been made, we find the bitterest hatred and the greatest antagonism existing between these exponents of the one "true faith." Such has been the efficacy of prayer even when it is said it was offered by Jesus himself!

It has been urged that the Catholic Church is the mother of Protestantism. If so, the disagreements commenced long before the final break-up in England under the rule of that extremely "moral" monarch, Henry VIII. The rebellious spirit against the claims of the "mother Church" manifested itself at the Council of Whitby in 664; in the protest of William I. against the pretensions of Gregory VII.; in the movement which was started in the ninth century, and which two hundred years later culminated in the establishment of what is known as the Greek Church; in the determined opposition of Grosteste, Bishop of Lincoln, in 1235, to the papal demands on England; and in the action of the English Parliament in

1366 in refusing to yield to the Pope's request that certain arrears of "Peter's Pence" should be paid. We see from these incidents that "strife" and "contention," which the New Testament informs us disturbed the harmony of the Christian family in its infancy, continued to mar its peace as it grew in age and extended in numbers. Whether Protestantism is the child of Roman Catholicism or not, it may be accepted as a fact that the latter is the oldest Christian Church extant, and that in point of numbers the Catholics far exceed the Protestants. From recent published statistics we learn that the leading religions of the world are represented by the following figures:—Protestant Christians, 200,000,000; Roman Catholic Christians, 195,000,000; Greek Catholic Christians, 105,000,000; total Christians, 500,000,000. Jews, 8,000,000; Mohammedans, 180,000,000; Heathens, 812,000,000; total non-Christians, 1,000,000,000. According to this calculation, one-third of the earth's population is classed as Christian, and the Catholics are 1,000,000 more than all the Protestant sects combined.

We will now inquire into the nature and character of this so-called "Mother Church," and no doubt we shall discover that her history has been so morally corrupt that nothing which emanated from her could possibly be free from the original taint. As Colonel Ingersoll has said: "There is no crime that the Catholic Church did not commit, no cruelty that it did not practise, no form of treachery that it did not reward, and no virtue that it did not persecute. It was the greatest and most powerful enemy of human rights. It did all that organization, cunning, piety, self-denial, heroism, treachery, zeal, and brute force could do to enslave the children of men. It was the enemy of intelligence, the assassin of liberty, and the destroyer of progress. It loaded the noble with chains, and the infamous with honors. In one hand it carried the alms dish, in the other a dagger. It argued with the sword, persuaded with poison, and convinced with the fagot." That Catholics are sincere we admit. There is an earnestness in their profession and a devotion in their faith that are almost absent from the Protestant sects. This fact illustrates that the more Christian-like people are, the more likely they are to commit crime. The statistics furnished by one of the organs of the "Mother Church" prove this. The *Catholic Times*, dated April 17, 1885, says: "Our people, though one-third the population of Liverpool, constitute nearly one-half of the total number of prisoners. In Scotland the Roman Catholics are one-twelfth of the population, yet on July 23, 1877, one-third of all the prisoners in Scotland were Roman Catholic. In Australia, in 1885, three-tenths of Roman Catholics contributed as many criminals as seven-tenths Protestant. The Parliamentary report for 1881 showed that, 'while the Roman Catholics form only three-fourths of the population of Ireland, they furnish six-sevenths of the criminals.' Especially is this disparity seen in the case of children, whose acts illustrate the value of parochial schools of juveniles, committed to county and borough prisons; in Ireland, in 1883-4, there were 116 Protestant Episcopalians, forty-two Presbyterians, and 777 Roman Catholics." It is the same to-day. In Catholic countries, where Christianity is devoutly believed, and where theology is accepted as a ruling principle in daily life, ignorance and criminality abound. The truth is, Protestantism has become more progressive of late because heresy has penetrated its churches, and the professed religion of their adherents sits but lightly upon them. It is the secular, not the "spiritual," elements in the Christian faith that have freed it from many of its original retarding influences.

The very organization of the Catholic Church is an absolute priest-ridden despotism, claiming the total subjection of its victims, and proclaiming the barefaced falsehood that the Church is infallible, and therefore cannot err. In 1874 "The Vatican Decrees" appeared, in which the severest condemnation was dealt out to those who maintained the right of mental liberty, the freedom of speech, and an unfettered press. Those "Decrees" denounced those men who held that the Church ought not to use force; that civil law should prevail over all ecclesiastical injunctions; that secular instruction is a necessity; that marriages legally contracted should be recognised as binding, even if religious formalities had nothing to do in making the contract; and that persecution for dissent is a crime. Thus the Church erected a barrier to all progress, and avowed its opposition to the

general advancement of the people. It was only a few days ago that the Rev. Dr. Clifford said: "The last (Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church, held in St. Peter's, Rome, from December, 1869, to October, 1870, was large and influential. It completed, in the face of sustained opposition and many heart-burnings, the system of Papal absolutism, declared the Pope's judgment on all matters of faith and morals infallible and irreversible, added dogmas to the Christian faith that affront the intellect and the conscience." Well might Draper write: "The signal peculiarity of the Papacy is that, though its history may be imposing, its biography is infamous" (*Intellectual Development*, vol. i., p. 367). It was, we think, the German Emperor, Maximilian I., who in Luther's time wrote to a Saxon counsellor: "All the Popes I have had anything to do with have been rogues and cheats." Those who have carefully read the history of the Popes, and studied the records of their deeds, will appreciate the truth and force of the Emperor's words. A more immoral and mind-destroying set of men, and more audacious and persistent wreckers of human happiness, never existed, than those who have been at the head of the Roman Catholic Church.

Perhaps one of the best of the Popes is the old man now in power; but, as Mr. L. K. Washburn truly states, he "has done nothing that the world honors a man for doing; nothing for which it gives its honor, its gratitude, or its love. The head of the Church represents its whole body. Catholicism has done no work for the material or mental improvement of mankind. It is a fact that *Rome gives nothing to the world*; that this priestly power is not interested in the progress of the human race; in learning, unless it defends its dogmas; in charity, unless it goes into its pocket; in labor, unless it enlarges its possessions; in literature, unless it celebrates its infallibility. It is enough to say that Emerson could not have been produced by Catholic theology; that Darwin could not have come from Catholic science; that Herbert Spencer could not have resulted from Catholic philosophy; that Garibaldi could not have found his sword in the armory of St. Peter's. Speak the name of any man of this century who has fought for the liberty of his race; who has given his thought to solve the vexed questions of sociology; who has toiled to increase the sum of human knowledge, or who has coined his brain for the joy and happiness of mankind, and you will speak the name of a man who was not a Catholic."

In our next article we will endeavor to show that, in many respects, the offspring has been but a little better than the "Mother Church." CHARLES WATTS.

PARALLEL RELIGION.

THAT scholar who makes himself thoroughly familiar with the religion of ancient Rome, antedating the alleged birth of Jesus hundreds of years, is always shocked as he runs a parallel with the old religion and that which is pretendedly new, known as Christianity. It is not a matter of faith alone, but it extends to every department of Church literature and practice, from the chief priest, Pontifex Maximus, down to the lowest subordinate priest and humblest layman. We trace the history of that pontiff back seven hundred years before our era, and his sacerdotal powers, merged with the monarch, were identical with that of the later Catholic Popes clothed with civil authority. Their ideas of heaven and hell were substantially the same as are now taught in orthodox pulpits. Saturn was the father of the Gods, as was Elohim in the Hebrew system; while Jupiter, paralleled by Jehovah, became the active reigning monarch in heaven. Pluto presided over Hades, as does Satan in Christian mythology. The millions of lesser gods are known as saints in the modern system.

Jes, or Yes, was one of about forty different names which Bacchus—Dionysos of the Greeks—bore. He was a son of Jupiter by a mortal woman. He was personified as a glorious and sublime being, who, under the form of an eternally flourishing youth, subdued all enemies, and travelled from East to West through all countries. He taught the culture of the vine, and thus, by a sort of miracle, converted water into wine. It was the image of Jes, otherwise Bacchus, which was removed from Pontus, on the Black Sea, nearly three hundred years before our era,

to Alexandria, Egypt, where a huge temple, one of the seven wonders of the world, was erected for his reception and was dedicated to his worship; and there he was posed as the resurrected god, Osiris. He was anointed, christened, made a christ, after the manner of ancient kings. Temples were also erected and dedicated to his worship at Memphis and Conopus. In the year 140 the worship of this god, Serapis—the resurrected Osiris—was introduced into Rome by Antoninus Pius. His "mysteries" were celebrated on May 6, agreeing with Ascension Day. The name Jes, spelled in Greek characters, as near as we can give them in English type, was I H S. The H is the capital Eta, with the power of E long. Now convert this Jes into Latin, by adding the Latin termination us, and we have Jesus. This Jesus, anointed, christened, became, when wrongly capitalized, Jesus Christ.

["The real origin of the mystical letters IHS, surrounded with rays of glory to this day, retained even in our Protestant churches, and supposed to stand for Jesus Hominum Salvator, is none other than the identical name of Bacchus, IYES (otherwise Jes), exhibited in Greek letters" (Rev. Robert Taylor, in *Diegesis*, p. 187). The *Imperial Dictionary*, in its department of abbreviations, says truthfully of these letters IHS: "These letters have been usually looked upon as the initials of Jesus Hominum Salvator (Jesus the Savior of Men); or in Hoc Salus (In this Cross is Salvation); but they were originally IHS, the first three letters of IESOUS, the Greek form of Jesus."

Will some Greek scholar be so kind as to inform us why the Greek letters IHS, spelling Jes in English characters, were wrested from their real meaning, and were used as initial letters for Jesus Hominum Salvator, rendered in English "Jesus the Savior of Men"? Was it not designed to mislead? It certainly does to those who are ignorant of the Greek characters, or who are thoughtless in the premises.

There is scarcely a festival or a holy day in the Catholic calendar which had not its counterpart in Roman mythology. And the sacraments of baptism and of the Lord's Supper were in vogue among the Pagans of Rome just as they are celebrated among Catholics now. Cicero, born 106 years, according to accepted chronology, before Jesus, made mirth of the people eating their god, as sceptics now do of the eating of the body and drinking the blood of the dear Savior. To quote Cicero accurately, he inquired: "How can a man be so stupid as to imagine what he eats to be a god?" May not the same question be asked with propriety to-day?

Prayers were directed to the gods, and hymns were sung in their praise, with as much fervor 2,500 years ago as now.

Every rite, ceremony, festival, and holiday of the old Romans is preserved among Roman Catholics. Their gods have been slightly changed; several of them, as Esculapius, the physician, who raised the dead to life; Bacchus, the god of wine; and Prometheus, who came down from heaven, was clothed with flesh, gifted with prophecy, suffered for the salvation of men—all were merged into the common character, Jesus; while Isis and her babe, with her home in Egypt, and temples to her honor in Rome before the Christian era, and known as the Queen of Heaven, was converted into the Madonna, the mother of our Lord.

The ritual used in Catholic worship is retained in its present Latin tongue, its very language, when carefully criticised, betraying the fact that it is a survival of Paganism. The Protestant reformers, ignorant of the real beginning of Christianity, attempted to remodel the worship, but its barbarian origin crops out in all their exercises.

Every symbol and emblem of the Church, as the Cross, the mitre, the crozier, the fish, the lamb, the dove, were in use by Pagans long centuries before the Christian era. Originally the cross was an emblem of the male life principle in nature; then it was used as a sign of victory, and was placed on banners, borne at the head of armies, and worn upon the breast as a charm, as now by Christians.

—Progressive Thinker.

To know what you prefer, instead of humbly saying amen to what the world tells you you ought to prefer, is to have kept your soul alive.

DAWSON ON DARWIN.

SIR J. W. DAWSON is entitled to hold what views he pleases on the subject of evolution; but this privilege most certainly does not extend to the right to misrepresent the position of Charles Darwin in relation thereto. Yet misrepresent it he does in an article on evolution in the current number of the *Expositor*, and that in a peculiarly vexatious manner, inasmuch as Charles Darwin's falsely-rendered position is made to do duty in the direction of supplying arguments in support of Sir J. W. Dawson's own teleological views, with which it is well known Darwin was entirely without sympathy. Is it possible that Sir J. W. Dawson has never read *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, edited by his son Francis Darwin, and published in 1889? When one remembers the furore that this work created, the thousands of review notices it inspired throughout the whole civilized world, it is, indeed, difficult to believe that to Sir James William Dawson this biography of the Colossus of Evolution has remained a sealed book! And yet upon what other assumption, consistent with the retention of confidence in his personal honor, can we account for his taking the sentence in the last chapter of the *Origin of Species*, referring to "life having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms, or into one," as representing Darwin's final position on the subject? On the strength of this passage Sir J. W. Dawson writes: "Darwin found it necessary to assume what may be termed an original creative act. At the close of his work he speaks of the Creator breathing life into a few organisms, or into one, and that from this original inbreathing of life 'endless forms, most beautiful and most wonderful, have been, and are being, evolved.' Darwin, therefore, unlike Spencer, assumes a creator, but he does not seem to perceive the consequences that flow from his admission." Now, on this very crucial point as to the necessity felt by Darwin of postulating an original creative act, and his assumption, therefore, of a creator, we have two letters written by Charles Darwin to Sir J. Hooker in the month of March, 1863, and published in the *Life and Letters* above referred to (vol. iii., pp. 15 and 18), which show that he utterly repudiated the idea of creation, and, by parity of reasoning, that of a creator also. In the first of these letters he says: "I had a most kind and delightfully candid letter from Lyell, who says he spoke out as far as he believed. I have no doubt his belief failed him as he wrote, for I feel sure that at times he no more believed in creation than you or I." In the second letter he said: "I have long regretted that I truckled to public opinion and used the Pentateuchal term of creation, by which I really meant 'appeared,' by some wholly unknown process." These utterances have been in print for nine years, and yet it is still possible for Charles Darwin to be grossly misrepresented, and that, too, at the hands of one who, himself holding high rank as a scientist, should have been incapable of such a proceeding. The distinction of the scientist should be his capacity for assimilating and rightly interpreting facts, and yet here is Sir J. W. Dawson completely ignorant of facts of the most essential character as bearing upon a subject—presumably under scientific treatment—by him. This article of Professor Dawson's is one of a series, so it is likely to be issued with the rest in book form. It is to be hoped that before this happens he will see his mistake, and so expunge this obnoxious misrepresentation from the body of the work. Its place might be supplied by some oracular deliverance of the Duke of Argyll or Lord Salisbury.

B. STEVENS.

What is God?

You ask me, What is God? and I
Am in no way puzzled to reply;
My inner lights so clearly shine
That heavenly things I may divine,
And, although but a finite creature,
Tell what is God and what is Nature.
Whatever can be seen or felt,
Whatever can be heard or smelt,
Whatever can be tasted, and
All that the mind can understand,
All that our wisdom can conceive,
All that is not we can believe,
All o'er, which fancy ever trod,
Is Nature—all the rest is God.

—Allen Davenport

EVOLUTION AND DESIGN.

FRANKLY, I should like to believe that the universe is the work of a wise and benevolent Creator, and that the many varieties of exquisite plants are the manifestation of His will and wisdom. But, while Darwin could not say that belief in God is incompatible with evolution, yet the whole teaching of his and Huxley's school supports the conclusion that evolution dispenses with any such agency or motive power. For example, we can no longer argue—now that the law of natural selection has been discovered—that the eye was specially designed to see with, or that the beautiful hinge of a bivalve shell must have been made or designed by an intelligent being—like, say, the hinge of a door by man.

Instead of saying that the eye was designed to see with, the *Origin of Species* teaches that the eye has been developed from a mere speck through numberless multitudes of generations, and has slowly reached approximate perfection through and by natural selection—a process that does not necessarily imply belief in a supernatural agency as the ultimate cause. This destroys the old idea of design. Our forefathers thought that an organ exists because it was purposely designed; but we now say that an organ, be it an eye or the flipper of a whale, exists, not because it was specially designed to perform its functions, but because it is the only one that has adapted itself to the conditions in which it is found, and that there is no express design or purpose concerned in the matter. Nature, according to the teaching of the *Origin of Species*, produced the eye without the aid of an original artificer; but, mark this, she only arrives at approximate perfection after countless trials and innumerable failures. This, I say, is the teaching of the Darwinian school, and if anyone maintains that this process is God's way of working, good and well; but it requires a robust faith to believe that God designedly created the "ichneumonidæ" with the intention of their feeding on the bodies of caterpillars!

Again, when the flower called the Venus-flytrap contracts with a living fly between its lobes, we are not to suppose that the flower was specially designed to act in that cannibalistic fashion, although the majority of people would naturally suppose such to be the case. On Darwin's hypothesis it is merely adaptation to environment, without which the flower would evidently perish; but if we are to believe that evolution implies design, then we are forced into the belief that the flower was specially designed to torture the fly.

An omniscient creator must have foreseen that natural selection implies the destruction of the unfit, not swiftly, but by innumerable varieties of slow torture. And, believing this, I cannot, I dare not, accept the dictum of your brilliant essayist, that perfection is to be reached only through designed agony and suffering. Surely every unprejudiced man will grant that a benevolent being could have brought about perfection at the outset, instead of by the roundabout and painful method of "sin and pain"—evolution, I call it, which only arrives at approximate success after countless blunders and frightful suffering.

Evolution, as shown by the *Origin*, is a history of errors and suffering; and it is this pain and sin that harasses and perplexes every earnest man, even although Emerson assures us every crime is punished, every virtue awarded, and every wrong redressed in silence and certainty. Many earnest and capable Christians believe that evolution is God's way of working—that is to say, when a new species or class is required God takes a lower one and develops it. But please notice, this implies a continuous undoing of what had previously been done; and, as Herbert Spencer says, "It is not everyone who would thank God for a belief the implication of which is that God is alleged to overcome opposition by subtle devices." And the famous preacher, Henry Ward Beecher, has put it in this way: "A grand mistake of the old reasoners, in their arguing for the goodness of God, was that they tried to prove that in the world there is more evidence of design for happiness than there is of design for pain. Now that position cannot be maintained. There is just as much evidence of a design to produce pain as to produce pleasure."

But now that the law of the survival of the fittest has been discovered, design, as commonly understood, has no meaning. An example from Darwin will make this clear,

I think. A man may design a watch or kill a rabbit, but nature produces and destroys without any definite end in view. Let us assume that a person shoots a rabbit. He does so designedly. Now let us assume that a flash of lightning kills the man. The result in each case is death, but we are not to say that the death of the man was purposely designed. Nature accomplished it without a special end in view; and, as Darwin puts it, if there was no design in the death of the man or in the lightning, neither is there reason to believe that our first birth or production was necessarily designed. Nature does not produce watches, but it produced the eye, which is just as complex and far more wonderful. But there seems, says Darwin, no more design in the action of natural selection than in the course which the wind blows.

People in the past have worshipped because they saw, or thought they saw, God's power and wisdom in everything; but once we get to understand that every event, from the dew that rises by radiation to the birth of a planet, happens through and by purely mechanical laws, the "Stream of Tendency" explanation will be sent to keep company with the defunct deities remembered by Zeus and Osiris. But this happy consummation will, I hope, tend to confirm our deep feeling of the beautiful, the good, and the true, and our faith in their final victory. J. KING.

—Extract from a letter to the "Glasgow Weekly Citizen."

TRUTH & THE BIBLE.

THE Christian's Book of Fairy Tales—
Of devils, ghosts, and cheap-trip whales,
And Faith's creative wishes—
Says Jesus treated, at a wish,
Five thousand folk to bread and fish,
From five small loaves and fishes.

An ordinary basket would
Have held the whole amount of food;
But here our awe increases:
For, after all the folk were fed,
A dozen baskets full, 'tis said,
Were gathered of the pieces.

Says Truth: "From nothing nothing comes";
"Absurd!" said Jahveh's Jewish chums;
"Absurd!" said ev'ry native;
"Absurd!" exclaimed the Great "I Am";
"Absurd!" said Mary's little lamb,
"Faith's fiat is creative!"

This story tells the pious soul:
The part, at times, exceeds the whole!
A simple proposition,
To those that have the mental grasp
To apprehend, without a gasp,
The Three-in-one addition.

But Science teaches from its start
"The whole is greater than the part,"
And none with brains can doubt it;
So he that claims to harmonize
The "Book" and Science simply lies!
And that's the truth about it!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Father Ignatius, preaching to the congregation of St. Sepulchre's and St. Andrew's, Holborn, said: "Gentlemen, you seldom hear, in these days of the personality of the Devil, yet this Book [striking the Bible], which needs no justification from me, contains his history, which is the very *raison d'être* of the existence of Christianity. While, however, the Devil is seldom mentioned in our churches, he is openly worshipped in Europe and America. When, too, you read Sir Edwin Arnold's accounts of Buddhist priests you are not reading the history of men, but of men, inspired by demons, described by St. Paul as the powers of the air." That, he said, if rightly understood, explained many of the worst crimes such as disgraced the West-end. Men were not so bad as they seemed, but were possessed of the Evil One. We will tell Father Ignatius where devil-worship is to be found at its very acme. It is in his own representations of a God who not only permits men to be possessed by devils, but dooms the majority of them to eternal punishment for being so possessed. But Father Ignatius is personally a great deal better than his creed.

NATURE GOVERNED BY LAW.

HAS the great shadeless desert nothing to do with the habits of the nomadic tribes who pitch their tents upon it, the fertile plain no connection with flocks and pastoral life, the mountain fastnesses with the courage that has so often defended them, the sea with habits of adventure? Indeed, do not all our expectations of the stability of social institutions rest upon our belief in the stability of surrounding physical conditions? From the time of Bodin, who, nearly three hundred years ago, published his work, *De Republica*, these principles have been well recognised—that the laws of nature cannot be subordinated to the will of man, and that government must be adapted to climate. It was these things which led him to the conclusion that force is best resorted to for northern nations, reason for the middle, and superstition for the southern.

In the month of March the sun crosses the equator, dispensing his rays more abundantly over our northern hemisphere. Following his train, a wave of verdure expands towards the pole. The luxuriance is in proportion to the local brilliancy. The animal world is also affected. Pressed forward, or solicited onward by the warmth, the birds of passage commence their annual migration, keeping pace with the developing vegetation beneath. As summer declines, this orderly advance of light and life is followed by an orderly retreat, and in its turn the southern hemisphere presents the same glorious phenomenon. Once every year the life of the earth pulsates; now there is an abounding vitality, now a desolation. But what is the cause of all this? It is only mechanical. The earth's axis of rotation is inclined to the plane of her orbit of revolution round the sun.

Let that wonderful phenomenon and its explanation be a lesson to us; let it profoundly impress us with the importance of physical agents and physical laws. They intervene in the life and death of man personally and socially. External events become interwoven in our constitution; their periodicities create periodicities in us. Day and night are incorporated in our waking and sleeping; summer and winter compel us to exhibit cycles in our life.

JOHN W. DRAPER.

—*Intellectual Development of Europe.*

ACID DROPS.

A BOLD bad fellow, named Abraham Phillips, eight years of age, was charged at the Guildhall, London, with wandering in Newgate-street and not being under proper control. During the hearing of this dreadful case Mr. Wills, an industrial schools' officer, protested against the way in which children were taken into the Salvation Army shelters. They were only admitted on payment of twopence. The alderman on the bench was surprised to hear that a charge was made for what he thought a charitable act. Mr. Wills, however, insisted that the charge was a fact. Moreover, he said, if the boys hadn't got twopence, they were told "to go out and either beg or steal it." We presume Mr. Wills meant that the officers of the shelter did not say this in so many words, but were indifferent how the twopence was obtained. Anyhow, it seems high time that these Salvation Army shelters were placed under some kind of public supervision. General Booth's lodging-houses—for such they are—ought not to be the only ones exempted from the operation of the law. Diseases lurk there, and fleas bite just as hard.

Despite the utter failure of Booth's promise to redeem the submerged tenth, there are many, even of those who have little faith in his religion, who think his social schemes deserve encouragement. Mr. Herbert Gladstone is giving them his patronage, but he would find it hard to demonstrate that they have had any appreciable effect in remedying the poverty of the masses.

The quarrel between Jews and Christians has extended to England. Faction fights are going on between Jew and Christian boys in Spitalfields. One little fellow was killed on St. Patrick's Day. He was struck on the head with a stone, with the result that he died from inflammation of the brain. Generally, it is the Christian who kills the Jew; in this case it was the Jew who killed the Christian; which slightly redresses the balance.

Father Ignatius has been preaching Lent sermons to big congregations in London. In one of them he stood up for the personality of the Devil. He said that the Bible contained the Devil's history, and that the Devil's existence was the *raison d'être* of Christianity. For our part, we quite agree with Father Ignatius. No Devil means no Hell, no Hell means no Damnation, and no Damnation means no Salvation. You must have the Devil if you want to keep Jesus Christ. Two sides are necessary in every battle.

Fraserburgh Congregational Chapel does not contain a very happy family. For some time there has been a dispute between the Rev. James Stirling and a section of the congregation, and the man of God thought it advisable to intimate that a penalty of £100 could be imposed on anyone who disturbed public worship. In the course of his sermon he employed an expression which caused an auditor to cry "Shame!" "Who said that?" asked the minister. "I did," said Mr. James Trail, the treasurer. There was a good deal of excitement in the chapel, and a complaint has been lodged by the minister with the Burgh Fiscal against Mr. Trail. Still, the world goes round once in twenty-four hours, as usual.

The congregation of the Gilfillan Memorial Church, Dundee, has been debating the vexed question of the amalgamation of its property and congregational accounts. The discussion was carried on amid numerous interruptions, scenes of disorderliness, and vehement personal abuse. Concerted attempts to hawl down speakers were of common occurrence. Little or no heed was paid to the ordinary rules of conducting public business, and the chairman (the Rev. Walter Walsh), during the whole of the evening, was quite unable to quell the storm.

Yells in time turned to blows. One woman seized another by the throat, holding on like a terrier. This was the signal for a general *mêlée*. Male sympathizers were soon fighting and tugging and kicking, and the scene reminded the spectator of the records of old Donnybrook Fair. A fight outside was only prevented by the police.

The *Scotsman* of March 23 had an amusing article on the row in the Gilfillan church and other squabbles which have recently taken place in Scotland, which it chooses to attribute to the activity of "Auld Nick." It asks: "Can it be mere accident that this last and flagrant proof of the revived activity of the Devil in the Church has been produced in the very building where a popular divine made proclamation that hell itself was but an allegory? Does the suggestion not seem plausible, that the inveterate troubler of Zion, whose personality it has become the fashion to whittle away, and whose character each new preacher takes it upon him to whitewash, has chosen this particular spot and time to testify that he is very much alive and kicking? Is not the whole series of congregational scenes an apt commentary on the old-fashioned beadle's saying, that 'a kirk without a hell is no worth a dam'?"

The Rev. C. J. Ball, who is a good Hebraist and a not-over-orthodox member of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, suggests that the word Nineveh, meaning "house of the fish," may have given rise to the story of Jonah's adventure. It has been suggested that, in a similar way, the story of the serpent may have arisen from one of the meanings of the word Eve being serpent.

The Rev. A. A. Green states in *Young Israel* that he had heard from a bright little girl a defence of Lot's wife that she was so excited that her head was turned. She became a pillar of salt by day, and a pillar of fire by night.

At a Clerical Conference called by the Bishop of London on the attitude of the Church to Board schools, Mr. Athelstan Riley got a resolution passed: "That undenominational religious instruction, by which is understood Biblical instruction, imparted by teachers appointed without any reference to their possessing religious belief, though better than a purely secular education, is dangerous to the faith of our children, and cannot be accepted by Churchmen." This resolution was denounced by the *English Churchman* as a slur on the blessed Bible.

The plague has broken out at Jiddah, and this indication that it is *en route* for Europe may awaken more lively interest than the fact of the desolation of far-off Bombay. It is surprising how much proximity helps sympathy.

The Khedive has decreed that, in the event of plague breaking out at Mecca, Egyptian pilgrims must not return under six months. But the wealthy are sure to evade this regulation by bribery.

A Berlin paper says that England will hardly side with two Pagan nations like China and Japan against her Christian neighbors. According to an article in Tuesday's *Westminster Gazette*, the Chinese are polite even when they differ from you most thoroughly, and are in the habit of saying: "Religions are many; reason is one; we are all brothers." Supposing this to be quite accurate, we are bound to say that the "Christian neighbors" show up rather badly in comparison with the "Pagans." It seems to us, also, that "Christian neighbors" is pretty much a euphemism for "Christian thieves."

The Nonconformists Marriage Bill, relieving them

from the necessity of always having a registrar present at marriage, is only a measure of religious equality. The Continental method of making all marriages first of all civil ones, and letting those who like add a religious ceremony, seems to us preferable.

Of the marriages annually contracted in England and Wales 63 per cent. are performed in Anglican churches; 14 per cent. take place at the Registry without any religious function; 12 per cent. are in Nonconformist chapels; 7 per cent. among Jews or Quakers, and 4 per cent. Roman Catholics. These figures are encouraging to Secularists, when it is remembered that nearly every family has friends who like to see a church wedding.

Some time ago the Rev. Mr. Cope, of St. James's, Bethnal Green, announced his willingness to marry people for nothing. The result was that he had as many as 1,400 marriages in one year, and many of these were extremely young, so that Mr. Arnold White's accusation of the encouragement of improvidence came home, and the generous offer was abandoned.

The Queen has become a patron of the Mothers' Union, a Church organization claiming to have 150,000 members. This organization is going to uphold the Church, if necessary, against the State. It is particularly strong on the sanctity of marriage. "The present attack on married life through the divorce court," it says, "is sounding a death-knell to the morality of nations." That is to say, the High Church party wants to uphold the "sanctity" of marriage even when one of the parties has been guilty of the grossest infidelity. Adulterous husbands and wives must be held together in spite of common sense and natural morality.

On Sunday morning the officiating priest at the Greek Church of St. Sophia, Bayswater, offered up public prayers for Mr. Gladstone. He asked God that the Grand Old Man might be "spared to his family, to his country, and to mankind." It would be rather more to the purpose if God were asked to take away the veteran's pain. On the theory of Providence there is something unspeakably shabby in torturing an old man who gave all the best strength of his life to the public service. If a man acted in this way, he would be called a devil.

Archbishop Walsh, of Dublin, has also been praying for Mr. Gladstone. He begs God to send the Grand Old Man comfort and relief, which God ought to do without Dr. Walsh's prompting. But if Providence doesn't choose to lighten the veteran's sufferings, Dr. Walsh hopes that he will be given "strength and patience to bear it." Finally, the Archbishop suggests that whatever suffering *must* be borne is intended for "his greater good." This is a cold-blooded touch of which only a pious man is capable.

"General" Booth says: "The world is growing more and more to think that it can do without God." Evidently the world is on the right track after all—that is, if Booth tells the truth; and he is a pretty shrewd observer. Anyhow, we'll take his word for this once.

A singular little exposition of bigotry has been given by the members of a voluntary Parochial Church Council at Colchester. Owing to complaints of the annoyance caused by "the sound of the church-going bell," including some from the congregation, the clergyman, himself a liberal-minded man, proposed that the tolling should be shortened from a quarter of an hour to five minutes before each service; but the council disapproved of the change, one of the objections mentioned being that Nonconformists would be gratified by such a concession. In other words, the bell is to be kept ringing for the full quarter of an hour, not because so long a spell of the noise is agreeable to Churchmen, but because it annoys Dissenters.—*Truth*.

The vicar of Holt, near Wrexham, has the true churchly spirit. He refused to allow a Nonconformist funeral in his churchyard, and the relatives arranged with the deceased's minister, Rev. Hobson Thomas, to hold a service outside the consecrated ground. While this was proceeding the vicar, who had advanced to meet the *cortège*, retired into the church, and when it was over reappeared and rapidly read through the Church service before he could be anticipated. The corpse, it is to be hoped, will be very much the better for it.

Sydney Pitt-street Congregational Church, the *Bulletin* is told, is carefully guarded during service by a constable to prevent the angel of charity from being appealed to by Lazarus. But at St. Mary's Cathedral Lazarus is even permitted to sue for alms as he will. "If Christ came to Sydney," what would he say to the conjunction of piety and the policeman?

A glance at the titles of sermons delivered in Melbourne

churches during the last few weeks reveals a significant fact. Not one of them even remotely hinted at Sheol. The preachers seemed to feel that congregations who had sweltered through the late infernal weather would have greeted the mention of hell with scorn and derision.—*Bulletin*.

Rev. John Hughes, a Welsh preacher, died suddenly at the Charing Cross-road Welsh Presbyterian Church last Sunday morning. There was nothing extraordinary in the occurrence, as the reverend gentleman suffered from heart disease. But what a rumpus there would be if a Secular lecturer died suddenly in the same way! It would be a clear case of "divine judgment."

The criminal cases tried summarily in 1896 that show the most appalling increase are those coming under the category of "Sunday trading," of which there were no fewer than 3,593. It is explained, however, that 3,340 of these occurred in the police district of Hull, and that the vigorous enforcement of the law in one borough only explains the extraordinary increase of this kind of offence. Hull seems to need the attention of the National Sunday League and the Sunday Society. A few plucky anti-Sabbatarians like the late Mr. Billany ought to be able to make the Sunday laws as obsolete in Hull as in our other large cities.

A Protestant missionary in Mexico writes to the *Christian Endeavor World* as under: "Yesterday in a Roman Catholic church in Mexico I read the following notice:—'Raffle for souls. At the last raffle for souls the following numbers obtained the prize, and the lucky holders may be assured that their loved ones are for ever released from the flames of Purgatory: Ticket 841. The soul of the lawyer, James Vasquey, is released from Purgatory, and ushered into heavenly joys. Ticket 41. The soul of Madame Calderon is made happy for ever. Ticket 762. The soul of the aged widow, Francisca de Parras, is for ever released from the flames of Purgatory.'

"Another raffle for souls will be held at this same blessed Church of the Redeemer on January 1, at which four bleeding and tortured souls will be released from Purgatory, according to the four highest tickets in this most holy lottery. Tickets, one dollar. To be had of the father-in-charge. Will you, for the sum of one dollar, leave your loved ones to burn in Purgatory for ages?" Such an appeal goes home. What is more important still, it fetches in the dollars. And some people fancy that religion is the pure efflux of the natural mind without any admixture of priestcraft.

Juanerillo, the bull-fighter, has been gored to death at Barcelona. This bit of news does not fill us with grief. We are rather pleased to see that one bull, at any rate, has got even with his tormentors. When a few more bull-fighters are disembowelled this precious "sport" may lose some of its popularity.

A fund is being raised at Madrid for the purchase of a warship. The Bishop of Madrid is president of the committee for receiving subscriptions. Good old Christianity! This is how it promotes peace on earth.

Who shall say that the Humanitarian League is unnecessary when we read that this spring the feathers of the egret and osprey, obtained by the butchery of birds just when needed for the protection of their young, is more fashionable than ever, and that the latest in this line is to have a blouse entirely composed of such plumage? When will women be shamed out of this cruel vanity?

Woman's cruelty is thoughtless, not deliberate like that of the Christian sportsman who, at Radford, had pigeons tied to a trap by strings. When they flew out, if not shot, they were promptly returned to the trap to be let out and shot at again and again. The people who take part in this horrible "sport" would probably be shocked at a suspicion thrown on their religion.

The standing armies of all Christian nations amount to 4,610,000 soldiers, with 700,000 horses. The cost of keeping this military population amounts to about a billion pounds a year.

The day is at hand for the fulfilment of the predictions of Brother Dimpleby, of the British Chronological Association, and one of his followers, Joseph Gauntlett, sends a letter on "Portentous Signs of the Times" to the *Wiltshire Times*. He says that most Christians who have studied prophecy agree that we are on the verge of the advent of Christendom, and he follows Dimpleby in fixing the period at the present Eastertide, from March 20 to April 10. But Christendom has been on the verge of the second advent every generation.

The Christian world was thrown into the utmost consternation at the end of the tenth century by the generally-preached belief that the end of all things was at hand. Estates were handed over wholesale to religious bodies, and the priests feathered their nests finely out of the panic; and the same game has been played, though with decreasing results, ever since. The force of faith could hardly be better illustrated than by the believers in Baxter and Dimpleby, who might read in their own Testaments that Jesus prophesied the second advent would occur in the lifetime of his own generation.

Small-pox has not attacked Leicester, where most of the people are unvaccinated. It has attacked Middlesborough, which is the best-vaccinated town in England. Common-sense people are not surprised. But will the doctors please explain? And will they also explain, while they are about it, why vaccination should be enforced upon citizens who despise and detest it?

A Toronto friend sends us the local *Christian Guardian* for March 16, which contains a long and nauseous account of the last hours of Frances Willard. We are told that she is "now with God." But when one of her lady friends heard of her death she moaned, "Oh! it can't be true." Evidently there is much contradiction between profession and actual feeling even in the most orthodox Christian circles. We are reminded of the parson who asked the captain of a ship in a bad storm whether there was any danger. "Sir," said the captain, "in five minutes we shall all be in heaven"; and the parson said, "God forbid!"

Berlin is becoming more Sabbatarian than Aberdeen. According to newly-issued regulations on Sundays, Days of Penitents, and through Passion week, private festivities are forbidden if they interfere. That is to say, the police may enter a house and forbid piano-playing if anyone says they are disturbed thereby. Finally, people must not tend and water their flowers in their gardens and balconies during the hours of Divine service.

The Biennial Report of the Western Penitentiary of Pennsylvania, located at Allegheny, for the years 1894-6, thus classifies its inmates as regarding religious belief: "Catholic, 145; Presbyterian, 30; Episcopalian, 13; United Presbyterian, 6; Other religious belief, 38; Methodist, 110; Lutheran, 21; Baptist, 35; United Brethren, 8; No religious belief, 2. Total prisoners, 408."

In the case of the charges against the Rev. Charles William Alfred Brooke of misconduct with Mrs. Hurd, and sending her an indecent letter, Chancellor Tristman said that three of the assessors decided that the respondent was not guilty, and two held a contrary opinion. He gave judgment for the respondent, each side to pay their own costs.

A Boston Sunday-school teacher and active church worker, it is discovered, has engaged himself to marry six girls. His name is Orme, and he is under arrest for embezzlement.

Rev. A. S. Embree, D.D., Methodist pastor of Topeka, Kan., is in hot water. On Dec. 28 his attorney paid the parents of Lena Crith, a colored domestic, \$200 to hush up and settle a certain matter. On Jan. 13 she died under abortion. The inquest and arrest of Dr. Shields brought out the facts. His church rally around their chief, and threaten to arrest the dead girl's parents for blackmail. If innocent, why did he pay the \$200? For many years he was the head of the Prohibition party, and was practically governor of the state while Humphrey occupied the chair. —*Truthseeker*.

Dr. Uhlhorn, of Hanover, the chaplain of Emperor Will, being unable to accompany his august master to Jerusalem, has drawn up for him an account of where he will probably find Golgotha. There are now three different sites for the alleged crucifixion in or near Jerusalem, besides the statement in the Talmud, that Jeshu was stoned at Lud, and that in the Apocalypse about the great city spiritually called Sodom and Egypt.

Soon after the London County Council elections the *Daily Mail* interviewed the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. This interview escaped our notice at the time, but one point of it is worth recurring to. Mr. Hughes said that he was a Progressive in municipal matters, but he held himself free to vote for the other side; in fact, he had just done so, his vote having been cast for Sir Blundell Maple—who, by the way, is a rich man, and a possible subscriber. The reverend gentleman then went on to say: "If the Progressive party fell in the hands of Atheists or extravagant Socialists, I should oppose them with all my power." There spoke the true Christian, which is another word for a bigot. Mr. Hughes's idea of citizenship is, that if many Progressives are Atheists it is the duty of every Christian to turn a

Reactionist. We thank him for exhibiting himself thus publicly in his true colors.

At a convention of the American Theosophical Society, by an overwhelming vote, the Society changed its name to that of the Universal Brotherhood, with Mrs. Tingley as chief. Now some members of the Theosophical Society, who do not recognise Mrs. Tingley as the successor of Madame Blavatsky, have sued her to recover the archives, money, and other property of the society.

Orthodoxy, says the *Glasgow Saturday Weekly Citizen*, evolves in spite of every effort to gag and bind it. The old terms and words have been in many cases retained, but theologians have expended a vast amount of ingenuity in inventing new interpretations. So manifold and diverse are these interpretations that we find all the various branches of the Anglican Church—high, low, broad, and narrow—owning allegiance to the same Thirty-nine Articles. The Westminster Confession of Faith is, also, one thing when viewed in the light of the writings of the divines who drew it up, and many other things when viewed in the parti-colored light of the works of modern theologians who sign that same Confession. Nearly all the various sects refer to the Bible as the authority for their corporate existence, and each one holds a position virtually exclusive of all the rest.

"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." An old sexton, of whom we have been reading, had his own ideas as to the interpretation of this text, when consecrated soil was in question. No need for bishops to consecrate additions to churchyards and cemeteries if this old Lincolnshire man was about. Unconsecrated ground was no difficulty to him; he knew how to make it right. "Having some surplus soil on the consecrated side" (we quote from the *New Age*), "he wheeled the same over to the unconsecrated earth, and mixed the two well together, declaring that we have it upon the highest authority 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.'" A little consecration should go a long way.

Another story going the rounds is of a bishop who, during his annual confirmation visit to a country church, was surprised and annoyed to find one-half of the churchyard under a seemingly flourishing crop of potatoes. Upon coming out of the church after the confirmation ceremony was over he turned to the clergyman and said: "Mr. Vicar, I see that you have potatoes planted in God's acre." "Yes, my lord," replied the vicar, "and an excellent crop I expect, too." "Well, sir," rejoined the bishop, "I trust that when I come here next year I shall not find a crop of potatoes in the churchyard, sir." "Oh, no, my lord, I hope I am not such a fool as that. I propose to rotate the crops—cabbages next year, my lord!"

The *Boston Herald* says that an eccentric character who lives near Derby, Conn., has been engaged for some time past in making violins for the angels. He is an expert wood worker, and these instruments are said to be finely constructed. No money will tempt him to part with his instruments; he declares that God ordered 1,000 violins from him.

Cardinal Langénieux, Archbishop of Rheims, in a pastoral to his flock, compares France and England. He thinks religion is in a worse state in his own country owing to the "official Atheism of France." Protestantism is a much easier thing to tackle than complete rejection of the supernatural.

The *Osservatore Romano* felt it necessary to warn American Catholics of the disaster which might attend the setting up of an Independent Catholic Church. There need be no fear until the American Catholics are imbued with the true republican spirit. At present they are far too slavish and superstitious.

Among curious superstitions there is a very widespread one among sailors that it is unlucky to have a sky-pilot on board. Some fishermen will consider it a misfortune to even see one when on the way to their boat. On the Scotch coast "minister" and kirk used never to be mentioned on board, but were alluded to as "the upstander" and the "bell house" or "bonny house."

Various reasons have been assigned for this superstition. Some tales are told that, when some sailors took a number of sky pilots to Leith to attend the General Assembly, they had a storm all the way, which ceased on the men of God being landed. Some say the minister is regarded as a rain doctor, whose power ceases on water where the prince of the power of the air exercises dominion. This points to the sailors having an earlier faith than that represented by the ministers. Another explanation is that in old faiths Sunday was a specially lucky day for sailing and starting for the fishing. As the sky pilots set themselves in opposition to this, they were held to have a sinister influence on sailors' luck.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 3, Chatham Secular Society (Queen's-road, New Brompton): morning, "Is the Bible a Fit Book for Children?"; evening, "God and the Devil."
 April 17, Huddersfield.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—April 3 and 17, Athenæum Hall, London; 26, 27, 28, 29, and May 1, Glasgow and Districts. May 8, Manchester; 15 and 16, Birmingham; 22, Sheffield.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton.
- W. T. (Magnificent).—Mr. Forder can supply the Koran for 2s. 4d., post free.
- W. ESRIC.—Sorry we cannot print the verses. Your command of English is inadequate.
- D. Z. BEAUMONT.—In the absence of any knowledge of a future life, the strongest belief can be nothing but a guess and a hope. All the "reasons" you refer to seem to us only the suggestions of your own desire. The wish is father to the thought.
- E. S. C. MAYO.—Appears. You must not suppose that we are intellectually responsible for anything that is said by our correspondents. Pleased to hear you enjoyed our articles on Mr. Stead.
- GENERAL FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Bedlington Branch, 4s.
- TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—J. W. Gott, 10s.; Ips, 2s. 6d.
- G. W. BLYTH.—There was no "offence" whatsoever. We did not insert your letter for the simple reason that not even the most indulgent judge could think it any sort of real answer to our articles on Mr. Stead. Merely to say that you believe so and so is of no importance; at least it is of none to our readers.
- T. H.—The verse you say you have sent us has not arrived. Some of your expressions make us doubt whether you are really serious. The *Academy* prize was awarded to Mr. Stephen Phillips for the best book of poetry during the year.
- C. WRIGHT.—England was called Mary's Dowry in the Pope's Letter of August 30, 1897.
- J. SUMNERS.—Your volume of Paine's *Political Works*, 1792, is by no means rare, and the portrait is doubtless Sharp's engraving from Romney's picture.
- K. L. C. R.—Freethought journals cannot maintain a large staff of writers. We are quite unable to add to our present obligations. If you have the opportunity of studying Spiritism at first-hand, you should do so, without asking us "how do you account for this, that, and the other?"—these things being merely what you have read and not seen. You forget that allegations are not necessarily facts. If Spiritists are anxious for a thorough investigation by a sceptical committee, we are prepared to find the committee if they will find the phenomena.
- H. G. UFFINDELL.—Many thanks. We gladly notify that the National Anti-Vaccination League issues a tract on *How to Avoid Vaccination*, copies of which can be obtained by applying to Mrs. J. Young, secretary of the Defence Fund, 31 Beechdale-road, Brixton Hill, London, S.W.
- J. R. WHITELL.—Your bookseller reports an untruth. *Darwin on God* is not out of print. Agents often say that when they don't want to take trouble. The second volume of *Crimes of Christianity* is not yet published. Platina's *Lives of the Popes* has lately been reprinted in two shilling volumes. See references to other works in the footnotes of chapter vii. of the *Crimes*.
- C. B.—The author of *Supernatural Religion* signed his own name to an article on Tatian in the *Nineteenth Century*.
- PAPERS RECEIVED.—Dundee Advertiser—Isle of Man Times—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Literary Guide—Adult—Sydney Bulletin—University Magazine—Free Society—Star—Scotsman—Wiltshire Times—Freidenker—Truthseeker—Secular Thought—Liberator—People's Newspaper—Dominion Review—Torch of Reason—Blue Grass Blade.
- 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.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.
- 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.
- 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
- LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- 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.
- FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.

SUGAR PLUMS.

In spite of the wretched weather, there was a capital audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on Mrs. Mona Caird's *Morality of Marriage*. Mr. Victor Roger made an excellent chairman. We need say nothing about the lecture, as Mr. Foote will shortly deal with Mrs. Caird's book in the *Freethinker*. Some criticism was offered by Mr. Bedborough, of the Legitimation League, and Captain Adams, of Montreal, who is paying England another lengthy visit.

During the week Mr. Foote has been lecturing at Chatham and New Brompton. His week's Freethought Mission ends there to-day (April 3), when he lectures morning and evening in the Secular Hall. A fuller account will appear in our next issue.

The Athenæum Hall platform will be occupied this evening (April 3) by Mr. Charles Watts, who will lecture on "Prayer and Müller's Orphanage." The subject is one that should attract a good audience.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts lectured in the Co-operative Hall, Bolton, three times to large and highly appreciative audiences. We are informed that the meetings were the most successful Mr. Watts has ever had in Bolton. At each gathering the applause was frequent and enthusiastic. Ladies mustered in good force, and many requests were made that Mr. Watts, who was in excellent form, would again visit Bolton at an early date. There was a little opposition, but many questions were put, the answers to which met with the marked approval of the audiences.

The N. S. S. secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, desires to call attention to the fact that the Executive meeting, which is usually held upon the last Thursday in the month, is postponed until Thursday, April 7, in consequence of the President's absence from town.

Some weeks ago we drew attention to a Sunday Observance Bill which was before the Canadian Legislature, and which appears to have been chiefly designed to suppress Sunday papers. We are now happy to report that this Bill has been defeated by a majority of sixty to forty-three. The minority, however, is a large one, and shows that Sabbatarianism is still a danger in Canada. The friends of Sunday freedom must continue to be vigilant and energetic.

Mr. Thomas Hardy, the greatest of our novelists after Mr. George Meredith, rightly refuses to be drawn as to his principles and intentions. It is not the business of an artist to join the didactics. "I am," says Mr. Hardy to the secretary of the Legitimation League, "a mere observer and recorder of the tragedies of life, and am personally limited to the representation of these tragedies as faithfully as possible, without bias or what is called 'purpose.'" A very judicious reply! Nevertheless one can easily read some of Mr. Hardy's views between the lines, and that he is a Freethinker is obvious and demonstrable.

There is a probability, it is said, that the French Court of Appeal will grant Zola's application for a new trial. In that case, it is also said, he will accept a handsome offer from America, and go over there to deliver fifteen lectures at 20,000 francs each. Certainly the Yankees do these things in great style.

Captain Adams, of Montreal, will lecture on Monday evening (April 4), under the auspices of the Legitimation League, on "The Right of Private Judgment in Morals." Mr. Foote has promised to take the chair, as a mark of respect for the lecturer, who has been such a good friend to the Freethought movement in Canada. This meeting was to have taken place in the French Room at St. James's Hall, but, since Mr. Foote has promised to take the chair, it has been thought advisable to engage the large Banqueting Room, the entrance to which is from Regent-street. Admission to all seats is free.

The *Dominion Review* (Toronto) reprints from our columns Mr. Foote's articles on "The Real Robert Burns." This magazine is conducted by Mr. J. Spencer Ellis, the editor of *Secular Thought*. It generally contains a liberal supply of good reading, and we hope it has a large circle of readers.

Mrs. Charles Watts occupies the platform of the Leicester Secular Hall this evening (April 3). She is to give a selection of readings and recitations. Her skill in this direction is well known, and we have no doubt she will have a large and appreciative audience.

THE MARRIAGE QUESTION.

IN the *Freethinker* dated March 13 there appeared an article of mine under the heading, "Secularism and Marriage," the object of which was to show that the charges orthodox Christians have been in the habit of bringing against Secularists for years past, in reference to marriage, were, and are, utterly false. It is not necessary to repeat those charges here, as their nature is too well known. In my article I was concerned that the truth upon the subject should be made clear, and therefore I quoted from our printed official Objects, which recognise the marriage contract and proclaim the necessity for radical improvement of the laws bearing upon the subject, so that the position of woman should be equal to that of man. I am not interested at present in discussing the abstract question of the sexual relation between man and woman in some future, and, let us hope, a better condition of society, than the one we now have. My point is: What does Secularism teach in reference to marriage under the existing order of things, and what should be done to immediately improve this order?

In my article I dealt with this phase of the subject, and what I therein wrote has not met with the approval of Mr. George Bedborough, writer of the "Editorial Notes" in the last issue of the *Adult*, for he has devoted nearly a column in traversing the views I expressed. With one exception, he leaves the reader to infer the object of his criticism. He does not attempt to refute by argument what I said, but he makes assertions and uses phrases without giving any explanation as to their meaning. This is "beating the air," as a debater, with a vengeance. May it not be here permissible to use Mr. Bedborough's own words, and say: "Surely it is time.....this juvenile-debating-class style of controversy gave place to an attempt to understand the attitude of sociological Freethinkers?" So far as any positive opposition is concerned, it is very difficult, apart from the one exception, to discover why my critic wrote at all upon the subject.

In his first paragraph there are but two points that call for any notice. He says that "Mr. Watts, like so many Secularists, is exceedingly anxious that he shall not be charged with having any sympathy with the free-love movement." Now, the fact is, I never once referred to that movement. Will Mr. Bedborough tell me what he understands by such a movement? I have great sympathy for free-love, but not for the indulgence of unrestrained passion. In my opinion all love should be free. I am told that I protest "against the charge that Secularists hold loose views on the marriage question." Yes, I certainly do, for, to my mind, the Secular view is a sound and reasonable one. It means that proper care should be taken before marriage, and that where a mistake has been made there should be proper means whereby the man and woman should separate. This would prevent the woman from being in a state of forced subjection, the man from exercising despotic power towards her, and both from being victims of domestic misery.

We are next told that "loose views, in the literal (not in the moral) sense of the phrase, are, however, eminently characteristic of all Secularist pronouncements on the subject." No other reason is given for this reckless assertion than my statement, "that marriage is necessary for the protection of woman." I am told that I answer myself by alleging that "indiscreet unions are followed, particularly on the wife's part, by untold misery, etc." But does it follow that, because in some cases the protection fails, it does in every instance? What other plan of sexual association can be mentioned where the misery of woman can be always and entirely avoided? Therefore, while man is what he is, I prefer the only protection for woman that I know of, which is marriage, accompanied by a fair law of divorce, even if that protection is not absolutely perfect. A method should be devised whereby the husband and wife should part and the woman left free from all expense which would be caused by her family. While I urge that husband and wife ought not to be forced to live together where they are not suited to each other, I object to the man being free to go, leaving his offspring to fester his wife in her struggle for existence. Equal freedom for both is my principle.

I am taken to task for saying that a man cannot be a Secularist if he neglects his wife and children; and that

nothing would justify a man in neglecting his home or in ill-treating his wife. But, surely, to do one or the other is immoral. To neglect children is cruel and unjust, and to ill-treat a woman is mean and cowardly. Even where no love exists kindness and humanity should prevail. Exercise freedom by all means; but, in doing so, let us be careful not to inflict wrongs upon others. The man who is unmindful of this duty is no Secularist, as I understand Secular philosophy.

CHARLES WATTS.

CHRIST'S TEMPTATION.

FEW stories, even in that budget of absurdities, the Holy Bible, are more farcical than that of the forty days' fasting and temptation of Christ in the wilderness, which Christians are supposed to commemorate at this season of Lent. The story seems to have been written with the design of showing that the devil is an ass. Not one of the temptations was worthy of the acumen usually attributed to the wily and experienced Satan. The only enticement with the slightest sense in it was that of asking Christ, when hungry, to turn stones into bread. But even this was silly. Suppose he had done so, it would have been less to his discredit than turning water into wine for boozers at a marriage feast. Then to fly with him to the pinnacle of the temple, and ask him to cast himself down, was sheer stupidity. The suggestion would only occur to one whose brains had been deranged through long fasting, or imprisonment in Pandemonium. Nor is it very easy to see what the devil would have gained if the Deity had succumbed. For the devil to ask the man-god to fall down and worship him was the height of farce. A thing which any sane person would refuse surely could not have been the climax of Satan's subtlety in his chief encounter with his greatest enemy.

In the earlier legend, that of the temptation of Buddha by Mara, there is no absurdity, for the temptation takes place before Gautama attains Buddhahood. The story is, moreover, a transparent allegory, signifying the temptations which all have to overcome to rise to the full dignity of which human nature is capable. But the doctrine of the deity of Christ makes the proceedings recorded in the Gospel farcical. If the Devil knew, as we presume he did, that Christ was God, he must have been aware that he was making a fool of himself. If he was unaware of who and what Jesus was, his intelligence must also have been deficient. Why should Satan ask Jesus to work miracles, or offer him all the kingdoms of the world, unless he knew that he was dealing with a being of supernatural powers? We need not pause to inquire from what high mountain the Devil could show all the kingdoms of the world, since it is clear that his Black Highness had the power of working miracles also.

Milton, with all his genius, could not tell the story of the temptation of Christ in *Paradise Regained*, on the orthodox theory that Christ was very God of very God. He makes Jesus the messenger of the Eternal Father, the Son of God.

"Though sons of God both angels are and men."

Despite the elevation of Milton's style, it must be confessed that the discussion between the Son of Man and the Father of Lies is supremely ridiculous. The Abbé Baume Dessodat, in his *Christiad*, with French slippancy, but more insight than Satan, made the real temptation come through Mary Magdalene. To find oneself run after by fascinated and fascinating women, to be ministered to by these angels, to be hailed with Hosannahs as the Messiah, and induced to think "A greater than Solomon is here, and all who came before me were thieves and robbers," was something like a real Satanic temptation; whereas those recorded in Matthew and Luke deserve no better term than that of puerile fiction.

FLAVIUS JULIANUS.

This is the way of salvation—to look thoroughly into everything and see what it really is, alike in matter and in cause; with your own heart to do what is just and say what is true; and one thing more, to find life's fruition in heaping good on good so close that not a chink is left between.—*Marcus Aurelius*.

ISLAM AND TOLERATION.

In the *Crescent* for March 23 the Sheikh-ul-Islam, of the British Isles, has an important article on "The Toleration of Islam." Sheikh Quilliam contends that Islam, from the days of its inception right down the cycles of thirteen centuries, has been the most tolerant of the great faiths that the world has ever known. He compares its course in this respect with Christianity, but makes no mention of Buddhism, which boasts that it has never persecuted, and has shed no blood in wars of religion.

While Christian Europe and America have no care for the Jews; while anti-semitic feeling rages like a furnace in Central Europe, and seethes upward with volcanic upheaval in Republican France; while Catholic Spain has not allowed a single Mussulman family to remain on its European territory, and has centuries ago tortured to death or expelled them all, Muslim Turkey protects every faithful and law-abiding Christian or Jew within its territory, and promotes their leading men to high honors and responsible positions. The reason of this colossal difference lies in the fact that Islamism, while essentially missionary, is yet equally essentially and radically tolerant. If it were not so, neither the Ottoman nor Moorish dominions to-day would contain a single Christian or Jewish subject, and there would exist no "Eastern, Armenian, or Cretan questions." The Turks suffer to-day from the tolerance that forms an intrinsic and essential part of their religion. The Koran plainly inculcates this duty, as the following extracts will not fail to show:—

"Summon thou to the ways of the Lord with wisdom and with kindly warning: dispute with them in the kindest manner" (Sura xvi, ayat 123)

"They who have inherited the Book after them (that is to say, the Jews and the Christians) are in perplexity of doubt concerning it.

"For this cause summon thou (them to the faith), and walk uprightly therein as thou hast been bidden, and follow not their desires: and say, In whatsoever Books God hath sent down do I believe; I am commanded to decide justly between you; God is your Lord and our Lord; we have our works, and you have your works; between us and you let there be no strife; God will make us all one; and to him shall we return" (xlii. 13, 14).

The above extracts are from suras revealed at Mecca, but similar injunctions are to be found also in the suras revealed at Medina, when Mohammed was at the acme of his power, and when thousands upon thousands of zealous Muslims were ready to have unsheathed their swords and poured out their blood at his command. Let us quote some of them:—

"Say to those who have been given the Book and to the ignorant, Do you accept Islam? Then, if they accept Islam, are they guided aright; but if they turn away, thy duty is only preaching; and God's eye is on his servants" (iii. 19).

"To every people have we appointed observances which they observe. Therefore let them not dispute the matter with thee, but summon them to thy Lord: Verily thou art guided aright:

"But if they debate with thee, then say, God best knoweth that what ye do!" (xxii. 66, 67).

"Let there be no compulsion in religion" (ii. 257).

"Obey God and obey the apostle; but if ye turn away, yet is our apostle only charged with plain-spoken preaching" (lxiv. 12).

The following passages are taken from what is generally supposed to be the last sura that was delivered:—

"If anyone of those who join gods with (God ask an asylum of thee, grant him an asylum in order that he hear the word of God; then let him reach his place of safety" (ix. 6).

Mr. Quilliam gives many instances of Muslim toleration, notably that of Omar at the conquest of Jerusalem.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

THERE'S a well-known proverb, though not in the collection of Solomon, to the effect that you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. The attempt certainly seems to have been made by the gentlemen who sought to disguise the erotic character of the Canticles by placing at the headings such bogus descriptions as "The Church's Love unto Christ"; "She Confesseth Her Deformity"; "The Church Glorified in Christ"; "Christ Sets Forth the Graces of the Church, and His Love towards Her." Such misleading captions are absolute enticements to pious young girls to read a book which the Rabbis prohibited to all under the age of thirty. They are stimulants to false delicacy and artificial desire.

Captain J. F. Wilson, the Comprehensionist, has applied some of the principles of Biblical hermeneutics to the interpretation of fairy tales. He has shown that "Jack and the Beanstalk" is a wonderful allegory of the progress and conflicts of the soul, while "The House that Jack Built" contains the revelation of a complete system of philosophy. Some of the small Germans have tried the same methods with Shakespeare, and in *Romeo and Juliet* discover, not the romance of two rivals, but the reconciliation in death of the *ding an sich* with the *welt-schmerz*.

After all, reality is best, and most beautiful too. The sow's ear has worth of its own—not as purse, but on the sow. So the Song of Songs, once recognised as a human production, is not without its merit. It is not milk for babes, but the story—as expounded, for instance, in Mr. Wheeler's *Bible Studies*—is a tale of innocent fidelity, proof against the seductions of a sensual sultan, and its moral is certainly more human and natural than that generally found in the pages of Scripture. It is when the story is invested with Divine authority, and declared to be part of an infallible revelation, that it becomes pernicious.

THE CHURCH OF ST. CRÆSUS.

GRAND Revival of Religion

At the Church of the Elect!

No admittance, save for sinners,

In full dress and style correct!

Patent-leathers brightly polished,

Trousers custom-made and whole,

Will conduce to man's salvation;

Come to us—we'll save your soul!

Faultlessly attired and perfect

In decorum's mazy code,

Let us thank the bounteous master;

We have reaped where others sowed

All with wealth and purse plethoric

May start with us for the goal;

Let the occasion be historic;

Come to us—we'll save your soul!

Do thy bonds and stocks oppress thee?

Are their dividends too low?

Doth thy real-estate harass thee,

Rents decrease and taxes grow?

Hath Dame Fortune failed to write thee

On the multimillion roll?

Then seek solace in salvation:

Come to us—we'll save your soul!

Come not ye who, heavy-laden,

Toil with sweat upon your brow;

If your souls are worth the saving,

We can't bother with them now;

For our pews, upholstered richly,

Cannot with the poor be jammed:

If you've neither blood nor money,

You're predestined to be damned!

—E. F. T.

CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION.

A LARGE, strong man, dressed in a uniform and armed to the teeth, knocked at the door of a hut on the coast of Africa.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" asked a voice from the inside.

"In the name of civilization, open your door, or I'll break it down for you and fill you full of lead."

"But what do you want here?"

"My name is Christian Civilization. Don't talk like a fool, you black brute. What do you suppose I want here but to civilize you, and make a reasonable human being out of you, if it is possible?"

"What are you going to do?"

"In the first place, you must dress yourself like a white man. It's a shame and a disgrace the way you go about. From now on you must wear underclothing; a pair of pants, vest, coat, plug hat, and a pair of yellow gloves. I will furnish them to you at a reasonable price."

"What shall I do with them?"

"Wear them, of course. You didn't expect to eat them, did you? The first step of civilization is to wear proper clothes."

"But it is too hot to wear such garments. I'm not used to them; I'll perish from the heat. Do you want to murder me?"

"Well, if you die, you will have the satisfaction of being a martyr to civilization."

"You are very kind."

"Don't mention it. What do you do for a living, anyhow?"

"When I am hungry I eat a banana. I eat, drink, or sleep just as I feel like it."

"What horrible barbarity! You must settle down to some occupation, my friend. If you don't, I'll have to lock you up as a vagrant."

"If I've got to follow some occupation, I think I'll start a coffee-house. I've got a good deal of coffee and sugar on hand."

"Oh, you have, have you? Why, you are not such a hopeless case as I thought you were. In the first place, you must pay me £5."

"What for?"

"An occupation tax, you innocent heathen. Do you expect to get all the blessings of civilization for nothing?"

"But I haven't got any money."

"That makes no difference. I'll take it out in sugar and coffee. If you don't pay, I'll put you in jail."

"What is a jail?"

"Jail is a progressive word. You must be prepared to make sacrifices for civilization, you know."

"What a great thing civilization is!"

"You cannot possibly realize the benefits, but you will before I get through with you."

The unfortunate native took to the woods, and has not been seen since.

BOOK CHAT.

IN 1867 Thomas Chenery, M.A., gave to the world the first volume of an English translation of the *Makamat; or, Assemblies of Al Hariri*, a work throwing great light on the Arabic language, which therein sparkles like a jewel of many facets, and on Moslem proverbs, customs, and modes of thought. The work had a long and most valuable Introduction on the place of Al Hariri in Arabic literature, and copious and instructive annotations. Of the fifty sections of the *Assemblies*, Mr. Chenery translated and published the first twenty-six. He had intended to complete the translation of the remaining twenty-four, and also to prepare an index to the two volumes. But, called to the editorship of the *Times* in 1877, his hopes and expectations were never fulfilled, and he died in 1884 leaving his task unfinished.

For such a work as this, without the sensual attraction of *The Thousand and One Nights*, there is little demand among the general public; and since the work is of the utmost importance to students of Arabic, it might well have become a Government work with millions of Moslem subjects, and ever needing competent men to understand and rule them, to have provided for the fulfilment of the task which Thomas Chenery began. No better monument to a scholar than the completion of his life-work. This completion has been carried out by Dr. F. Steingass at the instigation and expense of Mr. F. F. Arbuthnot, who has himself made the careful and elaborate index to the two volumes, and who touchingly dedicates the second volume "To Thomas Chenery, M.A." Such generosity must ever have the affectionate admiration and esteem of scholars.

Al Hariri was a contemporary with the first Crusade. At that time it is safe to say that the Christians were comparative barbarians to the Moslems, whose literature and science, dominant in the East, were extending through Spain to Europe. The *Assemblies* display the wondrous flexibility and power of the Arabic tongue in the hands of a master. Like a diamond with many sides, it scintillates in all directions, and the reader is not only astonished by its wealth of imagery, its many references to the Koran, to proverbial sayings and poetry, but would be perplexed by its *nuances*, conceits, and double meanings, but for the careful guidance of the translator. There is nothing exactly to compare to it in English literature. Perhaps Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* may give some idea of its mixture of philosophy, pleasantry, religion, nonsense, poetry, ethics, and superstition, with apposite quotations on every conceivable subject.

At a meeting of the National Protestant Union Prebendary Webb-Peploe referred to a book entitled *Forty-six Instructions for Lent*, dedicated to the Bishop of London. He wrote to the Bishop and asked him if he had carefully read the book, and the Bishop replied that he had not read it before, but he had now unearthed it, and considered it the silliest book he had ever read. He said that he consented to the dedication because, in the innocence of his heart, he thought that any book coming from a clergyman must be good. Mr. Peploe had his Lordship's permission to say that he did not approve the book, though it had his imprimatur. Instead of abusing their Ritualistic friends, let them

imitate their activity, literary and otherwise.—*Daily News*, March 23.

Manners for All and Home Management are two new penny handbooks issued by Ward, Lock, & Co. As they extend to over eighty pages each, no one can complain there is not ample value for money.

It is just ten years this thirty-first of March since there died at Mentone one of the most promising of young French Freethinkers, Marie Jean Guyau. His work, *L'Irreligion de l'Avenir*, published shortly before his death, is a most interesting sociological study from the advanced standpoint. Religion, he holds, was only necessary to the world's childhood. All its facts and his ideas were but as the unfinished sketches which lumber the rooms of artists and mechanicians. Besides this work, which has been translated, he wrote on *The Morals of Epicurean Contemporary English Ethics*, and a *Sketch of Morality without Obligation or Sanction*, all of which have had influence on the thinkers of France.

The April number of the *Adult* contains some editorial strictures on Mr. Charles Watts's recent article on "Secularism and Marriage." We shall not presume to defend Mr. Watts, who is well able to take care of himself. With regard to one point, however, we think it right to say that the writers of signed articles in the *Freethinker* bear the entire responsibility for the opinions they express. Neither agreement nor disagreement must be presumed on the part of the editor or of other contributors. Perhaps we might add that, considering the age of the critic and the age of Mr. Watts, it is somewhat amusing to hear the latter's views called "juvenile." Nothing could well be more juvenile than the hymn in the *Adult* to a pair of bed-sheets. It recalls the sentimental erotics of Tom Little. We have no wish to deprecate the discussion of sex problems, but it has peculiar perils to a certain order of minds. There is also a fanaticism of small minorities as well as a fanaticism of big majorities, and this temper is manifest in too many of the Free Lovers' references to Secularists who cannot believe in the efficacy of this old-new specific. It never occurs to these vehement writers that those who dissent from them have any knowledge of the subject. It is, indeed, quite diverting to observe how they regard unbelief as a kind of blasphemy.

Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner has acted on the hint we threw out some time ago, and has published a brief authoritative account of her father's last hours, as a check to the lies and misrepresentations of the baser sort of Christian advocates. *Did Charles Bradlaugh Die an Atheist?* is the title of her pamphlet, which is issued at the popular price of one penny by Bonner, 1, Took's-court, and is presumably obtainable from Mr. Forder. Mrs. Bonner does not refute one by one the ridiculous stories that have been set afloat by pious malignity. She contents herself with a plain statement of the facts. For the first time she prints the written testimony of Dr. A. J. Bell, who was in constant attendance on Charles Bradlaugh during his fatal illness. "During that time," Dr. Bell says, "I heard him say no word bearing directly or indirectly upon any religious subject." Similar statements were signed by the two nurses. Towards the end his mind wandered a good deal, but his thoughts, as he spoke them, were mostly happy ones. The last words Mrs. Bonner heard him utter, the very night of his death, were reminiscent of his voyage to India. "Never," she says, "throughout the whole time did my father by sign or sound indicate that there was the smallest change in his opinions." Freethinkers should procure this pamphlet, and keep it by them for the ready correction of orthodox falsehoods.

The *University Magazine* opens with a refutation of Professor James's "Plea for Theism." Howard Williams follows with an article on "The English Criminal Code." Mr. Wheeler writes on "The Irreligion of Shakespeare." John Vickers continues his papers on "Christian Origins." W. Platt writes on "Egoism," and J. Heywood on "The Religious Ideas of Children."

The end of Herr Brandes's critical study on *William Shakespeare*, the translation of which is produced under the direction of W. Archer, has a rather significant hint, that we know far more the real personality of Shakespeare than of Jesus Christ. He says: "The William Shakespeare who was born at Stratford-on-Avon in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, who lived and wrote in her reign and that of James, who ascended into heaven in his comedies and descended into hell in his tragedies, and died at the age of fifty-two in his native town, rises a wonderful personality in grand and distinct outlines, with all the vivid color of life from the pages of his books, before the eyes of all who read them with an open, receptive mind, with sanity of judgment and simple susceptibility to the power of genius."

CORRESPONDENCE.

PHRENOLGY AND THEISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Davies has been shrewd enough to withhold from your readers his views regarding phrenology as a science. Obviously this is intentional on his part. Probably, if the battle goes against him, he will declare it a "pseudo science," and if in his favor, "an exact" one; at any rate, he makes accessible a safe retreat, prior to his appearance in print anent the above question.

Mr. Davies presumably knows some little of the subject on which he writes; he has had a "course of several years' careful study of the science." He invites attention to the "many elaborate expositions on the subject of phrenology" published; but, strangely enough, his knowledge appears to be confined to a little 40-cents booklet; at all events, he quotes no other. From this valuable text-book Mr. Davies cites certain paragraphs, but the quotations are so mutilated that one hesitates to accept them as representative of the position taken in *Heads and Faces*. My advice to your readers is: Procure the book, read what is said relative to "Spirituality" and "Veneration," and then decide how much color has been given (through abstraction) to the sentences by your ingenious correspondent.

Mr. Davies's contention is that the primary and normal function of "Spirituality" and "Veneration" is secular. He is undoubtedly able to speak with authority upon the question, for he has had "several years' experience of the subject. His own authority, Professor N. Sizer (whose experience was great, although I do not for a moment contend that he was a more able exponent of phrenology than Mr. Davies—I remember that the latter gentleman has given "several years" of careful study to the science), however, by way of definition, says: "SPIRITUALITY.—Faith, trust, an intuitive religious element, leads to prophecy and belief in the immortal and invisible. *Excess*.—Superstition, fanaticism. *Deficiency*.—Scepticism, incredulity. VENERATION.—Reverence for deity, desire to adore and worship; it also imparts deference for superiors, and respect for whatever is ancient and honorable. *Excess*.—Idolatry, undue deference for persons. *Deficiency*.—Disregard for things sacred, and for the aged and venerable" (*Forty Years in Phrenology*, p. 406). Now, from this it is evident that Sizer considers that the primary and normal function of both faculties is essentially religious. In this all standard writers agree. I could quote from all the text-books on the science with the same result, but the burden of proof lies with Mr. Davies. He must either prove his contention from acknowledged standards of appeal, or manfully admit that he is elaborating a new and original nomenclature of phrenology, for which he is solely responsible; in which event we shall have pleasure in dealing with it upon its own merits. *Opponents* of phrenology have, almost from its advent, urged that it was materialistic; but its *advocates*—never! They find Gall refuting it, Spurzheim denying it, the Fowlers denouncing it, and the illustrious Coombe lecturing against it. To particularize would be to waste space, for the facts are well known.

Now, "if a man is born with either of these faculties inactive," he will be a sceptic. *Inactive!* Why "inactive" if the primary and normal function of these faculties is secular? Surely the fact that Mr. Davies wants them "inactive" in order to make a good sceptic should make him a little sceptical as to the validity of his hypothesis! My experience appears to prove that *inactive* organs, whether physical, vital, or mental, manifest diseased functions; *ergo*, he wants the diseased faculties—I the healthy. When these faculties "become diseased through too great an activity, it produces what the Rev. Brown Grant called the *mad Christian*"; and when diseased through *deficiency* of activity, they produce what Professor Huxley called "a shallow man."

Mr. Davies is pleased to "deny that any man possessing these organs in degree one can cultivate the organs to any higher degree." It was well said that "he would be a bold man who would pronounce the word 'impossible' outside of mathematics." How does he know? Has he carefully watched persons through a life of endeavor to cultivate weak faculties? If not, can he speak positively on this point? Has he ever met a man with an organ degree one? If so, what standard does he gauge by? Ah, sir, if no more logical argument is forthcoming to uproot the doctrine of "freewill" than this, that doctrine is destined to stand!

Phrenology does not teach that the brain thinks. It teaches that the brain is the *instrument* of thought, and its ablest exponents declare that thought is as distinct from the brain as the player is from the instrument on which he performs.

E. S. G. MAYO.

Convictions are generally first impressions that are sealed with later prejudices.—George Meredith.

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

THE forms of dogma begin to grow old from the day they are consecrated by general consent.—*Professor Sabatier*.

I am convinced that the only faith that can save us is the belief in the efficacy of the accomplished effort. It is very beautiful to dream of eternity; but it is enough for the honest man to pass away, having done his task.—*Zola*.

Be not diverted from your duty by any idle reflections the silly world may make on you, for their censures are not in your power, and consequently should be no part of your concern.—*Epictetus*.

Truth: there can be no merit, no craft at all, without that. And, further, all beauty is, in the long run, only fineness of truth, or what we call expression, the finer accommodation of speech to the vision within.—*Walter Pater*.

The revelations of devout and learn'd,
Who rose before us, and as prophets burned,
Are all as stories which, awoke from sleep,
Men told their fellows, and to sleep returned.

—Omar Khayyam.

Truth is a torch, but a terrible one; oftentimes so terrible that the natural instinct of us all is to give a side glance with a blinking eye, lest, on looking it fairly in the face, the strong glare might blind us.—*Goethe*.

If Christ were to come to London now, he would not be crucified. Oh, no! He would be lionized, asked out to dinner to hear the strange things he had got to say, and the bettermost people would wonder that a man who could be so sensible on some points should be so foolish on others, would wish he were a little more practical, and so on.—*T. Carlyle*.

There was only one man not spoiled by being lionized. His name was Daniel.

SOME YARNS.

IN a mixed Sunday-school class of English, Scottish, and Irish girls the minister failed to obtain an explanation of the expression, "unclean spirit." At length a bright-eyed native of the Emerald Isle, on being pressed for an answer, replied: "Sure, your riverence, it's the very same as a dirty devil."

The Rev. Dr. Blank delivered a prosy and lengthened lecture on the chronological order of the minor prophets. When every one was weary except himself, the lecturer asked: "And now, dear brethren, what position shall we assign to Hosea?" A man in the audience rose and said: "There's a seat for him here; I'm off."

A Roman ecclesiastic, when asked a question, was in the habit of always beginning his reply by saying: "I make a distinction." A cardinal, having invited him to dine, proposed to derive some amusement for the company from this well-known peculiarity of his guest. Saying he had an important question to propose, he asked: "Is it under any circumstance lawful to baptize in soup?" "I make a distinction," said the guest. "If you ask, is it lawful to baptize in soup in general, I say, No; if you ask, is it lawful to baptize in your excellency's soup, I say, Yes, for there is really no difference between it and water."

A certain Border Auld Kirk minister engaged a local character to put glass on the top of a wall round his garden to prevent boys stealing his apples. Running short of glass, the man went up to the manse to see if he could get glass of any kind. On his way up he met the minister. "Well," said the character, "have ye ony auld bottles ye cud gie's, as I'm run short o' glass?" "No," said the minister, "not just now; but there's to be a meeting o' the elders tomorrow afternoon, and if you could come up after they're away you'll get plenty."

This yarn is as true as gospel, as purgatory, transubstantiation, and the rest of the stock-in-trade of the clergy. Tim: "O, Father Flaherty, I've committed a mortal sin. Can you do anything for me?" Father Flaherty—"Is it a mortal sin? What money have you got?" Tim—"I've £70 about my clothes." Father Flaherty—"Then lay down £50, and I'll see what can be done. Tell me what sin you've committed." Tim—"O, it's so terrible, I can scarcely tell you, Father." Father Flaherty—"Is it murder?" Tim—"No, but I'm afraid it's nearly as bad. It's too terrible to mention." Father Flaherty—"Well, I won't waste my time. If you don't tell me soon, I'll take the £50 and be gone." Tim—"Ah! it's a dreadful crime I've committed." Father Flaherty—"Well, tell me what it was?" Tim—"O, Father, I've married a nun!" Father Flaherty—"That's a dreadful sin you are guilty of. Do you know you've married one of God's sisters?" Tim—"What! am I now God's brother-in-law?" Father Flaherty—"You are, Tim!" Tim (sweeping the £50 back into his hand and pocketing it)—"I shouldn't like family matters to be talked about. I'll go myself to my brother-in-law about it."

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, C. Watts, "Prayer and Müller's Orphanage."
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 11.30, A lecture; 7, Concert and dance.
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 7, F. J. Gould, "The Religion of the First Christians"; 3, Peckham Rye (near band-stand), J. Clarke, M.A.
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, G. H. Ferris, "Despotism by Newspaper."
WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 7, Debate between J. Boyce and Stanley Jones (second night), "Is the Bible an Inspired Revelation from a God to Man?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S. W. Railway-station): 7, R. P. Edwards, "Why we Attack Christianity."
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): R. P. Edwards—11.30, "Atheism and Morality"; 8.30, "Why we Attack Christianity."
WEST LONDON BRANCH (Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture; 3.30, A lecture.
WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, Harry Courtney, "Glory of Freethought."
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, W. Heaford.
LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, S. Jones.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): 7, G. Bayliffe, "Gods and Prayers."
CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): G. W. Foote—morning, "Is the Bible a Fit Book for Children?"; evening, "God and the Devil."
GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class, open discussion, "Is Materialism the Most Reasonable Hypothesis?"; 6.30, "Medicus," "Ancient Egyptian Religions."
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mrs. Charles Watts, Readings and recitations.
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner—3, "Capital Punishment"; 7, "A Little Englander's Look Round."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, W. Simpson, "Is Socialism Selfish?"
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): H. P. Ward—11, "Some Social Evils of the Age"; 3, "The Church the Robber"; 7, "Why I am an Atheist."
PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimble-street): 7, Meeting of members.
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Amos Waters—8, "Visitation: The Outrages on Animals and the Menace to Humanity"; 7, "Charles Lamb: Heretic and Humorist." Tea at 5.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Business meeting.

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—April 2, 3, and 4, Stanley; 10, Gateshead; 17, Manchester; 24 and 25, Birmingham. May 1, Sheffield; 8, Liverpool; 15, Blackburn.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—April 10, Mile End; 17, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith; 24, a., Victoria Park. May 1, m., Finsbury; 8, m., Mile End; 15, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 22, m., Mile End.

H. PERCY WARD, 6 Wawne Grove, Alexandra-road, Hull.—April 3, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 10, Stockton-on-Tees; 17, Glasgow.

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