

FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL

ALL THINGS DEMONSTRATED & CERTAIN

UNIVERSITY

ORION

IN WHATSOEVER MAY BE DOUBTED

FREE DIVERSITY

ENCE

IN ALL THINGS

CHARITY

ATION

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"FREE WILL" AND "FREE MORAL AGENCY."

(Continued.)

BY ALLEN PRINGLE.

Since my last article on this subject in the FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL, an address on "Science and Man," given at Birmingham, England, by Prof. Tyndall, has been published in Toronto in the November number of the *Fortnightly Review*. It is with the profoundest pleasure that I peruse this address, dealing as it does incidentally with the question of "Free Will"—a question which has engaged my thoughts since the time I became capable of observation and reflection. My intense gratification will be better understood when it is seen that the main positions taken in my previous articles are sustained and confirmed by one of the greatest of living scientists and thinkers. In the course of his address Prof. Tyndall says:

"We now stand face to face with the final problem. It is this: Are the brain and the moral and intellectual processes known to be associated with the brain—and as far as our experience goes, indissolubly associated—subject to the same laws which we find paramount in physical nature? Is the will of man, in other words, free, or are it and nature equally 'bound fast in fate'? From this latter conclusion, after he had established it to the entire satisfaction of his understanding, the great German thinker, Fichte, recoiled. You will find the record of this struggle between head and heart in his book entitled, 'Die Bestimmung des Menschen'—the Vocation of Man. Fichte was determined at all hazards to maintain his freedom, but the price he

paid for it indicates the difficulty of the task. To escape from the iron necessity seen everywhere reigning in physical nature, he turned defiantly round upon nature and law, and affirmed both of them to be the products of his own mind. He was not going to be the slave of a thing which he had himself created. There is a good deal to be said in favor of this view, but few of us probably would be able to bring into play the solvent transcendentalism whereby Fichte melted his chains.

"Why do some of us regard this notion of necessity with terror, while others do not fear it at all? Has not Carlyle somewhere said that a belief in destiny is the bias of all earnest minds? 'It is not nature,' says Fichte, 'it is freedom itself, by which the greatest and most terrible disorders incident to our race are produced. Man is the cruellest enemy of man.' But the question of moral responsibility here emerges, and it is the possible loosening of this responsibility that so many of us dread. The notion of necessity certainly failed to frighten Bishop Butler. He thought it untrue, but he did not fear its practical consequences. He showed, on the contrary, in the 'Analogy' that as far as human conduct is concerned, the two theories of free will and necessity come to the same in the end.

"What is meant by free will? Does it imply the power of producing events without antecedents!—of starting, as it were, upon a creative tour of occurrences without any impulse from within or from without? Let us consider the point. If there be absolutely or relatively no reason why a tree should fall, it will not fall; and if there be absolutely or relatively no reason why a man should act, he will not act. It is true that the united voice of this assembly could not persuade me that I have not, at this moment, the power to lift my arm if I wish to do so. Within this range the conscious freedom of my will cannot be questioned. But what about the origin of the 'wish'? Are we, or are we not, complete masters of the circumstances which create our wishes, motives, and tendencies to action? Adequate reflection will, I think, prove that we are not. What, for example, have I had to do with the generation and development of that which some will consider my total being, and others a most potent factor of my total being—the living, speaking organism which now addresses

you? As stated at the beginning of this discourse, my physical and intellectual textures were woven for me, not by me. Processes in the conduct or regulation of which I had no share have made me what I am. Here, surely, if anywhere, we are as clay in the hands of the potter. It is the greatest of delusions to suppose that we come into this world as sheets of white paper on which the age can write anything it likes, making us good or bad, noble or mean, as the age pleases. The age can stunt, promote or pervert pre-existent capacities, but it cannot create them. The worthy Robert Owen, who saw in external circumstances the great moulders of human character, was obliged to supplement his doctrine by making the man himself one of the circumstances. It is as fatal as it is cowardly to blink facts because they are not to our taste. * * * * It is not, however, from the observation of individuals that the argument against 'free will,' as commonly understood, derives its principal force. It is, as already hinted, indefinitely strengthened when extended to the race." Prof. Tyndall here goes on to show the results of "heredity," "accidental variation," etc., in evolving the race from "progenitors which could not be called human" to what we are to-day, and then thus tranchantly states the argument against the popular doctrine of "free will."

"If, then, our organisms, with all their tendencies and capacities, are given to us without our being consulted; and if, while capable of acting within certain limits in accordance with our wishes, we are not masters of the circumstances in which motives and wishes originate; if, finally, our motives and wishes determine our actions—in what sense can these actions be said to be the result of free will?"

Let the theologian answer if he can! The fact is, no distinguished student of human nature who is free from prejudice can for one moment accept the theological doctrine of free will. The religionist only accepts it because he has been taught it, and because it is an essential constituent of his creed. He accepts it by *faith*, not by reason. Haeckel, in his great work, "The History of Creation," says: "Where faith commences science ends." With many science never begins, for faith is the beginning and end.

James Fitzjames Stephen, the noted English Barrister and Author, in his work, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," has one incidental sentence which shows unmistakably his opinion of the doctrine of free will. Here it is: "That any human creature ever, under any conceivable circumstances, acted otherwise than in obedience to that which for the time being was his strongest wish, is to me an assertion as incredible and as unmeaning as the assertion that on a particular occasion two straight lines enclosed a space." The truth is, the notion of the freedom of the human will has been frequently doubted and occasionally challenged by reflective minds for centuries. We find Shelley, with apparent impatience at so absurd a proposition, exclaiming: "The word liberty, as applied to mind, is analogous to the word chance as applied to matter; both spring from our ignorance of the certainty of the conjunction between antecedents and consequents. * * * Only the few fanatics who are engaged in the Herculean task of reconciling the justice of their God with the misery of man, will longer insult common sense by the supposition of a voluntary action without a motive."

I now propose, as the lawyers say, to rest my case here, that is, so far as the philosophical and scientific arguments against free will are concerned. But I also propose to go further—to "beard the lion in his den" if you please. I propose to meet the theologian on his own ground, *to wit*: Theology and the Bible, and disprove his doctrine of free will from his own premises. This I will endeavor to accomplish in the next article, and then in one or two subsequent articles deal with moral responsibility and "Free Moral Agency." Meanwhile I beg to wish all the contributors and readers, orthodox and heterodox, of the FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL a happy New Year.

Selby, December 13, 1877.

EXCELLENT ADVICE.

To the Managing Editors and Directorate of the Freethought Journal, and all others concerned:

DEAR FRIENDS AND BROTHERS,—Will you allow me to make a suggestion, and earnestly urge it upon your consideration? It is the desirability of continuing the FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL as a *monthly* instead of a *weekly*, at least for a time. This, I think, would be the more prudent course, for various reasons.

In the first place, you will all agree with me that it is better to commence low and work up gradually than to begin high and have to come down. In any laudable undertaking, upward progress from an humble beginning is commendable and creditable; while retrogression, or failure, *might* be discreditable and *certainly* would be humiliating. Let us, then, avoid the latter in our journalistic enterprise by moving cautiously and on a safe basis. It may be quite true that the Liberal element throughout the Dominion, with the assistance we would get from our brethren across the border, is strong enough to sustain a *weekly* journal at \$2 per year, if such element could be immediately reached and brought in. But this, in the absence of a regular and thorough canvass, is at present impracticable, and will require time. A monthly journal at, say, one dollar a year, could perhaps be carried along safely and successfully until such time, sooner or later, as the Liberal element would be generally enlisted; and then as fast as we felt warranted, financially and otherwise, we could enlarge, and change from monthly to semi-monthly, or weekly. This, it seems to me, would be the more judicious course. Besides, a one dollar journal would work much sooner into circulation than one high-priced. Many outside our own ranks would *try* it at that price, whereas they would not care to venture more in what to them would at first appear a dubious investment. But after reading it for a time, having gauged it, they would no doubt be quite willing to pay more and get it oftener.

There are also other considerations in favor of the temporary *monthly* issue instead of *weekly*. The substantial and literary character of the monthly is necessarily higher than that of the weekly. The writer for the monthly periodical, having more time in which to prepare his articles, furnishes more substantial and mature food for his readers. And in this, the inauguration of a Freethought journal in Canada, it is absolutely essential that it should avoid the stigma of crudity and superficiality. Let us then endeavor at the outset to give it a character of solidity, utility, and culture. Such a character, once established, will command the patronage of not only the distinctively rationalistic, but of the broad and liberal-minded *outside* our ranks. In all the churches is quite a large element, in merely nominal connection, who have almost outgrown their creeds, and who are inwardly liberal. To say nothing of the whole body of Unitarians, this is especially true of the Episcopalian and Presbyterian denominations of the Christian Church. This class of nominal, or *quasi*, believers we will inevitably reach if we succeed in making such a journal as above indicated. We must keep abreast with the times. We must give our readers, not indeed our own thoughts alone, but the *best thoughts of the best minds*, and the latest facts, philosophic and scientific, bearing upon our field, which are constantly emerging from the brain of the age and from the infinite Cosmos in which we are and of which we form a part. Abandoning mere carping, we must deal with doctrines not men. In our attacks upon false doctrines and false systems we must recollect that our opponents regard them as true. And we must build up as fast as we pull down. In any case where we have no better edifice to put in the place of the existing one, it will not be molested. We will endeavor to thrust no doctrine or fact into the place of another, which is not better than that other.

With these objects and principles faithfully adored to and carried out our journal *must* succeed, and ultimately become a potent factor in shaping the thought and destiny of this Dominion.

Fraternally yours,

ALLEN PRINGLE.

Selby, Ont., December, 1877.

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TORONTO, JANUARY 15TH, 1878.

We invite the earnest attention of our readers to a communication in this issue from Mr. Allen Pringle relative to this JOURNAL. We entirely agree with Mr. Pringle in thinking it advisable, at least for the present, to make the JOURNAL a monthly instead of a weekly paper. It will be more honorable to work upward from a small beginning than to endeavor to do too much and fail in the attempt. There are a large number of Freethinkers in the Dominion, but from want of organization it is with great difficulty that they can be reached. Christians, forgetting the example and advice of their "Master," taunt infidels with being poor, and they undoubtedly, as a rule, deem poverty a crime. It is unfortunately too true that a majority of us are poor, and to many even the small sum of two dollars is a serious consideration. By making the JOURNAL a monthly paper and reducing the price to one dollar we have no doubt large numbers would subscribe who at present feel unable to do so.

EXEMPTIONS.

The people of the Dominion are beginning to see the injustice of exempting church property and clergymen from bearing their share of the burdens of taxation in return for the privileges and protection accorded them, and petitions against all exemptions have been circulated and are being numerously signed by all classes of citizens. Liberals are especially interested in this question, and should do all in their power to forward the movement. We, who think Christianity is, and ever has been, a clog to the wheels of progress, are compelled to aid in its support by paying increased taxes that churches and ministers may be exempt, and the latter to that extent become paupers of the State. A great outcry is made in England against the injustice and tyranny of forcing men to support a State religion in which many of them do not believe, while they see no injustice in imposing on us taxes, that churches and ministers, which we believe detrimental to the welfare of the public, ought to pay. There is not a single reason

that can be urged against one, which may not, with equal justice and truth, be urged against the other.

In support of this iniquitous system of spoliation, Christians assert that churches repay the State by the "good moral influence" they exert on the community, whereby they lessen crime and the cost of administering justice; that they are necessary to the State, and therefore ought not to be taxed. We shall show further on that neither of these assertions have any foundation in fact; but suppose they are true. Christians might for the same reasons with as much justice ask the State to build and support churches for the public benefit. If by preventing crime they act as a police force, they should be under the same control as are other branches of the police force. If they are necessary to the State, the State should build and control them. There can, with justice, be no middle position. So long as they are controlled by private corporations they should be supported by the same means, but if necessary to the State should be wholly supported and controlled by the State. But we deny the assertion that they are necessary or even beneficial. In an able article on the subject in the *Boston Index* its editor says:

"Trinity Church, by the use it permits to be made of the land it rents to its tenants, is the greatest feeder of vice in the whole city! According to the official records in the offices of the Chief of Police and the Excise Commissioners, the real estate of Trinity Church supports seven hundred and sixty-four saloons, or 'gin mills,' and ninety-six known houses of prostitution (ninety-two white and four colored), with many others suspected to be such! Who can estimate the annual expense entailed on the city by all these haunts of vice in its lowest forms? Not we, assuredly; but it must be simply enormous. Yet Trinity Church is exempted from taxation, forsooth, because it is a 'bulwark of morality,' and officiates in this capacity by pandering to the most depraved appetites of the worst classes of the city!"

So much for the necessity of Christianity in New York, but we do not need to go beyond our own borders to show that churches have been the most expensive "police" a country was ever burdened with. More than one-fifth of all the freehold property in Montreal is held by churches and religious corporations—all, as well as the enormous income derived from it—exempt from taxation. Some of the worst dens of infamy and crime are to be found on their property. The same state of things, though perhaps not to the same extent, exists in every city of importance in the Dominion, and yet we are told that it would be wrong to tax "God's property." The trustees of that estate should heed and profit by the lessons of the past, or the time may come when, on this continent, it may be necessary for the benefit of the public to place it in other hands. Churches, too, by various means, some of them not very reputable, contrive to drain the country of large sums of money for the purpose of converting (1) the "heathen," while thousands at their own doors are lacking bread, are worse off both morally and in all other respects than those to whom the "gospel" and the money are sent. It may be said that it is no concern of ours, but so long as we are taxed for the benefit of churches it is our concern. If Christians paid taxes on the immense sums represented by church property, they might have less to spare to send away to pervert and demoralize the "heathen."

There is another aspect of the case which is seldom noticed. These self-appointed "guardians of the public peace," by their utterances in their pulpits and press, engender so much bitterness

and hate that riot and bloodshed is the result; riots which cost the country thousands, sometimes millions of dollars to suppress, cause valuables to be lost, and the stagnation of business with consequent loss to individuals. Witness the Gavazzi riots in Montreal, when some estimable citizens lost their lives, while others were maimed for life. All the police and the troops in the city were required to quell the tumult. Witness the Chiniquy riots of the last few years, and the annual outbreaks in Montreal and other cities on the 12th of July. At such times it has required all the power at the disposal of the Government to prevent these "guardians of morality" from cutting each other's throats. Churches and ministers are so far from being either necessary or beneficial that they are a bane to any community inflicted with them. Some of our kid-gloved clergymen wince at being called paupers, but a poor man is not necessarily a pauper while a rich man may be one. Very few poor paupers receive as much from the city of Toronto as ministers do by the remission of their taxes. Infidels ask no special privileges. We ask simple justice; and to be compelled to aid in what we believe to be the worst system that ever cursed the human race is a monstrous injustice.

Friends, remember the Liberal Convention to be held in Albert Hall, in the city of Toronto, on the 22nd and 23rd inst. Mr. and Mrs. Underwood will be in attendance, and the former will lecture on the evenings of the Convention and on the evening of the Sunday previous. Let every Liberal in Canada endeavor to be present.

Mr. B. F. Underwood lectures in LaSalle, Ill., Jan. 11, 12, 13; Streator, Ill., 14, 15, 16; Toronto, 20, 22, 23; Meaford, Ont., 24, 25, 26; Owen Sound, Ont., 27, 28, 29; Lindsay, Ont., Feb. 1, 2, 4; and Belleville, 6, 7, 8.

The *Embro Planet* copies from the *Christian Age* a conversation said to have occurred between Napoleon and Gen. Bertrand on the island of St. Helena, in which the former is made to acknowledge the divinity of Christ and express a belief in the Christian religion. Whether such conversation ever took place or not, we do not need to enquire; as there is evidence that that greatest of human monsters *did* believe in Christianity. A religion founded on the blood of a deity, nourished, propagated and sustained by bloodshed was just such a religion as would recommend itself to his mind. Nearly all the great butchers of the human race, from Constantine to the present Czar of Russia, have been believers in Christianity. No doubt, in his forced retirement at St. Helena, Napoleon had ample leisure to study the Bible and trace a parallel between himself and Joshua, and to justify his course by reflecting that the latter had been commanded by God to engage in unjustifiable, needless and cruel wars against, and the butchery of, unoffending and peaceful nations.

Regarding Napoleon, the great Herbert Spencer, in his "Study of Sociology" says:—"Out of the sanguinary chaos of the Revolution, there presently arose a soldier whose immense ability, joined with his absolute unscrupulousness, made him now general, now consul, now autocrat. He was untruthful in an extreme degree: lying in his despatches day by day, never writing a page without bad faith, nay, even giving to others lessons in telling falsehoods. He professed friendship while plotting to betray; and quite early in his career made the wolf-and-lamb fable his guide. He got antagonists into his power by promises of clemency, and then executed them. To strike terror, he descended to barbarities like those of the bloodthirsty conquerors of old, of whom his career reminds us: as

in Egypt, when, to avenge fifty of his soldiers, he beheaded 2,000 fellahs, throwing their headless corpses into the Nile; or, as at Jaffa, when 2,500 of the garrison who finally surrendered, were, at his order, deliberately massacred. Even his own officers, not over-scrupulous, as we may suppose, were shocked by his brutality—sometimes refusing to execute his sanguinary decrees.

"Indeed, the instincts of the savage were scarcely qualified at all in him by what we call moral sentiments; as we see in his proposal to burn 'two or three of the large communes' in La Vendee; as we see in his wish to introduce bull-fights into France, and to revive the combats of the Roman arena; as we see in the cold-blooded sacrifice of his own soldiers, when he ordered a useless outpost attack merely that his mistress might witness an engagement! * * * It was natural, too, that in addition to countless treacheries and breaches of faith in his dealings with foreign powers, such a man should play traitor to his own nation, by stamping out its newly-gained free institutions and substituting his own military despotism."

Christianity is welcome to such an advocate.

We are indebted to our friend Mr. W. H. Johnston for several late Scotch papers, from one of which—the *Paisley Herald*—we take the following relative to the Foreign Missionary Societies of Great Britain. The *Herald* says:—

"How ludicrously barren of results have been the labors of the missionaries among the heathen we have shown in the *ipsissima verba* of their own Reports. According to them the annual cost of converts is as follows:—a Jew, £450 4s.; a Turkish Moslem, £244 15s.; a Persian ditto, £68 15s.; a Buddhist in China and Japan £60; an Irish Roman Catholic, £50; an Armenian, £35; and a negro of Central Africa the same price. How gladly would a mission attended by such happy financial results be welcomed by the heathen tribes in the interior of England, or in the dirty and noisome slums of our own great cities! But if the quantity of the foreign article produced is disappointing, perhaps the quality at least may be superior. Let us hear what travellers and impartial observers have said on this point."

"Dr. Anthony Grant, writing in 1843, says: 'The attempts to evangelize China have signally failed' ("Brampton Lectures.") Mr. Wingrove Cooke says, in 1858: "Whoever asserts that the missionaries are making sincere Chinese Christians must be either governed by a delusion or be guilty of a fraud."

Sir James Brooke, addressing a meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, in 1858, said: "You have made no progress at all either with the Hindoo or the Mahometan; you are just where you were the very first day that you went to India."

"Every gate seems to have been shut," says the Rev. W. Clarkson, a missionary himself, "every channel dammed up by which Gospel streams might force their way" ("India and the Gospel," p. 221); while of the nominal converts in India Mr. B. A. Irving writes: "Their lax morality shocks the feelings of even their heathen countrymen" ("Theory and Practice of Caste," p. 146.)

Of those in Ceylon the Rev. W. Harvard, a Wesleyan missionary, writes: "The greater part of the Singhalese whom I designate nominal Christians of the Reformed Religion are little more than Christians by baptism" ("Narrative of the Mission to Ceylon," p. 61.) "By far the greater part," observes the Rev. James Selkirk, a missionary, "live as if they had no souls" ("Recollections of Ceylon," p. 217.)

After citing the above and a great number of other authorities to the same effect the *Herald* says:—

"After this we will say no more. no testimony could be more crushing than the extracts we have given from the writings of disinterested men and calm observers. The foreign missionary enterprise of England is a scandal. The homely old maxim that charity begins at home is either forgotten or discredited among us. There is plenty of scope for charity among our own poor, in the unclean and overcrowded dwellings which abound in all our large cities, and in the cottages of the farm laborers throughout the country; in educating the poor in useful knowledge; in combating the demon of drink, which claims its hecatombs of victims every year; and in warring with the equally fatal forms of many-sided immorality which are eating into the very vitals of society, and overthrowing all respect for decency, law and order. Here is a work at our own doors, which the expenditure of two millions annually would help considerably to carry out. Let our poor have improved dwellings, free libraries and museums open always, harmless amusements and games."

A FEW WORDS TO A PREACHER.

FRIEND D.—Thee seems to deride the doctrine of evolution, and asks me to give thee one case of one species becoming another, and to point out the connecting link between the man and monkey. I must confess to some surprise at a person of thy intelligence asking such silly questions. Don't thee know that nature never takes sudden leaps? that all her changes are the slow growth and accretion of the ages? So gradual, quiet and imperceptible, as to seem ever the same from day to day, yet in summing up and comparing the result at different epochs or ages, we find strange and wonderful transformations. We hold a little babe in our arms to-day—tomorrow it is still apparently the same, and so on through several to-morrows, each day showing no perceptible alteration, yet when we look back after a few weeks we know it has changed. Years pass off, and still each day is as yesterday, but somehow the child has become a man, full grown and well developed. An evolution performed so gradually that none saw its daily progress. Yet there was a time when, in the fetus of that child, no scientist could discern any difference between it and that of a fish of the sea. Are not all things evolutions? science, art, religion, philosophy, mechanics, vegetable and animal growths? What are the present patent steam plows but an evolution of the crooked sticks of our ancestors? What is the big Corliss engine but an improvement of the tea kettle of Watts? What is the great clock that runs a hundred years without winding but an evolution of the water clock, or the hour glass of a few years ago that had to be turned upside down every sixty minutes. What are our wool-carding machines, with all their multiplicity of cylinders, rollers, wheels, bolts and bands, but an evolution from carding with the thumb and fingers, or with hand cards? What are our large, fine apples of to-day but an evolution from the little, sour, bitter crab of the tree which good old Mother Eve, in her desire for knowledge, robbed of a portion of its luscious (?) brethren? What are all our best flowers, fruits, and vegetables but evolutions, hybrids, and improvements? Do we not get our best race-horses by a process of evolution? It is but a few years since a 2:40 horse was thought to have reached the acme of equine speed; but that has been so much surpassed that it is impossible now to guess at what point the maximum will ultimately be found. The first men walked on all fours, as a baby now creeps, but evolution gave them lightning cars and swift balloons, and who shall say that they may not some day out-ride the winds themselves? Once men had no real language, but were only able to utter coarse, uncouth sounds; now they can converse in softest, sweetest music through the telephone, and be heard from city to city, even as face to face. And was any step of these a leap from one point to another—from one species to another? Nay, in the "mills of the gods" a thousand million of years are as but a second of time with us, and though the "missing links" may never all be found, yet that will not disprove the great fact that all nature is an evolution! Men are but just beginning to reason upon natural principles. They are just dropping the idea that gods did all, created all, and moved all, and therefore it may be ages ere the science of evolution will be fully understood or explained; but year by year the "missing links" grow less and less, thus proving we are on the right road, while year by year your proofs and facts, or what you once deemed such, grew weaker and weaker, "smaller by degrees and beautifully less" and your "missing links" more and more apparent. Your God, Christ, Heaven and hell are proved to be myths. Your Bible a book of old fables, traditions and dogmas, with a patchwork of history, romance and proverbs intermixed, and your church, creed, and faith only an evolution from ancient Paganism—and yet in the face of all this thee pities me for my "faithless, helpless condition."

Why my friend, I never know what *real* happiness was till I became "faithless and helpless," as far as all gods, myths and superstitions are concerned. But I ask in all candor if it is "hopeless" to believe that all who live are born to be happy? Happy now and here, and as long as life abideth in them? Is it "hopeless" to believe that not one poor unfortunate will ever be

lost? Not one of all the millions and quintillions of beings that have lived, do live, and will live on this, our own beautiful earth. Will suffer the endless torments of a burning, broiling, frizzling, sizzling hell, ten times ten million times hotter than any fire we can conceive of? Is it not intensely selfish of any one to rejoice in their own salvation when they know (?) that the great majority of those around them are thus doomed?

Just fancy thyself living in a costly palace surrounded by every imaginable source of comfort and enjoyment, while all around outside of thy happy home are throngs of starving, freezing, suffering ones, pleading, begging and beseeching for a crust of bread and a drop of water. Thy granaries teem with their loads, thy spring gushes forth its silvery floods. Thou has a plenty for all, yet selfishly hoards it up miser-like, and rejoices that thee is safe while others suffer!

"When'er I take my walks abroad how many poor I see,
What shall I render to my God for all his gifts to me."

Yes, this selfish, egotistic feeling glows in the heart of every hell-believer and God-worshipper. For do they not think and say God has enough for all, and could make all virtuous, good and happy if he pleased to do so? What virtue is it of mine or thine that we were not born amidst the slums of some great city and reared in vice and iniquity? Nay, nay, think not I envy thee any hopes that are founded upon such misery as are the hopes of future happiness such as the Christian faith can give. I want none of it. Give me the good old world just as it is—governed by nature's inexorable and unchanging laws, and I will adapt myself to it as best I can, and make the most of it, and am only sorry all others cannot see as I see and do as I do, so that they might enjoy to the fullest life and all its splendid opportunities.

"Look around the fields of nature,
Pleasant scenes, how richly gay;
What a home for every creature
Dath the universe display!
See the earth with air surrounded,
Ocean with her deep profound;
All with life and joy abounding,
Happy millions all around."—*Abner Hawiland.*

The Sun's Day, Dec. 10, 1877.

ELMINA DRAKE SLENKER,
Snowville, Pulaski Co., Va.

THE BIBLE.

BY G. W. GRIFFITHS.

Having been honored by a request from the conductors of the FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL that I should become one of the editorial contributors, I propose, in a series of articles as brief as may be consistent with the clearness necessary to the forcible statement of facts, to deal with certain episodes in the Bible in such a manner, as to expose the fallacy of the servile popular belief in their inspiration. Should the FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL be found able, as is devoutly to be hoped, to hold its own against orthodox violence and conventional cowardice, I will beg its readers to consider each of the articles which I propose to lay before them, as one of a connected series; designed to carry out a definite system of consideration of certain salient points of the Bible, on some of which are based the fundamental dogmas of the vulgar theology, while others disclose conceptions of Almighty attributes, which should cause the orthodox to blush for their blindness, ignorance, and credulity.

It is probable that the exigencies, on the one hand, of demonstration and illustration, and, on the other hand, of space, may at any time leave a particular subject unfinished, in a single issue. In such a case the patience of the reader is begged for the continuation. But it is hoped that, after some remarks on the Mosaic cosmogony, which it may be important not to curtail, few individual subjects will exceed the reasonable limits of a single article.

In order that we may clear the ground for a fair start, I desire, in the first instance, to record an emphatic protest against the practice of styling the Bible "a book." In the sense of being

generally contained within the binding of a single volume it is "a book," but in no other. It is in fact an extremely heterogeneous collection of works of different characters and designs, written by different persons, at various times extending over a period, assuming Moses to have been the first compiler, of about sixteen hundred years. Compiled and re-compiled, revised and garbled, so that, supposing the original sources to have been of greater intrinsic value than they possibly could have been, that value must, by all the laws of evidence, have become greatly deteriorated—lost for hundreds of years, and only ultimately thrown together into the shape which they are popularly known, at the Council of Carthage. Within the last decade of the fourth century, the canonical character of the books decided by vote, in which process the Revelations, a wild, visionary outburst of philosophies far older than the book of Genesis, mixed with the later speculations of the highly spiritual Alexandrian school, was only declared to be inspired by a majority of one, yet so dense is the ignorance, so blank the critical faculty, in Mr. Carlyle's innumerable majority, that the great mass of the orthodox world regards this miscellaneous compilation as one inspired volume, which has somehow come to them direct from God, in the dress in which it was clothed by King James' translation, and I do not doubt that inspiration is, by many, attributed even to the fulsome dedication of those venerable and reverend sycophants.

It is not to be wondered at that—in view of the approaching advent of a new translation, which cannot but tend to rationalize the existing beliefs, and which must inevitably divide the allegiance now monopolized by the present fetish—the orthodox should "so furiously rage." Macaulay, criticizing Mr. Gladstone's early work on Church and State, describes that versatile writer's style as characterized by a vast command of a kind of language grave and majestic, but of vague and uncertain import; of a kind of language which affects us much in the same way in which the lofty diction of the chorus of clouds affected the simple-hearted Athenian." Again, he says: "Here are propositions of a vast and indefinite extent conveyed in language which has a certain obscure dignity and sanctity, attractive, we doubt not, to many minds. But the moment we bring them to the test by running over but a very few of the particulars which are included in them, we find them to be false and extravagant." Had Macaulay been criticising the so-called sacred writings, he could scarcely have altered his phraseology to advantage. The ordinary cultivated religious mind is carried away by a certain grandeur, simplicity and brevity which pervade the Hebrew literary style, a great part of the effect of which is due to that perfectly cool assumption of the marvellous and impossible, as simple matters of fact, which is a characteristic of the oriental mind in all ages, and which is co-incidentally apparent in the "Arabian Nights." As regards the Book of Judges especially, both the Arabian Nights and the *Iliad* at once present themselves to the mind as keys, the one to the eastern love of the supernatural, the other to the exaltation of popular heroes to a mythic grandeur. The half or wholly fabulous early histories and early poetry of all rude nations and tribes, which have proved themselves possessed of a national imaginative soul fitted for survival, lend themselves to this analogy. Grecian and Roman Epic, Scandinavian Saga, German, Frankish and Iberian legend and ballad, and ancient Jewish record, are identical in their faithful witness to the intuitions of tribes in their earliest stages of approach to civilization. As Sampson, Gideon, Jephtha, Joshua, so were Hector, Achilles, Romulus Curtius. Far down the stream of time the hero-worship scarcely changes an iota in character. Siegfried, Frithiof, Charlemagne, Roland, Bernard *del carpio*, and the Cid, are but reproductions, tinted and suffused with the glamour of the later chivalry, all were the embodiments of a rude but strong sense of patriotism. The Jewish legends are only distinguished by the monotheistic, and theocratic ideas which ruled and pervaded their literature, and it is remarkable that these apparently pure ideas, grafted on an exclusive and savage national temperament, led to the glorification, as a religiously patriotic action, of an atrocity such as no pagan nation would have dreamed of reckoning as meritori-

ous. I mean the teaching of Jael. The assimilation of Old Testament ideas of God, produced, as we all know singular manifestations of a dreary and sordid ferocity in the Puritans of England and Massachusetts, and in the Covenanters of Scotland, remnants of which yet assert their vitality in modern Presbyterianism. It might have been supposed, however, that the blind votaries of the anthropomorphic God of an obscure early race, much given to the cultivation of systematized vengeance, had reached the acme of truculence in the Presbyterian murder of the unfortunate The. Aikenhead, in 1697. But it is not generally known that an ignorant veneration of the Bible legends had, so late as within the last eight years, borne its diabolical fruit in full perfection. During the advance of the German troops into France in 1870, a German soldier wounded to the death, staggered into a cottage of a French peasant begging a drink of water and to be allowed to lie down. He fell on a bed, and presently sunk into the sleep of utter exhaustion, when his hostess, a young woman, presently conceived the idea of picking out the unfortunate man's eyes with a fork, and forthwith carried it into execution. This horrible act was performed in direct imitation of that for which Deborah poured forth her splendid rhapsody of praise to God.

It is impossible to predicate whether the company of translators now at work, will prove sufficiently courageous to give full effect to the different interpretations of various important passages, which are known to be required.

Much is to be hoped from the cumulative impact of truth for its own sake, on the higher planes of intellect. Much is to be feared from the ponderous *vis inertia* of the orthodox mind, which is a compound of the exaggerated characteristics attributed in old Natural History books, to the crocodile, the hyena, and the sloth.

The general result cannot but tend to weaken dogma; but, as there is little good to be perceived totally unalloyed with evil, it is probable that from time to time, the advocate of inspiration may fondly imagine a vain thing, viz.: that some new light on a word or sentence may prove a gain to the theological cause.

Such a claim has, indeed, already been set up. In the course of that increased stringency of enquiry to which men are daily more strongly impelled, it has been asserted that the words "In the beginning" should be rendered "In former duration," i.e. in the "duration or time previous to creation." On the strength of this alteration, a writer in the *Quarterly Review*, in an article entitled "Modern Philosophers on the Probable Age of the World," reproduced in the *New York Eclectic* for October, 1876, endeavors to show that the Mosaic cosmogony is in accord with the hypothesis of the nebular vortex-ring. I have already, in these preliminary remarks, taken up as much space as I imagine is convenient. In the succeeding issues I hope to expose the weakness and fallacy of the specious arguments adduced by the orthodox reviewer, and to demonstrate that it is not even open to the plenary inspirationists to wriggle out of literal interpretation as regards the six days of creation, but that the writer of the first chapter of Genesis wrote with no broader idea than that he was constructing a plausible account of the beginning of things, and with no notion of his account being ever interpreted otherwise than as literal matter of fact.

London, Ont.

Hell appeared to me like a great town kitchen with an endlessly long stove, on which were placed three rows of iron pots, and in these sat the damned and were cooked. In the third row sat the heathen, who, like the Jews, could take no part in salvation, and must burn forever. I heard one of the latter, as a square-built, burly devil put fresh coal under his kettle, cry out from his pot: "Spare me! I was once Socrates, the wisest of mortals. I taught truth and justice, and sacrificed my life for virtue." But the clumsy, stupid devil went on with his work, and grumbled: "Oh, shut up there! All heathen must burn, and we can't make an exception for the sake of a single soul.—*Heinrich Heine.*"

IMPATIENCE IN REFORM.

BY MRS. SARA A. UNDERWOOD.

It is perhaps only natural that one who has been emancipated from the thralldom of old creeds and customs, one who sees all things in the light of new and free ideas, should burn with impatient zeal to set about the work of reform—thinking to find all minds in just that transitional state in which the truth found him, and just as ready to recognize and accept that truth as he himself was. So it often happens that, fired with enthusiasm, the young reformer sets out to make converts to his new opinions, thinking that they need only to be stated to be believed in; but presently, to his utter disappointment and surprise, he finds out what weary, up-hill work such reform is, and how unappreciative of him and his work the great busy world is. So, finding converts few and far between and his pet opinions, though backed by the soundest argument, gaining small headway if perceptibly any, he straightway grows discouraged; his ardor begins to cool, and the chances are that the once ardent reformer will either degenerate into misanthropic indifference or sink back into his old sets of belief. This is the story of many a name that was once frequently and intimately associated with reforms of various kinds. And those who followed the progress of those reforms until their accomplished and triumphant success wonder why this, that, and the other one, once in the van of progressive thought, is no longer heard of in connection with it. This has been and will be the story of many.

But this impatience and consequent disheartening might be prevented by one who has honestly the real good and improvement of his race at heart, instead of a burning desire for self-aggrandizement as a hero and martyr, prevented by a little calm looking over of the history of all accomplished reforms, and a little consideration of the complex organization of the human mind, a little reflection as to the slow evolution of reform from antecedent wrong-doing. The motto of the German poet should be the motto of all reformers or would-be reformers:

"Haste not, rest not, calmly wait,
Meekly bear the storms of fate;
Duty be thy polar guide,
Do the right whatever betide."

All reforms have been matters of very slow growth, of very patient work on the part of genuine (not spasmodic) reformers. There are long periods when the sense of wrong thinking or of wrong done to man by man, is slowly making itself known; felt at first by the most intellectual and most sensitive minds, it gradually touches the consciousness of the more obtuse, but is still borne with from lack of knowing what evils may have to be encountered in the changing of men's views, in the removal of the wrong. Then comes the period of rebellious speech and protest—emanating at first from the more clear-seeing minds and least patient hearts. This, too, is slow work; many speeches have to be made, many fierce pamphlets written, for the masses wisely move and are moved slowly. But some sudden emergency startles at last this seemingly inert mass into action—action which means reform, whether of politics, morals or religion. Then will be seen how many have been thinking the same thoughts, dreaming the dreams in the quietude of their homes as the most active reformers; but it is to the active reformer that the meed of praise belongs, for, but for him, these rebellious thoughts would never have visited these quiet homes, whose inmates are to complete and ratify the work. It is at this stage that the movement is taken advantage of by many who call themselves reformers, but who are demagogues who hope to win a little reputation by noisily proclaiming themselves the lovers who have set agoing this bold, strong, triumphant reform.

Let those who are most impatient for the recognition of new truths remember that the reform of ideas is the most sluggish of all reforms in its movements, from the fact that there is generally little outside pressure goading on to any sudden desperation or determination. The transmitted ideas from generation to genera-

tion undergo slow gradations of change in tone or form. So gradual is the process that there seems to be no change when comparing the ideas of one generation with those of the succeeding one, and it is only by going back several generations and comparing the ideas then extant on any given subject with the ideas prevailing on the same subject to-day, that we discover what real progress has been made.

The duty of the true reformer is to keep steadily at the work of reform from pure love of that work, from pure love of his fellow man, keeping ever in mind the words of the poet:

"But thou
Who minglest in the harder strife
For truth, which men receive not now,
Thy warfare only ends with life.

Nor heed the shaft, too surely cast,
The hissing, stinging bolt of scorn,
For with thy side shall stand at last
The victory of endurance born."

ADAPTATION AND DESIGN.

The following brief communications we clip from three successive numbers of the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*.

"Underwood following Darwin talks about natural selection, and stripping the universe of a controlling intelligence, leaves the world and man to the sport of chance. But the common sense of mankind will always be proof against the vagaries of such teachers. Nature is full of adaptations, and these adaptations convince all unperverted minds that there is design and an infinite intelligence that created and governs all things."—*Christian Herald*.

Parasites are adapted to vegetables and the bodies of animals. Is this adaptation evidence of design? If so, is it right to sprinkle poison on plants or to give medicine to cattle or men with the intention of killing these parasites? What is the design in parasitic life? Potato bugs are adapted to destroy potatoes, and grasshoppers are adapted to eat almost everything upon which man and beast depend for food. Is there design in these adaptations? Were the bugs and 'hoppers designed for the vegetation or the vegetation for the bugs and 'hoppers? A cancer is wonderfully adapted to prey, like a carnivorous animal, upon the living body in which it exists, and the body is well adapted to be preyed upon by this "rebellion within the organism," as the cancer has been termed, by an able writer. Where is the design?

Adaptation is seen almost everywhere, but design in nature has no existence except in the mind which projects itself ideally into the objective world, and imagines the operations of nature subject to volition. What is called design in nature is adjustment of things to their environment. The environment precedes the thing that is adapted to it. The thing must get adapted on penalty of extinction, and in the struggle for life, "the survival of the fittest" is a necessity. In a changing environment, animals or plants that cannot change in adjustment to their medium, must perish, while those whose variations being most closely in correspondence with the surroundings will continue to exist, and their successors be subject to the same law of variations and the same chance of survival in the merciless, yet unavoidable struggle for existence. In the parasite and in man, in good and in evil, I see adaptation, adjustment, fitness, but no where in nature do I see what can perfectly be termed design. "Man designs; nature is," says Atkinson. He who has recourse to volition to supply the nexus between cause and effect in the objective world, simply contemplates, unawares his own personality reflected before him upon the field of phenomena.—*B. F. Underwood*.

The Rev. J. Marples of Toronto, Canada, writes: In your issue of the 21st instant, is a short paragraph copied from the *Christian Herald*, setting forth that there is design and infinite intelligence that created and governs all things. To this paragraph some remarks are appended by B. F. Underwood, a former opponent of mine in public debate. Mr. U. says: "Para-

sites are adapted to vegetables and the bodies of animals. Is this adaption evidence of design? If so, is it right to sprinkle poison on plants or to give medicine to cattle or men with the intention of killing these parasites? What is the design in parasitic life? Potato bugs are adapted to destroy potatoes, and grasshoppers are adapted to devour almost everything upon which man and beast depend for food. Is there design in those adaptations? Were the bugs and 'hoppers designed for the vegetation, or the vegetation for the bugs and 'hoppers? In reply to these questions I would say, that these parasites are sent on the earth by as certain a design as man was created, only man was created for a purely benevolent object; and parasites were sent as a discipline—that is to teach men science, industry and cleanliness. Mr. U. goes on: "A cancer is wonderfully adapted to prey, like a carnivorous animal, upon a living body in which it exists, and the body is well adapted to be preyed upon by this rebellion within the organism, as the cancer has been termed, by an *avolo* writer. Where is the design?" I reply again, That cancers, tumours, and afflictions are simply designed as punishment for the breaking of the laws of nature. Wherever nature's laws are infringed, there punishment will certainly follow. To suppose that all this science and intelligence could be displayed by blind chance, natural selection, or the survival of the fittest, is to bring the whole subject to Mr. Underwood's favorite phrase, viz.: *A reductio ad absurdum*. If my worthy opponent would take the trouble to read thoroughly, and master fully, the principles enunciated in that excellent book on the Constitution of Man, by George Combe, I think he would see the subject of parasites and diseases in a more sensible light; and I am fully convinced that until these principles are better understood and practiced we shall never be free from either diseases or parasites. I entertain a very high opinion of Mr. Underwood, both as a man and debater, having met him twice in public debate in Napanee and Toronto, and I would not be unwilling to engage him again if circumstances called for such an arrangement.

The Rev. Mr. Marples informs us that "parasites were sent as a discipline—that is to teach men science, industry and cleanliness." Indeed! What shall we say of the countless species of parasites that live on animal and plant; that prey on beast and bird, and reptiles, and every variety of vegetation in regions of the earth uninhabited by man! Did God make one species of parasites for the anaconda, another for the hyena, another for the ostrich, and another for the weed that is poisonous to man, "to teach men science, industry and cleanliness?" Even these parasites are the homes of smaller parasitic forms which prey upon them, as they prey upon the bodies they infest. Many of them are so small as to be invisible to the human eye. Did God make *all* these forms of parasitic life, often producing discord and death, and living even in portions of the earth where man is not found, and upon insects, reptiles, birds and beasts which he avoids, to teach man science, etc.? What a God theology requires us to acknowledge! And diseases, we are told, are "infections, designed as punishment for the breaking of the laws of nature." I think I have read such a statement before! What of those diseases that prevailed among animals, those diseases which twisted and reduced their bones as paleontology attest, ages before man appeared on the globe? Were those diseases designed to punish the animals? If so, what was the design of the punishment.

Think of a God causing cancers and malformations, and making disgusting and disease-producing and life-destroying creatures all over the world, ages before man appeared in regions where he cannot live, just to teach him the importance of cleanliness and industry. Mr. Marples very kindly commends to my perusal "Combe's Constitution of Man," a very good book, considering the time it appeared, and well suited to minds that are just beginning to get emancipated from the thralldom of the Calvinistic theology. I read it twenty years ago. It offers no solution to the difficulties hinted at in this note. But evolution *does* show the principle by which low and disgusting creatures have come into existence, and speaking for myself, I believe that the principle is *utterly inconsistent with design in nature.*—*B. F. Underwood.*

GERMAN FREETHINKERS IN AMERICA.

A Paper read before the Rochester Congress of the National Liberal League, Oct. 28, 1877.

BY MRS. CLARA NEYMAN,
OF NEW YORK CITY.

Though I do not come among you as a delegate of any special German Society, I do not think that I assume too much when I express the great and warm interest our German Freethinkers take in your movement.

Our German independent newspapers, the *Boston Pionier*, the *Milwaukee Freidenker*, and others of a like tendency, are rejoicing that their American brothers give decisive expression to liberal thoughts. They encourage and advocate co-operation, and consider it the best and purest means for success.

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During the last two years the German Freethinkers have made great progress in their organization, and every well-wisher of the Liberal cause ought to advocate a union; ought to use all his influence for the establishment of a mutual and harmonious activity. *Single, we are weak; united, we shall be strong.*

The endorsement and support of the German element will be gained so much the easier, as they have long ago felt and discussed the dangers which are threatening our free institutions. Catholicism is growing more and more daring every year; its widespread influence, its untiring efforts, its zeal is a constant anxiety to the liberal-minded. The Catholic religion would like to celebrate a new revival in this country; and well may they succeed, if their actions are not better watched, if they are left unopposed to spread their creed and its evil influences.

There is no question upon which our German population are so united; no question upon which their feelings can be so easily aroused, as the question of *religious independence*. They can differ about questions of finance, of civil service reform, of prohibition; they may find it even difficult to decide which of the two political parties is the most erect, the most trustworthy; they may bring weighty arguments against woman suffrage, and dispute her participation in public matters; but on the free religious question they are, on the whole, more unanimous, more enlightened, and, I think I may add, more enthusiastic. Why this is so, the student of the history and development of Germany will easily perceive.

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It is true that their way of reasoning is not always correct; that they lost themselves *many* times in their dangerous flights, and carried their speculations into untraceable regions. Still, their critical reasoning, their clear logic, the great ethical laws which they established independent of religious worship and Bible-teaching, took root in the mind and heart of the people, and prepared the way for the religious change which the new scientific revolutions are now making more complete. The German philosophers had reasoned out deductively what our scientists of to-day manifest through induction, by a verification of facts and actual proofs. The harmony of the universe, the laws by which our life is governed; the nature of man's duties and responsibilities; what effects good and virtuous actions have on the individual, on society, on the State—ethical, æsthetic questions which form the basis of higher life and a nobler being,—these and other problems they discussed ably and intelligently in their writings. Reflections of so grave a nature emancipated the people from the churches long ago, and greatly lessened the influence of the priesthood.

On my way home last year from Europe I met an American clergyman who had spent a few weeks in Germany. He told me that he was greatly puzzled about my country people. He had found them on the whole to be good, honest, trusty, inclined to walk in the paths of virtue and righteousness; and yet they were infidels! They did not support the churches; and the comparatively few churches extant were attended principally by women and children.

Very true. The intelligent German has long ago outgrown the established and popular creed. His morality is not dependent upon the Bible teaching; his ethics rest on a firmer basis, and his actions are not guided by the fear of an angry God, or a reward in a hereafter. It is not so with the majority of Americans.

The Bible has been the only source—and alas! it is so still—from which this great nation has drawn its inspiration for right-doing and thinking. The Bible has been the book out of which they have received instruction in morality; their conscience has been formed according to its fallacious teachings. A book which was written nearly two thousand years ago, containing many noble sentiments, but more scientific errors than truths, more false statements than true ones, serves to-day an intelligent race as the sole instigator, the sole inspirer, to moral virtues, moral conduct, and moral excellences! Is it to be wondered at that our social edifice is trembling in its very foundation, that vice is multiplying, that sin is increasing, that the infection is spreading, and that the passions are breaking through their artificial restraints? Distrust is undermining our social, commercial, and political relations. Honest men are losing all confidence; theft has become a universal vice; stealing, defrauding, embezzling under some cunning device is an every-day occurrence. The temptation to go astray has taken a hold upon our people. And mind! it is not among the poor and needy, not among the lower orders of society that vice is increasing. There are many, it is true, who are driven by want and by a neglected education towards dishonesty and licentiousness. It is not to them I am referring now. The debasing propensities have reached our upper and middle classes as well. Our well-to-do and well-cared-for sons and daughters—the children of honest parents—are infected by the moral pestilence.

Their education has been first-class; they have attended the Sunday-school regularly; they have been devout church-members; and their love for God cannot be doubted. They have lately read about the new science. They have seen extracts from Darwin's *Origin of Species*, of Huxley's explanations of the *Evolution of the Universe*, of Spencer's *Sociology*, of Tyndall's lectures on *Light and Electricity*. They are puzzled. Why? This is all in contradiction to what the Bible teaches; it differs widely from what they had learned,—what they had read in the Book of books. Either here or there there must be falsehood!

The anathema against the new revelations are of no avail. Its doctrines have already advanced too far. The spell of the Church is broken; and the sooner it is recognized the better for man's happiness and his ultimate advancement.

The Liberals have a great work before them. They have to educate the people's conscience, so that they may perceive the new truth. They have to establish a new morality derived from scientific experiences. The Religion of Humanity must have a fixed standard of morals. It has to show and explain the evil effects of vice,—how it acts upon ourselves, our children, and our posterity. The Liberals have to explain, teach, expound, make clear the laws by which our life is governed. They have to show that our actions are indeed foreordained by a wise unrelenting power of Nature, and that a neglect of these laws will be punished here among our own kind and kindred. Every noble act, every sacrifice for the good and the true, is a benediction to those nearest to our heart, and brings bliss and happiness to mankind. Righteousness means happiness in the visible world. Goodness and purity of action produce goodness and purity of sentiment. Goodness is and always will be good; badness is and always will be bad.

The Liberals have to popularize the sciences, show their bearings upon all the relations of life, and make the right application of the manifold beneficial discoveries. They have also to show the value of resthetical culture; how inspiring, ennobling, and elevating the different arts and sciences have been in the past; that the cultivation of art is a necessity,—a necessary path in the education of a civilized community.

We have also to show that the most lovely and amiable, the most beautiful sentiments are an outgrowth of elevated and intelli-

gent thought, leading us to higher spheres; that these lovely sentiments are by no means peculiar to the Christian Religion but belong to all ages and to every civilized country. Man's vanity, his ambition, his self-love, his egotism, have to be directed to loftier spheres, where there is satisfaction without satiety, gratification without repentance. What has been held out to be gained in a future life has to be realized here, and it has to be shown that this can only be when all men and all women know and fulfil their duties, love and show proper regard for their fellow-beings.

Life is full of sacrifice; but man wants to know why he shall sacrifice. He cannot soar on high without a clear ideal held out for his reach. The temptations to go astray are too strong, vice is too alluring, and his ignorance of causes and effects is too great.

The new ideal is loftier, more beautiful, more inspiring than ever it was, but it wants to be proclaimed,—it awaits its new apostles.

The Liberals must stand firmly together; we have a great, an arduous work before us, and we have a mighty enemy to contend against. Success can only be gained by a close alliance, by self-sacrifice, and by a clearness of purpose. We have to be magnanimous towards those who cannot sympathize with our cause; severe, unrelenting, but just towards our opponents. Many of us may have to give up our own less important schemes for the sake of the party and its success. Our demands are founded upon reason; and so let our actions, our deeds, be guided by a superior wisdom; and may we never forget the high aim we are pursuing! Let us have a clear perception of our ideal, and let the ideal stand out in vivid colors before the mind's eye, so that we may gain strength and endurance for the arduous task upon which we start out to a better life and a nobler existence.

THE CHILD AND THE SUNBEAM.

BY WM. M'DONNELL.

'Twas beauteous eve, a sunset beam
Descended on a mother's grave,
And like a mourner, it would seem,
A weeping willow there did wave;
And culling simple flow'rs quite wild,
Which sprang from tears that fell around—
There sat a little orphan child.

And oft at summer-day's repose,
When o'er the earth was nature's hush,
When dew was trembling in each rose,
And mellow light half hid its blush
Among the simple flow'rs quite wild,
Which sprang up there from tears that fell—
Were seen the sunbeam and the child.

The autumn came, and summer's bloom
Passed like a friendly smile away,
The willow leaves fell o'er the tomb,
And transient sunbeams scarce would stay;
And then the simple flowers quite wild,
Which grew from tears shed round the grave,
Seemed fading like the orphan child.

'Twas eve again; a stormy cloud
Hung darkly o'er that lonely place,
The wintry blast was long and loud,
No eye a sunbeam there could trace,
But 'neath the withered flow'rs so wild,
Which once had risen there from tears—
Lay sleeping too the orphan child.

From "Canadian Monthly" for December.

FREE THOUGHT LECTURES, FOR 1878.

By B. F. UNDERWOOD.

POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE LECTURES.

1. The Demands of Liberalism.
2. The Positive Side of Free Thought.
3. The Genesis and Nature of Religion considered as an element of Human Nature.
4. A Scientific and Philosophical View of Religious Revivals.
5. The Influence of Christianity on Civilization.
6. The Triumphs of Liberalism.
7. What Liberalism offers as a Substitute for the Christian Theology.
8. A True Man Better than a True Christian.
9. Judaism and Christianity, Outgrowths of Pre-Existent Heathenism.
10. Origin and History of the Bible. (From one to six lectures.)
11. Buddha and Buddhism.
12. Ancient Egypt: Her Laws, Morality, and Religion.
13. The Theory of Evolution.
14. Darwinism: Its Principles Stated and Defended.
15. Natural Selection *versus* Design in Nature.
16. The Philosophy of Herbert Spencer.
17. Modern Scientific Materialism.
18. Instinct and Intuition. organized experiences of the Race.
19. Woman: Her Past and Present, Her Rights and Wrongs.
20. Paine: The Pioneer of Free Thought in America.
21. The French Revolution: Its Cause and Consequence.

CRITICAL LECTURES.

22. The Fallacies of Rev. Joseph Cook regarding the Personality and Being of God.
23. Cook's Criticism of Scientific Materialism Examined.
24. Why I am an Unbeliever.
25. Christianity and Intellectual Progress.
26. The Four Gospels Unhistorical and Unreliable.
27. The Evidences for the Divinity of the Bible Examined.
28. Popular Assumptions Regarding the Bible and Christianity.
29. Popular Objections to Infidelity Answered.
30. The Crimes and Cruelties of Catholic and Protestant Christianity.
31. Bible Prophecies Falsified by the Facts of History.
32. The Proofs of a Personal, Intelligent Deity Examined.
33. The Pros and Cons of a Future State.

For terms, &c., address

B. F. UNDERWOOD,
THORNDIKE, MASS.

The People's Telephone, on ultra orthodox sheet, published at Red Oak, Iowa, speaking of Mr. B. F. Underwood's lecture in that place says:—

In the Saturday night discussion, the only one we have attended up to this time, Prof. Underwood had the affirmative and introduced the nebulous theory of creation, of Kant or La Place, and backed it up with eighteen distinct arguments in its support.—The Prof. is certainly a strong reasoner, a pleasing speaker and fair, square debater. Although we are not a believer in the theory he advanced, we were strongly impressed by the ability of the man and the wide range his study of the subject has taken, and his close examination of the laws of nature. He introduced nothing of an extraneous character, nothing not pertinent to the question under consideration, and he put his alleged facts into such good shape, wove them together with such a strong chain of cogent reasoning, as commanded the respect and close attention of those who differ with him.—He is certainly a man of honest convictions, an able, fair debater and entitled to the respectful attention he receives.

COMMUNICATIONS.

For the Free Thought Journal.

In No. 2 first article is an answer by Mr. Underwood to the "Dominion Churchman," who asks, what Scepticism has to offer in the place of the Bible and Christianity.

Mr. Underwood says:—"All that is good and true in the Christian system we would retain."

This is an admission that there is something true or good in it. Now I have held for years, that the Christian system is utterly false, from beginning to end. That there is not one single redeeming feature in it. Now if I have been calling the thing worse than it is I should be heartily sorry. Will Mr. Underwood be so good as to point out what he conceives to be good or true in the Christian system?

He says in another place:—"While we regard Jesus as a brother

and benefactor—as we do Paine and Parker." This is an admission that Jesus was as real a person as Paine or Parker. Does Mr. Underwood really believe in the "Ghost-story" in the 1st chapter of Matthew? It is not claimed for Paine or Parker that a ghost was their father, and where such an origin is claimed for Jesus, it ought to be proof positive to any rational person that Jesus never existed at all but, was a mere myth like all the God-begotten heroes of antiquity.

SARNIA.

JAMES THOMSON.

NEW SARUM, December 5th.

For the Freethought Journal.

While there is going on so much discussion on the question of Christianity, would it not be pertinent to go back to the Old Testament, and to enquire into those legends which, taken as history, form the basis on which are built a priori reasons why there should be a revelation.

The keystone of the Christian scheme as related in Genesis, is the "Fall of Man." Man is placed in paradise—is forbidden to eat of a certain fruit—Adam eats, tempted by Eve—Eve eats, tempted by the serpent—this serpent, according to church interpretation, is the devil—and the devil is a fallen angel. Now on what ground is the serpent said to be the devil? The Jews, who ought to know the meaning of their own books say that it was a serpent, and the whole story an allegory. Nothing can be more arbitrary than to say without proof, and in spite of the Jews, that the serpent is the Christian devil; besides, it is against all rules of interpretation to take one part of a narrative literally, and another part to suit circumstances, figuratively.

Then, again, whence do we get the devil? He is a fallen angel—but whence comes the legend of the fall of the angels? It is not in the Bible at all. Jude in his Epistle alludes to the fall of the angels, quoting the book of Enoch; but Papias says that the epistle of Jude was from the first considered spurious;—and the "Book of Enoch" is not in the Bible at all. The devil then comes to us from the fall of the angels, and we learn the fable of the fall of the angels by an extract in a spurious gospel from an unknown book.

Whence, then, came the fable of the fall of the angels? It is to be found only in the sacred books of the Hindoos, the "Shastah"—five thousand years old—coming apparently to the Jews through Babylon at the time of the captivity. The first chapter is so remarkable that an extract may be worth making. It begins with these words:—"God is one, he has created all things; God conducts the whole creation by a general providence—resulting from a fixed principle." Here then, we have contradicted the popular teaching that the Jews were a people specially set apart to preserve the knowledge of the "one true God." We see that a thousand years before Abraham, taking the chronology of the Bible itself, the Brahmins had, unaided, arrived at the knowledge of the Divine Unity.

I saw in the "Bible Index" of the Disciple community some time ago, that Mr. Underwood is represented as supporting atheism, but this is an old trick of the "church party." The term infidel has ceased, except among the uneducated classes, to be a term of reproach; but "atheist" is still for a time at least, a term of obloquy; it is the old plan of trying to destroy by vilification the man whose arguments you cannot answer.

Until the Church has refuted the conclusions of the scientific Biblical critics of the last thirty years, most of them too, as Strauss, Schleiermacher, DeWitt and others, themselves theologians, every one capable of understanding an argument, ought, as a reasoning man, to be an infidel.

Neither atheism or theism are provable. The East has for thousands of years believed in Supreme Intelligence pervading the universe. That is conceivable; but the idea of the personal God of popular Christianity—Infinite as conceived, limited by personality—a limited Infinite—is a contradiction in the terms, and is not conceivable. These matters belong to the unknowable, in the meantime, our experience is that nothing in nature or history has ever been proved to have been brought about by a departure from the fixed laws of the universe, or of any will superior to that of man.

G. H.

Truth comes to mortals gently, tenderly and sweetly, filling them with a peace that passeth understanding. Error clouds, affrights, angers and debases the soul. By their respective fruits we may know them.—*James*.

The liberal religionists say we recognize these rare exceptions among womankind—the George Sands and Harriet Martineau—but the masses of the sex are in such absolute bondage to the church that their votes would swamp any republic. So would the votes of unthinking men when the above mentioned questions come up for general consideration. The remedy is the same in both cases, *education, freedom to think*.—*E. Cady Stanton*.

DARWINISM.

BY WILLIAM EMMETTE COLEMAN.

Based partially upon Darwin, Wallace, Haeckel, Huxley, Fiske, Youmans, and others.

In December, 1831, Charles Darwin started upon that voyage around the world in the course of which he fell in with the facts which suggested his theory of the origin of species. On his return to England in 1837, he began practically to collect all kinds of facts which might be of use in the solution of the problem, "How is organic evolution caused?" After seven years of unremitting labor (in 1844), he committed to manuscript a brief sketch of his general conclusions, the main points of which were communicated to his friends Sir Charles Lyell and Dr. Hooker. After this he continued to work assiduously fifteen years longer (till 1859) in testing the weak and strong points of his theory, before presenting it to the public. It is significant that the weightiest objections which have been brought to bear on the Darwinian theory are to be found in Darwin's own work, where they are elaborately and conclusively answered. In 1858, Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace, having arrived at views concerning the origin of species quite similar to Mr. Darwin's, published an essay on the subject. Seeing which, Mr. Darwin, at the earnest request of his friends Lyell and Hooker, prepared for publication his memorable treatise on the "Origin of Species," which was given to the world in 1859.

It is a common error to speak of Mr. Darwin as if he were the originator of the derivation theory, or the doctrine of evolution; the term Darwinism being popularly used to signify the general principle of the development of higher species from lower by natural descent. Though Darwin was not the founder of the theory of organic evolution, he was yet the first to fairly establish the fact of said evolution; and he was also the first to point out the *modus operandi* of the change of species. It was by pointing out adequate causes of organic evolution that Darwin established the development theory upon a thoroughly scientific basis.

The first basic principle posited by Darwin is, the innate tendency to variation from the parental stock almost universally found in organic nature. There are innumerable cases, we know, in which species are made to change rapidly through the deliberate intervention of man; as in the cases of horses, dogs, pigeons, pigs, cattle, fowl, silk-moths, and bees. This variability, however, is not really caused by man; he only exposes organic beings to new conditions of life, and then nature acts upon the organization and causes it to vary. Mr. Darwin has shown how a similar process of selection, going on throughout the organic world without the knowledge or intervention of man, tends not only to maintain but to produce adaptive alterations in plants and animals. All plants and animals tend to increase in a high geometrical ratio, and, unless their growth and expansion were checked through the operation of natural law, they would in a short time overspread the earth. In case of a plant yielding one hundred seeds yearly, each of which hundred, reaching maturity the following year, doing likewise, in the tenth year the product would be one hundred quintillions of adult plants! The unchecked reproduction of many insects, crustaceans, and fishes could not long go on, without requiring the assimilation of a greater quantity of matter than is contained in the whole solar system! A single codfish has been known to lay six million eggs within a year; but of these six millions only a sufficient number survive to replace their two parents, and to replace a small proportion of those contemporary cod fish who leave no progeny. The rest must die. We may thus understand what is meant by the "struggle for existence." In this struggle, a few favored ones in each generation survive and propagate to their offspring the qualities by virtue of which they have survived. Consequent upon the struggle for existence, it follows that any being, if it vary however slightly in any manner profitable to itself, under the complex and sometimes varying conditions of life, will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be what Darwin terms *naturally selected*. The organisms which survive and propagate their kind are those which are best adapted to

the conditions in which they live; and the principle by which each slight variation, if useful, is preserved, or, if injurious, is destroyed, is called by Mr. Darwin NATURAL SELECTION, or the SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST. Man by selection can certainly produce great results, and can adapt organic beings to his own uses, through the accumulation of slight but useful variations; but natural selection is a power incessantly ready for action, and is as immeasurably superior to man's feeble efforts, as the works of Nature are to those of Art.

As organisms must adapt themselves to their environment or perish, and as constant change has been the order of things ever since our planet first became fit to support organic life, no part of the earth's surface having ever been, or is now, at rest, it follows that the various organisms have been unable to remain constant and live. The members of each species are ever slightly varying; and when the environment of a species changes, if certain variations tend to bring the individuals which manifest them into closer adaptation to the new environment, these individuals will survive in the struggle for life; and thus the average character of the species will be somewhat altered. Changes occur in organic forms to keep them in harmony with the changed conditions; and as the changes of conditions are permanent changes, in the sense of not reverting back to identical previous conditions, the changes of organic forms must be in the same sense permanent, and thus *originate species*.

The increased use and disuse of parts in animals also exerts a marked influence: in the domestic duck the bones of the wing weigh less and the bones of the leg more, in proportion to the whole skeleton, than do the same bones in the wild duck; this being due to the domestic duck flying much less, and walking more, than its wild parents. Domestic animals have generally drooping ears, due to the disuse of the muscles of the ear, owing to the animals being but seldom much alarmed. The wingless condition of so many Modern beetles is due to the action, probably, of natural selection, combined with disuse. The rudimentary condition of the eyes in moles and other burrowing animals is probably due to gradual reduction from disuse, aided perhaps by natural selection. In some of the crabs inhabiting caves the foot-stalk for the eye remains, though the eye is gone;—the stand for the telescope is there, though the telescope with its glasses has been lost. In the blind cave-rat captured by Prof. Silliman, the eyes were lustrous and of large size; and these animals, after having been exposed for about a month to a graduated light, acquired a dim perception of objects.

The changes directly caused by natural selection are likewise greatly aided and emphasized by other changes indirectly produced by correlated variations, or correlation of growth. The whole organization is so tied together during its growth and development, that when variations in any one part occur, and are accumulated through natural selection, other parts become modified. Among many examples of this principle found both in plants and animals, the following are striking: cats which are entirely white and have blue eyes are generally deaf, hairless dogs have imperfect teeth; long-haired and coarse-haired animals are apt to have long or many horns; pigeons with feathered feet have skins between their outer toes, and those with long beaks have long feet; diversity in the shape of the pelvis in birds is correlated with and causes the remarkable diversity in the shape of their kidneys; long limbs are almost always accompanied by elongated heads.

According to the theory of natural selection, each species of animals will be characterized by that shade of color which is most advantageous to the species in the struggle for existence. In striking harmony with this, we find that the great majority of animals are so colored as best to escape notice, and that animals which are not protectively colored are animals whose habits of life are such as to enable them to dispense with secrecy. The polar bear is white, as the California bear is grey, and the Hindoostan bear black, because with a coat thus colored it can best escape notice and secure its prey. In the sandy deserts of Northern Africa, all birds, without exception, all snakes and lizards, and all the smaller mammals, are of a uniform sandy color. The

tawny lion is a typical example, and must be almost invisible when crouched upon the sand or among desert rocks and stones. His brother, the tiger, is a jungle animal and hides among tufts of grass or of bamboos, and in these positions the vertical stripes of his body so assimilate with the vertical stems of the bamboo, as to assist greatly in concealing him from his approaching prey. Such nocturnal animals as owls, goatsuckers, mice, bats, and moles, are dusky-colored. Flat fish, like the skate and flounder, are colored like the gravel beneath them. It is obvious that the most conspicuous of those animals serving as food for others will be the soonest detected, killed, and eaten; while the most conspicuous carnivorous animals will be the most easily avoided, and hence will be the most likely to perish for lack of sustenance. These facts, with numerous others cited by Mr. Wallace, fully sustain the general conclusion, that the colors of animals are in the main determined by the exigencies of the struggle for existence. Where animals are otherwise adequately protected—either by their peculiar habits, by a sting, a disgusting odor or taste, or by a hard carapace,—and where it is not needful for them to be hidden from the prey upon which they feed, then there is usually no reference to protection in their color.

Sexual Selection also plays an important part in Darwinian evolution. This form of selection depends, not on a struggle for existence in relation to other organic beings or to external conditions, but on a struggle between individuals of one sex, generally but not universally the males, for the possession of the other sex. The result is not death to the unsuccessful competitor, but few or no offspring. Generally, the most vigorous males, those which are best fitted for their places in nature, will have most progeny. But in many cases, victory depends not so much on general vigor, as on having special weapons, confined to the male sex. A hornless stag or spurless cock would have a poor chance of leaving numerous offspring. In many cases the gorgeous tints of the otherwise protected male animal are due to sexual selection,—to the continual selection of the more beautiful males by the females. By this means a great number of male animals, as all our gorgeous birds, including the bird of paradise, some fishes, reptiles, and mammals, and a host of magnificently colored butterflies, have been rendered beautiful for beauty's sake,—the more beautiful males having been continually preferred by the females,—but not for the delight of man. So it is with the music of birds. When the female is as beautifully colored as the male, as is often the case with birds and butterflies, the cause apparently lies in the colors acquired through sexual selection having been transmitted to both sexes, instead of to the males alone. It seems almost certain, that, if the individuals of one sex were, during a long series of generations, to prefer pairing with certain individuals of the other sex characterized in some peculiar manner, the offspring would slowly but surely become modified in this same manner. The truth of the principle of sexual selection necessarily leads to the remarkable conclusion that the nervous system not only regulates most of the existing functions of the body, but has indirectly influenced the progressive development of various bodily structures and of certain mental qualities. Courage, pugnacity, perseverance, strength and size of body, weapons of all kinds, musical organs, both vocal and instrumental, bright colors and ornamental appendages, have all been indirectly gained by the one sex or the other, through the exertion of choice, the influence of love and jealousy, and the appreciation of the beautiful in sound, color, or form; and these powers of the mind manifestly depend on the development of the brain.

The most flourishing, or the dominant, species,—those which range widely, are the most diffused in their own country, and are the most numerous in individuals,—oftenest produce well-marked varieties, or incipient species. Thus the larger genera tend to become larger; and throughout nature the forms of life which are now dominant tend to become still more dominant by having many modified and dominant descendants. The larger genera, however, also tend to break up into smaller genera; and thus the forms of life throughout the universe become divided into groups subordinate to groups. The struggle for the production of

new and modified descendants will mainly lie between the larger groups which are all trying to increase in numbers. One large group will slowly conquer another large group, reduce its numbers, and thus lessen its chance of further variation and improvement. Within the same large group, the later and more highly perfected sub-groups, from branching out and seizing on many new places in the polity of Nature, will constantly tend to supplant and destroy the earlier and less improved sub-groups. Small and broken groups and sub-groups will finally disappear.

Natural selection, also, leads to divergence of character; for the more organic beings diverge in structure, habits, and constitution, by so much the more can a large number be supported on the same area. Therefore, during the modification of the descendants of any one species, and during the incessant struggle of all species to increase in number, the more diversified the descendants become, the better will be their chance of success in the battle of life. Thus the small differences distinguishing varieties of the same species steadily tend to increase, till they equal the greater differences between species of the same genus, or even of distinct genera.

It is the most closely allied forms,—varieties of the same species, and species of the same genus or of related genera,—that, having nearly the same structure, constitution, and habits, generally come into the severest competition with each other; consequently, each new variety or species, during the progress of its formation, will generally press hardest on its nearest kindred, and tend to exterminate them. We see this in the recent extension over parts of the United States of one species of swallow having caused the decrease of another species. The recent increase of the missel-thrush in parts of Scotland has caused the decrease of the song-thrush. How frequently we hear of one species of rat taking the place of another species under the most different climates. In Russia the small Asiatic cockroach has everywhere driven before it its great congener. In Australia the imported hive-bee is rapidly exterminating the small, stingless native bee. As natural selection necessarily acts by the selected form having some advantage in the struggle for life over other forms, there will be a constant tendency in the improved descendants of any one species to supplant and exterminate in each stage of descent their predecessors and their original progenitor. Hence all the intermediate forms between the earlier and later states, that is between the less and more improved states of the same species, as well as the original parent-species itself, will generally tend to become extinct. So it probably will be with many whole collateral lines of descent, which will be conquered by later and improved lines. If, however, the modified offspring of a species get into some distinct country, or becomes quickly adapted to some quite new station, in which offspring and progenitor do not come into competition, both may continue to exist.

On the Darwinian theory, the continued existence of lowly organisms offers no difficulty; for natural selection, or the survival of the fittest, does not necessarily include progressive improvement,—it only takes advantage of such variations as arise and are beneficial to each creature under its complex relations of life. What advantage would it be to an infusorian animalcule, to an intestinal worm, or even to an earth-worm, to be highly organized? If it were no advantage, these forms would be left by natural selection unimpaired, and might remain for ages in their present lowly condition.

New species have appeared very slowly, one after the other, both on the land and in the waters. Species belonging to different classes and genera have not changed at the same rate, or in the same degree. The variability of each species is independent of that of all others; hence it is by no means surprising that one species should retain the same identical form much longer than others; or if changing, should change in a less degree. A species once lost will never reappear, even if the same conditions of life, organic and inorganic, should recur. For though the offspring of one species might be adapted to fill the place of another species in the economy of nature, and thus supplant it; yet the two forms—the old and the new—would not be identically the same;

for both would almost certainly inherit different characters from their distinct progenitors; and organisms already differing would vary in a different manner. Natural selection cannot possibly produce any modification in a species exclusively for the good of another species: throughout nature one species incessantly takes advantage of, and profits by, the structures of others. But natural selection often produces structures for the direct injury of other animals, as in the fung of the adder, and in the ovipositor of the ichneumon, by which its eggs are deposited in the living bodies of other insects. Natural selection will never produce in a being any structure more injurious than beneficial to that being, for natural selection acts solely by and for the good of each.

Species at any one period are not indefinitely variable, and are not linked together by a multitude of intermediate gradations, partly because the process of natural selection is always very slow, and at any one time acts only on a few forms; and partly because the very process of natural selection implies the continued supplanting and extinction of preceding and intermediate gradations. An intermediate variety usually exists in less numbers than the two forms which it connects; consequently the latter two during the course of further modification, from existing in greater number, will have a great advantage over the less numerous intermediate variety, and will thus generally succeed in supplanting and exterminating it. Natural selection will modify the structure of the young in relation to the parent, and of the parent in relation to the young. In social animals it will adapt the structure of each individual for the benefit of the whole community, if the community profits by the selected change. In two beings widely remote from each other in the natural scale, organs serving for the same purpose and in external appearance closely similar may have been separately and independently formed; but when such organs are closely examined, essential differences in their structure can almost always be detected; and this naturally follows from the principle of natural selection. On the other hand, the common rule throughout nature is infinite diversity of structure for gaining the same end; and this again naturally follows from the same great principle.

As Huxley and Haeckel have shown, the only feasible manner of arranging the animal kingdom is in a number of diverging or branching lines, like the boughs and twigs of a tree. Starting from the amœba and its kindred, which are neither animal nor vegetal in character, we encounter two diverging lines of development represented respectively—according to Haeckel—by those protists with harder envelopes which are the predecessors of the vegetable kingdom, and those with the softer envelopes which are the forerunners of the more mobile animal type of organization. Confining our attention to animals, we meet first with the cœlenterata, including sponges, corals, and medusæ, characterized by the union of masses of amœba-like units, with but little specialization of structure or of function. Beside these lowly forms, but not immediately above any one of them, we find echinoderms starting off in one direction, worms or annuloids in a second, and molluscoids in a third. Following the first road, we stop short at echinoderms. But in the second, we find annuloid worms succeeded by articulata, or true annulosa, which re-diverge in sundry directions, reaching the greatest divergence from the primitive forms in the crabs, spiders, and ants. On the third road, we find the molluscoid worms, diverging into mollusks, and, as some think, into vertebrates. Through the bryozoa we are gradually led to the true mollusk, while the tunicata, of which the ascidian or "pitcher" is the most familiar form, leads, as is held by some naturalists, directly to the vertebrates. By others, however, the vertebrates are regarded, not as being derived from the molluscoids, but as constituting a fourth independent divergence from the primitive forms; the four great kingdoms of the animal world, the radiata, articulata, mollusca, and vertebrata, being separate offshoots from the original basis of animal life.

Now, from first to last, the farther we trace any one line of development, the more widely we find it diverging from other lines which originated in the same point. The higher insects and crustaceans are not at all like worms; but the myriapeda, the

lower crustaceans, and the caterpillars of higher insects, are like worms. Viewed at the upper end of the scale, the mollusks are widely different from the vertebrates: viewed at the lower end, the difference almost vanishes. In the man and the oak we get perhaps the widest possible amount of divergence between organisms; yet, at the bottom of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, we find creatures like the amœba and protococcus, which cannot be classified as either animal or vegetal, because they are as much one as the other. The monotremata, of all mammals the least remote from reptiles and birds, are at the same time the oldest. Far back, in secondary times, we find lizards strongly resembling fishes, and other saurian creatures which differ little from birds.

The embryonic development of organisms furnishes a strong proof of the genetic connection of races and species, and the derivative descent of higher from lower forms. At the outset the germs of all animals are exactly like each other; but in the process of development each germ acquires first the differential characteristics of the sub-kingdom to which it belongs, then successively, the characteristics of its class, order, family, genus, species, and race. For example, the germ-cell of a man is not only indistinguishable from the germ cell of a dog, a chicken, or a tortoise, but it is like the adult form of an amœba or a protococcus, which are nothing but simple cells. Four weeks after conception, the embryos of the man and dog can hardly be distinguished from each other, but have become perceptibly different from the corresponding embryos of the chicken and the tortoise. At eight weeks a few points of difference between the dog and man become perceptible; *the tail is shorter in the human embryo*, for one thing; but these differences are less striking than those which separate the two mammals on the one hand from the reptile and birds on the other. At a later stage the human embryo becomes still more unlike the dog, acquiring characteristics peculiar to the order of primates to which man belongs. Lastly the fetus of civilized man, at seven months, is entirely human in appearance, but still has not thoroughly acquired the physical attributes which distinguish the civilized man from the Australian or the negro.

Not only is this principle exemplified in the vertebrates, but in the other animal kingdoms as well,—in the radiates, mollusks, and articulata. The higher species of each during their embryonic development, successively resemble the lower orders of their type of animality. An insect passes through phases wherein it can scarcely be distinguished from a worm: echinoderms in their earlier stages resemble the adult acaliphs (jelly-fish) and also polyps (corals, sea anemones, etc.); in short, as Agassiz tells us, every animal belonging to any of the higher groups, during the transformation by which it reaches the adult stage, passes through modified conditions, in each of which it resembles some being of its own type of the animal kingdom.

The facts of morphology are equally significant. Why, unless through common inheritance, should all the vertebrata be constructed on the same type? Structurally considered, man, elephant, mouse, ostrich, humming-bird, tortoise, snake, frog, crocodile, halibut, herring, and shark, are but different modifications of one common form. What can be more curious than that the hand of a man, formed for grasping, that of a mole for digging, the leg of a horse, the paddle of the porpoise, and the wing of the bat, should all be constructed on the same pattern, and should include similar bones, in the same relative situations? Externally there is but little resemblance between the human hand and the hoof of a horse; yet anatomy shows that the horse's hoof is made up of claws or fingers firmly soldered together. Turning to the annulosa, we find that all insects and crustaceans—dragon-flies and mosquitoes as well as crabs and shrimps—are composed of just twenty segments. What can be the meaning of this community of structure among these hundreds of thousands of species filling the air, burrowing in the earth, swimming in the water, creeping about among the sea-weed, and having such enormous differences of size, outline, and substance, that no community would be suspected between them? Why, under the down-covered body of the moth and under the hard wing-cases of the beetle, should there be discovered the same number of divisions as in the calcareous frame-

work of the lobster? Such community of structure is strong evidence in favor of community of origin.

The facts of geographical distribution and geological succession are likewise confirmatory of the development theory. The extinct animals found in a given geographical area resemble, both in general structure and in special modifications, the animals which now live in the same area. Thus the fossil mammals of Australia are chiefly marsupials, allied in structure to the marsupials now inhabiting that continent; the extinct mammals of South America closely resemble living sloths, armadillos, and ant-eaters. Prof. Owen has extended the same generalization to the mammals of the Old World. The same law is exhibited in the extinct birds of New Zealand, the extinct land-shells of Maderia, the brackish-water shells of the Aralo-Caspian Sea, and in sea-shells in general.

The absence of intermediate forms—"missing links"—is often posited as a potent argument against Darwinism. In connection with this, it should be remembered that only a small portion of the globe has been geologically explored with care; that only certain classes of organic beings have been largely preserved in a fossil state; that the number both of specimens and of species preserved in our museums is absolutely as nothing compared with the number of generations which must have passed away during a single formation; that owing to subsidence being almost necessary for the accumulation of deposits rich in fossil species of many kinds, and thick enough to outlast future degradation, great intervals of time must have elapsed between most of our successive formations; that there has probably been more extinction during the periods of subsidence, and more variation during the periods of elevation, and during the latter the record will have been least perfectly kept; that each single formation has not been continuously deposited; that the duration of each formation is, probably, short compared with the average duration of specific forms; that migration has played an important part in the first appearance of new forms in any one area and formation; that widely ranging species are those which have varied most frequently, and have oftenest given rise to new species; that varieties have at first been local; and, lastly, though each species must have passed through numerous transitional stages, it is probable that the periods, during which each underwent modification, though many and long as measured by years, have been short in comparison with the periods during which each remained in an unchanged condition. These causes, taken conjointly, will to a large extent explain why we do not find interminable varieties connecting together all extinct and existing forms by the finest graduated steps.

Despite these drawbacks, and the fact that, in general, intermediate transitional forms must be the soonest killed off in the struggle for existence as heretofore shown, many such forms are frequently met with. The explorations of the last few years have resulted in the discovery of a large number of "missing links,"—intercalary forms; and new ones are constantly being brought to light. It may be asserted as one of the most significant truths of paleontology, that extinct forms are almost always intermediate between forms now existing. Not only species, genera, and families, but even orders of contemporary animals, apparently quite distinct, are, now and then, fused together by the discovery of extinct intercalary forms. In Cuvier's time, horse, tapir, pig, and rhinoceros were ranked as a distinct order from cow, sheep, deer, buffalo, and camel. But so many transitional forms have been found in tertiary strata that pachyderms and ruminants are now united in a single order. By numerous connecting links the pig is now seen to be closely united with the camel and the antelope. Similar results relating to the proboscideans, the hyæna family of carnivora, the apes, the horse, and the rhinoceros, have been obtained from the exploration of a single locality near Mount Pentelikos in Greece. Among more than seventy species there discovered, the gradational arrangement of forms was so strongly marked, that the great paleontologist, M. Gaudre, became a convert to Mr. Darwin's theory in the course of the search. The evidence of the existence of transitional forms, connecting links between differing species, has been of late, Huxley informs us, forthcoming in con-

siderable and constantly increasing quantities, and in respect to all divisions of the animal kingdom. Every new investigation into the tertiary mammalian fauna brings fresh evidence, tending to show how the various groups of animals have been derived the one from the other. The accurate information obtained in the department of paleontologic research has put the fact of evolution beyond a doubt. Evolution is no longer a matter of speculative reasoning, but is now a matter of fact and history as much as the monuments of Egypt.

The presence of rudimentary or aborted organs in many, if not all, of the higher grades of animals, is unintelligible, save on the theory of evolutionary development. Man and other higher animals we find possessed of the traces of organs or structures of no use or value to the forms possessing them, but which appear fully developed and of much use to lower allied forms.

The guinea-pig has teeth shed before it is born; the female dugong has tusks that never cut the gum; animals that never swim are provided with the requisite membranous apparatus therefor; foetal whales have useless teeth in their jaws, as have also certain embryonic birds; many snakes have the rudiments of a pelvis and hind-limbs; insects that never fly have wings firmly fastened under their wing cases; calves and other ruminants have incisor teeth that never pierce the gums; snakes have one lobe of the lungs rudimentary; and so, in many other instances. Rudimentary organs may be compared with the letters in a word, still retained in the spelling, but become useless in the pronunciation, but which serves as a clue for its derivation.

Many other facts in nature are rendered plain and clear, and are capable of being explained even in their minutest details, by the Darwinian hypothesis; and when a theory, deduced from the observed general facts of organic life, and invoking no agencies but such as are known to be in operation, is found on trial to account for such an enormous mass of special facts, for which no other valid explanation has been produced,—we may well say of it, as Laplace said of his own Nebular Hypothesis, that the chances in favor of its being a true explanation are many thousand millions to one.

The growth of Darwinism has been unparalleled in the records of science. Never in the whole history of science and philosophy has so great a revolution been effected as that due to the publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species." The belief in the independent creation or origin of the species of animals and plants, and in the very recent appearance of man on this planet, so prevalent previous to its publication, has utterly disappeared, not only in the scientific world, but almost equally so among the literary and educated classes generally; and in the matter of the evolution of man, hardly any one capable of judging of the evidence now doubts the derivation of man's bodily structure as a whole from the lower animal world. In Germany and Holland the entire scientific world is virtually Darwinian, and in England and America the most eminent savants are its staunchest advocates. One by one, the opponents of its truth are yielding to its potent sway, and enrolling themselves in the mighty Darwinian phalanx fast conquering the world. Lyell, Procter, Owen, Dana, Winchell, all its sturdy foes in times not long ago, have succumbed to the inevitable, and given in their adhesion to its general truth. Ninety-nine hundredths of the leading scientific investigators of the day, says Youmans, are evolutionists; in fact the banded scientific world may be considered Darwinian.

Even the Orthodox Christians are largely accepting Darwinism. Voluines, pamphlets, sermons, and lectures are constantly issuing in reconciliation of Darwinism and Christianity; and in a comparatively short time, we shall behold the entire Christian Church advancing the claims of Darwinism as a fundamental theological tenet, plainly taught in the "Revealed Word."

It is interesting to contemplate a tangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing in the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, that of ourselves included, so different from each other, and dependent upon each other in so complex a man-

nor, have all been produced by laws acting around us. These laws, taken in the largest sense, being Growth with Reproduction; Inheritance which is almost implied by Reproduction; Variability from the indirect and direct action of the conditions of life, and from use and disuse: a Ratio of Increase so high as to lead to a struggle for life, and as a consequence to Natural Selection, entailing Divergence of Character and the Extinction of less-improved forms. Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, including man, directly follows. There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally evolved by a few forms or by one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning, endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved!

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, U. S. A.

CASKET OF GEMS.

Sin always leaves its mark. A man who has been bad, brutal and vicious all his life cannot be made really pure, moral and good by any sudden conversion or ceremony. Virtue, benevolence, charity, goodness and purity come by slow and steady growth and accumulation. They are not picked up as one gathers pebbles upon the sea shore, but they must be laboriously mined out, as one mines out gold from its deep-hidden subterranean recesses by slow, patient, persevering toil.—*Mrs. E. D. Slenker.*

If God created a universe, was it because he desired a universe? Does not desire for a thing, imply dissatisfaction? If before the creation, God desired worlds and sentient beings, must he not have been dissatisfied, discontented with his condition,—a condition in which he sustained no relation to worlds and living creatures? Does not dissatisfaction imply finiteness, incompleteness, imperfection? If the desire for a universe had a beginning, must there not have been a change, and an addition to his wants? Can an infinite being—to whose existence relation and knowledge no additions can be made—have *new* desires? Can such a being have *any* desires, since they imply dissatisfaction with existing conditions? If it be said the desire for a universe always existed, must there not have been an unsatisfied desire, and consequently unhappiness up to the time that the creation occurred?—*B. F. Underwood.*

Rely not upon creeds, dogmas or beliefs, but place thy confidence on deeds and works; for these, combined with an earnest desire to attain to the greatest elevation, morally and physically, of which the race is capable, will make for thee a heaven here and now, which shall be so real and so satisfactory that it will cause to fade into nothingness all dreams of an intangible, incomprehensible vacuum of bliss, in some coming future of which no one knows or can know anything.—*Mrs. E. D. Slenker.*

What thou wilt, thou rather shalt enforce it with thy smile than how to it with thy sword.—*Shakespeare.*

The phrases which men are accustomed to repeat incessantly, end by becoming convictions, and ossify the organs of intelligence.—*Gaethe.*

Time will inevitably sift the false from the true, and what is real in all beliefs and "isms" will stand the test of the very closest examination and the most scientific research. Until people are content to confess their ignorance when they have traced causes as far back as actual knowledge and true reason will account for them; and then wait for future developments, instead of trying to solve the why and wherefore by saying "God did it," the whole progress of real truth will be kept back by Bibles, myths, ghosts, and gods.—*Mrs. E. D. Slenker.*

People gave ear to an upstart astrologer (Copernicus) who strove to show that the earth revolves, not the heavens, nor the

firmament, the sun and moon—but such is now the state of things. Whoever wishes to appear clever must devise some new system which of all systems is, of course, the very best. This fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy. But the sacred scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and not the earth.—*Martin Luther.*

Men must endure their going hence, even as their coming hither; ripeness is all.—*Shakespeare.*

We must be afraid of neither poverty nor exile, nor imprisonment; of fear itself only should we be afraid.—*Epictetus.*

Wood burns because it has the proper stuff for that purpose in it; a man becomes renowned because he has the necessary stuff in him. Renown is not to be sought, and all pursuit of it is vain. A person may, indeed, by skillful conduct, and various artificial means, make a sort of name for himself; but if the inner jewel is wanting, all is vanity, and will not last a day.—*Gaethe.*

OUR CONTEMPORARIES.

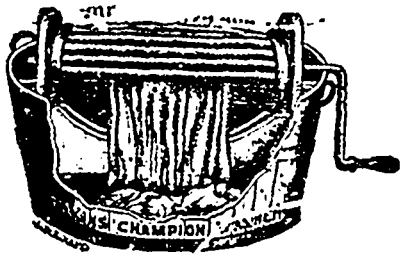
The *Spiritual Offering*, a monthly magazine formerly published in St. Louis, and now in Springfield, Mo., has reached its ninth number, which is before us. It is certainly one of the best Spiritualist publications offered to the public. Its contributors are both able and earnest, and it is conducted with care and dignity. We expect to be able to make such arrangements with its publishers that we can offer the *Spiritual Offering* and the *JOURNAL* at reduced rates.

The *Duluth Tribune* is making it hot for the orthodox people of that enterprising Western town. Bro. Mitchell is a man of ability, and deals sturdy blows. We hail with pleasure such signs of progress, and we hope many more editors will come out from their creed-bound churches and proclaim the truth as it is in Freethought. We wish Bro. Mitchell success, and we have no doubt that if he keeps on in his independent and manly course he will attain it.

We have received the first number of the *Anti-Sceptic*, a twenty-four page magazine to be published monthly in Boston, Mass. Its editor claims to be a "converted Infidel," but is evidently ashamed of his "conversion," as he does not favor the public with his name. Until he does so we shall be somewhat "sceptical" as to his ever having been an Infidel. He promises to demolish "Atheism," "Deism," "Materialism," "Free Religionism," "Spiritism," and all other "isms" that are opposed to Christianity. He uses eminently orthodox christian modes of warfare—misrepresentation, villification and threats. He speaks of "Christian morality" as though all non-christians were *immoral*. We scarcely know which to wonder at most, his impudence or his ignorance. Every word of the twenty-four pages seem to have been written by the same hand and in the same style. Not a single argument in support of Christianity is adduced, nothing but bare assertions of its truth and frantic appeals to the worst passions of the Christian public.

We have received the first number of *Payne's Age of Reason*, a new weekly eight-page Liberal paper, published by Seth Wilbur Payne, New York. It is thoroughly liberal but we think is somewhat egotistical, when it claims to be the only Infidel paper in America. We have noticed that most of our Liberal contemporaries published in the United States coquette with Spiritualism, but we think the *Common Sense* of St. Louis and the *Boston Investigator* are exceptions. If the worthy Editor of the *Age of Reason* will take the trouble to look over the *FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL* we think he will acknowledge that we are about as "broad-gauged" as it is possible to be. The *Age of Reason* is published at the marvelously low price of \$1 a year. We wish Bro. Payne abundant success in his undertaking.

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