

# Freethought Gleanings.

SELECTED AND ARRANGED FROM

“THE FREETHINKER,”

[Prosecuted for Blasphemy.]

DUTY OF HERETICS.—On religion in particular the time appears to me to have come when it is the duty of all who, being qualified in point of knowledge, have on mature consideration satisfied themselves that the current opinions are not only false but hurtful, to make their dissent known; at least, if they are among those whose station or reputation gives their opinion a chance of being attended to. Such an avowal would put an end, at once and for ever, to the vulgar prejudice that what is called, very improperly, unbelief, is connected with any bad qualities, either of mind or heart. The world would be astonished if it knew how great a proportion of its brightest ornaments, of those most distinguished even in popular estimation for wisdom and virtue, are complete sceptics in religion; many of them refraining from avowal, less from personal considerations, than from a conscientious, though now in my opinion a most mistaken apprehension, lest by speaking out what would tend to weaken existing beliefs, and by consequence (as they suppose) existing restraints, they should do harm instead of good.—*J. S. Mill*, “Autobiography,” p. 45; 1873.

MONOTHEISM in Western Europe is now as obsolete and as injurious as Polytheism was fifteen centuries ago. The discipline in which its moral value principally consisted has long since decayed; and consequently the sole effect of its doctrine, which has been so extravagantly praised, is to degrade the affections by unlimited desires, and to weaken the character by servile terrors. The pursuits of practical life were never sincerely promoted by it, and they advanced only by evading or resisting its influence. The noblest of all practical pursuits, that of social regeneration, is at the present time in direct opposition to it. For by its vague notion of providence it prevents men from forming a true con-

ception of law, a conception necessary for true prevision, on which all wise intervention must be based.—*Aug. Comte*, "General View of Positivism" (Bridges' translation), p. 294.

**THEOLOGY v. FREETHOUGHT.**—Theology of the old stamp, so far from encouraging us to love nature, teaches us that it is under a curse. It teaches us to look upon the animal creation with shuddering disgust; upon the whole race of man outside our narrow sect as delivered over to the Devil; and upon the laws of nature at large as a temporary mechanism, in which we have been caught, but from which we are to expect a joyful deliverance. It is science, not theology, which has changed all this; it is the atheists, infidels, and rationalists, as they are kindly called, who have taught us to take fresh interest in our poor fellow denizens of the world, and not to despise them because almighty benevolence could not be expected to admit them to heaven.—*Leslie Stephen*, "Essays on Freethinking and Plain-speaking," p. 354; 1874.

**SCEPTICISM.**—Every advance in science, every improvement in the command of the mechanical forces of nature, every step in political or social freedom, has risen in the first instance from an act of scepticism, from an uncertainty whether the formulæ, or the opinions, or the government, or the received practical theories were absolutely perfect; or whether beyond the circle of received truths there might not lie something broader, deeper, truer, and thus better deserving the acceptance of mankind.—*J. A. Froude*, "Short Studies on Great Subjects," vol. i., p. 243.

THE sacred oracles of divine wisdom, the god-breathed Bible, was not given to men to instruct them in their own wondrous frame and the nature or the constitution and grandeur of the universe we inhabit, but to teach us to save our souls. Such, to the priest-ridden mind, is the all-sufficient apology for the stumbling blocks, the moral errors, and physical impossibilities of the Bible. It is not considered that without some gleams of science man's soul is a blank, his morality incongruous, his religion idolatry, his prayers not the cry of a freeman of the city of god, but the utterances of a scourged or maudlin slave—his hopes of futurity the echo of the fanaticism and fraud of priests.—"The Religious Thoughts of a Believer in Nature," p. 107 (published by John Chapman, 1855).

**ORIGIN OF MORALITY.**—Not in the way assumed by our dogmatic teachers has the morality of human nature been propped up. The power which has moulded us thus far has worked with stern tools upon a rigid stuff. What it has done cannot be so readily undone; and it has endowed us with moral constitutions which take pleasure in the noble, the beautiful, and the true; just as surely as it has endowed us with sentient organisms

which find aloes bitter and sugar sweet. That power did not work with delusions, nor will it stay its hand when such are removed. *Facts* rather than *dogmas* have been its ministers—hunger, shame, pride, love, hate, terror, awe—such were the forces, the interaction and adjustment of which during the immeasurable ages of his development wove the triplex web of man's physical, intellectual, and moral nature, and such are the forces that will be effectual to the end.—*Tyndall* "On Science," Birmingham, October, 1877.

ORTHODOXY AND MORALITY.—From the orthodox or the semi-orthodox come all the querulous misgivings as to the natural foundations of duty; all the assertions that the reasonableness of selfish license and selfish tyranny begin to appear. Orthodoxy it is which in our time *has* reason to feel its own moral ground shaking under its feet, and consequently orthodoxy it is which, at any critical juncture, loses alike its faith in principle, and its hope in patience, and falls into action that is intemperate, national, sectarian, inhumane.—*Miss L. Bevington, Fortnightly Review*, Aug. 1881, p. 185.

TRUTH THE ONLY REVELATION.—The argument so often employed by theologians that divine revelation is necessary for man, and that certain views contained in that revelation are required by our moral consciousness, is purely imaginary and derived from the Revelation which it seeks to maintain. The only thing absolutely necessary for man is Truth; and to that, and that alone, must our moral consciousness adapt itself. Reason and experience forbid the expectation that we can acquire knowledge otherwise than through natural channels. We might as well expect to be supernaturally nourished as supernaturally informed. To complain that we do not know all that we desire to know is foolish and unreasonable. It is tantamount to complaining that the mind of man is not differently constructed. To attain the full altitude of the knowable, whatever that may be, should be our earnest aim, and more than this is not for humanity.—"Supernatural Religion," vol. iii., p. 585; 1879.

EVOLUTION AND MORALITY.—The pulpits of the orthodox churches, the press of the pietistic oratories, the platforms of the missions, the chairs of the consistories, resound with the pretended attacks on the foundations of human existence made by Materialism and Darwinism. They feel surprised that people with such views can be good citizens, honest men, good husbands, and fathers. There are priests who, while defrauding the state of taxes, mount the pulpit and preach that when Materialists and Darwinians do not commit all sort of crimes it is not from righteousness, but from hypocrisy. Let them rage! They require the fear of punishment, the hope of reward in a dreamt-of



beyond, to keep in the right path—for us suffices the consciousness of being men amongst men, and the acknowledgment of their equal rights. We have no other hope than that of receiving the acknowledgments of our fellow-men; no other fear than that of seeing our human dignity violated—a dignity we value the more, since it has been conquered with the greatest labor by us and our ancestors, down to the ape.—*Dr. Carl Vogt*, “Lectures on Man,” Lecture 16, p. 469; 1864.

THE BIBLICAL COSMOGONY.—The creation of the sun takes place on the fourth day only, when the changes of day and night, inconceivable with the sun omitted, are stated to have taken place already for three days. Moreover the creation of the earth precedes that of the sun by several days, and to the latter as well as to the moon is ascribed a subordinate position with regard to the earth, while only casual mention is made of the stars; a perversion of the true relations governing heavenly bodies, unbecoming a divinely-inspired account of the creation. A fact no less striking is the statement that god took no less than five days to create and fashion forth the earth, while for the making of the sun, the whole starry host, as well as the planets—not such in the biblical narrative, it is true, but merely lighted candles—he allowed himself only one day.—*D. F. Strauss*, “The Old Faith and the New,” p. 17; 1873.

GENESIS AND SCIENCE.—When Sunday after Sunday, men who profess to be our instructors in righteousness, read out the statement, “In six days the lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is,” in innumerable churches, they are either propagating what they may easily know, and therefore are bound to know, to be falsities; or if they use the words in some non-natural sense, they fall below the moral standard of the much-abused Jesuit.—*Prof. T. H. Huxley*, “Critiques and Addresses,” p. 271; 1873.

THE CHURCH AND SCIENCE.—Is it at all surprising that the number of those who hold the opinions of the Church in light esteem should so rapidly increase? How can that be received as a trustworthy guide in the invisible, which falls into so many errors in the visible? How can that give confidence in the moral, the spiritual, which has so signally failed in the physical? It is not possible to dispose of these conflicting facts as “empty shadows,” “vain devices,” “errors wearing the deceitful appearance of truth,” as the Church stigmatises them. On the contrary, they are stern witnesses, bearing emphatic and unimpeachable testimony against the ecclesiastical claim to infallibility, and fastening a conviction of ignorance and blindness upon her.—*Prof. J. W. Draper, M.D., LL.D.*, “History of the Conflict between Religion and Science,” p. 361.



SCIENCE DISPLACES ANIMISM.—No indwelling deity now regulates the life of the burning sun, no guardian angels drive the stars across the arching firmament, the divine Ganges is water flowing down into the sea to evaporate into cloud and descend again in rain. No deity simmers in the boiling pot, no presiding spirits dwell in the volcanos, no howling demon shrieks from the mouth of the lunatic. There was a period of human thought when the whole universe seemed actuated by spiritual life. For our knowledge of our own history, it is deeply interesting that there should remain rude races yet living under the philosophy which we have so far passed from, since physics, chemistry, biology, have seized whole provinces of the ancient Animism, setting force for life, and law for will.—*Dr. E. B. Tylor*, "Primitive Culture," vol. ii., p. 167; 1871.

SURVIVALS IN LANGUAGE OF EARLIER BELIEFS.—Among all the relics of barbaric religion which surround us, few are more striking than the phrases which still recognise as a deity the living sky, as "Heaven forgive me!" "The vengeance of heaven will overtake him."—*Dr. E. B. Tylor*, "Anthropology," p. 359; 1881.

CHRISTIAN INCONSISTENCY.—We still pray for a fine harvest; but we really consult the barometer, and believe more in the prophecies of meteorologists than in an answer to our prayers; *Te Deums* for victories excite more ridicule than sympathy; and we encounter the cholera by improved systems of drainage without attributing much value to fastings and processions. In other words, the old belief in the supernatural is so far extinct that it could not be restored without encountering some of the most vigorous beliefs of the time.—*Leslie Stephen*, "North American Review," p. 456; May, 1880.

DECAY OF SUPERNATURALISM.—The universal idea of the interposition of a personal agency in the most common concerns of every-day life, and the most ordinary natural processes inherited by the European, has become gradually discarded. As science by successive efforts explains the sequence and changes in natural phenomena, so mysterious to ignorance, the idea of personal agency becomes gradually eliminated, and driven further beyond the region of direct observation and experience. And, as it escapes ordinary attention, the idea of a supernaturalism gradually fades from the recollection and ceases materially to influence conduct.—*Westminster Review*, p. 150; July, 1881.

SUPERSTITION.—It is idle to attribute the destruction of superstition to the Reformation. Protestants were as superstitious as Catholics.—*Henry Thomas Buckle*, "Miscellaneous Works," vol. i., p. 419.

**DECLINE OF RELIGION.**—But as the intelligence in any race of people increased, their religious fervor has grown more timid and parsimonious. Prayer and genuflections have gradually replaced the burdensome peace-offerings and the bloody sacrifices. Sometimes, as in China, offerings are made only in effigy; paper images are substituted for the real objects, and are burned in their place. The primitive man, urged by some need or by some emotion, prays coarsely but sincerely. "Come and pray," a missionary said to an islander in Madagascar. "Pray for what? I am not in want of anything now," was the answer. After a while prayer becomes a formula read mechanically at stated times; rites and ceremonies are performed without warmth, without earnestness—simply from habit. This change seems to indicate that the age of faith will give way to the age of examination, that the age of ignorance will have to yield to the age of knowledge.—*Dr. Chas. Letourneau*, "Sociology based on Ethnology," p. 323; 1881.

**UNBELIEF OF BELIEVERS.**—A man believes in the immaculate conception. He denies, then, that a certain event took place in accordance with laws exemplified in all similar cases. He impugns, in this instance, the validity of that inductive process upon which he counts at every step in every-day life. He is a scientific sceptic, in the strictest sense, for he is throwing doubt upon the trustworthiness of one of the primary ratiocinative processes. The same is true, whenever an event, admitted by all parties to have occurred, is ascribed by one party to supernatural interference. An amiable apologist expressed his surprise, the other day, that men of science should take into account such trifles as the existence of flint implements, and refuse to take into account the existence of the Bible and Christianity. Surely he never heard of the men of science who denied the existence of the Bible and Christianity. Which man really declines "to take a fact into account?"—the man who declares it to be altogether exceptional and supernatural, or the man who regards it as a result of the normal operation of recognised forces?—which implies the greatest "scepticism?"—the assertion that somebody wrote the book of Genesis by faculties similar to those which enabled another to write Homer, or the assertion that it was utterly impossible that anybody would have written down the legends of the garden of Eden and the ark without the direct assistance of god almighty? If it is sceptical to deny one agency, it is equally sceptical to deny the other. What is given to Jehovah is taken from Moses.—*Leslie Stephen*, "Fortnightly Review," vol. xxii., p. 359; 1877.

**A RELIGION FOR A FEW.**—But there is one moral contradiction inseparable from every form of Christianity which no ingenuity

can resolve, and no sophistry explain away. It is, that so precious a gift, bestowed on a few, should have been withheld from the many; that countless millions of human beings should have been allowed to live and die, to sin and suffer, without the one thing needful, the divine remedy for sin and suffering, which it would have cost the divine giver as little to have vouchsafed to all, as to have bestowed by special grace on a favored minority. Add to this that the divine message, assuming it to be such, has been authenticated by credentials so insufficient, that they fail to convince a large proportion of the strongest and most cultivated minds, and the tendency to disbelieve them appears to grow with the growth of scientific knowledge and critical discrimination. He who can believe these to be the intentional short-comings of a perfectly good being, must impose silence on every prompting of the sense of goodness and justice as received among men.—*John Stuart Mill*, "Three Essays on Religion," p. 115; 1874.

THE Christian god is a father who makes a great deal of his apples and very little of his children.—*Diderot*, "Addition aux Pensées Philosophiques," xvi.

THE ATONEMENT.—It is impossible that the sin of one man can be imposed upon another. It is by a fiction not to be realised by the mind that the transference is to be made. Nor can blood of any sort wipe away sin. Sin has to be repented of and turned from, and can be got rid of in no other manner.—*Judge Thomas Lumsden Strange*, "The Sources of Development of Christianity," p. 254; 1875.

HELL NECESSARY TO CHRISTIAN DOGMA.—Give up material fire, and you lose the bodily resurrection. Renounce the bodily resurrection and away goes the visible coming of Christ to a general judgment, and the climacteric completeness of the Church-scheme of redemption is wanting. Mar the wholeness of the redemption plan, and farewell to the incarnation and vicarious atonement. Neglect the vicarious atonement, and down crumbles the hollow and broken shell of the popular theology helplessly into its grave.—*William Rounseville Alger*, "A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life," p. 518, tenth edition, New York, 1878.

MODERN RELIGION A SURVIVAL OF GROSSER SUPERSTITION.—If we trace the history of religious opinion in our own and neighboring countries, we find as we go back in line, closer and closer approach to those gross supernatural conceptions, the normal intellectual heritage of less civilised peoples of the present day. Carrying the historical retrospect no further than three or four centuries back, we reach in Europe a condition of emotion and a state of opinion wherein religion, superstition, spiritualism, and fetichism, all meet and mingle on common,



harmonious and realistic terms.—“Westminster Review,” “The Decay of Faith,” July, 1882, p. 63.

**HELL-FIRE.**—It was only in a cruel age that the doctrine of hell-fire could have acquired that hold upon men's minds which it had acquired in the Middle Ages. In recent times the doctrine has almost become universally discredited throughout the more enlightened portions of Christendom. Even those who maintain a belief in some kind of endless punishment, no longer insist literally upon the lake of brimstone and fire that is never quenched. Now the doctrine of hell-fire has become thus universally discredited, not because it has been scientifically disproved, for science has neither data nor methods whereby to disprove such a doctrine; nor because it has been exegetically shown to be unsupported by Scripture, for the ingenuity of orthodox exegesis has always been equal to the task of making Scripture mean whatever is required; it has been discredited simply because people have become milder in their manners and less used to enduring and inflicting physical pain. The doctrine shocks people's feelings, and so they refuse to believe it, no matter how the logic of the case may stand.—*Prof. John Fiske*, “North American Review,” January, 1881, p. 9.

**THE CHRISTIAN GOD.**—The incoherence of the Christian scheme is surpassed by its moral depravity. What are the motives attributed to the creator for ordaining evil? He ordained it, as the theologians tell us, for his own glorification! His object was to manifest his majesty in justice and in mercy; his means was to create man; he created him miserable in order to show his mercy, he created him sinful in order to show his justice! Thus the incentive to creation was *vanity*, the inconceivably puerile desire in the creator to dazzle the eyes of his own puppets! It was for this that he ordained eternal misery; it was thus that amongst men he gives life to those who in their mother's womb are destined to inevitable damnation, in order to glorify his name by their ruin! It has been said that man creates god in his own image; the saying is a slander upon human nature. Man has never been as bad as god; and the lowest savage would be revolted by the deeds which we attribute reverentially to the almighty.—“Westminster Review,” April, 1876, p. 462, 463.

**A SCIENTIFIC OPINION.**—In spite of its being so barren in metaphysical qualities, Christianity a hybrid religion, a confused mixture of Vedism, of Mazdeism, of Brahmanism, of Buddhism, of Judaism, nevertheless deserves some of the praises which we have given to the great Asiatic religions. Like them, it has deeply concerned itself with moral duties, though it has borrowed from them the greater part of its lessons. But the Christian metaphysics, poor and without logical sequence of thought, dis-

tinguishes itself from the others only by the adoption of an insane idea, borrowed from Philo and the Alexandrine dreamers, the idea of creation *ex nihilo*. Christianity has also lowered itself by taking note of all the coarse manifestations of the primitive religions: fetiches, idols, the worship of one's ancestors, the adoration of genii, etc. Its rites for the most part servilely imitated from the Buddhist rites, are wholly devoid of originality. Finally, and this is a much more serious matter, Brahmanism and Buddhism are not incompatible with science; Christianity is diametrically opposed to it. Scientific thought has grown and made its way in spite of Christianity, and by means of scientific thought Christianity is one day destined to perish.—*Dr. Charles Letourneau*, "Sociology Based upon Ethnography," pp. 316, 317, Library of Contemporary Science, 1881.

A MEDICAL TESTIMONY.—It is impossible to say of any false belief which mankind have had, that it has been the most pernicious in its effects; but we may truly say of the theological notion of the relations of mind and body, that it has been surpassed by few false doctrines in the evil which it has worked.—*Henry Maudsley, M.D.*, "Body and Mind," p. 120; 1873.

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

DIABOLISM AND CHRISTIANITY.—During the early centuries of Christianity, demoniacal possession indeed becomes peculiarly conspicuous, perhaps not from unusual prevalence of the animistic theory of disease, but simply because a period of intense religious excitement brought it more than usually into requisition. Ancient ecclesiastical records describe, under the well-known names of "dæmoniacks," "possessed," "energumens," the class of persons whose bodies are seized or possessed with an evil spirit; such attacks being frequently attended with great commotions and vexations and disturbances of the body, occasioning sometimes frenzy and madness, sometimes epileptic fits, and other violent tossings and contortions. These energumens formed a recognised part of an early Christian congregation, a standing

place apart being assigned for them in the church.—*Dr. Edward B. Tylor*, "Primitive Culture," chap. xv., vol. ii., p. 127; 1871.

THE CHURCH.—Every year, indeed, messengers are sent unto all the world, who under the protection of the Church, in the most shameless manner, and speculating on the basest side of human nature, preach a crusade against, whatever may be called freedom of mind or thought, enlightenment, culture, etc. Yet all these are only the convulsive movements of an antiquated colossus, whose blows even in its death-struggles may indeed be dangerous, but can never gain the victory.—*Dr. F. C. C. L. Büchner*, "Force and Matter," preface, p. lxxii., 1870.

PERSECUTION.—Let the priests of any religion have power, and let men speak for themselves in opposition to their doctrines, in this case persecution is sure to follow.—*Lord Brougham*, Speech in the House of Commons, May 10th, 1825, on Roman Catholic Relief Bill.

CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION.—At the end of the sixteenth century the simple proposition that men for holding or declaring heterodox opinions in religion should not be burned alive or otherwise put to death, was itself little else than a sort of heterodoxy; and though many privately must have been persuaded of its truth, the Protestant churches were as far from acknowledging it as that of Rome.—*Henry Hallam, F.R.A.S.*, "Introduction to the Literature of Europe," vol. i., p. 559; 1854.

PROTESTANTISM AND PERSECUTION.—The Protestant religion is, for the most part, more tolerant than the Catholic, simply because the events which have given rise to Protestantism have at the same time increased the play of the intellect, and therefore lessened the power of the clergy. But whoever has read the works of the great Calvinist divines, and, above all, whoever has studied their history, must know, that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the desire of persecuting their opponents burnt as hotly among them as it did among any of the Catholics even in the worst days of the papal dominion.—*Henry Thos. Buckle*, "History of Civilisation in England," chap. viii., vol. i., p. 584; 1858.

PROTESTANT PERSECUTION.—But while the pre-eminent atrocity of the persecutions of the Church of Rome is fully admitted, nothing can be more grossly disingenuous or untrue, than to represent persecution as her peculiar taint. She persecuted to the full extent of the power of her clergy, and that power was very great. The persecution of which every Protestant Church was guilty, was measured by the same rule, but clerical influence in Protestant countries was comparatively weak. The Protestant persecutions were never so sanguinary as those of the Catholics.



but the principle was affirmed quite as strongly, was acted on quite as constantly, and was defended quite as pertinaciously by the clergy.—*W. E. H. Lecky, M.A.*, "History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe," chap. iv., part ii., pp. 42—43, vol. ii.; 1865.

**CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION.**—It can be shown that from the time of Constantine to the time when the rationalistic spirit wrested the blood-stained sword from the priestly hand, persecution was uniformly defended in long, learned, and elaborate treatises, by the best and greatest men the Church had produced, by sects that differed on almost all other points, by multitudes who proved in every conceivable manner the purity of their zeal. It can be shown too, that toleration began with the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines, expanded in exact proportion to the growing latitudinarianism, and triumphed only when indifference to dogma had become a prevailing sentiment among legislators. It was only when the battle had been won—when the anti-dogmatic party, acting in opposition to the Church, had rendered persecution impossible—that the great body of theologians revised their arguments, and discovered that to punish men for their opinions was wholly at variance with their faith.—*W. E. H. Lecky*, "History of European Morals," vol. i., p. 397; 1877.

**REVIVAL OF PERSECUTION.**—It will be said that we do not put to death the introducers of new opinions; we are not like our fathers who slew the prophets, we even build sepulchres to them. It is true we no longer put heretics to death; and the amount of penal infliction which modern feeling would probably tolerate, even against the most obnoxious opinions, is not sufficient to extirpate them. But let us not flatter ourselves that we are yet free from the stain even of legal persecution. Penalties for opinions, or at least for its expression, still exist by law, and their enforcement is not, even in these times, so unexampled as to make it at all incredible that they may some day be revived in full force. . . . What is boasted of at the present time as the revival of religion, is always, in narrow and uncultivated minds, at least as much the revival of bigotry; and where there is the strong permanent leaven of intolerance in the feelings of a people, which at all times abides in the middle classes of this country, it needs but little to provoke them into actively persecuting those whom they have never ceased to think proper objects of persecution—*John Stuart Mill*, "On Liberty," pp. 54—57; 1859.

**IMPIETY.**—On every side I hear the cry of impiety. The Christian is impious in Asia, the Mussulman in Europe, the Papist at London, the Calvinist at Paris, the Jansenist at the

top of the Rue St. Jacques, the Molinist at the bottom of the faubourg St. Medard. Who then is impious? Is everyone or nobody?—*Denis Diderot*, "Pensees Philosophiques," xxxv.

PROTESTANTISM AND FAITH.—The Reformation, in restoring the empire of Reason within the realms of theology, practically destroyed the doctrine of Justification by Faith; for if its chiefs might legitimately exercise the right of private judgment by rejecting the Eucharistic miracle, we also, in the fuller light of our generation, may disavow the Christian mysteries which they left untouched, and seek our justification, not by the faith that fosters credulity, but by the scepticism which worships truth.—"The Evolution of Christianity," p. 311; 1883.

THE HEBREW BIBLE.—Every archæologist knows that the *square letter* characters of the present Hebrew text were not invented by the Rabbis before the second century *after* Christ, or 1600 years posterior to the vague age when *Ie H Oua H* buried the lawgiver "in a valley in the land of Moab opposite to Beth-peor; but no man has known his sepulchre *unto this day*" (Deut. xxxiv., 6; Cahen's transl.). The real question, however, pointed in logical shape is this:—The Hebrew Moses wrote the Hebrew Pentateuch. Did the Hebrew Moses write the Hebrew Pentateuch? If the Hebrew Moses wrote the Hebrew Pentateuch, where is the Hebrew Pentateuch the Hebrew Moses wrote.—*G. R. Gliddon*, "Types of Mankind," pp. 579, 625; 1854.

THE DECALOGUE.—From the legend of a decalogue, lithographed by the finger of god, we learn that Moses introduced the moral precepts of the Egyptians to his countrymen as a divine revelation; but, even centuries after possession of the Ten Commandments, Semitic ethics fall immeasurably short of the moral culture of Egyptian citizens and Achaian Greeks as disclosed on comparison of monumental evidence and Homeric song with the licentious and sanguinary annals of the children of Israel.—"The Evolution of Christianity," p. 143; 1883.

THE HEBREW TERM FOR GOD.—Whatever may be said, the plural form *Elohim* itself, the interpretation of which as *pluralis majestatis* belongs to the stage of pure monotheism, decidedly indicates that a plural conception was inherent in this word. Such expressions, created by polytheistic imagination, were retained at the monotheistic stages. Like the myth, they lost their original signification, and were used by zealous monotheists without any idea of the polytheism which had created them, and had been expressed by them—*Ignaz Goldziher*, *Ph.D.*, "Mythology Among the Hebrews," p. 270; 1877.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL.—It is from beginning to end, artificial; professing to be written at one time, and by an author whose

name and personality are given; in reality written at another time, and by an author whose name and personality are concealed. Daniel was written about the year B.C. 168, a little before the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, and the allusions to that monarch are, of course, made under the veil of prophecy, in a style designed to be intelligible without being direct.—*John Russell, Viscount Amberley*, "An Analysis of Religious Beliefs," vol. ii., p. 298; 1876.

**BIBLE PROPHECIES.**—There is no case in which we can say with certainty—even where it is reasonable to suppose that the prediction was uttered before the event—that the narrative has not been tampered with to suit the prediction, or the prediction modified to correspond with the event. De Wette, and other eminent theologians consider that in many cases where the prophecy is unusually definite, this has certainly been done.—*W. R. Greg*, "The Creed of Christendom," vol. i., p. 80; 1874.

**THE DECALOGUE.**—A very curious thing about these Commandments is that their supposed author violated nearly every one. From Sinai, according to the account, he said, "Thou shalt not kill," and yet he ordered the murder of millions, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and yet he gave captured maidens to gratify the lust of captors. "Thou shalt not steal," and yet he gave to Jewish marauders the flocks and herds of others. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, nor his wife," and yet he allowed his chosen people to destroy the houses of neighbors, and to steal their wives. "Honor thy father and thy mother," and yet this same god had thousands of fathers butchered, and with the sword of war killed children yet unborn. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," and yet he sent abroad lying spirits to deceive his own prophets, and in a hundred ways paid tribute to deceit. So far as we know, Jehovah kept only one of these Commandments—he worshipped no other god.—*Col. R. G. Ingersoll*, "North American Review," p. 480; 1881.

**THE JEW GOD.**—His service was at no time an easy one, and he was liable to outbursts of passion which rendered it peculiarly oppressive. Tolerant as he might be towards some descriptions of immorality, he had no mercy whatever for disloyalty towards himself. On one occasion he characterised himself by the name of "jealous," which was but too appropriate, and implied the possession of one of the least admirable of human weaknesses. Now the Jews were unfortunately prone to lapses of this kind. Such was the severity with which these offences were treated, that it is questionable whether it would not have been a far happier fate to be doomed in the Red Sea with the Egyptians



than preserved with the children of Israel.—*Viscount Amberley*, "An Analysis of Religious Belief," vol. ii., p. 308; 1876.

GOD'S FAVORITES AND ADULTERY.—If it be true that a man who takes another woman to wife in addition to a present wife is guilty of adultery; if this be true as a fundamental principle, and not merely by the force of any local or temporary enactment; if it be true in the widest sense of the term *wife* (i.e., including both wives and concubines), then certainly Abraham was guilty of adultery when he took Hagar to wife in the lifetime of Sarah, and yet "the Lord appeared to Abram," and gave him no rebuke. Then Jacob was guilty of adultery when god met him at Peniel, with his two wives and his two concubines, yet "He blessed him there." Then was David living in adultery with his several wives in Hebron, and yet "the lord god of hosts was with him." And lastly, then were the sisters, Aholah and Aholibah, joined in adultery, not only to their lovers, the Assyrians and the Egyptians, but to him also who espoused them both together, and said of them, "They were mine, and they bare sons and daughters."—*M.D.*, "Hagar, or Scripture Facts concerning Marriage," p. 102, 1881.

INSPIRATION AND REVELATION.—The sacred records of the Israelites and the Christians attribute to each of these religions a supernatural origin. They hold it in common with the adherents of many, nay, of most other forms of religion. Zarathrusta, Sakya-Muni, and Mahommed pass among their followers for *envoys* of the godhead; and in the estimation of the Brahmins, the Vedas, and the laws of Manu, are holy, divine books. At the same time, it does not follow from this that the description of these forms of religion must start from that belief. No one expects or requires this for Buddhism or Islam; with what right, then, can it be demanded with respect to Judaism or Christianity? If we look upon those other religions as so many manifestations of the religious spirit of mankind, are we not bound to examine the Israelitish and the Christian religions also from the same point of view?—*Prof. Kuenen*, "Religion of Israel," p. 6.

THE GOSPELS.—No modern theologian, who is also a scholar, now considers any of the four gospels to be the work of its pretended author, or in fact to be by an apostle, or the colleague of an apostle.—*Dr. D. F. Strauss*, "The Old Faith and the New," pp. 45-6; 1873.

EARLY CHRISTIAN LEGENDS.—That some of the Christian legends were deliberate forgeries can scarcely be questioned; the principle of pious fraud appeared to justify this mode of working on the popular mind; it was admitted and avowed. To deceive unto Christianity was so valuable a service as to

hallow deceit itself.—*Dean H. H. Milman, D.D.*, "The History of Christianity," vol. iii., p. 358; 1867.

THE PASSAGE IN JOSEPHUS [ANTIQ., xviii., iii., 3].—Those who are best acquainted with the character of Josephus and the style of his writings have no hesitation in condemning this passage as a forgery interpolated in the text during the third century by some pious Christian who was scandalised that so famous a writer as Josephus should have taken no notice of the gospels or of Christ their subject. But the zeal of the interpolator has outrun his discretion, for we might as well expect to gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, as to find this notice of Christ among the judaising writings of Josephus. It is well known that this author was a zealous Jew, devoted to the laws of Moses, and to the traditions of his countrymen. How, then could he have written that *Jesus was the Christ*? Such an admission would have proved him to be a Christian himself, in which case the passage under consideration, too long for a Jew, would have been far too short for a believer in the new religion, and thus the passage stands forth, like an ill-set jewel, contrasting most inharmoniously with everything around it. If it had been genuine, we might be sure that Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Chrysostom would have quoted it in their controversies with the Jews, and that Origen or Photius would have mentioned it. But Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian [i., 11], is the first who quotes it, and our reliance on the judgment or even the honesty of this writer is not so great as to allow of our considering everything found in his works as undoubtedly genuine.—*The Rev. Dr. J. A. Giles*, "Heathen Records to the Jewish Scripture History," p. 86; 1856, and "Christian Records," p. 62; 1877.

THE GOSPELS.—It is evident that the gospel we have, to which the name of Matthew is attached, is not the one adverted to by Papias, for he spoke of a writing in Hebrew, while what we have is in Greek; nor does the gospel according to Mark correspond with his description of what Mark wrote; for what we have is an orderly narrative, but what he describes is a miscellaneous collection of anecdotes, taken down from time to time as they fell from the lips of Peter. The existing gospels, with which the names of Matthew and Luke are connected, are therefore certainly not those of which Papias knew. Nor are there means for satisfying ourselves, positively, that the four gospels particularised by Irenæus are the very same that we now have.—*Judge Strange*, "The Bible: is it the Word of God?" p. 28; 1871.

EARLY CHRISTIAN FRAUDS.—In reference to the advancement of the various Christian interests, and in like manner also to those developments of doctrine already mentioned, *the spurious*

*literature* which had arisen and continually increased among Jews and Christians, was of great importance. The Christians made use of such expressions and writings as had already been falsely attributed by Jews from partiality to their religion, to honored persons of antiquity, and altered them in parts to suit their own wants, such as the book of Enoch and the fourth book of Ezra. But writings of this kind were also fabricated anew by Christians, who quieted their conscience respecting the forgery with the idea of their good intention, for the purpose of giving greater impressiveness to their doctrines and admonitions by the reputation of respectable names, of animating their suffering brethren to steadfastness, and of gaining over their opponents to Christianity.—*Dr. J. G. L. Gieseler*, Professor of Theology in Gottingen, "Compendium of Ecclesiastical History," sec. 52, vol. i., pp. 157, 158. Translated by Dr. S. Davidson. T. & T. Clark's Foreign Theological Library.

EARLY FATHERS AND THE GOSPELS.—There is not a single sentence in all their remaining works in which a clear allusion to the New Testament is to be found. They do actually quote Moses, and other old Testament writers by name, "Moses hath said," "But Moses says," etc., in numerous passages, but we nowhere meet with the words "Matthew hath said in his gospel," "John hath said," etc. They always quote, not the words of the evangelists, but the words of Christ himself directly, which furnishes the strongest presumption, that, though the sayings of Christ were in general vogue, yet the evangelical histories, into which they were afterwards embodied, were not then in being.—*Rev. Dr. Giles*, "Christian Records," p. 52.

CRITICISM AND THE GOSPEL HISTORY.—It would seem as if the sources of Christianity, like the roots of all other living things, were purposely buried in mystery. There exist no ancient writings whatever of such vast moment to mankind of which so little can be authentically known. The four gospels, in the form and under the names which they at present bear, become visible only with distinctness towards the end of the *second century* of the Christian era. Then it was that they assumed the authoritative position which they have ever since maintained, and were selected by the Church out of the *many other then existing narratives* as the supreme and exclusive authorities for our lord's life.—*J. A. Froude*, "Short Studies," vol. i., p., 172.