

THE BIBLE AND THE SCIENCES.

A Reply to Colonel Ingersoll.

BY J. M. S.

Another attack upon religion in general and Christianity and the Bible in particular has been made by Colonel Ingersoll in an article headed: "The Divided Household of Faith," which appears in the *North American Review* for August, this year.

The article abounds in statements so unreasonable and so much at variance with well established facts that it is a wonder the Colonel would risk his reputation by stamping his name upon them. For instance, he says:

"You will find in our sacred books the astronomy, the geology, the philosophy, and the morality of the ancient barbarians." Page 152.

"At last it became evident to the intelligent world that the inspired writings, literally translated, did not contain the truth." Page 153.

"If anything can be established by analogy and reason, man has existed upon the earth for many millions of ages." Page 155.

"The inspired writers knew nothing of the sciences, knew nothing of the origin of the earth, nothing of the origin of man—in other words, nothing of any particular value to the human race." Page 156.

"Hebrews might steal from any other race or creed." Page 156.

These are only a few specimens of the numerous groundless assertions of the author. Like the evil spirits in the demoniac, they are Legion, "because they are many," and as there is not one vestige of truth in them, I must deny them in toto.

To understand Colonel Ingersoll correctly, his mode of reasoning must be carefully noted. He exhibits the selfishness, the hypocrisy, the bigotry, the stupidity and the rascality, ignorance and arrogance of the pseudo-churches of the world. So far he is right. But no farther. If he would confine himself to chastising the millions of fools who pretend to be Christians, he would be entitled to the applause of every wise man in the world. He might earn for himself the surname of Søren Kierkegaard the Second. But he goes too far. He attacks the Bible and God in heaven, as if these were responsible for the sins of men. This is the great fault of our author. In his eagerness to rid the garden of the weeds, he tramples down everything. His method of war is mere vandalism. He might with propriety adopt the motto of those Islington rioters who had inscribed upon their flag: "Down with everything!" For this seems to be the chief characteristic of his polemics.

It is not possible within the limits of this article to expose the fallacy of each of our author's assertions separately, but by examining the chief points, I think it will be sufficiently clear to the honest reader that the Bible is safe, and that our author has not been more successful than any of his predecessors in proving the word of God to be a fraud.

Judging from the outward appearance, you would think that one shot from the Colonel's big gun would blow the Bible into small atoms. But this is only appearance, as I hope to be able to show.

THE CHARGE.

Our author informs us that, the "church" has "disputed every step, denied every fact, resorted to every device that cunning could suggest" (p. 154) in order to defeat the various sciences, and that she has now "been compelled substantially to abandon first, the astronomy of the sacred scriptures; second, the geology; third, the account of the origin of man; fourth, the doctrine of original sin, the fall of the human race; fifth, the mathematical contradiction known as the Trinity; sixth, the atonement; seventh, that the miracles are either the misunderstood or the impossible; eighth, that the Bible is not inspired in its morality; and ninth, the divinity of Christ." Page 160.

This is the charge and contains indeed *nothing in parvo*. It will be observed that our author has been in such a hurry in drawing up this charge that he has even forgotten the simplest rules of English grammar. For when he tells us, that the church has been compelled to abandon "that the miraculous is either the misunderstood or the impossible," or, abandon "that the Bible is not inspired in its morality," he evidently means exactly the contrary of what he says. I point this out merely to indicate the general reliability of our author.

BIBLE ASTRONOMY.

So the Church has now been compelled to abandon the astronomy of the sacred Scriptures?

It is hard to know what the term "the astronomy of the sacred Scriptures" means. For in reality there never was such a thing as the astronomy of the Scriptures. The bible does not teach astronomy. It advocates no peculiar theory of the origin of the heavenly bodies or of their relation to each other beyond ascribing everything both in the heavens and the earth to God as the creator and preserver of all things.

But although the Bible does not treat on astronomy, strictly speaking, yet the earth, the sun and the stars are often referred to in connection with other subjects.

The question, therefore, to be discussed is: Does the Bible refer to these bodies in such a way as to indicate that the author knew them, or are they referred to in such terms as to warrant an infidel in saying that the astronomy of the Bible is the astronomy

of the ancient barbarians? A few facts will suffice to vindicate the truth:

The "ancient barbarians" had very peculiar ideas. In Greek and Latin philosophy, the heavens were a solid vault over the earth (a firmamentum or stercoma), a sphere studded with stars, as Aristotle called them. The sages of Egypt held that the world was formed by the motion of air and the upward course of flame. Plato seems to think that the earth was an intelligent being. Empedocles advocated the existence of two suns. In the Hindoo philosophy the earth is represented as a flat triangle, composed of seven stories, the whole resting on elephants, which, when they shake themselves, cause earthquakes.

But the authors of the Bible speak of the earth as an orb, suspended on nothing.

"It is he that sitteth upon the circle (literally globe) of the earth, and the inhabitants are as grasshoppers." Isa. xl: 22.

"He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." Job xxvi: 7.

When they speak of the stars, they declare them to be innumerable, and yet dependent, material, obedient bodies.

"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by names." Isa. xl: 26.

"As the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore." Gen. xxii: 17.

This last comparison would be nonsense, if the stars were not innumerable. But the author knew it, and had not learned it from the "ancient barbarians" either. For Hipparchus counted no more than 1022, and Ptolemy only 1026 stars in all. The author of Genesis was evidently familiar with the fact so beautifully expressed by Sir John Herschel, after he had surveyed the heavens with his stars and nebulae: "God has scattered them like dust through the immensity of space."

But I feel that the expression in Joshua 10:13 will be pointed out as contradicting science: "The sun stood still." At least this expression was formerly thought sufficient to kill the whole Bible, that is, before the discovery was made that the sun really is moving as well as the earth. When it once had been established that the sun is moving, too, the supposition became very probable that the arrest of the course of the sun was the primary cause of the arrest of the course of the earth, and Joshua's expression was seen to be correct. It is remarkable that the arrest of the course of the moon is expressly noted in that passage, as an indication, I think, that the inspired author knew the true connection between these bodies, the sun, the earth and the moon.

As soon as the fact had been discovered that the sun was a moving body, efforts were made to find the central point of its course. And Alcione, a star in the Pleiades, has been pointed out as this centrum. Now, in the book of Job, xxxviii: 31, the question is put: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades?" And oriental scholars inform us that the word used for "Pleiades" is derived from a root the meaning of which is an axle round which something turns. The very words used in the Bible are evidences of their divine origin.

From these few facts which could be largely multiplied the reader can judge how false is the assertion that the astronomy of the Bible must be for "has been abandoned."

BIBLE GEOLOGY.

In speaking of geology, one fact must be remembered which seems to have escaped the notice of Col. Ingersoll, namely, that geology is yet a science in infancy. It has not yet spoken its last word. The geologists are chiefly gathering facts and trying to arrange them. Many theories have already been advanced and again abandoned. And many more will meet the same fate, before ultimate conclusions can be reached.

But if geology is summoned as a witness in the present case, its testimony is for, not against, the Bible. One of its clearest lessons is the recentness of the "last great geological change." The present state of the globe cannot date much farther back than 6000 years. In this assertion I am supported by Saussure, Cuvier and De Luc.

When our author speaks of the "geology" of the scriptures, he means, apparently, the account of the creation as given by Moses. This account is not true, he says.

Let us then compare this account with the now extensively accepted theory of the origin of our earth.

Science supposes that matter existed previous to our solar system as ether, without form and non-luminous.

Moses: "And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep."

Out of this ether the worlds were formed, and other worlds were previous to our solar system.

Moses: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," placing the creation or the formation of the stars before the earth.

The first appearance of organized matter was in the form of luminous nebulae, which further condensed into suns and planets.

Moses: "And God said, Let there be light."

As the earth cooled, some of the surrounding gases combined and formed the air and water.

Moses: "And God said, Let there be an expansion (firmament) is not the

correct rendering of the Hebrew *Rakiah*. It means, what is expanded.)

When the earth further cooled, great convulsions took place, which heaved up the rocks and raised them above the sea, forming mountains, islands and continents.

Moses: "And God said, Let the dry land appear."

Soon the earliest forms of vegetable life appeared, followed by flowering plants with naked seeds such as conifers, and also by plants bearing a low order of fruit.

Moses: "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass (literally 'sprout forth sproutage'), and the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit."

Up till this time the earth had been surrounded with vapor and the climate was equal over the whole surface. But now the mists subside and the rays of the sun, the moon and the stars appear to regulate times and seasons.

Moses: "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven, and let them be for signs and for seasons."

After this great event many fresh species of marine animals appeared and the oceans swarmed with life, and birds, traces of which are first found in New Red Sandstone.

Moses: "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly, and fowl that may fly above the earth."

In the succeeding strata of Lias, Ichtyosaurus and Plesiosaurus are found.

Moses: "And God created great whales." (Sea monsters.)

Next appear enormous beasts such as Megalosaurus, Iguanodon, and Dinotherium.

Moses: "And God made the beasts of the earth after his kind."

Cattle come next and appeared before man, in the Post-Pliocene period.

Moses: "And cattle after their kind."

According to Agassiz the principal flowers, fruit, trees and cereals appeared only shortly before man, the highest and last created form of animal life.

Moses: "And God created man."

As far as our present knowledge goes, no fresh species of plants or animals have been created after man.

Moses: "God ended His work which he had made."

This subject has been discussed very ably by Dr. Samuel Kinns in a work entitled "The Harmony of the Bible with Science," from which the above is condensed.

It will be seen clearly by this that Moses follows very strictly the order which eminent geologists now maintain to be the correct one. If there still are points on which the Bible and science seem to disagree; such points will be cleared up when science has gathered more facts, and when we know better the real meaning of the Bible. The word of God and science will not disagree, except as a result of misunderstanding.

This remark applies particularly to the word "day" (Hebrew *Yom*) in the account of the creation. That it often stands for any period of time, whether long or short, is certain, but in what sense Moses used it in this account remains yet to be ascertained. And when it has been ascertained, the difficulty will be solved.

When we note how Moses in every particular follows the correct order of creation; how he distinguishes between unorganized matter and the formation of the earth; describing heaven as boundless space, or expansion; light as prior to and independent of the sun; gives to the waters "above" an importance which modern science alone can appreciate, we must admit that the account is inspired by God. Nothing less can explain the knowledge of Moses.

ORIGIN OF MAN.

On this subject the Colonel seems to be confused. He says: "The Church cannot and dare not give up the account of creation of Adam from the dust of the earth, and Eve from the rib of the man. The Church cannot give up the story of the garden of Eden—the serpent—the fall and the expulsion; these must be defended because they are vital." Page 155. But although the Church "cannot and dare not" give up these, yet on page 160 we are informed that the Church "within a few years has been compelled substantially to abandon" these very doctrines. This is slight confusion.

The objection of the Colonel is that the Bible does not allow man sufficient time for his existence here upon the earth. "Man has existed upon the earth for many millions of ages." "We know now . . . that people not only existed before Adam, but that they existed in a highly civilized state." Page 153.

No, sir! We do not "know" any such thing.

"The scriptures give to man a very recent origin, and their accuracy in this respect is attested by the ascertained state of the earth's surface and by the monuments of antiquity."—Joseph Angus.

"Many learned men have already written volumes upon the important and deeply interesting subject of man's advent; they differ, however, greatly from one another. It would, therefore, be presumptuous for any one at present to hold or enunciate dogmatic opinions in reference to it."—Samuel Kinns.

This is exactly what we "know." We "know" that we as yet know nothing upon this subject beyond the account of the Bible and the "presumptuous" assertions of those who "know" everything. But it seems that any suggestion is by the Colonel exalted to the dignity of certainty, provided it can be turned against the Bible. Whether this is honestly or not, the reader may decide.

I will quote another passage from Dr. Samuel Kinns:

"And does science confirm this (the Bible) account of man's advent upon the earth? With all his noble endowments, does it nullify the word 'created' and substitute another term, 'evolved'? I think not.

Fossil apes are found in abundance. Even as far back as the Miocene period such animals lived, and continued to do so in all respects unchanged, but the infinite number of links required to connect man with so mean an origin had not been found. On the other hand, whenever human remains have been discovered, they show the same high-class type of head, and a skeleton indicating a form as perfect and as noble as that of the present race. I say in whatever strata human remains have been discovered, because some striking facts have come out in reference to the time of man's first appearance, which seem to place the date much further back than has been generally received. This, however, will not affect the authenticity of Holy Writ, for there are no dates mentioned in the Bible. It is only the commentators and the compilers of chronological systems who have put forward the 5000 years."

This last statement will be best illustrated by the fact that at least four different systems of chronology claim to be correct. Archbishop Usher makes the time from the creation to the birth of our Saviour 4,004 years. Septuagint gives 5,503; Josephus, according to Hales, 5,411, and modern Jews only 3,760 years.

The exact date of man's appearance upon the earth can probably be ascertained neither by geologists nor by chronologists. This is, therefore, a question they need not quarrel about. What can be known is, that man was created last of all, and that since the advent of man no additional species has appeared. And in this, the vital point of the question, the Bible and science agree.

DOCTRINES.

Col. Ingersoll thinks that the Church has abandoned the doctrine of the Fall, the Atonement, the Trinity, and the divinity of Christ as well as the miracles.

To this I will only say that the true Church has not abandoned one single doctrine taught her by inspired men, nor is she ashamed to defend any of them.

Many absurd doctrines have been coined by the world and again abandoned. And many infidels have always been found to abandon everything. But this does not affect the Church. The Church, whenever she has existed, has professed and defended the truth in all its bearings.

The true church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, today believes in miracles and claims the miraculous gifts just as much as the Church formerly.

We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc.—Joseph Smith.

"Now, it is wilful blindness, or ignorance of the English language, that has ever caused any misunderstanding here. For some tell us that those signs were only to follow the Apostles."

But Christ places the preaching, believing, salvation and the signs that were to follow, all on an equal footing; where one was limited, the other must be; where one ceased, the other did.—Parley P. Pratt.

"Miracles are necessary for the existence of the Christian Church."—Orson Pratt.

"Bible Saints never lived in any other age than an age of miracles, visions and angels. They knew that true Saints never would live in any other age. They knew that the Gospel could not be communicated to any people of any age without revelation; a gospel without revelation is no gospel."—Orson Spencer.

These quotations show whether the Church, as Ingersoll asserts, has abandoned her belief in the "miraculous." I think not.

BIBLE MORALITY.

The objection of Colonel Ingersoll to the Bible on account of its cruelty, I think I have answered in my criticism of the Colonel's Reply to Mr. Gladstone, and also the objection founded on slavery. To this criticism, which recently appeared in the *Deseret Evening News*, I therefore now refer the reader.

In the article now under consideration our author has a paragraph on polygamy. Here it is:

"If anything on the earth is immoral, that is, if there is anything calculated to destroy home, to do away with human love, to blot out the idea of family life, to cover the hearthstone with serpents, it is the institution of polygamy. The Jehovah of the Old Testament was a believer in that institution." Page 157.

I suppose the Colonel wrote this paragraph merely to tease and torment the poor priests, who pretend not to believe in polygamy.

The paragraph is a funny effort in the direction of the pathetic, a ridiculous attempt at an *argumentum ad hominem*. Just fancy the "hearthstone" covered with "serpents" as a result of polygamy. I would think children would be more likely to crawl round the hearthstone, than serpents.

But, to leave the funny side of the paragraph, let me say as a vindication of the honor of God, that the laws he gave Israel were all good and admirably adapted to the conditions of the people. They show his knowledge of the human heart, his love and wisdom in every particular, and they were all intended for the advancement, temporally and spiritually, of his chosen people.

CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE.

I must conclude by a few remarks on the true attitude of Christianity toward science.

Col. Ingersoll asserts that "The Church" has denied everything.

By "the church," the author means the bigoted monks and priests, and so far his assertion is true.

But it is not true as far as the true Church is concerned. The Church has always hailed every newly-discovered truth with joy and accepted every fact with satisfaction. But she has demanded truths and facts, not conjectures and assertions.

This for two reasons: First, because the Church knows that every truth is from God, no matter who announces it. In its nature of truth it comes from God.

"Truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come; and whatsoever is more or less than this, is the spirit of that wicked one who was a liar from the beginning. The Spirit of Truth is of God." Book of Doc. and Cov. xxi: 21-26.

Secondly, because she knows and recognizes the fact that the creation is God's work.

The early gnostics thought that matter was the abode of evil. Therefore they avoided it all they could. But the Church never took this view. She holds that everything in nature from the smallest insect to the most brilliant star in the heavens is God's work, God's "poems," as Paul puts it.

Hence, Christianity and true science have always been and will always be true friends. The one is the complement of the other. Both will assist each other in bringing men, the children of God, to a right knowledge of God and consequent exaltation. For to know God is life eternal.

EUROPEAN NOTES.

The Manchester Canal.—Three Unfortunate Queens.—The Emperor's Envoys.—European Armaments.—England's Danger.

For a long time the city of Manchester, England, has desired to become a maritime port; but how to accomplish this has only lately been answered. To dig a ship canal from Manchester to the sea may seem a formidable undertaking and that it is already commenced may be known to few. The work will be the aid of improved machinery be greatly facilitated, and we may therefore expect soon to see Manchester manufactures shipped directly to various parts of the world. There was quite a contest among the English French and Germans as to what machinery should be used. After repeated trials, the committee of construction acknowledged the superiority of the French machines.

The Messrs. Schenk, the Imperial publishers of Berlin, are endeavoring to sell a translation of the Gerhardt report to an English publishing company and Sir Morell Mackenzie has been asked if he had any objections to the issuing of such a word. To this question Sir Morell made the following reply:

"I am much obliged to you for your courteous letter. I am not surprised to find that Messrs. Schenk are offering their thoroughly professional (?) and strictly veracious (?) publication for sale in the London market. I do not think, however, that any respectable publisher in this country will jump at securing the honor and profit necessarily contingent on the reproduction of the edifying document. But should any enterprising firm be found to swallow the delectable bait I shall not shrink from a prompt vindication of my professional reputation through the medium of the law courts."

Among the other topics that have arrested public attention, may be mentioned the naval manoeuvres in the Irish sea, the unveiling of Her Majesty's jubilee statue at Bristol, the Chester Musical Festival, the arrest of Mr. O'Kelly, M. P., the Irish Exhibition, which still continues to draw vast crowds, and last, but not least, the splendid reception given to Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone on the fiftieth anniversary of their wedding.

Republican Paris has just witnessed the remarkable spectacle of three queens, each with an unhappy and a melancholy history, living within its walls. These royal ladies were the Queen of Servia, the Queen of Naples, and the Queen of Spain. The Queen of Naples is, as is well known, the sister of the Empress of Austria. The King and Queen of Naples were driven from their beautiful palace in the revolution of 1860. Then they bought the Palazzo Farnese, in Rome, and remained till 1870 when the troops of Victor Emanuel marched into the Eternal City. Since then they have been veritable wanderers on the face of the earth. Like the poor exile of Erin, said to have been written by Campbell, they have been without a home or a country. Some time ago their cup of misery was filled to overflowing by the death of their only daughter. Since then they have chosen to live in Paris. Queen Isabella has not had so many misfortunes as either the Queen of Naples or the Queen of Servia. Nevertheless her troublous reign in Spain and her enforced departure in 1808, also the death of her son after he was raised to the throne of his ancestors have been enough to make any ordinary person long for peace and retirement. The Queen of Servia, separated from her husband, deprived of her boy and ex-patriated from Germany is as restless as Noah's dove.

A story is going the rounds of the French and German press with regard to the reception of the special German envoys sent to England to announce the accession of William II to the German throne. Queen Victoria is