



## Truth Seeker Tracts, Volume 1.

This first volume of Truth Seeker Tracts has no index of the pamphlets it contains, and so we will create one for your convenience. The page numbers in the book are for each pamphlet and are not continuous through the book. Therefore the page numbers we use are those of the File as shown at the bottom left of your screen.

**Bank of Wisdom**  
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U.S.A.

There were four volumes of pamphlets issued by The Truth Seeker, and each volume contained over 500 pages, this is a rare set and we have only volumes one and three. Bank of Wisdom does not generally publish a

partial set of any work, but as these volumes are made up of individual pamphlets, each complete in itself, we are issuing what volumes we have. If we should find the other two volumes (2 and 4) we will issue them in a future CD.

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# Truth Seeker Tracts. No. 1.

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## ARRAIGNMENT OF PRIESTCRAFT.

[From The Truth Seeker for June, 1874.]

BY D. M. BENNETT.

**A**S far back in the ages of antiquity, as we have any account of the human race, we find there has been a class of men who have claimed peculiar privileges, have assumed authority over their fellow-men; have insisted upon being obeyed and revered; have required support from their more industrious brethren, and have demanded immunity from the menial and laborious avocations of life. They have in all ages claimed to have direct authority from the gods; and they have assumed that they were delegated and commissioned by these gods to proclaim to their fellow-men what was required of them, and have professed that they had more influence with these mysterious deities than all the world besides.

They have in fact been the inventors and manufacturers of gods ; mankind has known little or nothing relative to these gods save what this privileged aristocracy have told them. They have managed the business so adroitly that they have maintained great and almost supreme control over the minds and bodies of their fellow-men, and by threats, invectives, and denunciations have succeeded marvelously in keeping the human race in an abject condition of ignorance, terror, and slavery. It has been their object and aim to hold the masses in ignorance, to discountenance investigation and inquiry, and they have assumed the right to tell their fellow-men all they needed to know about the gods and heaven, as well as demons and hell. They have virtually said to their dupes : " It is unnecessary for you to approach the gods, or have intercourse with them, we will act for you, and will say to the gods all that needs to be said, and will proclaim to you their will and commands, and this is all you need to know. For these disinterested services on our part, we claim of you in return, implicit obedience, unquestioning submission, and devout veneration, and we modestly demand that you give us the first fruits of you crops, the fattest of your flocks, the finest of your linens, silks, wools and furs, for ourselves and our families. We, of course, expect you to be unstinted in your donations, and that you will look to us as your mediators, your law-givers, your guides and rulers. Remember, we demand humble submission on your part to all our claims; and failing in this, the curses of the gods and the judgements of heaven will be hurled upon you."

This privileged class of which we are speaking, have been known in the world as *Priests*, though other appellations have frequently been applied to them; sometimes Oracles, sometimes Dervises, sometimes Seers and Prophets, sometimes Monks and Friars, sometimes Fathers and Elders, sometimes Bishops and Prelates, and sometimes Cardinals and Popes. In modern times they have been termed Ministers, Preachers, Pastors, Clergymen, Reverends, and Divines. They have been numerous in all systems of religion, and in all manner of beliefs. Of the three thousand different religions inflicted upon the human family, all have had their Priests—their “holy men”—men who have professed to know all about God and the unknown world, and have assumed to impart this knowledge to their credulous followers.

They have in all ages been an un-producing class; having neither cultivated the earth nor tended the flocks. They have always lived upon the labor and toil of others, and have absolutely been dead weights and “dead beats” in the society of the world, feeding upon the best the earth afforded, and scarcely lifting a finger to produce a grain of wheat, a kernel of corn, a hill of beans or potatoes.

They have not only originated the thousands of different gods believed in, in all ages of the world, but as many systems of religion with which humanity has been cursed. Nor is this the least evil they have inflicted on the race; they have been the incitors of dissensions, the promoters of discord, the instigators of persecutions, and in thousands of cases the prime movers in wars, carnage, and bloodshed. They have

evinced the most cruel, merciless, blood-thirsty and fiendish traits ever known in human character. They have committed and caused to be committed murders without number, both in public and private. They have instigated, in the plenitude of their godliness, as just observed, the most bloody and devastating wars the world has known, and have caused rivers and oceans of human blood to be spilled, sparing neither the helpless mother nor her sucking infant.

As great a curse as king-craft has been to the human race, priestcraft has been a thousand times greater. True, kings have subdued nations, devastated populous and happy countries, destroyed the labors and wealth of many people, rolled back for centuries the wheels of progress and civilization, and have drenched the earth in human blood; but Priests have done all this and more. They have incited kings and tyrants to the wars and slaughters they have committed; they have inflamed the passions of the ignorant masses, and led them on in the work of carnage, bloodshed and death. They have instigated the most needless and cruel wars of which we have any account, and the most fiendish massacres, assassinations, and murders that have ever been committed.

Who, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries instigated the wars of the Crusades against the Mohammedans of the East, the Moors of Spain, and the Waldenses of France, and other countries, by which millions of human beings were slain, and human blood enough spilled to float all the ships of the world? It was *Priests*, and in their interests was the whole *demoniac*, bloody work prosecuted.

Who was it in the twelfth century that instituted and conducted the infernal Inquisition for the trial and punishment of Heretics, which was kept up for five hundred years, and before which hellish court were dragged, at all hours of day and night, countless numbers of innocent, defenceless persons, and where by unutterable cruelties of the rack, the wheel, pinchers, thumb-screws, faggots and fire, and nameless other diabolical inventions, they were made to confess crimes they never committed, and when, without a chance of making a defence, or of confronting their accusers, hundreds of thousands of these hapless, helpless mortals were forced out of the world by the infliction of the most terrible cruelties of which the mind can conceive? It was PRIESTS—men who claimed to be holier than other men, and to be the mediators between God and man.

Who were the authors and instigators of the notorious massacre on St. Bartholomew's day in Paris, in 1572, when thousands of innocent people, men, women, and children, were cruelly murdered and wantonly assassinated, and for which abominable slaughter the Pope ordered special thanksgiving to be rendered in all his churches and Te Deums and "Masses" to be performed? It was PRIESTS—true to their historical, bloody character.

Many similar fiendish and inhuman crimes have they been guilty of, both on a large and small scale, but we cannot now stop to mention a tithe of them. History, however, is full of such recitals and instances without number, can be given if desired.

As many thousands and millions of innocent lives as

the Priests have been the means of taking, without show of reason or justice, as much as they have done towards destroying the peace and quietness of nations, communities, and families, the greatest evil they have done to the world has been in the darkness they have cast over the minds of men and women, and in the clogs and brakes they have fastened upon the wheels of the car of progress, science, and civilization. Under the divine authority from the gods which they have represented, they have taught and enjoined the most pernicious doctrines. They have made Deity appear to mankind as a cruel, blood-thirsty monster ; they have compelled their dupes to accept the most abhorrent creeds and dogmas ; they have discouraged and prohibited free thought and free investigation ; they have retarded and kept back for thousands of years the advance of science, truth, and mental freedom. They have promoted ignorance and opposed education ; they have favored tyranny and oppression, and have fought to the bitter end liberty and civilization. They have dwarfed the human intellect ; they have spread and held a pall of darkness and gloom over the entire world, and have obscured the sun of light and truth and progress. They have bound fetters and shackles upon deluded human beings, and doomed them to lives of the most abject slavery. They have claimed to be the best friends of the human race, but have really been its worst enemies. They have prated much of God and heaven, but their rule and influence has resembled more the worst conceptions of the devil and hell. They have taxed the people of the world to the extent of thousands of millions of

dollars—impoverishing nations, ruining families and individuals for the services they claimed to be heavenly and God-inspired, while in reality their conduct has been fitted to the character of demons incarnate.

Our language to some may seem somewhat extravagant, but it is simply the truth, and we have not uttered a thousandth part of what can be said in perfect keeping with the facts of history. It is certainly our wish to mis-state and over-state nothing. The truth, in all conscience, is bad enough, and there is not the slightest necessity for drawing upon the imagination. It is truly an appalling thought to realize the wrongs this class of men have perpetrated upon humanity, and how much they have retarded the progress of the race. When it is remembered how many iniquities and absurdities they have fastened upon the human intellect, it is enough to make the "blood of an honest man boil," and cause him to curse them as the most unmitigated enemies poor human nature has had to contend with.

If the wealth of which Priests have robbed the world—if the exactions they have laid upon mankind; if the time, toil, and effort which they have used in binding upon the minds and consciences of men, debasing creeds, degrading dogmas, and worse than useless doctrines, had been used in enlightening mankind, in elevating their views and opinions, in establishing schools of science, of art, and of truth; in promulgating the principles of peace, benevolence and fraternity, what a paradise this priest-ridden world would now be—how infinitely better and happier the human family would be to-day. Why, if we simply had the

money that has been paid to these Priests for *forgiving sins*, for *praying souls out of purgatory*, for *performing masses* for the dead, and for *granting indulgences* to their simple dupes, to commit immoral conduct, we could build a school-house in every township in the United States, and an asylum for destitute widows and homeless orphans in every county in the land. If we had the hard-earned treasures that have been wrung from the patient and deluded people by these Priests for teaching creeds that are vain, and dogmas that are false, together with the cost of temples, pagodas, mosques, cathedrals, and churches that have been built at their dictation, we could erect a hall of science and education in every town and village in the habitable world—we could reclaim all the waste and swamp lands in the United States—make commodious highways in every neighborhood, and construct railroads and telegraph lines leading and connecting from every city, town, and hamlet. ✓

It may be claimed that Priestcraft presented its worst features in olden times, before the introduction of the Christian religion. This is not so. Though the Jewish Priests were culpable in the extreme, and some of them specimens of depravity in human form, though many of the pagan Priests were ignorant, barbarous, and cruel, it was the Christian priesthood which transcended all others in crimes, depravity, and horror; and if in the last three centuries they have materially improved, it has not arisen from any inherent virtue or goodness within themselves or their institution, but because the world has advanced in spite of them, and they have been compelled to

measurably keep pace with the progress of the age. As we remarked, they opposed science, education, and mental liberty, and persecuted students of learning as long and as effectually as in their power, but by degrees they have been compelled to yield to these civilizing and elevating influences, until now they fain would claim they have all along really been the patrons of science and education. Nothing can be further removed from justness and truth than this claim.

✓ We do not for a moment assert that there have been and are no sincere, honest men among the clergy, nor that many are not aiming to do their duty according to their best understanding, and are commendable exceptions to the general rule, but we do claim they are engaged in teaching falsehoods and errors the world would be better without, and that their influence has been most baneful in the past, and is mischievous and hurtful in the present. ✓ They have not made the world moral in the past, and they are not making it moral to-day. Let mankind be fully educated in the truths of science, and in the superiority of fraternal human conduct towards their fellow-men, without regard to invisible gods or devils which have no existence in fact, and the world would be vastly more moral than now. They would be fully able to do their own thinking and praying, and have not the slightest use for a pampered, designing, and most expensive Priesthood.

✓ As greatly as the world has improved, as much as the Priesthood have advanced, they really have no superiority in morality and virtue over other men. ✓

They surely have an equal greed for gold, an equal anxiety for applause, as great a desire for power and domain, as much fondness for pleasure, as liable to indulge in passion, and as ready to yield to temptation as any class of men in the world.

They are as artful, as designing, and use as much cunning and finesse in achieving their purposes and in carrying out their plans as any portion of humanity. In yielding to improper influences, in weakness in withstanding the besetments of life, and in their proneness to wrong and culpable conduct, they are not superseded by any portion of their fellow-men. They claim to be better, holier, and purer, but these claims are baseless and false. They have abundantly proved themselves unfit conscience-keepers for their fellow-men, and that in virtue, morality, and manhood they possess no superiority. Their partiality for tender, yellow-legged chickens and pretty women has passed into a proverb.

We wish not to exaggerate their short-comings, or to misrepresent their motives, nor even to tell the whole truth concerning them ; but we will in this connection give a few instances, derived from authentic sources, where our modern clergy have shown themselves weak and criminal, proving conclusively to the unprejudiced that they are unworthy the reverence and obsequiousness accorded them. And right here the question arises, If they are not better or holier, or more godly than other men, why will their silly, infatuated followers still continue to revere and absolutely worship them under the mistaken belief that they are "men of God," and superior to all others ?

U. S. SENATOR BROWNLOW, of Tennessee, who was for many years a clergyman, as well as an editor and after, Governor of the State, in his book published some years ago, uses this language in reference to clergymen in the South. "I have no hesitancy in saying, as I now do, that the worst men who make tracks upon Southern soil are Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist and Episcopal clergymen, and at the head of them for mischief are the Methodists." [p. 187.] "A majority of the clergymen have acted upon the principle that the kingdom of their Divine Master is of this world, and as a consequence many of them have embarked in fighting, lying and drinking mean whiskey. [p. 190.] "Here, as in all parts of the South, the worst class of men are preachers. They have done more to bring about the deplorable state of things existing in the country, (meaning the war of the rebellion), than any other class of men. And foremost in this work of mischief are the Methodist preachers. Brave in anticipation of war, and prone to denunciation on all occasions, even in the pulpit, they have been among the first to take to their heels." [p. 392.]

REV. MR. CRAIG, El Paso, Ill., was guilty of *crim. con.* with a lady of that place.

A CLERICAL GENT of Detroit, forsook his wife and family, and went away with another woman, and resumed preaching in the far West, hoping to "meet all his Detroit friends in heaven."

REV. MR. WESLEY, Geneseo, Ill., ran away with another man's wife.

REV. E. P. W. PACKARD had his wife put in an insane asylum when she was not insane, because she

would not acknowledge she believed a part of the human family were destined to burn forever in hell.

REV. EPHRAIM K. AVERY, a promising young clergyman of New England, it will be remembered by many, after seducing his victim, a young lady of previous good character, cruelly murdered her in the most fiendish manner, and left her hanging by the neck.

A CATHOLIC PRIEST, of Evansville, Ind., was proved to be guilty of gross improprieties and immorality with young girls under his charge.

A REV. GENT, of England, was recently proven guilty of forgery and other criminal conduct.

The case of the Rev. HENRY WARD BEECHER is still fresh in the public mind. The charge of his numerous *liasons* with the females of his flock has not been disproved or denied. That he is a man of great amateness is well understood by those who know him best. This, however, we do not mention as a crime, and it doubtless is the secret of his great magnetism and popularity, but it is expected Divines will keep their animal passions under suitable control.

REV. H. D. FIELDS, Maquoketa, Iowa, attempted to commit suicide.

REV. J. S. BARTLETT, Milford, Ohio, was guilty of criminal intimacy with a pretty married woman of that town, who had no children.

REV. MR. LINN, of Pittsburgh, was guilty of several improprieties with the ladies of his congregation.

REV. MIRIAM D. WOOD, of Decatur, Ga., seduced Miss Emma J. Chivers. Result, a bouncing boy with-

out a legal father.

REV. J. M. MITCHELL, of Savannah, Ga., and formerly from Maine, was guilty of gross improprieties with females of his fold. When charged with the offences, he stoutly denied it, and asserted his innocence, but when proofs accumulated and stared him in the face, he was compelled to confess to Bishop Beckwith that he was not only guilty of the offences as charged, but that he had used the grossest falsehood in endeavoring to conceal his crimes.

The embroglio between REV. DR. LANGDON and REV. DR. GOODENOUGH and several other Reverends of the Methodist Book Concern of this city, is well remembered, when charges of dishonesty, embezzlement, falsehood, &c., &c., were freely made against each other.

REV. MR. LINDSLEY, of Medina, N. Y., whipped a little child of his three years old, for two hours, and until it died. The excuse alleged by the Reverend "man of God" was the child would not obey its step-mother and say its prayers. He was imprisoned at Albion, and came near being lynched by an infuriated populace.

REV. L. D. HUSTON, *the Clerical villain* of Baltimore, was guilty of seducing and ruining several young, innocent girls, daughters of widows and other members of his congregation, who were sent to him for instruction in morality. The fiendish ingenuity he employed in accomplishing his vile purposes was enough to strike one with horror.

REV. A. T. THOMPSON, of Cincinnati, was guilty of numerous criminal intimacies with ladies, married

and unmarried of his congregation, as well as of gross intemperance in the use of intoxicating liquors.

REV. E. F. BERKLEY, of St. Louis, was guilty of criminal liberties with the young ladies of his flock—"the gentle lambs of the fold." Among others was Ella C. Perry, of the immature age of eleven years.

REV. WASHINGTON W. WELCH, near Holly, Mich., committed a rape upon Mrs. Louisa Green, the wife of a brother minister.

REV. GEO. WASHBURN, of the Lewistown and Bradford Circuit, Allegheny County, N. Y., was engaged in courting two or more young ladies at the same time, and was under promise of marriage to several of them.

REV. DR. GRISWOLD, of Maine, of South Carolina, and other localities, was noted as a "ladies' man." His love adventures were numerous and spicy. He was also very fond of jovial and convivial company. He committed the crime of bigamy, having two wives at one time.

REV. WM. HOLT, near Paris, Ill., whipped a widow woman with plow lines.

REV. THURLOW TRESSELMAN, in Annetia, N. Y., seduced several young ladies of his flock, and when unmistakable indications became so apparent that he was charged with the matter, and about to be tried, he left the place very early one morning with the gay Mrs. Hurst, the wife of a gentleman who was absent from home.

REV. E. G. RIBBLE, of De Kalb County, Ill., seduced four young girls in the neighborhood, and ran away, leaving a wife and two children behind him un-

provided for. A shocking case of scandalous criminality.

REV. B. PHINNEY, of Westboro, Mass., was guilty of licentiousness with various females connected with his church.

REV. MR. REED, of Malden, was in the same category.

REV. I. S. KALLOCH, of Kansas, while a resident of Massachusetts, visited a neighboring village with a woman not his wife, and hiring a room in a hotel for a short time, committed adultery with her then and there, as an eye-witness was able to testify.

REV. DR. POMEROY, Secretary of the American Board of Foreign Missions, Boston, was proved to be a liberal patron of houses of ill-fame, where he freely used the money his confiding flock had donated for the conversion of foreign heathen. By his own confession he had paid over \$6,000 to women of notorious character in that city.

REV. TUNIS TITUS KENDRICK, of Brooklyn, has very recently been proved guilty of drunkenness and other immoral conduct. His troubles are still unsettled. He is struggling to gain admission into the church from which he has been expelled.

REV. R. H. WILLIAMSON, Wilkesbarre, Pa., (pastor of the St. Stephen's Episcopal Church) was guilty of visiting houses of ill-fame and other immoral conduct.

REV. ~~SMITH~~ SMITH, of Illinois, a few years ago drowned his wife in a shallow stream by holding her head under water.

For want of room and from a disinclination to further pursue the subject at this time, we decline extend-

ing the recital of similar instances. With a moderate effort enough authentic statements of a like character, of our weak, sinful clergy could be collected to fill several sheets like this, and probably scarcely one case in ten of the criminal acts of clergymen are brought to light. They are "hushed up" and smothered for the "good of the cause" when it is possible to do so. Doubtless many of our readers can call to mind cases of clerical peccadillos, falling under their notice which we have not mentioned. We think, however, we have said enough to convince candid, honest people that priests and clergymen are no holier than other men—know nothing more about God—have no more influence with him, and are no more controlled by the principles of virtue, morality and self-denial than their fellow men.

In closing we will ask, is it for such conduct as we have named, and is it for perpetuating and sustaining such a privileged class that the people of this country are paying the priesthood over sixty millions of dollars annually? Is any good to be gained by keeping these facts smothered and concealed, and is it not about time these Reverend gentry were shown up in their true light, to be appreciated by the public in their real character?

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# ORATION ON THE GODS.

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BY ROBT. G. INGERSOLL.

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*"An Honest God is the Noblest Work of Man."*

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**N**EARLY every people have created a god, and the god has always resembled his creators. He hated and loved what they hated and loved, and he was invariably found on the side of those in power. Each god was intensely patriotic, and detested all nations but his own. All these gods demanded praise, flattery, and worship. Most of them were pleased with sacrifice, and the smell of innocent blood has ever been considered a divine perfume. All these gods have insisted upon having a vast number of priests, and the priests have always insisted upon being supported by the people, and the principal business of these priests has been to boast about their god, and to insist that he could easily vanquish all the other gods put together.

These gods have been manufactured after numberless models, and according to the most grotesque fashions. Some have a thousand arms, some a hundred heads, some are adorned with necklaces of liv-

ing snakes, some are armed with clubs, some with sword and shield, some with bucklers and some have wings as a cherub ; some were invisible, some would show themselves entire and some would only show their backs ; some were jealous, some were foolish, some turned themselves into men, some into swans, some into bulls, some into doves, and some into Holy Ghosts, and made love to the beautiful daughters of men. Some were married—all ought to have been—and some were considered as old bachelors from all eternity. Some had children, and the children were turned into gods and worshipped as their fathers had been. Most of these gods were revengeful, savage, lustful and ignorant. As they generally depended upon their priests for information, their ignorance can hardly excite our astonishment.

These gods did not even know the shape of the worlds they had created, but supposed them perfectly flat. Some thought the day could be lengthened by stopping the sun, that the blowing of horns could throw down the walls of a city, and all knew so little of the real nature of the people they had created, that they *commanded* the people to love them. Some were so ignorant as to suppose that man could believe just as he might desire, or as they might command, and that to be governed by observation, reason, and experience is a most foul and damning sin. None of these gods could give a true account of the creation of this little earth. All were woefully deficient in geology and astronomy. As a rule, they were most miserable legislators, and as executives, they were far inferior to the average of American presidents.

These deities have demanded the most abject and degrading obedience. In order to please them, man must lay his very face in the dust. Of course, they have always been partial to the people who created them, and have generally shown their partiality by assisting those people to rob and destroy others, and to ravish their wives and daughters.

Nothing is so pleasing to these Gods, as the butchery of unbelievers. Nothing so enrages them, even now, as to have some one deny their existence.

Few nations have been so poor as to have but one god. Gods were made so easily, and the raw material cost so little, that generally, the god-market was fairly glutted, and heaven crammed with these phantoms. These gods not only attended to the skies, but were supposed to interfere in all the affairs of men. They presided over everybody and everything. They attended to every department. All was supposed to be under their immediate control. Nothing was too small—nothing too large : the falling of sparrows, the flatulence of the people, and the motions of the planets were alike attended to by these industrious and observing deities. From their starry thrones they frequently came to the earth for the purpose of imparting information to man. It is related of one, that he came amid thunderings and lightnings, in order to tell the people that they should not cook a kid in its mother's milk. Some left their shining abodes to tell women that they should, or should not, have children—to inform a priest how to cut and wear his apron, and to give directions as to the proper manner of cleaning the intestines of a bird.

When the people failed to worship one of these gods, or failed to feed and clothe his priests, (which was much the same thing) he generally visited them with pestilence and famine. Sometimes he allowed some other nation to drag them into slavery—to sell their wives and children; but generally he glutted his vengeance by murdering their first-born. The priests always did their whole duty, not only in predicting these calamities, but in proving, when they did happen, that they were brought upon the people because they had not given quite enough to them.

These gods differed just as the nations differed: the greatest and most powerful had the most powerful god, while the weaker ones were obliged to content themselves with the very off-scourings of the heavens. Each of these gods promised happiness here and hereafter to all his slaves, and threatened to eternally punish all who either disbelieved in his existence, or suspected that some other god might be his superior; but to deny the existence of all gods was, and is, the crime of crimes. Redden your hands with human blood; blast by slander the fair fame of the innocent; strangle the smiling child upon its mother's knees: deceive, ruin and desert the beautiful girl who loves and trusts you—and your case is not hopeless. For all this, and for all these you may be forgiven. For all this, and for all these, that bankrupt court established by the gospel will give you a discharge; but deny the existence of these divine ghosts, of these gods, and the sweet and tearful face of Mercy becomes livid with eternal hate. Heaven's golden gates are shut, and you, with an infinite curse

ringing in your ears, with the brand of infamy upon your brow, commence your endless wanderings in the lurid gloom of hell—an immortal vagrant—an eternal outcast—a deathless convict.

One of these gods, and one who demands our love our admiration and our worship, and one who is worshipped, if mere heartless ceremony is worship, gave to his chosen people, for their guidance, the following laws of war: "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, *then proclaim peace unto it.* And it shall be if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it. And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof shalt thou take unto thyself, and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies which the Lord thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these people which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, *thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth.*"

Is it possible for man to conceive of anything more perfectly infamous? Can you believe that such directions were given by any being except an infinite fiend? Remember that the army receiving these instructions was one of invasion. Peace was offered

upon condition that the people submitting should be the slaves of the invader ; but if any should have the courage to defend their homes, to fight for the love of wife and child, then the sword was to spare none—not even the prattling, dimpled babe.

And we are called upon to worship such a god ; to get upon our knees and tell him that he is good, that he is merciful, that he is just, that he is love. We are asked to stifle every noble sentiment of the soul, and to trample under foot all the sweet charities of the heart. Because we refuse to stultify ourselves—refuse to become liars—we are denounced, hated, traduced and ostracised here ; and this same god threatens to torment us in eternal fire the moment death allows him to fiercely clutch our naked, helpless souls. Let the people hate—let the god threaten ; we will educate them, and we will despise and defy him.

The book, called the bible, is filled with passages equally horrible, unjust and atrocious. This is the book to be read in schools in order to make our children loving, kind and gentle ! This is the book to be recognized in our Constitution as the source of all authority and justice !

Strange ! that no one has ever been persecuted by the church for believing God bad, while hundreds of millions have been destroyed for thinking him good. The orthodox church never will forgive the Universalist for saying, “ God is love.” It has always been considered as one of the very highest evidences of true and undefiled religion to insist that all men, women and children deserve eternal damnation. It has always been heresy to say God “ will at last save all.”

We are asked to justify these frightful passages—these infamous laws of war—because the bible is the word of God. As a matter of fact there never was and there never can be, an argument, even tending to prove the inspiration of any book whatever. In the absence of positive evidence, analogy and experience, argument is simply impossible, and at the very best, can amount only to a useless agitation of the air. The instant we admit that a book is too sacred to be doubted, or even reasoned about, we are mental serfs. It is infinitely absurd to suppose that a god would address a communication to intelligent beings, and yet make it a crime, to be punished in eternal flames, for them to use their intelligence for the purpose of understanding his communication. If we have the right to use our reason, we certainly have the right to act in accordance with it, and no god can have the right to punish us for such action.

The doctrine that future happiness depends upon belief is monstrous. It is the infamy of infamies. The idea that faith in Christ is to be rewarded by an eternity of bliss, while a dependence upon reason, observation and experience merits everlasting pain, is too absurd for refutation, and can be believed only by that unhappy mixture of insanity and ignorance, called "faith." What man, who ever thinks, can believe that blood can appease God? And yet, our entire system of religion is based upon that belief. The Jews pacified Jehovah with the blood of animals, and according to the Christian system, the blood of Jesus softened the heart of God a little, and rendered possible the salvation of a fortunate few. It is hard to

conceive how the human mind can give its assent to such terrible ideas, or how any sane man can read the bible, and still believe in the doctrine of inspiration.

Whether the bible is true or false, is of no consequence in comparison with the mental freedom of the race.

Salvation through slavery is worthless. Salvation from slavery is inestimable.

As long as man believes the bible to be infallible, that book is his master. The civilization of this century is not the child of faith, but of unbelief—the result of free thought.

All that is necessary, as it seems to me, to convince any reasonable person that the bible is simply and purely of human invention—of barbarian invention—is to read it. Read it as you would any other book ; think of it as you would of any other ; get the bandage of reverence from your eyes ; drive from your heart the phantom of fear ; push from the throne of your brain the cowed form of superstition—then read the holy bible, and you will be amazed that you ever, for one moment, supposed a being of infinite wisdom, goodness and purity, to be the author of such ignorance and of such atrocity.

Our ancestors not only had their god-factories, but they made devils as well. These devils were generally disgraced and fallen gods. Some had headed unsuccessful revolts ; some had been caught sweetly reclining in the shadowy folds of some fleecy cloud, kissing the wife of the god of gods. These devils generally sympathized with man. There is in regard to them a most wonderful fact : in nearly all the theologies, mythologies and religions, the devils have been much

more humane and merciful than the gods. No devil ever gave one of his generals an order to kill children and to rip open the bodies of pregnant women. Such barbarities were always ordered by the good gods. The pestilences were sent by the most merciful gods. The frightful famine, during which the dying child with pallid lips sucked the withered bosom of a dead mother, was sent by the loving gods. No devil was ever charged with such fiendish brutality.

One of these gods, according to the account, drowned an entire world, with the exception of eight persons. The old, the young, the beautiful and the helpless were remorselessly devoured by the shoreless sea. This, the most fearful tragedy that the imagination of ignorant priests ever conceived, was the act, not of a devil, but of a god, so-called, whom men ignorantly worship unto this day. What a stain such an act would leave upon the character of a devil! One of the prophets of one of these gods, having in his power a captured king, hewed him in pieces in the sight of all the people. Was ever any imp of any devil guilty of such savagery?

One of these gods is reported to have given the following directions concerning human slavery: "If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years shall he serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself, if he were married then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love

my master, my wife and my children ; I will not go out free. Then his master shall bring him unto the judges ; he shall also bring him unto the door, or unto the door-post ; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl ; and he shall serve him forever."

According to this, a man was given liberty upon condition that he would desert forever his wife and children. Did any devil ever force upon a husband, upon a father, so cruel and so heartless an alternative ? Who can worship such a god ? Who can bend the knee to such a monster ? Who can pray to such a fiend ?

All these gods threatened to torment forever the souls of their enemies. Did any devil ever make so infamous a threat ? The basest thing recorded of the devil, is what he did concerning Job and his family, and that was done by the express permission of one of these gods, and to decide a little difference of opinion between their "serene highnesses" as to the character of "my servant Job."

The first account we have of the devil, is found in that purely scientific book called Genesis, and is as follows : "Now the serpent was more subtile than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made, and he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden ? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden ; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in

the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. \* \* \* \* And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever. Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life."

According to this account, the promise of the devil was fulfilled to the very letter. Adam and Eve did not die, and they did become as gods, knowing good and evil.

The account shows, however, that the gods dreaded education and knowledge then just as they do now. The church still faithfully guards the dangerous tree of knowledge, and has exerted in all ages her utmost power to keep mankind from eating the fruit thereof. The priests have never ceased repeating the old falsehood and the old threat: "Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." From every pulpit comes the same cry, born of the same fear: "Lest they eat and become as gods, knowing good and evil." For this reason, religion hates science, faith detests reason, theology is the sworn enemy of

philosophy, and the church with its flaming sword still guards the hated tree, and like its supposed founder, curses to the lowest depths the brave thinkers who eat and become as gods.

If the account given in Genesis is really true, ought we not after all to thank this serpent? He was the first schoolmaster, the first advocate of learning, the first enemy of ignorance, the first to whisper in human ears the sacred word liberty, the creator of ambition, the author of modesty, of inquiry, of doubt, of investigation, of progress and of civilization.

Give me the storm and tempest of thought and action, rather than the dead calm of ignorance and faith! Banish me from Eden when you will; but first let me eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge!

Some nations have borrowed their gods; of this number, we are compelled to say, is our own. The Jews having ceased to exist as a nation, and having no further use for a god, our ancestors appropriated him, and adopted their devil at the same time. This borrowed god is still an object of some adoration, and this adopted devil still excites the apprehensions of our people. He is still supposed to be setting his traps and snares for the purpose of catching our unwary souls, and is still, with reasonable success, waging the old war against our god.

To me, it seems easy to account for these ideas concerning gods and devils. They are a perfectly natural production. Man has created them all, and under the same circumstances would create them again. Man has not only created all these gods, but he has

created them out of the materials by which he has been surrounded. Generally he has modeled them after himself, and has given them hands, feet, eyes, ears, and organs of speech. Each nation made its gods and devils speak its language not only, but put in their mouths the same mistakes in history, geography, astronomy, and in all matters of fact, generally made by the people. No god was ever in advance of the nation that created him. The negroes represented their deities with black skins and curly hair. The Mongolian gave to his a yellow complexion and dark almond-shaped eyes. The Jews were not allowed to paint theirs, or we should have seen Jehovah with a full beard, an oval face, and an aquiline nose. Jove was a perfect Greek, and Jupiter looked as though a member of the Roman senate. The gods of Egypt had the patient face and placid look of the loving people who made them. The gods of northern countries were represented warmly clad in robes of fur; those of the tropics were naked. The gods of India were often mounted upon elephants; those of some islanders were great swimmers, and the deities of the Arctic zone were passionately fond of whale's blubber. Nearly all people have carved or painted representations of their gods, and these representations were, by the lower classes, generally treated as the real gods, and to these images and idols they addressed prayers and offered sacrifice.

In some countries, even at this day, if the people after long praying do not obtain their desires, they turn their images off as impotent gods, or upbraid them in a most reproachful manner, loading them

with blows and curses. "How now, dog of a spirit," they say, "we give you lodging in a magnificent temple, we gild you with gold, feed you with the choicest food, and offer incense to you, yet after all this care you are so ungrateful as to refuse us what we ask." Hereupon they will pull the god down and drag him through the filth of the street. If in the meantime it happens that they obtain their request, then with a great deal of ceremony, they wash him clean, carry him back and place him in his temple again, where they fall down and make excuses for what they have done. "Of a truth," say they, "we were a little too hasty, and you were a little too long in your grant. Why should you bring this beating on yourself. But what is done cannot be undone. Let us not think of it any more. If you will forget what is past we will gild you over again brighter than before."

Man has never been at a loss for gods. He has worshipped almost everything, including the vilest and most disgusting beasts. He has worshipped fire, earth, air, water, light, stars, and for hundreds of ages prostrated himself before enormous snakes. Savage tribes often make gods of articles they get from civilized people. The Todas worship a cow-bell. The Kotas worship two silver plates, which they regard as husband and wife, and another tribe manufactured a god out of a king of hearts.

Man having always been the physical superior of woman, accounts for the fact that most of the high gods have been males. Had woman been the physical superior, the powers supposed to be the rulers of

Nature would have been women, and instead of being represented in the apparel of man, they would have luxuriated in trains, low-necked dresses, laces and back-hair.

Nothing can be plainer than that each nation gives to its god its peculiar characteristics, and that every individual gives to his god his personal peculiarities.

Man has no ideas, and can have none, except those suggested by his surroundings. He cannot conceive of anything utterly unlike what he has seen or felt. He can exaggerate, diminish, combine, separate, deform, beautify, improve, multiply and compare what he sees, what he feels, what he hears, and all of which he takes cognizance through the medium of the senses; but he cannot create. Having seen exhibitions of power, he can say, omnipotent. Having lived, he can say, immortality. Knowing something of time, he can say, eternity. Conceiving something of intelligence, he can say, God. Having seen exhibitions of malice, he can say, devil. A few gleams of happiness having fallen athwart the gloom of his life, he can say, heaven. Pain, in its numberless forms, having been experienced, he can say, hell. Yet all these ideas have a foundation in fact, and only a foundation. The superstructure has been reared by exaggerating, diminishing, combining, separating, deforming, beautifying, improving or multiplying realities, so that the edifice, or fabric, is but the incongruous grouping of what man has perceived through the medium of the senses. It is as though we should give to a lion the wings of an eagle, the hoofs of a bison, the tail of a horse, the pouch of a kangaroo, and the

trunk of an elephant. We have in imagination created an impossible monster. And yet the various parts of this monster really exist. So it is with all the gods that man has made.

Beyond nature man can not go, even in thought, above nature he can not rise—below nature he cannot fall.

Man, in his ignorance, supposed that all phenomena were produced by some intelligent powers, and with direct reference to him. To preserve friendly relations with these powers was, and still is, the object of all religions. Man knelt through fear and to implore assistance, or through gratitude for some favor which he supposed had been rendered. He endeavored by supplication to appease some being who, for some reason, had, as he believed, become enraged. The lightning and thunder terrified him. In the presence of the volcano he sank upon his knees. The great forests filled with wild and ferocious beasts; the monstrous serpents crawling in mysterious depths; the boundless sea; the flaming comets; the sinister eclipses; the awful calmness of the stars, and more than all, the perpetual presence of death, convinced him that he was the sport and prey of unseen and malignant powers. The strange and frightful diseases to which he was subject; the freezings and burnings of fever; the contortions of epilepsy; the sudden palsies; the darkness of night, and the wild, terrible and fantastic dreams that filled his brain, satisfied him that he was haunted and pursued by countless spirits of evil. For some reason he supposed that these spirits differed in power—that they were not all alike malevolent—that the higher controlled the

lower, and that his very existence depended upon gaining the assistance of the more powerful. For this purpose he resorted to prayer, to flattery, to worship and to sacrifice. These ideas appear to have been almost universal in savage man.

For ages, all nations supposed that the sick and insane were possessed by evil spirits. For thousands of years the practice of medicine consisted in frightening these spirits away. Usually the priests would make the loudest and most discordant noises possible. They would blow horns, beat upon rude drums, clash cymbals, and in the meantime utter the most unearthly yells. If the noise-remedy failed, they would implore the aid of some more powerful spirit.

To pacify these spirits was considered of infinite importance. The poor barbarian, knowing that men could be softened by gifts, gave to these spirits that which to him seemed of the most value. With bursting heart he would offer the blood of his dearest child. It was impossible for him to conceive of a god utterly unlike himself, and he naturally supposed that these powers of the air would be effected a little at the sight of so great and so deep a sorrow. It was with the barbarians then, as with the civilized now: one class lived upon and made merchandise of the fears of another. Certain persons took it upon themselves to appease the gods, and to instruct the people in their duties to these unseen powers. This was the origin of the priesthood. The priest pretended to stand between the wrath of the gods and the helplessness of man. He was man's attorney at the court of heaven. He carried to the invisible world a flag of truce, a

protest and a request. He came back with a command, with authority and with power. Man fell upon his knees before his own servant, and the priest, taking advantage of the awe inspired by his supposed influence with the gods, made of his fellow-man a cringing hypocrite and slave. Even Christ, the supposed son of God, taught that persons were possessed of evil spirits, and frequently, according to the account, gave proof of his divine origin and mission by frightening droves of devils out of his unfortunate countrymen. Casting out devils was his principal employment, and the devils thus banished generally took occasion to acknowledge him as the true Messiah ; which was not only very kind of them, but quite fortunate for him. The religious people have always regarded the testimony of these devils as perfectly conclusive, and the writers of the New Testament quote the words of these imps of darkness with great satisfaction.

The fact that Christ could withstand the temptations of the devil, was considered as conclusive evidence that he was assisted by some god, or at least by some being superior to man. St. Matthew gives an account of an attempt made by the devil to tempt the supposed son of God ; and it has always excited the wonder of Christians that the temptation was so nobly and heroically withstood. The account to which I refer is as follows :

“Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when the tempter came to him, he said, ‘If thou be the son of God command that these stones be made bread.’ But he answered and said, ‘It is written : man shall not

live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city and setteth him upon a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, 'If thou be the son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, 'He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, lest at any time thou shalt dash thy foot against a stone.' Jesus said unto him, 'It is written again thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and saith unto to him, 'All these will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me.'"

The Christians now claim that Jesus was God. If he was God, of course the devil knew that fact, and yet, according to this account, the devil took the omnipotent God and placed him upon a pinnacle of the temple, and endeavored to induce him to dash himself against the earth. Failing in that, he took the creator, owner and governor of the universe up into an exceeding high mountain, and offered him this world—this grain of sand, if he, the God of all the worlds, would fall down and worship him, a poor devil, without even a tax title to one foot of dirt! Is it possible the devil was such an idiot? Should any great credit be given to this deity for not being caught with such chaff? Think of it! The devil—the prince of sharpers—the king of cunning—the master of finesse, trying to bribe God with a grain of sand that belonged to God!

Is there in all the religious literature of the world anything more grossly absurd than this?

These devils, according to the bible, were of various kinds,—some could speak and hear, others were deaf and dumb. All could not be cast out in the same way. The deaf and dumb spirits were quite difficult to deal with. St. Mark tells of a gentleman who brought his son to Christ. The boy, it seems, was possessed of a dumb spirit, over which the disciples had no control. "Jesus said unto the spirit, 'Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him.'" Whereupon, the deaf spirit (having heard what was said) cried out (being dumb) and immediately vacated the premises. The ease with which Christ controlled this deaf and dumb spirit, excited the wonder of his disciples, and they asked him privately why they could not cast that spirit out. To whom he replied: "This kind can come forth by nothing but prayer and fasting." Is there a Christian in the whole world who would believe such a story if found in any other book? The trouble is, these pious people shut up their reason, and then open their bibles.

In the olden times, the existence of devils was universally admitted. The people had no doubt upon that subject, and from such belief it followed as a matter of course, that a person, in order to vanquish these devils, had either to be a god, or assisted by one. All founders of religions have established their claims to divine origin by controlling evil spirits and suspending the laws of nature. Casting out devils was a certificate of divinity. A prophet, unable to cope with the powers of darkness, was regarded with contempt. The utterance of the highest and noblest

sentiments; the most blameless and holy life, commanded but little respect, unless accompanied by power to work miracles and command spirits.

This belief in good and evil powers had its origin in the fact that man was surrounded, by what he was pleased to call, good and evil phenomena. Phenomena affecting man pleasantly were ascribed to good spirits, while those affecting him unpleasantly or injuriously, were ascribed to evil spirits. It being admitted that all phenomena were produced by spirits, the spirits were divided according to the phenomena, and the phenomena were good or bad as they affected man. Good spirits were supposed to be the authors of good phenomena, and evil spirits of the evil: so that the idea of a devil has been as universal as the idea of a god.

Many writers maintain that an idea to become universal must be true; that all universal ideas are innate; and that innate ideas can not be false. If the fact, that an idea has been universal, proves that it is innate, and if the fact, that an idea is innate, proves that it is correct, then, the believers in innate ideas must admit that the evidence of a god superior to nature, and of a devil superior to nature, is exactly the same, and that the existence of such a devil must be as self-evident as the existence of such a god. The truth is, a god was inferred from good, and a devil from bad phenomena. And it is just as natural and logical to suppose that a devil would cause happiness, as to suppose that a god would produce misery. Consequently, if an intelligence, infinite and supreme, is the immediate author of all phenomena, it is difficult

to determine whether such intelligence is the friend or enemy of man. If phenomena were all good, we might say they were all produced by a perfectly beneficent being. If they were all bad, we might say they were produced by a perfectly malevolent power; but as phenomena are, as they affect man, both good and bad, they must be produced by different and antagonistic spirits; by one who is sometimes actuated by kindness, and sometimes by malice; or all must be produced of necessity, and without reference to their consequences upon man.

The foolish doctrine, that all phenomena can be traced to the interference of good and evil spirits, has been, and still is almost universal. That most people still believe in some spirit that can change the natural order of events, is proven by the fact, that nearly all resort to prayer. Thousands, at this very moment, are probably imploring some supposed power to interfere in their behalf. Some want health restored; some ask that the loved and absent be watched over and protected; some pray for riches; some for rain; some want diseases stayed; some vainly ask for food; some ask for revivals; a few ask for more wisdom, and now and then one tells the Lord to do as he may think best. Thousands ask to be protected from the devil; some, like David, pray for revenge, and some implore, even God, not to lead them into temptation. All these prayers rest upon, and are produced by the idea that some power not only can, but probably will, change the order of the universe. This belief has been among the great majority of tribes and nations. All sacred books are filled with the accounts of such

interferences, and our own bible is no exception to this rule.

If we believe in a power superior to nature, it is perfectly natural to suppose that such power can and will interfere in the affairs of this world. If there is no interference, of what practical use can such power be? The scriptures give us the most wonderful accounts of divine interference: Animals talk like men; springs gurgle from dry bones; the sun and moon stop in the heavens in order that General Joshua may have more time to murder; the shadow on a dial goes back ten degrees to convince a petty king of a barbarous people that he is not going to die of a boil; fire refuses to burn; water positively declines to seek its level, but stands up like a wall; grains of sand become lice; common walking sticks, to gratify a mere freak, twist themselves into serpents, and then swallow each other by way of exercise; murmuring streams, laughing at the attraction of gravitation, run up hill for years, following wandering tribes from a pure love of frolic; prophecy becomes altogether easier than history; the sons of God become enamoured of the world's girls; women are changed into salt for the purpose of keeping a great event fresh in the minds of men; an excellent article of brimstone is imported from heaven free of duty; clothes refuse to wear out for forty years; birds keep restaurants and feed wandering prophets free of expense; bears tear children in pieces for laughing at old men without wigs; muscular development depends upon the length of one's hair; dead people come to life, simply to get a joke on their enemies and heirs; witches

and wizards converse freely with the souls of the departed, and God himself becomes a stone-cutter and engraver, after having been a tailor and dress-maker.

The veil between heaven and earth was always rent or lifted. The shadows of this world, the radiance of heaven, and the glare of hell mixed and mingled until man became uncertain as to which country he really inhabited. Man dwelt in an unreal world. He mistook his ideas, his dreams, for real things. His fears became terrible, and malicious monsters. He lived in the midst of furies and fairies, nymphs and naiads, goblins and ghosts, witches and wizards, sprites and spooks, deities and devils. The obscure and gloomy depths were filled with claw and wing—with beak and hoof—with leering looks and sneering mouths—with the malice of deformity—with the cunning of hatred, and with all the slimy forms that fear can draw and paint upon the shadowy canvass of the dark.

It is enough to make one almost insane with pity to think what man in the long night has suffered ; of the tortures he has endured, surrounded, as he supposed, by malignant powers and clutched by the fierce phantoms of the air. No wonder that he fell upon his trembling knees—that he built altars and reddened them even with his own blood. No wonder that he implored ignorant priests and impudent magicians for aid. No wonder that he crawled groveling in the dust to the temple's door, and there, in the insanity of despair, besought the deaf gods to hear his bitter cry of agony and fear.

The savage, as he emerges from a state of barbar-

ism, gradually loses faith in his idols of wood and stone, and in their place puts a multitude of spirits. As he advances in knowledge, he generally discards the petty spirits and in their stead believes in one, whom he supposes to be infinite and supreme. Supposing this great spirit to be superior to nature, he offers worship or flattery in exchange for assistance. At last, finding that he obtains no aid from this supposed deity—finding that every search after the absolute must of necessity end in failure—finding that man cannot by any possibility conceive of the conditionless—he begins to investigate the facts by which he is surrounded, and to depend upon himself.

The people are beginning to think, to reason, and to investigate. Slowly, painfully, but surely, the gods are being driven from the earth. Only upon rare occasions are they, even by the most religious, supposed to interfere in the affairs of men. In most matters we are at last supposed to be free. Since the invention of steamships and railways, so that the products of all countries can be easily interchanged, the gods have quit the business of producing famine. Now and then they kill a child because it is idolized by its parents. As a rule they have given up causing accidents on railroads, exploding boilers, and bursting kerosene lamps. Cholera, yellow fever, and small-pox are still considered heavenly weapons; but measles, itch and ague are now attributed to natural causes. As a general thing, the gods have stopped drowning children, except as a punishment for violating the Sabbath. They still pay some attention to the affairs of kings, men of genius and persons of

great wealth ; but ordinary people are left to shirk for themselves as best they may. In wars between great nations, the gods still interfere ; but in prize fights, the best man, with an honest referee, is almost sure to win.

The church cannot abandon the idea of special providence. To give up that doctrine, is to give up all. The church must insist that prayer is answered—that some power superior to nature hears and grants the request of the sincere and humble Christian, and that this same power in some mysterious way provides for all.

A devout clergyman sought every opportunity to impress upon the mind of his son the fact, that God takes care of all his creatures ; that the falling sparrow attracts his attention, and that his loving kindness is over all his works. Happening, one day, to see a crane wading in quest of food, the good man pointed out to his son the perfect adaptation of the crane to get his living in that manner. "See," said he, "how his legs are formed for wading! What a long slender bill he has! Observe how nicely he folds his feet when putting them in or drawing them out of the water! He does not cause the slightest ripple. He is thus enabled to approach the fish without giving them any notice of his arrival." "My son," said he, "it is impossible to look at that bird without recognizing the design, as well as the goodness of God, in thus providing the means of subsistence." "Yes," replied the boy, "I think I see the goodness of God, at least so far as the crane is concerned ; but after all, father, don't you think the arrangement a little tough on the fish?"

Even the advanced religionist, although disbelieving in any great amount of interference by the gods in this age of the world, still thinks, that in the beginning, some god made the laws governing the universe. He believes that in consequence of these laws a man can lift a greater weight with, than without, a lever ; that this god so made matter, and so established the order of things, that two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time ; so that a body once put in motion will keep moving until it is stopped ; so that it is a greater distance around, than across a circle ; so that a perfect square has four equal sides, instead of five or seven. He insists that it took a direct interposition of providence to make the whole greater than a part, and that had it not been for this power superior to nature, twice one might have been more than twice two, and sticks and strings might have had only one end apiece. Like the old Scotch divine, he thanks God that Sunday comes at the end instead of in the middle of the week, and that death comes at the close instead of at the commencement of life, thereby giving us time to prepare for that holy day and that most solemn event. These religious people see nothing but design everywhere, and personal, intelligent interference in everything. They insist that the universe has been created, and that the adaptation of means to ends is perfectly apparent. They point us to the sunshine, to the flowers, to the April rain, and to all there is of beauty and of use in the world. Did it ever occur to them that a cancer is as beautiful in its developement as is the reddest rose ? That what they are pleased to call the adapta-

tion of means to ends, is as apparent in the cancer as in the April rain? How beautiful the process of digestion! By what ingenious methods the blood is poisoned so that the cancer shall have food! By what wonderful contrivances the entire system of man is made to pay tribute to this divine and charming cancer! See by what admirable instrumentalities it feeds itself from the surrounding quivering, dainty flesh! See how it gradually but surely expands and grows! By what marvelous mechanism it is supplied with long and slender roots that reach out to the most secret nerves of pain for sustenance and life! What beautiful colors it presents! Seen through the microscope, it is a miracle of order and beauty. All the ingenuity of man cannot stop its growth. Think of the amount of thought it must have required to invent a way by which the life of one man might be given to produce one cancer? Is it possible to look upon it and doubt that there is design in the universe, and that the inventor of this wonderful cancer must be infinitely powerful, ingenious and good?

We are told that the universe was designed and created, and that it is absurd to suppose that matter has existed from eternity, but that it is perfectly self-evident that a god has.

If a god created the universe, then, there must have been a time when he commenced to create. Back of that time there must have been an eternity, during which there had existed nothing—absolutely nothing—except this supposed god. According to this theory, this god spent an eternity, so to speak, in

an infinite vacuum, and in perfect idleness.

Admitting that a god did create the universe, the question then arises, of what did he create it? It certainly was not made of nothing. Nothing, considered in the light of a raw material, is a most decided failure. It follows then, that the god must have made the universe out of himself, he being the only existence. The universe is material, and if it was made of god, the god must have been material. With this very thought in his mind, Anaximander of Miletus said: "Creation is the decomposition of the infinite."

It has been demonstrated, that the earth would fall to the sun, only for the fact, that it is attracted by other worlds, and those worlds must be attracted by other worlds still beyond them, and so on, without end. This proves the material universe to be infinite. If an infinite universe has been made out of an infinite god, how much of the god is left?

The idea of a creative deity is gradually being abandoned, and nearly all truly scientific minds admit that matter must have existed from eternity. It is indestructible, and the indestructible cannot be created. It is the crowning glory of our century to have demonstrated the indestructibility and the eternal persistence of force. Neither matter nor force can be increased nor diminished. Force cannot exist apart from matter. Matter exists only in connection with force, and consequently, a force apart from matter, and superior to nature, is a demonstrated impossibility.

Force then must have also existed from eternity.

and could not have been created. Matter, in its countless forms, from dead earth to the eyes of those we love, and force in all its manifestations, from simple motion to the grandest thought, deny creation and defy control.

Thought is a form of force. We walk with the same force with which we think. Man is an organism, that changes several forms of force into thought-force. Man is a machine into which we put what we call food, and produce what we call thought. Think of that wonderful chemistry by which bread was changed into the divine tragedy of Hamlet!

A god must not only be material, but he must be an organism, capable of changing other forms of force into thought-force. This is what we call eating. Therefore, if the god thinks, he must eat, that is to say, he must of necessity have some means of supplying the force with which to think. It is impossible to conceive of a being who can eternally impart force to matter, and yet have no means of supplying the force thus imparted.

If neither matter nor force were created, what evidence have we then, of the existence of a power superior to nature? The theologian will probably reply, "We have law and order, cause and effect, and besides all this, matter could not have put itself in motion."

Suppose, for the sake of the argument, that there is no being superior to nature, and that matter and force have existed from eternity. Now suppose that two atoms should come together, would there be an effect? Yes. Suppose they came in exactly opposite direc-

tions with equal force, they would be stopped, to say the least. This would be an effect. If this is so, then you have matter, force and effect without a being superior to nature. Now suppose that two other atoms, just like the first two, should come together under precisely the same circumstances, would not the effect be exactly the same? Yes. Like causes, producing like effects, is what we mean by law and order. Then we have matter, force, effect, law and order without a being superior to nature. Now, we know that every effect must also be a cause, and that every cause must be an effect. The atoms coming together did produce an effect, and as every effect must also be a cause, the effect produced by the collision of the atoms, must as to something else have been a cause. Then we have matter, force, law, order, cause and effect without a being superior to nature. Nothing is left for the supernatural but empty space. His throne is a void, and his boasted realm is without matter, without force, without law, without cause, and without effect.

But what put all this matter in motion? If matter and force have existed from eternity, then matter must have always been in motion. There can be no force without motion. Force is forever active, and there is, and there can be no cessation. If, therefore, matter and force have existed from eternity, so has motion. In the whole universe there is not even one atom in a state of rest.

A deity outside of nature exists in nothing, and is nothing. Nature embraces with infinite arms all matter and all force. That which is beyond her grasp is

destitute of both, and can hardly be worth the worship and adoration even of a man.

There is but one way to demonstrate the existence of a power independent of and superior to nature, and that is by breaking, if only for one moment, the continuity of cause and effect. Pluck from the endless chain of existence one little link; stop for one instant the grand procession, and you have shown beyond all contradiction that nature has a master. Change the fact, just for one second, that matter attracts matter, and a god appears.

The rudest savage has always known this fact, and for that reason always demanded the evidence of miracle. The founder of a religion must be able to turn water into wine—cure with a word the blind and lame, and raise with a simple touch the dead to life. It was necessary for him to demonstrate to the satisfaction of his barbarian disciple, that he was superior to nature. In times of ignorance, this was easy to do. The credulity of the savage was almost boundless. To him, the marvellous was the beautiful, the mysterious was the sublime. Consequently, every religion has for its foundation a miracle—that is to say, a violation of nature—that is to say, a falsehood.

No one, in the world's whole history, ever attempted to substantiate a truth by a miracle. Truth scorns the assistance of miracle. Nothing but falsehood ever attested itself by signs and wonders. No miracle ever was performed, and no sane man ever thought he had performed one, and until one is performed, there can be no evidence of the existence of any power superior to, and independent of nature.

The church wishes us to believe. Let the church, or one of its intellectual saints, perform a miracle, and we will believe. We are told that nature has a superior. Let this superior, for one single instant, control nature, and we will admit the truth of your assertions.

We have heard talk enough. We have listened to to all the drowsy, idealess, vapid sermons that we wish to hear. We have read your bible, and the works of your best minds. We have heard your prayers, your solemn groans and your reverential amens. All these amount to less than nothing. We want one fact. We beg at the doors of your churches for just one little fact. We pass our hats along your pews and under your pulpits and implore you for just one fact. We know all about your mouldy wonders and your stale miracles. We want a this year's fact. We ask only one. Give us one fact for charity. Your miracles are too ancient. The witnesses have been dead for nearly two thousand years. Their reputation for "truth and veracity" in the neighborhood where they resided is wholly unknown to us. Give us a new miracle, and substantiate it by witnesses who still have the cheerful habit of living in this world. Do not send us to Jericho to hear the winding horns, nor put us in the fire with Meshech, Shadrach and Abednego. Do not compel us to navigate the sea with Captain Jonah, nor dine with Mr. Ezekiel. There is no sort of use in sending us fox hunting with Samson. We have positively lost all interest in that little speech so eloquently delivered by Balaam's inspired donkey. It is worse than useless to

show us fishes with money in their mouths, and call our attention to vast multitudes stuffing themselves with five crackers and two sardines. We demand a new miracle, and we demand it now. Let the church furnish at least one, or forever after hold her peace.

In the olden time, the church, by violating the order of nature, proved the existence of her God. At that time miracles were performed with the most astonishing ease. They became so common that the church ordered her priests to desist. And now this same church—the people having found some little sense—admits, not only, that she cannot perform a miracle, but insists that the absence of miracle—the steady, unbroken march of cause and effect, prove the existence of a power superior to nature. The fact is, however, that the indissoluble chain of cause and effect proves exactly the contrary.

Sir William Hamilton, one of the pillars of modern theology, in discussing this very subject, uses the following language: "The phenomena of matter taken by themselves, so far from warranting any inference to the existence of a god, would on the contrary ground even an argument to his negation. The phenomena of the material world are subjected to immutable laws; are produced and reproduced in the same invariable succession, and manifest only the blind force of a mechanical necessity."

Nature is but an endless series of efficient causes. She cannot create, but she eternally transforms. There was no beginning, and there can be no end.

The best minds, even in the religious world, admit that in material nature there is no evidence of what

they are pleased to call a god. They find their evidence in the phenomena of intelligence, and very innocently assert that intelligence is above, and in fact, opposed to nature. They insist that man, at least, is a special creation ; that he has somewhere in his brain a divine spark, a little portion of the "Great First Cause." They say that matter cannot produce thought ; but that thought can produce matter. They tell us that man has intelligence, and therefore there must be an intelligence greater than his. Why not say : God has intelligence, therefore there must be an intelligence greater than his ? So far as we know there is no intelligence apart from matter. We cannot conceive of thought, except as produced within a brain.

The science, by means of which they demonstrate the existence of an impossible intelligence, and an incomprehensible power, is called, metaphysics or theology. The theologians admit that the phenomena of matter tend, at least, to disprove the existence of any power superior to nature, because in such phenomena we see nothing but an endless chain of efficient causes—nothing but the force of a mechanical necessity. They therefore appeal to what they denominate the phenomena of mind to establish this superior power.

The trouble is, that in the phenomena of mind we find the same endless chain of efficient causes ; the same mechanical necessity. Every thought must have had an efficient cause. Every motive, every desire, every fear, hope, and dream must have been necessarily produced. There is no room in the mind

of man for providence or chance. The facts and forces governing thought are as absolute as those governing the motions of the planets. A poem is produced by the forces of nature, and is as necessarily and naturally produced as mountains and seas. You will seek in vain for a thought in man's brain without its efficient cause. Every mental operation is the necessary result of certain facts and conditions. Mental phenomena are considered more complicated than those of matter, and consequently more mysterious. Being more mysterious they are considered better evidence of the existence of a god. No one infers a god from the simple, from the known, from what is understood, but from the complex, from the unknown, and incomprehensible. Our ignorance is God; what we know is science.

When we abandon the doctrine that some infinite being created matter and force, and enacted a code of laws for their government, the idea of interference will be lost. The real priest will then be, not the mouth-piece of some pretended deity, but the interpreter of nature. From that moment the church ceases to exist. The tapers will die out upon the dusty altar; the moths will eat the fading velvet of pulpit and pew; the Bible will take its place with the Shastras, Puranas, Vedas, Eddas, Sagas and Korans, and the fetters of a degrading faith will fall from the minds of men.

“But,” says the religionist, “you cannot explain everything; you cannot understand everything; and that which you cannot explain, that which you do not comprehend, is my God.”

We are explaining more every day. We are understanding more every day ; consequently your God is growing smaller every day.

Nothing daunted, the religionist then insists, that nothing can exist without a cause, except cause, and that this uncaused cause, is God.

To this we again reply : *Every cause must produce an effect, because until it does produce an effect, it is not a cause. Every effect must in its turn become a cause. Therefore, in the nature of things, there cannot be a last cause, for the reason that a so-called last cause would necessarily produce an effect, and that effect must of necessity become a cause. The converse of these propositions must be true. Every effect must have had a cause, and every cause must have been an effect. Therefore, there could have been no first cause. A first cause is just as impossible as a last effect.*

Beyond the universe there is nothing, and within the universe the supernatural does not and can not exist.

The moment these great truths are understood and admitted, a belief in general or special providence becomes impossible. From that instant men will cease their vain efforts to please an imaginary being, and will give their time and attention to the affairs of this world. They will abandon the idea of attaining any object by prayer and supplication. The element of uncertainty will, in a great measure, be removed from the domain of the future, and man, gathering courage from a succession of victories over the obstructions of nature, will attain a serene grandeur un-

known to the disciples of any superstition. The plans of mankind will no longer be interfered with by the finger of a supposed omnipotence, and no one will believe that nations or individuals are protected or destroyed by any deity whatever. Science, freed from the chains of pious custom and evangelical prejudice, will, within her sphere, be supreme. The mind will investigate without reverence, and publish its conclusions without fear. Agassiz will no longer hesitate to declare the Mosaic cosmogony utterly inconsistent with the demonstrated truths of geology, and will cease pretending any reverence for the Jewish scriptures. The moment science succeeds in rendering the church powerless for evil, the real thinkers will be outspoken. The little flags of truce carried by timid philosophers, will disappear, and the cowardly parley will give place to victory—lasting and universal.

If we admit that some infinite being has controlled the destinies of persons and peoples, history becomes a most cruel and bloody farce. Age after age, the strong have trampled upon the weak; the crafty and heartless have ensnared and enslaved the simple and innocent, and nowhere, in all the annals of mankind, has any god succored the oppressed.

Man should cease to expect aid from on high. By this time he should know that heaven has no ear to hear, and no hand to help. The present is the necessary child of all the past. There has been no chance, and there can be no interference.

If abuses are destroyed, man must destroy them. If slaves are freed, man must free them. If new

truths are discovered, man must discover them. If the naked are clothed ; if the hungry are fed ; if justice is done ; if labor is rewarded ; if superstition is driven from the mind ; if the defenceless are protected, and if the right finally triumphs, all must be the work of man. The grand victories of the future must be won by man, and by man alone.

Nature, so far as we can discern, without passion and without intention, forms, transforms, and re-transforms forever. She neither weeps nor rejoices. She produces man without purpose, and obliterates him without regret. She knows no distinction between the beneficial and the hurtful. Poison and nutrition, pain and joy, life and death, smiles and tears are alike to her. She is neither merciful nor cruel. She can not be flattered by worship nor melted by tears. She does not know even the attitude of prayer. She appreciates no difference between poison in the fangs of snakes and mercy in the hearts of men. Only through man does nature take cognizance of the good, the true, and the beautiful ; and, so far as we know, man is the highest intelligence.

And yet man continues to believe that there is some power independent of and superior to nature, and still endeavors, by form, ceremony, supplication, hypocrisy and sacrifice, to obtain its aid. His best energies have been wasted in the service of this phantom. The horrors of witchcraft were all born of an ignorant belief in the existence of a totally depraved being superior to nature, acting in perfect independence of her laws, and all religious superstition has had for its basis a belief, in at least two beings, one good and the

other bad, both of whom could arbitrarily change the order of the universe. The history of religion is simply the story of man's efforts in all ages to avoid one of these powers, and to pacify the other. Both powers have inspired little else than abject fear. The cold, calculating sneer of the devil, and the frown of God, were equally terrible. In any event, man's fate was to be arbitrarily fixed forever by an unknown power superior to all law, and to all fact. Until this belief is thrown aside, man must consider himself the slave of phantom masters—neither of whom promise liberty in this world nor the next.

Man must learn to rely upon himself. Reading bibles will not protect him from the blasts of winter, but houses, fires, and clothing will. To prevent famine, one plow is worth a million sermons, and even patent medicines will cure more diseases than all the prayers uttered since the beginning of the world.

Although many eminent men have endeavored to harmonize necessity and free will, the existence of evil, and the infinite power and goodness of God, they have only succeeded in producing learned and ingenious failures. Immense efforts have been made to reconcile ideas utterly inconsistent with the facts by which we are surrounded, and all persons who have failed to perceive the pretended reconciliation, have been denounced as infidels, atheists and scoffers. The whole power of the church has been brought to bear against philosophers and scientists in order to compel a denial of the authority of demonstration, and to induce some Judas to betray Reason, one of the

saviours of mankind.

During that frightful period known as the "Dark Ages," Faith reigned, with scarcely a rebellious subject. Her temples were "carpeted with knees," and the wealth of nations adorned her countless shrines. The great painters prostituted their genius to immortalize her vagaries, while the poets enshrined them in song. At her bidding, man covered the earth with blood. The scales of Justice were turned with her gold, and for her use were invented all the cunning instruments of pain. She built cathedrals for God, and dungeons for men. She peopled the clouds with angels and the earth with slaves. For centuries the world was retracing its steps—going steadily back towards barbaric night. A few infidels—a few heretics cried, "Halt!" to the great rabble of ignorant devotion, and made it possible for the genius of the nineteenth century to revolutionize the cruel creeds and superstitions of mankind.

The thoughts of man, in order to be of any real worth, must be free. Under the influence of fear, the brain is paralyzed, and instead of bravely solving a problem for itself, tremblingly adopts the solution of another. As long as a majority of men will cringe to the very earth before some petty prince or king, what must be the infinite abjectness of their little souls in the presence of their supposed creator and God? Under such circumstances, what can their thoughts be worth?

The originality of repetition, and the mental vigor of acquiescence, are all that we have any right to expect from the Christian world. As long as every question

is answered by the word, "god," scientific inquiry is simply impossible. As fast as phenomena are satisfactorily explained, the domain of the power, supposed to be superior to nature, must decrease, while the horizon of the known must as constantly continue to enlarge.

It is no longer satisfactory to account for the fall and rise of nations by saying: "It is the will of God." Such an explanation puts ignorance and education upon an exact equality, and does away with the idea of really accounting for anything whatever.

Will the religionist pretend that the real end of science is, to ascertain how, and why God acts? Science, from such a stand-point would consist in investigating the law of arbitrary action, and in a grand endeavor to ascertain the rules necessarily obeyed by infinite caprice.

From a philosophic point of view, science is a knowledge of the laws of life; of the conditions of happiness; of the facts by which we are surrounded, and the relations we sustain to men and things—by means of which, man, so to speak, subjugates nature, and bends the elemental powers to his will, making blind force the servant of his brain.

A belief in special providence does away with the spirit of investigation, and is inconsistent with personal effort. Why should man endeavor to thwart the designs of God? "Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature?" Under the influence of this belief, man, basking in the sunshine of a delusion, considers the lilies of the field and refuses to take any thought for the morrow. Believ-

ing himself in the power of an infinite being, who can, at any moment, dash him to the lowest hell or raise him to the highest heaven, he necessarily abandons the idea of accomplishing anything by his own efforts. As long as this belief was general, the world was filled with ignorance, superstition and misery. The energies of man were wasted in a vain effort to obtain the aid of this power, supposed to be superior to nature. For countless ages, even men were sacrificed upon the altar of this impossible god. To please him, mothers have shed the blood of their own babes; martyrs have chanted triumphant songs in the midst of flame; priests have gorged themselves with blood; nuns have fore-sworn the ecstasies of love; old men have tremblingly implored; women have sobbed and entreated; every pain has been endured, and every horror has been perpetrated.

Through the dim, long years that have fled, humanity has suffered more than can be conceived. Most of the misery has been endured by the weak, the loving and the innocent. Women have been treated like poisonous beasts, and little children trampled upon as though they had been vermin. Numberless altars have been reddened, even with the blood of babes; beautiful girls have been given to slimy serpents; whole races of men doomed to centuries of slavery, and everywhere there has been outrage beyond the power of genius to express. During all these years, the suffering have supplicated; the withered lips of famine have prayed; the pale victims have implored, and Heaven has been deaf and blind.

Of what use have the gods been to man?

It is no answer to say that some god created the world, established certain laws, and then turned his attention to other matters, leaving his children weak, ignorant and unaided, to fight the battle of life alone. It is no solution to declare that in some other world this god will render a few, or even all, his subjects happy. What right have we to expect that a perfectly wise, good, and powerful being will ever do better than he has done, and is doing? The world is filled with imperfections. If it was made by an infinite being what reason have we for saying that he will render it nearer perfect than it now is? If the infinite "Father" allows a majority of his children to live in ignorance and wretchedness now, what evidence is there that he will ever improve their condition? Will God have more power? Will he become more merciful? Will his love for his poor creatures increase? Can the conduct of infinite wisdom, power and love ever change? Is the infinite capable of any improvement whatever?

We are informed by the clergy that this world is a kind of school; that the evils by which we are surrounded are for the purpose of developing our souls, and that only by suffering can men become pure, strong, virtuous and grand.

Supposing this to be true, what is to become of those who die in infancy? The little children, according to this philosophy, can never be developed. They were so fortunate as to escape the ennobling influences of pain and misery, and as a consequence, are doomed to an eternity of mental inferiority. If the clergy are right on this question, none are so unfor-

tunate as the happy, and we should envy only the suffering and distressed. If evil is necessary to the development of man, in this life, how it is possible for the soul to improve in the perfect joy of paradise ?

Since Paley found his watch, the argument of "design" has been relied upon as unanswerable. The Church teaches that this world, and all it contains, was created substantially as we now see it ; that the grasses, the flowers, the trees, and all animals, including man, were special creations, and that they sustain no necessary relation to each other. The most orthodox will admit that some earth has been washed into the sea ; that the sea has encroached a little upon the land, and that some mountains may be a trifle lower than in the morning of creation. The theory of gradual development was unknown to our fathers ; the idea of evolution did not occur to them. That most wonderful observer, Charles Darwin, had not then given to the world his wonderful philosophy. Our fathers looked upon the then arrangement of things as the primal arrangement. The earth appeared to them fresh from the hands of a deity. They knew nothing of the slow evolutions of countless years, but supposed that the almost infinite variety of vegetable and animal forms had existed from the first.

Suppose that upon some island we should find a man a million years of age, and suppose that we should find him in the possession of a most beautiful carriage, constructed upon the most perfect model. And suppose further, that he should tell us that it was the re-

sult of several hundred thousand years of labor and of thought; that for fifty thousand years he used as flat a log as he could find, before it occurred to him that, by splitting the log, he could have the same surface with only half the weight; that it took him many thousand years to invent wheels for this log; that the wheels he first used were solid, and that fifty thousand years of thought suggested the use of spokes and tire; that for many centuries he used the wheels without lynch-pins; that it took a hundred thousand years more to think of using four wheels instead of two; that for ages he walked behind the carriage when going down hill, in order to hold it back, and that only by a lucky chance he invented the tongue, would we conclude that this man, from the very first, had been an infinitely ingenious and perfect mechanic? Suppose we found him living in an elegant mansion, and he should inform us that he lived in that house for five hundred thousand years before he thought of putting on a roof, and that he had but recently invented windows and doors, would we say that from the beginning, he had been an infinitely accomplished and scientific architect?

Does not an improvement in the things created, show a corresponding improvement in the creator?

Would an infinitely wise, good and powerful God, intending to produce man, commence with the lowest possible forms of life; with the simplest organism that can be imagined, and during immeasurable periods of time, slowly and almost imperceptibly improve upon the rude beginning, until man was evolved? Would countless ages thus be wasted in the produc-

tion of awkward forms, afterwards abandoned? Can the intelligence of man discover the least wisdom in covering the earth with crawling, creeping horrors, that live only upon the agonies and pangs of others? Can we see the propriety of so constructing the earth, that only an insignificant portion of its surface is capable of producing an intelligent man? Who can appreciate the mercy of so making the world that all animals devour animals; so that every mouth is a slaughter-house, and every stomach a tomb? Is it possible to discover infinite intelligence and love in universal and eternal carnage?

What would we think of a father, who should give a farm to his children, and before giving them possession should plant upon it thousands of deadly shrubs and vines; should stock it with ferocious beasts and poisonous reptiles; should take pains to put a few swamps in the neighborhood to breed malaria; should so arrange matters, that the ground would occasionally open and swallow a few of his darlings, and besides all this, should establish a few volcanoes in the immediate vicinity, that might at any moment overwhelm his children with rivers of fire? Suppose that this father neglected to tell his children which of the plants were deadly; that the reptiles were poisonous; failed to say anything about the earthquakes, and kept the volcano business a profound secret, would we pronounce him angel or fiend?

And yet this is exactly what the orthodox God has done.

According to the theologians, God prepared this globe expressly for the habitation of his loved chil-

dren, and yet he filled the forests with ferocious beasts; placed serpents in every path; stuffed the world with earthquakes, and adorned its surface with mountains of flame.

Notwithstanding all this, we are told that the world is perfect; that it was created by a perfect being, and is therefore necessarily perfect. The next moment, the same persons will tell us that the world was cursed; covered with brambles, thistles and thorns, and that man was doomed to disease and death, simply because our poor, dear mother ate an apple contrary to the command of an arbitrary God.

A very pious friend of mine, having heard that I had said the world was full of imperfections, asked me if the report was true. Upon being informed that it was, he expressed great surprise that any one could be guilty of such presumption. He said that, in his judgment, it was impossible to point out an imperfection. "Be kind enough," said he, "to name even one improvement that you could make, if you had the power." "Well," said I, "I would make good health catching, instead of disease." The truth is, it is impossible to harmonize all the ills, and pains, and agonies of this world with the idea that we were created by, and are watched over and protected by an infinitely wise, powerful and beneficent God, who is superior to, and independent of nature.

The clergy, however, balance all the real ills of this life with the expected joys of the next. We are assured that all is perfection in heaven—there the skies are cloudless—there all is serenity and peace. Here empires may be overthrown; dynasties may be extin-

guished in blood ; millions of slaves may toil beneath the fierce rays of the sun, and the cruel strokes of the lash. yet all is happiness in heaven. Pestilence may strew the earth with corpses of the loved ; the survivors may bend above them in agony—yet the placid bosom of heaven is unruffled. Children may expire vainly asking for bread ; babes may be devoured by serpents, while the gods sit smiling in the clouds. The innocent may languish unto death in the obscurity of dungeons ; brave men and heroic women may be changed to ashes at the bigot's stake, while heaven is filled with song and joy. Out on the wide sea, in darkness and in storm, the shipwrecked struggle with the cruel waves, while the angels play upon their golden harps. The streets of the world are filled with the diseased, the deformed and the helpless ; the chambers of pain are crowded with the pale forms of the suffering, while the angels float and fly in the happy realms of day. In heaven they are too happy to have sympathy ; too busy singing to aid the imploring and distressed. Their eyes are blinded ; their ears are stopped and their hearts are turned to stone by the infinite selfishness of joy. The saved mariner is too happy when he touches the shore to give a moment's thought to his drowning brothers. With the indifference of happiness, with the contempt of bliss, heaven barely glances at the miseries of earth. Cities are devoured by the rushing lava ; the earth opens and thousands perish ; women raise their clasped hands toward heaven, but the gods are too happy to aid their children. The smiles of the deities are un-

acquainted with the tears of men. The shouts of heaven drown the sobs of earth.

In all ages, man has prayed for help, and then helped himself.

Having shown how man created gods, and how he became the trembling slave of his own creation, the question naturally arises: How did he free himself, even a little, from these monarchs of the sky; from these despots of the clouds; from this aristocracy of the air? How did he, even to the extent that he has, outgrow his ignorant, abject terror, and throw off the yoke of superstition?

Probably, the first thing that tended to disabuse his mind was the discovery of order, of regularity, of periodicity in the universe. From this, he began to suspect that everything did not happen purely with reference to him. He noticed that, whatever he might do, the motions of the planets were always the same; that eclipses were periodical, and that even comets came at certain intervals. This convinced him that eclipses and comets had nothing to do with him, and that his conduct had nothing to do with them. He perceived that they were not caused for his benefit nor injury. He thus learned to regard them with admiration instead of fear. He began to suspect that famine was not sent by some enraged and revengeful deity, but resulted often from the neglect and ignorance of man. He learned that diseases were not produced by evil spirits. He found that sickness was occasioned by natural causes, and could be cured by natural means. He demonstrated, to his own satisfaction at least, that prayer is not a medicine. He

found by sad experience that his gods were of no practical use, as they never assisted him, except when he was perfectly able to help himself. At last, he began to discover that his individual action had nothing whatever to do with strange appearances in the heavens; that it was impossible for him to be bad enough to cause a whirlwind, or good enough to stop one. After many centuries of thought, he about half concluded that making mouths at a priest would not necessarily cause an earthquake. He noticed, and no doubt with considerable astonishment, that very good men were occasionally struck by lightning, while very bad ones escaped. He was frequently forced to the painful conclusion (and it is the most painful to which any human being ever was forced,) that the right did not always prevail. He noticed that the gods did not interfere in behalf of the weak and innocent. He was now and then astonished by seeing an unbeliever in the enjoyment of most excellent health. He finally ascertained that there could be no possible connection between an unusually severe winter and his failure to give a sheep to a priest. He began to suspect that the order of the universe was not constantly being changed to assist him because he repeated a creed. He observed that some children would steal after having been regularly baptized. He noticed a vast difference between religion and justice, and that the worshippers of the same god took delight in cutting each others throats. He saw that these religious disputes filled the world with hatred and slavery. At last he had the courage to suspect that no god at any time interferes with the order of events. He learned a few

facts, and these facts positively refused to harmonize with the ignorant superstitions of his fathers. Finding his sacred books incorrect and false in some particulars, his faith in their authenticity began to be shaken; finding his priests ignorant upon some points, he began to lose respect for the cloth; this was the commencement of intellectual freedom.

The civilization of man has increased just to the same extent that religious power has decreased. The intellectual advancement of man depends upon how often he can exchange an old superstition for a new truth. The Church never enabled a human being to make even one of these exchanges; on the contrary, all her power has been used to prevent them. In spite, however, of the Church, man found that some of his religious conceptions were wrong. By reading his Bible, he found that the ideas of his God were more cruel and brutal than those of the most depraved savage. He also discovered that this holy book was filled with ignorance, and that it must have been written by persons wholly unacquainted with the nature of the phenomena by which we are surrounded, and now and then, some man had the goodness and courage to speak his honest thoughts. In every age some thinker, some doubter, some investigator, some hater of hypocrisy, some despiser of sham, some brave lover of the right, has gladly, proudly and heroically braved the ignorant fury of superstition for the sake of man and truth. These divine men were generally torn in pieces by the worshipers of the gods. Socrates was poisoned because he lacked reverence for some of the deities. Christ was crucified by a relig

ious rabble for the crime of blasphemy. Nothing is more gratifying to a religionist than to destroy his enemies at the command of God. Religious persecution springs from a due admixture of love towards God and hatred towards man.

The terrible religious wars that inundated the world with blood, tended at least, to bring all religion into disgrace and hatred. Thoughtful people began to question the divine origin of a religion that made its believers hold the rights of others in absolute contempt. A few began to compare Christianity with the religions of heathen people, and were forced to admit that the difference was hardly worth dying for. They also found that other nations were even happier and more prosperous than their own. They began to suspect that their religion, after all, was not of much real value.

For three hundred years the Christian world endeavored to rescue from the "Infidel" the empty sepulchre of Christ. For three hundred years the armies of the Cross were baffled and beaten by the victorious hosts of an impudent imposter. This immense fact sowed the seeds of distrust throughout all Christendom, and millions began to lose confidence in a God who had been vanquished by Mohammed. The people also found that commerce made friends where religion made enemies, and that religious zeal was utterly incompatible with peace between nations or individuals. They discovered that those who loved the gods most were apt to love men least; that the arrogance of universal forgiveness was amazing; that the most malicious had the effrontery to pray for their

enemies, and that humility and tyranny were the fruit of the same tree.

For ages, a deadly conflict has been waged between a few brave men and women of thought and genius on the one side, and the great ignorant religious mass on the other. This is the war between Science and Faith. The few have appealed to reason, to honor, to law, to freedom, to the known, and to happiness here in this world. The many have appealed to prejudice, to fear, to miracle, to slavery, to the unknown, and to misery hereafter. The few have said, "Think!" The many have said, "Believe!"

The first doubt was the womb and cradle of progress, and from the first doubt man has continued to advance. Men began to investigate and the Church began to oppose. The astronomer scanned the heavens, while the Church branded his grand forehead with the word, "Infidel," and now not a glittering star in all the vast expanse bears a Christian name. In spite of all religion, the geologist penetrated the earth, read her history in books of stone, and found hidden within her bosom, souvenirs of all ages. Old ideas perished in the retort of the chemist, and useful truths took their places. One by one religious conceptions have been placed in the crucibles of science, and thus far, nothing but dross has been found. A new world has been discovered by the microscope: everywhere has been found the infinite; in every direction, man has investigated and explored, and nowhere, in earth nor stars, has been found the footstep of any being superior to, or independent of

nature. Nowhere has been discovered the slightest evidence of any interference from without.

These are the sublime truths that enabled man to throw off the yoke of superstition. These are the splendid facts that snatched the sceptre of authority from the hands of priests.

In that vast cemetery, called the past, are most of the religions of men, and there, too, are nearly all their gods. The sacred temples of India were ruins long ago. Over column and cornice; over the painted and pictured walls, cling and creep the trailing vines. Brahma, the golden, with four heads, and four arms; Vishnu, the sombre, the punisher of the wicked with his three eyes, his crescent and his necklace of skulls; Siva, the destroyer, red with seas of blood; Kali, the goddess, Draupodi, the white-armed, and Chrishna, the Christ, all passed away and left the thrones of heaven desolate. Along the banks of the sacred Nile, Isis no longer wandering weeps, searching for the dead Osiris. The shadow of Typhon's scowl falls no more upon the waves. The sun rises as of yore, and his golden beams still smite the lips of Memnon, but Memnon is as voiceless as the Sphnix. The sacred fanes are lost in desert sands; the dusty mummies are still waiting for the resurrection promised by their priests, and the old beliefs, wrought in curiously sculptured stone, sleep in the mystery of a language lost and dead. Odin, the author of life and soul, Vili and Ve, and the mighty giant Yamir, strode long ago from the icy halls of the North; and Thor, with iron glove and glittering hammer, dashes mountains to the earth no more. Broken are the circles and cromlechs

of the ancient Druids; fallen upon the summits of the hills and covered with the centuries' moss, are the sacred cairns. The divine fires of Persia and of the Aztecs, have died out in the ashes of the past, and there is none to rekindle, and none to feed the holy flames. The harp of Orpheus is still; the drained cup of Bacchus has been thrown aside; Venus lies dead in stone, and her white bosom heaves no more with love. The streams still murmur, but no naiads bathe; the trees still wave, but in the forest aisles no dryads dance. The gods have flown from high Olympus. Not even the beautiful women can lure them back, and even Danae lies unnoticed, naked to the stars. Hushed forever are the thunders of Sinai; lost are the voices of the prophets, and the land, once flowing with milk and honey, is but a desert waste. One by one the myths, have faded from the clouds; one by one the phantom host has disappeared, and one by one, facts, truths and realities have taken their places. The supernatural has almost gone, but the natural remains. The gods have fled, but man is here.

“Nations, like individuals, have their periods of youth, of manhood and decay.” Religions are the same. The same inexorable destiny awaits them all. The gods, created by the nations, must perish with their creators. They were created by men and like men, they must pass away. The deities of one age are the by-words of the next. The religion of our day, and country, is no more exempt from the sneer of the future than the others have been. When India was supreme, Brahma sat upon the world's throne. When the sceptre passed to Egypt, Isis and Osiris

received the homage of mankind. Greece, with her fierce valor, swept to empire, and Jove put on the purple of authority. The earth trembled with the tread of Rome's intrepid sons, and Jupiter grasped with mailed hand the thunderbolts of heaven. Rome fell, and Christians from her territory, with the red sword of war carved out of the ruling nations of the world, and now, Christ sits upon the old throne. Who will be his successor?

Day by day, religious conceptions grow less and less intense. Day by day, the old spirit dies out of book and creed. The burning enthusiasm, the quenchless zeal of the early Church have gone, never, never to return. The ceremonies remain, but the ancient faith is fading out of the human heart. The worn-out arguments fail to convince, and denunciations that once blanched the faces of a race, excite in us only derision and disgust. As time rolls on, the miracles grow mean and small, and the evidences our fathers thought conclusive, utterly fail to satisfy us. There is an "irrepressible conflict" between religion and science, and they cannot peaceably occupy the same brain nor the same world.

While utterly discarding all creeds, and denying the truth of all religions, there is neither in my heart nor upon my lips a sneer for the hopeful, loving and tender souls who believe that from all this discord will result a perfect harmony; that every evil will in some mysterious way become a good, and that above and over all there is a being who, in some way, will reclaim and glorify every one of the children of men; but for the creeds of those who glibly prove that sal-

vation is almost impossible; that damnation is almost certain; that the highway of the universe leads to hell; who fill life with fear, and death with horror; who curse the cradle and mock the tomb, it is impossible to entertain other than feelings of pity, contempt and scorn.

Reason, Observation and Experience—the Holy Trinity of Science—have taught us that happiness is the only good; that the time to be happy is now, and the way to be happy is to make others so. This is enough for us. In this belief we are content to live and die. If, by any possibility, the existence of a power superior to, and independent of nature shall be demonstrated, there will then be time enough to kneel. Until then, let us stand erect.

Notwithstanding the fact that Infidels in all ages have battled for the rights of man, and have at all times been the fearless advocates of liberty and justice, we are constantly charged by the Church with tearing down without building again. The Church should by this time know that it is utterly impossible to rob men of their opinions. The history of religious persecution fully establishes the fact that the mind necessarily resists and defies every attempt to control it by violence. The mind necessarily clings to old ideas until prepared for the new. The moment we comprehend the truth all erroneous ideas are of necessity cast aside.

A surgeon once called upon a poor cripple and kindly offered to render him any assistance in his power. The surgeon began to discourse very learnedly upon the nature and origin of disease; of the

curative properties of certain medicines ; of the advantages of exercise, air and light, and of the various ways in which health and strength could be restored. These remarks were so full of good sense, and discovered so much profound thought and accurate knowledge, that the cripple, becoming thoroughly alarmed, cried out, "Do not, I pray you, take away my crutches. They are my only support, and without them I should be miserable indeed !" "I am not going," said the surgeon, "to take away your crutches ; I am going to cure you, and then you will throw the crutches away yourself."

For the vagaries of the clouds the Infidels propose to substitute the realities of earth ; for superstition, the splendid demonstrations and achievements of Science ; and for theological tyranny, the chainless liberty of thought.

We do not say that we have discovered all ; that our doctrines are the all in all of truth. We know of no end to the development of man. We cannot unravel the infinite complications of matter and force. The history of one monad is as unknown as the universe ; one drop of water is as wonderful as all the seas ; one leaf as all the forests ; and one grain of sand as all the stars.

We are not endeavoring to chain the future, but to free the present. We are not forging fetters, for our children, but we are breaking those our fathers made for us. We are the advocates of inquiry, of investigation and thought. This of itself is an admission that we are not perfectly satisfied with all our conclusions. Philosophy has not the egotism of faith.

While superstition builds walls and creates obstructions, science opens all the highways of thought. We do not pretend to have circumnavigated everything, and to have solved all difficulties, but we do believe that it is better to love men than to fear gods; that it is grander and nobler to think and investigate for yourself than to repeat a creed, or quote scripture like a religious parrot, with the countenance of a dyspeptic owl. We are satisfied that there can be but little liberty on earth while men worship a tyrant in heaven. We do not expect to accomplish everything in our day; but we want to do what good we can, and to render all the service possible in the holy cause of human progress. We know that doing away with gods and supernatural persons and powers is not an end. It is a means to an end: the real end being the happiness of man.

Felling forests is not the end of agriculture. Driving pirates from the sea is not all there is of commerce.

We are laying the foundations of the grand temple of the future—not the temple of all the gods, but of all the people—wherein, with appropriate rites, will be celebrated the religion of Humanity. We are doing what little we can to hasten the coming of the day when society shall cease producing millionaires and mendicants—gorged indolence and famished industry—truth in rags, and superstition robed and crowned. We are looking for the time when the useful shall be the honorable; when the true shall be the beautiful, and when REASON, thronged upon the world's brain, shall be the King of Kings and God of Gods.

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## ARRAIGNMENT OF THE CHURCH.

### AND A PLEA FOR INDIVIDUALITY.

*A Lecture delivered before the Free Religious Society of  
Chicago, December 21, 1873.*

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BY COL. R. G. INGERSOLL.

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**B**Y way of introduction, Col. Ingersoll stated that he had been invited by the Free Religious Society and supposed he could speak his thoughts freely. He had accepted the invitation in that sense; and would speak under no other conditions.

The speaker chose for his text:—

*“His soul was like a star and dwelt apart.”*

On every hand, he began, are the enemies of individuality and mental freedom. Custom meets us at the cradle, and leaves us only at the tomb. Our first questions are answered by ignorance, and our last by superstition. We are pushed and dragged by countless hands along the beaten track, and our entire train-

ing can be summed up in the word "suppression." Our desire to have a thing or to do a thing is considered as conclusive evidence that we ought not to have it, and ought not to do it. At every turn we run against a cherubim and a flaming sword guarding some entrance to the Eden of our desire. We are allowed to investigate all subjects in which we feel no particular interest, and to express the opinions of the majority with the utmost freedom. We are taught that liberty of speech should never be carried to the extent of contradicting the dead witnessess of a popular superstition. Society offers continual rewards for self-betrayal, and they are nearly all earned and claimed, and some are paid.

We have all read accounts of Christian gentlemen remarking when about to be hanged, how much better it would have been for them if they had only followed a mother's advice! But, after all, how fortunate it is for the world that the maternal advice has not been followed! How lucky it is for us all that it is somewhat unnatural for a human being to obey! Universal obedience is universal stagnation; disobedience is one of the conditions of progress. Select any age of the world and tell me what would have been the effect of implicit obedience. (Suppose the church had had absolute control of the human mind, at any time, would not the words liberty and progress have been blotted from human speech? In defiance of advice the world has advanced. (Applause.) ✓

✓ Suppose the astronomers had controlled the science of astronomy; suppose the doctors had controlled the science of medicine; suppose kings had been left to fix the forms of government; suppose our fathers had taken the advice of Paul, who said, "be subject to

the powers that be, because they are ordained of God;" suppose the church could control the world to-day, we would go back to chaos and old night. Philosophy would be branded as infamous; science would again press its pale and thoughtful face against the prison bars; and round the limbs of liberty would climb the bigot's flame.

It is a blessed thing that in every age some one has had individuality enough and courage enough to stand by his own convictions (Applause), some one who had the grit to say his say; ✓ I believe it was Magellan who said, "the church says the earth is flat; but I have seen its shadow on the moon, and I have more confidence even in a shadow than in the church." On the prow of his ship were disobedience, defiance, scorn and success.

✓ The trouble with most people is that they bow to what is called authority; they have a certain reverence for the old because it is old. They think a man is better for being dead, especially if he has been dead a long time, and that the forefathers of their nation were the greatest and best of all mankind. All these things they implicitly believe because it is popular and patriotic, and because they were told so when very small, and remember distinctly of hearing mother read it out of a book, and they are all willing to swear that mother was a good woman. It is hard to overestimate the influence of early training in the direction of superstition. You first teach children that a certain book is true—that it was written by God himself—that to question its truth is a sin, that to deny it is a crime, and that should they die without believing that book they will be forever damned without benefit of clergy; the consequence is that long before they

read that book they believe it to be true. When they do read their minds are wholly unfitted to investigate its claim. They accept it as a matter of course.

In this way the reason is overcome, the sweet instincts of humanity are blotted from the heart, and while reading its infamous pages even justice throws aside her scales, shrieking for revenge, and charity, with bloody hands, applauds a deed of murder. In this way we are taught that the revenge of man is the justice of God, that mercy is not the same everywhere. In this way the ideas of our race have been subverted. In this way we have made tyrants, bigots, and inquisitors. In this way the brain of man has become a kind of palimpsest upon which, and over the writings of Nature, superstition has scribbled her countless lies. Our great trouble is that most teachers are dishonest. They teach as certainties those things concerning which they entertain doubts. They do not say, "*We think this is so*" but "*We know this is so.*" They do not appeal to the reason of the pupil, but they command his faith. They keep all doubts to themselves; they do not explain, they assert. All this is infamous. In this way you may make Christians, but you cannot make men; you cannot make women. You can make followers but no leaders; disciples, but no Christs. You may promise power, honor, and happiness to all those who will blindly follow, but you cannot keep your promise. (Applause.)

An eastern monarch said to a hermit, "Come with me and I will give you power." "I have all the power that I know how to use," replied the hermit. "Come," said the king, "I will give you wealth." "I have no wants that money can supply." "I will give you honor." "Ah! honor cannot be given, it must be

earned." "Come," said the king, making a last appeal, "and I will give you happiness." "No.," said the man of solitude, "there is no happiness without liberty, and he who follows cannot be free." "You shall have liberty too." "Then I will stay." And all the king's courtiers thought the hermit a fool.

Now and then somebody examines, and, in spite of all, keeps his manhood and has courage to follow where his reason leads. Then the pious get together and repeat wise saws and exchange knowing nods and most prophetic winks. The stupidly wise sit owl-like on the dead limbs of the tree of knowledge, and solemnly hoot. Wealth sneers, and fashion laughs, and respectability passes on the other side, and scorn points with all her skinny fingers, and like the snakes of superstition writhe and hiss, and slander lends her tongue, and infamy her brand, and perjury her oath, and the law its power, and bigotry tortures and the church kills. (Applause.)

The church hates a thinker precisely for the same reason that a robber dislikes a sheriff, or that a thief despises the prosecuting witness. Tyranny likes courtiers, flatterers, followers, fawners, and superstition wants believers, disciples, zealots, hypocrites, and subscribers.—The church demands worship, the very thing that man should give to no being human, or divine. To worship another is to degrade yourself. Worship is awe and dread and vague fear and blind hope. It is the spirit of worship that elevates the one and degrades the many; that builds palaces for robbers, erects monuments to crime, and forges manacles even for its own hands. The spirit of worship is the spirit of tyranny. The worshiper always regrets that he is not the worshiped. We should all remember that

the intellect has no knees, and that whatever the attitude of the body may be, the brave soul is always found erect. Whoever worships, abdicates. Whoever believes at the command of power tramples his own individuality beneath his feet, and voluntarily robs himself of all that renders man superior to a brute.

The despotism of faith is justified upon the ground that Christian countries are the grandest and most prosperous of the world. At one time the same thing could have been truly said in India, in Egypt, in Greece, in Rome, and in every other country that has in the history of the world, swept to empire. This argument proves too much not only, but the assumption upon which it is based is utterly false. Numberless circumstances and countless conditions have produced the prosperity of the Christian world. The truth is that we have advanced in spite of religious zeal, ignorance, and opposition. The church has won no victories for the rights of man. Over every fortress of tyranny has waved, and still waves, the banner of the church. Wherever brave blood has been shed the sword of the church has been wet. On every chain has been the sign of the cross. The altar and the throne have leaned against and supported each other.—Who can appreciate the infinite impudence of one man assuming to think for others? Who can imagine the impudence of a church that threatens to inflict eternal punishment upon those who honestly reject its claims and scorn its pretensions? In the presence of the unknown we all have an equal right to guess.

✓ Over the vast plain called life we are all travelers, and not one traveler is perfectly certain that he is

going in the right direction. True it is, that no other plain is so well supplied with guide-boards. At every turn and crossing you find them, and upon each one is written the exact direction and distance. One great trouble is, however, that these boards are all different, and the result is that most travelers are confused in proportion to the number they read. Thousands of people are around each of these signs, and each one is doing his best to convince the traveler that his particular board is the only one upon which the least reliance can be placed, and that if his road is taken the reward for so doing will be infinite and eternal, while all the other roads are said to lead to hell, and all the makers of the other guide-boards are declared to be heretics; hypocrites, and liars. "Well," says a traveler "you may be right in what you say, but allow me at least to read some of the other directions and examine a little into their claims. I wish to rely a little upon my own judgment in a matter of so great importance." "No sir!" shouts the zealot, "that is the very thing you are not allowed to do. You must go my way without investigation or you are as good as damned already." "Well," says the traveler, "if that is so, I believe I had better go your way." And so most of them go along, taking the word of those who know as little as themselves. Now and then comes one who, in spite of all threats, calmly examines the claims of all, and as calmly rejects them all.—These travelers take roads of their own, and are denounced by all the others as Infidels and Atheists. ✓

In my judgment every human being should take a road of his own. (Applause.) Every mind should be true to itself; should think, investigate, and conclude for itself. This is a duty alike incumbent upon paup-

er and prince. Every soul should repel dictation and tyranny, no matter from what source they come—from earth or heaven, from men or gods. Besides, every traveler upon this vast plain should give to every other traveler his best idea as to the road that should be taken. Each is entitled to the honest opinion of all. And there is but one way to get an honest opinion upon any subject whatever. The person giving the opinion must be free from fear. The merchant must not fear to lose his custom, the doctor his practice, nor the preacher his pulpit. There can be no advance without liberty. Suppression of honest inquiry is retrogression, and must end in intellectual night. The tendency of Orthodox religion to-day is toward mental slavery and barbarism. Not one of the Orthodox ministers dare preach what he thinks if he knows that a majority of his congregation think otherwise. He knows that every member of his church stands guard over his brain with a creed like a club in his hand. He knows that he is not expected to search after the truth, but that he is employed to defend the creed. ✓ Every pulpit is a pillory in which stands a hired culprit, defending the justice of his own imprisonment. ✓

Is it desirable that all should be exactly alike in their religious convictions? Is any such thing popular? Do we not know that there are no two persons alike in the whole world? No two trees, no two leaves, no two anythings that are alike? Infinite diversity is the law.—Religion tries to force all minds into one mould. Knowing that all cannot believe, the church endeavors to make all say that they believe. She longs for the unity of hypocrisy, and detests the splendid diversity of individuality and freedom. (Applause.)

Nearly all people stand in great horror of annihilation, and yet to give up your individuality is to annihilate yourself. / Mental slavery is mental death and every man who has given up his intellectual freedom is the living coffin of his dead soul. In this sense every church is a cemetery and every creed an epitaph. (Applause.) ✓

We should all remember that to be like other folks is to be unlike ourselves, and that nothing can be more detestible in character than servile imitation. The great trouble with imitation is that we are apt to ape those who are in reality far below us. After all, the poorest bargain that a human being can make is to trade off his individuality for what is called respectability.

✓ There is no saying more degrading than this: "It is better to be the tail of a lion than the head of a dog." It is a responsibility to think and act for yourself. Most people hate responsibility; therefore they join something and become the tail of some lion. ✓ They say, "My party can act for me—my church can do my thinking. It is enough for me to pay taxes and obey the lion to which I belong, without troubling myself about the right, the wrong, or the why or the wherefore of anything whatever." These people are respectable. They hate reformers, and dislike exceedingly to have their mind disturbed. They regard convictions as very disagreeable things to have. They love forms, and enjoy, beyond everything else, telling what a splendid tail their lion has, and what a troublesome dog their neighbor is. Besides this natural inclination to avoid personal responsibility is and always has been the fact, that every religionist has warned men against the presumption and wickedness

of thinking for themselves. ✓ The reason has been denounced by all Christendom as the only unsafe guide. The church has left nothing undone to prevent man following the logic of his brain. The plainest facts have been covered with the mantle of mystery. The grossest absurdities have been declared to be self-evident facts. ✓ The order of nature has been as it were, reversed, in order that the hypocritical few might govern the honest many. ✓ The man who stood by the conclusion of his reason was denounced as a scorner and hater of God and his holy church.—From the organization of the first church until this moment, to think your own thoughts has been inconsistent with the duties of membership. Every member has borne the marks of collar, and chain, and whip. No man ever seriously attempted to reform a church without being cast out and hunted down by the hounds of hypocrisy. (Applause.) The highest crime against a creed is to change it. Reformation is treason. ✓

Thousands of young men are being educated at this moment by the various churches. What for? In order that they may be prepared to investigate the phenomena by which we are surrounded? No! The object, and the only object, is that they may be prepared to defend a creed. That they may learn the arguments of their respective churches and repeat them in the dull ears of a thoughtless congregation. If one after being thus trained at the expense of the Methodists turns Presbyterian or Baptist, he is denounced as an ungrateful wretch. Honest investigation is utterly impossible within the pale of any church, for the reason that if you think the church is right you will not investigate, and if you think it wrong, the church will investigate you. The conse-

quence of this is, that most of the theological literature is the result of suppression, of fear, of tyranny, and hypocrisy.

Every Orthodox writer necessarily said to himself, "If I write that, my wife and children may want for bread. I will be covered with shame and branded with infamy, but if I write this, I will gain position, power, and honor. My church rewards defenders, and burns reformers,—(Applause.)

Under these conditions, all your Scotts, Henrys, and McKnights have written; and weighed in these scales what are their commentaries worth? They are not the ideas and decisions of honest judges, but the sophisms of the paid attorneys of superstition. Who can tell what the world has lost by this infamous system of suppression? How many grand thinkers have died with the mailed hand of superstition on their lips? How many splendid ideas have perished in the cradle of the brain, strangled in the poison coils of that Python, the church!

For thousands of years a thinker was hunted down like an escaped convict. To him who had braved the church every door was shut, every knife was open. To shelter him from the wild storm, to give him a crust of bread when dying, to put a cup of water to his cracked and bleeding lips; these were all crimes, not one of which the church ever did forgive; and with the justice taught of God his helpless children were exterminated as scorpions and vipers.

Who at the present day can imagine the courage, the devotion to principle, the intellectual and moral grandeur it once required to be an Infidel, to brave the church, her racks, her fagots, her dungeons, her tongues of fire—to defy and scorn her heaven and

her devil and her God? They were the noblest sons of earth- They were the real saviors of our race, the destroyers of superstition and the creators of science. They were the real Titans who bared their grand foreheads to all the thunderbolts of all the gods.

The church has been, and still is, the great robber. She has rifled not only the pockets but the brains of the world. She is the stone at the sepulchre of liberty; the upas tree in whose shade the intellect of man has withered, the Gorgon beneath whose gaze the human heart has turned to stone.

Under her influence even the Protestant mother expects to be in heaven, while her brave boy who fell fighting for the rights of man shall writhe in hell.

It is said that some of the Indian tribes place the heads of their children between pieces of bark until the form of the skull is permanently changed. To us this seems a most shocking custom, and yet, after all, is it as bad as to put the souls of our children in the straight jacket of a creed; to so utterly deform their minds that they regard the God of the Bible, as a Being of infinite mercy, and really consider it a virtue to believe a thing just because it seems unreasonable? Every child in the Christian world has uttered its wondering protest against this outrage. All the machinery of the church is constantly employed in thus corrupting the reason of children. In every possible way they are robbed of their own thoughts and forced to accept the statements of others. Every Sunday School has for its object the crushing out of every germ of individuality. The poor children are taught that nothing can be more acceptable to God than unreasoning obedience and eyeless faith, and that to believe that God did an impossible act is far

better than to do a good one yourself. They are told that all the religions have been simply the JOHN the Baptist of ours; that all the gods of antiquity have withered and shrunk into the Jehovah of the Jews; that all the longings and aspirations of the race are realized in the motto of the Evangelical Alliance, "Liberty in non-essentials;" that all there is, or ever was of religion can be found in the Apostle's creed; that there is nothing left to be discovered; that all the thinkers are dead, and all the living should simply be believers; that we have only to repeat the epitaph found on the grave of wisdom; that grave-yards are the best possible universities, and that the children must be forever beaten with the bones of the fathers.

It has always seemed absurd to suppose that a God would choose for his companions during all eternity the dear souls whose highest and only ambition is to obey. He certainly would now and then be tempted to make the same remark made by an English gentleman to his poor guest. This gentleman had invited a man in humble circumstances to dine with him. The man was so overcome with honor that to everything the gentleman said he replied, "Yes." Tired at last with the monotony of acquiescence the gentleman cried out, "For God's sake, my good man, say 'No' just once, so there will be two of us."

✓ Is it possible that an infinite God created this world simply to be the dwelling-place of slaves and serfs? Simply for the purpose of raising Orthodox Christians, that he did a few miracles to astonish them; that all the evils of life are simply his punishments, and that he is finally going to turn heaven into a kind of religious museum filled with Baptist barnacles, petrified Presbyterians, and Methodist mummies? I want no

heaven for which I must give my reason ; no happiness in exchange for my liberty, and no immortality that demands the surrender of my individuality. Better rot in the windowless tomb, to which there is no door but the red mouth of the pallid worm, than wear the jeweled collar even of a God.

✓ Religion does not and cannot contemplate man as free. She accepts only the homage of the prostrate, and scorns the offerings of those who stand erect. She cannot tolerate the liberty of thought. The wide and sunny fields belong not to her domain. The starlit heights of genius and individuality are above and beyond her appreciation and power. Her subjects cringe at her feet covered with the dust of obedience. They are not athletes standing posed by rich life and brave endeavor like the antique statues, but shriveled deformities studying with furtive glance the cruel face of power. ✓

No religionist seems capable of comprehending this plain truth. ( There is this difference between thought and action:—For our actions we are responsible to ourselves and to those injuriously affected ; for thoughts there can, in the nature of things, be no responsibility to gods or men, here or hereafter. And yet the Protestant has vied with the Catholic in denouncing freedom of thought, and while I was taught to hate Catholicism with every drop of my blood, it is only justice to say that in all essential particulars, it is precisely the same as every other religion. ✓ Luther denounced mental liberty with all the coarse and brutal vigor of his nature, Calvin despised from the very bottom of his petrified heart anything that even looked like religious toleration, and solemnly declared that to advocate it was to crucify Christ afresh. All

the founders of all the orthodox churches have advocated the same infamous tenet. The truth is that what is called religion is necessarily inconsistent with Free Thought.

A believer is a songless bird in a cage, a Freethinker is an eagle parting the clouds with tireless wings.

✓ At present, owing to the inroads that have been made by Liberals and Infidels, most of the churches pretend to be in favor of religious liberty. Of these churches, we will ask this question: "How can a man who conscientiously believes in religious liberty worship a God who does not?" They say to us: "We will not imprison you on account of your belief, but our God will. We will not burn you because you throw away the sacred Scriptures; but their Author will." "We think it an infamous crime to persecute our brethern for opinion's sake; but the God whom we ignorantly worship will on that account damn his own children forever." Why is it that these Christians do not only detest the Infidels; but so cordially despise each other? Why do they refuse to worship in the temples of each other? Why do they care so little for the damnation of men, and so much for the baptism of children? Why will they adorn their churches with the money of thieves, and flatter vice for the sake of subscription? Why will they attempt to bribe science to certify to the writings of God? Why do they torture the words of the great into an acknowledgement of the truth of Christianity? Why do they stand with hat in hand before Presidents, Kings, Emperors, and Scientists, begging like Lazarus for a few crumbs of religious comfort? Why are they so delighted to find an allusion to Providence in the message of Lincoln? Why are they so afraid that

some one will find out that Paley wrote an essay in favor of the Epicurean Philosophy, and that Sir Isaac Newton was once an Infidel? Why are they so anxious to show that Voltaire recanted? that Paine died palsied with fear; that the Emperor Julian cried out, "Galilean thou hast conquered;" that Gibbon died a Catholic; that Agassiz had a little confidence in Moses; that the old Napoleon was once complimentary enough to say that he thought Christ greater than himself or Cæsar; that Washington was caught on his knees at Valley Forge; that blunt old Ethan Allen told his child to believe the religion of her mother; that Franklin said, "Don't unchain the tiger;" that Volney got frightened in a storm at sea, and that Oakes Ames was a wholesale liar?

Is it because the foundation of their temple is crumbling, because the walls are cracked, the pillars leaning, the great dome swaying to its fall, and because science has written over the high altar its *mene, mene, tekel, upharsin*, the old words destined to be the epitaph of all religions?

Every assertion of individual independence has been a step toward Infidelity. Luther started toward Humboldt, Wesley toward Bradlaugh. To really reform the church is to destroy it. Every new religion has a little less superstition than the old, so that the religion of science is but a question of time. I will not say the church has been an unmitigated evil in all respects. Its history is infamous and glorious. It has delighted in the production of extremes. It has furnished murderers for its own martyrs. It has sometimes fed the body, but has always starved the soul. It has been a charitable highwayman, a generous pirate. It has produced some angels and a multitude of

devils. It has built more prisons than asylums. It made a hundred orphans while it cared for one. In one hand it carried the alms-dish, and in the other a sword. It has founded schools and endowed universities for the purpose of destroying true learning. It filled the world with hypocrites and zealots, and upon the cross of its own Christ it crucified the individuality of man. It has sought to destroy the independence of the soul, and put the world upon its knees. This is its crime. The commission of this crime was necessary to its existence. In order to compel obedience it declared that it had the truth and all the truth; that God had made it the keeper of all his secrets; his agent and his vicegerent. It declared that all other religions were false and infamous. It rendered all compromises impossible, and all thought superfluous. Thought was its enemy, obedience was its friend. Investigation was fraught with danger; therefore investigation was suppressed. The holy of holies was behind the curtain. All this was upon the principle that forgers hate to have the signature examined by an expert, and that imposture detests curiosity.

“He that hath ears to hear let him hear,” has always been one of the favorite texts of the church.

In short, Christianity has always opposed every forward movement of the human race. Across the highway of progress it has always been building breastworks of bibles, tracts, commentaries, prayer-books, creeds, dogmas, and platforms, and at every advance the Christians have gathered behind these heaps of rubbish and shot the poisoned arrows of malice at the soldiers of freedom.

And even the liberal Christian of to-day has his holy

of holies, and in the niche of the temple of his heart has his idol. He still clings to a part of the old superstition, and all the pleasant memories of the old belief linger in the horizon of his thoughts like a sunset. We associate the memory of those we love with the religion of our childhood. It seems almost a sacrilege to rudely destroy the idols that our fathers worshiped, and turn their sacred and beautiful truths into the silly fables of barbarism. Some throw away the Old Testament and cling to the New, while others give up everything except the idea that there is a personal God, and that in some wonderful way we are the objects of His care.

Even this, in my opinion, as science, the great iconoclast, marches onward, will have to be abandoned with the rest. The great ghost will surely share the fate of the little ones. They fled at the first appearance of the dawn, and the other will vanish with the perfect day. Until then, the independence of man is little more than a dream. Overshadowed by an immense personality—in the presence of the irresponsible and the infinite, the individuality of man is lost, and he falls prostrate in the very dust of fear. Beneath the frown of the Absolute, man stands a wretched, trembling slave—beneath his smile he is at best only a fortunate serf. Governed by a being whose arbitrary will is law, chained to the chariot of power, his destiny rests in the pleasure of the Unknown. Under these circumstances what wretched object can he have in lengthening out his aimless life?

And yet, in most minds, there is a vague fear of what the gods may do, and the safe side is considered the best side.

A gentleman walking among the ruins of Athens

came upon a fallen statue of Jupiter. Making an exceedingly low bow, he said: "O, Jupiter, I salute thee." He then added: "Should you ever get up in the world again, do not forget, I pray you, that I treated you politely while you were prostrate."

We have all been taught by the church that nothing is so well calculated to excite the ire of the Deity as to express a doubt as to his existence, and that to deny it is an unpardonable sin. Numerous well-attested instances were referred to, of Atheists being struck dead for denying the existence of God. According to these religious people, God is infinitely above us in every respect, infinitely merciful, and yet He cannot bear to hear a poor finite man honestly question His existence. Knowing as He does that His children are groping in darkness and struggling with doubt and fear; knowing that He could enlighten them if He would, He still holds the expression of a sincere doubt as to His existence the most infamous of crimes.

According to the orthodox logic, God having furnished us with imperfect minds has a right to demand a perfect result. Suppose Mr. Smith should overhear a couple of small bugs holding a discussion as to the existence of Mr. Smith, and suppose one should have the temerity to declare upon the honor of a bug that he had examined the whole question to the best of his ability, including the argument based upon design, and had come to the conclusion that no man by the name of Smith had ever lived. Think then of Mr. Smith flying into an ecstasy of rage, crushing the atheist bug beneath his iron heel, while he exclaimed, "I will teach you, blasphemous wretch, that Smith is a diabolical fact!" What then can we think of a God who would open the artillery of heaven upon one of

His own children for simply expressing his honest thought? And what man who really thinks can help repeating the words of Æneas, "If there are gods they certainly pay no attention to the affairs of man."

In religious ideas and conceptions there has been for ages a slow and steady development. At the bottom of the ladder (speaking of modern times) is Catholicism, and at the top are Atheism and Science. The intermediate rounds of this ladder are occupied by the various sects, whose name is legion.

But whatever may be the truth on any subject has nothing to do with our right to investigate that subject, and express any opinion we may form. All that I ask is the right I freely accord to all others.

A few years ago a Methodist clergyman took it upon himself to give me a piece of friendly advice. "Although you may disbelieve the bible," said he, "you ought not to say so. That you should keep to yourself." "Do you believe the bible?" said I. He replied, "Most assuredly." To which I retorted, "Your answer conveys no information to me. You may be following your own advice. You told me to suppress my opinions. Of course a man who will advise others to dissimulate will not always be particular about telling the truth himself."

It is the duty of each and every one to maintain his individuality. "This above all, to thine own self be true, and it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." It is a magnificent thing to be the sole proprietor of yourself. It is a terrible thing to wake up at night and say: "There is nobody in this bed!" It is humiliating to know that your ideas are all borrowed, and that you are indebted to your memory for your principles, that your

religion is simply one of your habits, and that you would have convictions if they were only contagious. It is mortifying to feel that you belong to a mental mob and cry "crucify him," because the others do. That you reap what the great and brave have sown and that you can benefit the world only by leaving it.

Surely every human being ought to attain to the dignity of the *unit*. Surely it is worth something to be *one* and to feel that the census of the universe would not be complete without counting you.

Surely there is grandeur in knowing that in the realm of thought, at least, you are without a chain; that you have the right to explore all heights and all depths; that there are no walls, nor fences, nor prohibited places, nor sacred corners in all the vast expanse of thought; that your intellect owes no allegiance to any being human or divine; that you hold all in fee and upon no condition and by no tenure whatever; that in the world of mind you are relieved from all personal dictation, and from the ignorant tyranny of majorities.

Surely it is worth something to feel that there are no priests, no popes, no parties, no governments, no kings, no gods to whom your intellect can be compelled to pay a reluctant homage.

Surely it is a joy to know that all the cruel ingenuity of bigotry can devise no prison, no lock, no cell, in which for one instant to confine a thought; that ideas cannot be dislocated by rack, nor crushed in iron boots, nor burned with fire.

Surely it is sublime to think that the brain is a castle, and that within its curious bastions and winding halls the soul in spite of all worlds and all beings is the supreme sovereign itself.

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## HERETICS AND HERESIES.

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BY COL. ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

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[Delivered at Kingsbury Hall, Chicago, Ill., May 4th, 1874.]

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*“ Liberty, a word without which all other words are vain.”*

Whoever has an opinion of his own, and honestly expresses it, will be guilty of heresy. Heresy is what the minority believe; it is a name given by the powerful to the doctrine of the weak. This word was born of the hatred, arrogance, and cruelty of those who love their enemies, and who, when smitten on one cheek, turn the other. This word was born of intellectual slavery in the feudal ages of thought. It was an epithet used in the place of argument. From the commencement of the Christian era, every art has been exhausted, and every conceivable punishment inflicted to force all people to hold the same religious opinions. This effort was born of the idea

that a certain belief was necessary to the salvation of the soul. Christ taught, and the Church still teaches, that unbelief is the blackest of crimes. God is supposed to hate with an infinite and implacable hatred, every heretic upon the earth, and the heretics who have died are supposed, at this moment, to be suffering the agonies of the damned. The Church persecutes the living, and her God burns the dead.

It is claimed that God wrote a book called the Bible, and it is generally admitted that this book is somewhat difficult to understand. As long as the Church had all the copies of this book, and the people were not allowed to read it, there was comparatively little heresy in the world; but when it was printed and read, people began honestly to differ as to its meaning. A few were independent and brave enough to give the world their real thoughts, and for the extermination of these men the Church used all her power. Protestants and Catholics vied with each other in the work of enslaving the human mind. For ages they were rivals in the infamous effort to rid the earth of honest people. They infested every country, every city, town, hamlet, and family. They appealed to the worst passions of the human heart. They sowed the seeds of discord and hatred in every land. Brother denounced brother, wives informed against their husbands, mothers accused their children, dungeons were crowded with the innocent; the flesh of the good and the true rotted in the clasp of chains, the flames devoured the heroic, and in the name of the most merciful God, his children were exterminated with famine, sword and fire. Over the wild waves of battle rose and fell the banner of Jesus Christ. For sixteen hundred years the robes of the

Church were red with innocent blood. The ingenuity of Christians was exhausted in devising punishment severe enough to be inflicted upon other Christians who honestly and sincerely differed with them upon any point whatever.

Give any orthodox Church the power, and to-day they would punish heresy with whip, and chain, and fire. As long as a Church deems certain belief essential to salvation, just so long it will kill and burn if it has the power. Why should the Church pity a man whom her God hates? Why should she show mercy to a kind and noble heretic whom her God will burn in eternal fire? Why should a Christian be better than his God? It is impossible for the imagination to conceive of a greater atrocity than has been perpetrated by the Church.

Let it be remembered that all Churches have persecuted heretics to the extent of their power. Every nerve in the human body capable of pain has been sought out and touched by the Church. Toleration has increased only when and where the power of the Church has diminished. From Augustine until now the spirit of the Christian has remained the same. There has been the same intolerance, the same undying hatred of all who think for themselves, the same determination to crush out of the human brain all knowledge inconsistent with the ignorant creed.

Every Church pretends that it has a revelation from God, and that this revelation must be given to the people through the Church; that the Church acts through its priests, and that ordinary mortals must be content with a revelation—not from God—but from the Church. Had the people submitted to this pre-

posterous claim, of course there could have been but one Church, and that Church never could have advanced. It might have retrograded, because it is not necessary to think, or investigate, in order to forget. Without heresy there could have been no progress.

The highest type of the orthodox Christian does not forget. Neither does he learn. He neither advances nor recedes. He is a living fossil, imbedded in that rock called faith. He makes no effort to better his condition, because all his strength is exhausted in keeping other people from improving theirs. The supreme desire of his heart is to force all others to adopt his creed, and in order to accomplish this object, he denounces all kinds of Freethinking as a crime, and this crime he calls heresy. When he had the power, heresy was the most terrible and formidable of words. It meant confiscation, exile, imprisonment, torture, and death.

In those days the cross and rack were inseparable companions. Across the open Bible lay the sword and fagot. Not content with burning such heretics as were alive, they even tried the dead, in order that the Church might rob their wives and children. The property of all heretics was confiscated, and on this account they charged the dead with being heretical—indicted, as it were, their dust,—to the end that the Church might clutch the bread of orphans. Learned divines discussed the propriety of tearing out the tongues of heretics before they were burned, and the general opinion was that this ought to be done, so that the heretics should not be able by uttering blasphemies to shock the Christians who were burning them. With a mixture of ferocity and Christianity, the priests insisted that heretics ought to be burned

at a slow fire, giving as a reason, that more time was given them for repentance.

No wonder that Jesus Christ said, "I came not to bring peace but a sword!"

Every priest regarded himself as the agent of God. He answered all questions by authority, and to treat him with disrespect was an insult offered to God. No one was asked to think, but all were commanded to obey.

In 1208 the Inquisition was established. Seven years afterward, the fourth council of the Lateran enjoined all kings and rulers to swear an oath that they would exterminate heretics from their dominions. The sword of the Church was unsheathed, and the world was at the mercy of ignorant and infuriated priests, whose eyes feasted upon the agonies they inflicted. Acting as they believed, or pretended to believe, under the command of God, stimulated by the hope of infinite reward in another world—hating heretics with every drop of their bestial blood—savage beyond description—merciless beyond conception—these infamous priests in a kind of frenzied joy, leaped upon the helpless victims of their rage. They crushed their bones in iron boots, tore their quivering flesh with iron hooks and pincers, cut off their lips and eyelids, pulled out their nails, and into the bleeding quick thrust needles, tore out their tongues, extinguished their eyes, stretched them upon racks, flayed them alive, crucified them with their head downward, exposed them to wild beasts, burned them at the stake, mocked their cries and groans, ravished their wives, robbed their children, and then prayed God to finish the holy work in hell.

Millions upon millions were sacrificed upon the

altars of bigotry. The Catholic burned the Lutheran, the Lutheran burned the Catholic ; the Episcopalian tortured the Presbyterian, the Presbyterian tortured the Episcopalian. Every denomination killed all it could of every other ; and each Christian felt in duty bound to exterminate every other Christian who denied the smallest fraction of his creed.

In the reign of Henry the VIII., that pious and moral founder of the Apostolic Episcopal Church, there was passed by the Parliament of England an act entitled, "An act for abolishing of diversity of opinion." And in this act was set forth what a good Christian was obliged to believe.

First, that in the sacrament was the real body and blood of Jesus Christ.

Second, that the body and blood of Jesus Christ was in the bread, and the blood and body of Jesus Christ was in the wine.

Third, that priests should not marry.

Fourth, that vows of chastity were of perpetual obligation.

Fifth, that private masses ought to be continued.

And sixth, that auricular confession to a priest must be maintained.

This creed was made by law, in order that all men might know just what to believe by simply reading the statute. The Church hated to see the people wearing out their brains in thinking upon these subjects. It was thought far better that a creed should be made by Parliament, so that whatever might be lacking in evidence might be made up in force. The punishment for denying the first article was death by fire. For the denial of any other article, imprisonment, and for the second offense—death.

Your attention is called to these six articles, established during the reign of Henry VIII., and by the Church of England, simply because not one of these articles is believed by that Church to-day. If the law then made by the Church could be enforced now, every Episcopalian would be burned at the stake.

Similar laws were passed in most Christian countries, as all orthodox Churches firmly believed that mankind could be legislated into heaven. According to the creed of every Church, slavery leads to heaven, liberty leads to hell. It was claimed that God had founded the Church, and that to deny the authority of the Church was to be a traitor to God, and consequently an ally of the Devil. To torture and destroy one of the soldiers of Satan was a duty no good Christian cared to neglect. Nothing can be sweeter than to earn the gratitude of God by killing your own enemies. Such a mingling of profit and revenge, of heaven for yourself and damnation for those you dislike, is a temptation that your ordinary Christian never resists.

According to the theologians, God, the Father of us all, wrote a letter to his children. The children have always differed somewhat as to the meaning of this letter. In consequence of these honest differences, these brothers began to cut out each other's hearts. In every land, where this letter from God has been read, the children to whom and for whom it was written have been filled with hatred and malice. They have imprisoned and murdered each other, and the wives and children of each other. In the name of God every possible crime has been committed, every conceivable outrage has been perpetrated. Brave men, tender and loving women, beautiful girls,

and prattling babes have been exterminated in the name of Jesus Christ. For more than fifty generations the Church has carried the black flag. Her vengeance has been measured only by her power. During all these years of infamy no heretic has ever been forgiven. With the heart of a fiend she has hated; with the clutch of avarice she has grasped; with the jaws of a dragon she has devoured, pitiless as famine, merciless as fire, with the conscience of a serpent. Such is the history of the Church of God.

I do not say, and I do not believe, that Christians are as bad as their creeds. In spite of Church and dogma, there have been millions and millions of men and women true to the loftiest and most generous promptings of the human heart. They have been true to their convictions, and with a self-denial and fortitude excelled by none, have labored and suffered for the salvation of men. Imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice, believing that by personal effort they could rescue at least a few souls from the infinite shadow of hell, they have cheerfully endured every hardship and scorned danger and death. And yet, notwithstanding all this, they believed that honest error was a crime. They knew that the Bible so declared, and they believed that all unbelievers would be eternally lost. They believed that religion was of God, and all heresy of the Devil. They killed heretics in defense of their own souls and the souls of their children. They killed them, because, according to their idea, they were the enemies of God, and because the Bible teaches that the blood of the unbeliever is a most acceptable sacrifice to heaven. Nature never prompted a loving mother to throw her child into the Ganges.

Nature never prompted men to exterminate each other for a difference of opinion concerning the baptism of infants. These crimes have been produced by religions filled with all that is illogical, cruel and hideous. These religions were produced for the most part by ignorance, tyranny, and hypocrisy. Under the impression that the infinite ruler and creator of the Universe had commanded the destruction of heretics and infidels, the Church perpetrated all these crimes.

Men and women have been burned for thinking there was but one God ; that there was none ; that the Holy Ghost is younger than God ; that God was somewhat older than his son ; for insisting that good works will save a man, without faith ; that faith will do without good works ; for declaring that a sweet babe will not be burned eternally, because its parents failed to have its head wet by a priest ; for speaking of God as though he had a nose ; for denying that Christ was his own father ; for contending that three persons, rightly added together, make more than one ; for believing in purgatory ; for denying the reality of hell ; for pretending that priests can forgive sins ; for preaching that God is an essence ; for denying that witches rode through the air on sticks ; for doubting the total depravity of the human heart ; for laughing at irresistible grace, predestination, and particular redemption ; for denying that good bread could be made of the body of a dead man ; for pretending that the Pope was not managing this world for God, and in place of God ; for disputing the efficacy of a vicarious atonement ; for thinking that the Virgin Mary was born like other people ; for thinking that a man's rib was hardly sufficient to make a good sized woman ;

for denying that God used his finger for a pen ; for asserting that prayers are not answered, that diseases are not sent to punish unbelief ; for denying the authority of the Bible ; for having a Bible in their possession ; for attending mass, and for refusing to attend ; for wearing a surplice ; for carrying a cross, and for refusing ; for being a Catholic, and for being a Protestant, for being an Episcopalian, a Presbyterian, a Baptist, and for being a Quaker. In short, every virtue has been a crime, and every crime a virtue. The Church has burned honesty and rewarded hypocrisy, and all this she did because it was commanded by a book—a book that men had been taught implicitly to believe, long before they knew one word that was in it. They had been taught that to doubt the truth of this book, to examine it, even, was a crime of such enormity that it could not be forgiven, either in this world or in the next.

The Bible was the real persecutor. The Bible burned heretics, built dungeons, founded the Inquisition, and trampled upon all the liberties of men.

How long, O how long will mankind worship a book ? How long will they grovel in the dust before the ignorant legends of the barbaric past ? How long, O how long will they pursue phantoms in a darkness deeper than death ?

Unfortunately for the world, about the beginning of the sixteenth century a man by the name of Gerard Chauvin was married to Jeanne Lefranc, and still more unfortunately for the world, the fruit of this marriage was a son, called John Chauvin, who afterward became famous as John Calvin, the founder of the Presbyterian Church.

This man forged five fetters for the brain. These

fetters he called points. That is to say, predestination, particular redemption, total depravity, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints. About the neck of each follower he put a collar, bristling with these five iron points. The presence of all these points on the collar is still the test of orthodoxy in the Church he founded. This man, when in the flush of youth, was elected to the office of preacher in Geneva. He at once, in union with Farel, drew up a condensed statement of the Presbyterian doctrine, and all the citizens of Geneva, on pain of banishment, were compelled to take an oath that they believed this statement. Of this preceeding Calvin very innocently remarked, that it produced great satisfaction. A man by the name of Caroli had the audacity to dispute with Calvin. For this outrage he was banished.

To show you what great subjects occupied the attention of Calvin, it is only necessary to state, that he furiously discussed the question, as to whether the sacramental bread should be leavened or unleavened. He drew up laws regulating the cut of the citizens' clothes, and prescribing their diet, and all whose garments were not in the Calvin fashion were refused the sacrament. At last, the people becoming tired of this petty, theological tyranny, banished Calvin. In a few years, however, he was recalled and received with great enthusiasm. After this, he was supreme, and the will of Calvin became the law of Geneva.

Under the benign administration of Calvin, James Gruet was beheaded because he had written some profane verses. The slightest word against Calvin or his absurd doctrine was punished as a crime.

In 1553, a man was tried at Vienne by the Catholic

Church for heresy. He was convicted and sentenced to death by burning. It was his good fortune to escape. Pursued by the sleuth hounds of intolerance he fled to Geneva for protection. A dove flying from hawks, sought safety in the nest of a vulture. This fugitive from the cruelty of Rome asked shelter from John Calvin, who had written a book in favor of religious toleration. Servetus had forgotten that this book was written by Calvin when in the minority ; that it was written in weakness to be forgotten in power ; that it was produced by fear instead of principle. He did not know that Calvin had caused his arrest at Vienne, in France, and had sent a copy of his work, which was claimed to be blasphemous to the archbishop. He did not then know that the Protestant Calvin was acting as one of the detectives of the Catholic Church, and had been instrumental in procuring his conviction for heresy. Ignorant of all this unspeakable infamy, he put himself in the power of this very Calvin. The maker of the Presbyterian creed caused the fugitive Servetus to be arrested for blasphemy. He was tried ; Calvin was his accuser. He was convicted and condemned to death by fire. On the morning of the fatal day, Calvin saw him, and Servetus, the victim, asked forgiveness of Calvin, the murderer, for anything he might have said that had wounded his feelings. Servetus was bound to the stake, the fagots were lighted. The wind carried the flames somewhat away from his body, so that he slowly roasted for hours. Vainly he implored a speedy death. At last the flame climbed around his form ; through smoke and fire his murderers saw a white, heroic face. And there they watched until a man became a charred and shriveled mass.

✓ Liberty was banished from Geneva, and nothing but Presbyterianism was left. Honor, justice, mercy, reason and charity were all exiled; but the five points of predestination, particular redemption, irresistible grace, total depravity, and the certain perseverance of the saints remained instead. ✓

Calvin founded a little theocracy in Geneva, modeled after the Old Testament, and succeeded in erecting the most detestable government that ever existed, except the one from which it was copied.

Against all this intolerance, one man, a minister, raised his voice. The name of this man should never be forgotten. It was Castellio. This brave man had the goodness and the courage to declare the innocence of honest error. He was the first of the so-called reformers to take this noble ground. I wish I had the genius to pay a fitting tribute to his memory. Perhaps it would be impossible to pay him a grander compliment than to say, Castellio was in all things the opposite of Calvin. To plead for the right of individual judgment was considered as a crime, and Castellio was driven from Geneva by John Calvin. By him he was denounced as a child of the Devil, as a dog of Satan, as a beast from Hell, and as one who, by this horrid blasphemy of the innocence of honest error, crucified Christ afresh, and by him he was pursued until rescued by the hand of death.

Upon the name of Castellio, Calvin heaped every epithet, until his malice was satisfied and his imagination exhausted. It is impossible to conceive how human nature can become so frightfully perverted as to pursue a fellow man with the malignity of a fiend, simply because he is good, just and generous.

Calvin was of a pallid, bloodless complexion, thin,

sickly, irritable, gloomy, impatient, egotistic, tyrannical, heartless and infamous. He was a strange compound of revengeful morality, malicious forgiveness, ferocious charity, egotistic humility, and a kind of hellish justice. In other words he was as near like the God of the Old Testament as his health permitted.

The best thing, however, about the Presbyterians of Geneva was, that they denied the power of the Pope, and the best thing about the Pope was, that he was not a Presbyterian.

The doctrines of Calvin spread rapidly, and were eagerly accepted by multitudes on the continent. But Scotland, in a few years, became the real fortress of Presbyterianism. The Scotch rivaled the adherents of Calvin, and succeeded in establishing the same kind of theocracy that flourished in Geneva. The clergy took possession and control of everybody and everything. It is impossible to exaggerate the slavery, the mental degradation, the abject superstition of the people of Scotland during the reign of Presbyterianism. Heretics were hunted and devoured as though they had been wild beasts. The gloomy insanity of Presbyterianism took possession of a great majority of the people. They regarded their ministers as the Jews did Moses and Aaron. They believed that they were the especial agents of God, and that whatsoever they bound in Scotland would be bound in heaven. There was not one particle of intellectual freedom. No one was allowed to differ from the Church, or to even contradict a priest. Had Presbyterianism maintained its ascendancy, Scotland would have been peopled by savages to-day. The revengeful spirit of Calvin took possession of

the Puritans, and caused them to redden the soil of the new world with the brave blood of honest men. Clinging to the five points of Calvin, they, too, established governments in accordance with the teachings of the Old Testament. They, too, attached the penalty of death to the expression of honest thought. They, too, believed their Church supreme, and exerted all their power to curse this continent with a spiritual despotism as infamous as it was absurd. They believed with Luther that universal toleration is universal error, and universal error is universal hell. Toleration was denounced as a crime.

Fortunately for us, civilization has had a softening effect upon the Presbyterian Church. To the ennobling influence of the arts and sciences the savage spirit of Calvinism has, in some slight degree, succumbed. True, the old creed remains substantially as it was written, but by a kind of tacit understanding it has come to be regarded as a relic of the past. The cry of "heresy" has been growing fainter and fainter, and, as a consequence, the ministers of that denomination have ventured now and then to express doubts as to the damnation of infants, and the doctrine of total depravity. The fact is, the old ideas became a little monotonous to the people. The fall of man, the scheme of redemption and irresistible grace, began to have a familiar sound. The preachers told the old stories while the congregation slept. Some of the ministers became tired of these stories themselves. The five points grew dull, and they felt that nothing short of irresistible grace could bear this endless repetition. The outside world was full of progress, and in every direction men advanced, while the Church, anchored to a creed, idly rotted at the

shore. Other denominations, imbued some little with the spirit of investigation, were springing up on every side, while the old Presbyterian ark rested on the Ararat of the past, filled with the theological monsters of another age.

Lured by the splendors of the outer world, tempted by the achievements of science, longing to feel the throb and beat of the mighty march of the human race, a few of the ministers of this conservative denomination were compelled by irresistible sense, to say a few words in harmony with the splendid ideas of to-day.

These utterances have upon several occasions so nearly awakened some of the members, that, rubbing their eyes, they have feebly inquired whether these grand ideas were not somewhat heretical? These ministers found that just in proportion as their orthodoxy decreased, their congregations increased. Those who dealt in the pure unadulterated article, found themselves demonstrating the five points to a less number of hearers than they had points. Stung to madness by this bitter truth, this galling contrast, this harassing fact, the really orthodox have raised the cry of heresy, and expect with this cry to seal the lips of honest men. One of these ministers, and one who has been enjoying the luxury of a little honest thought, and the real rapture of expressing it, has already been indicted, and is about to be tried by the Presbytery of Illinois.

He has been charged :

First, With speaking in an ambiguous language in relation to that dear old doctrine of the fall of man. With having neglected to preach that most comfort-

ing and consoling truth, the eternal damnation of the soul.

Surely, that man must be a monster who could wish to blot this blessed doctrine out and rob earth's wretched children of this blissful hope!

Who can estimate the misery that has been caused by this most infamous doctrine of eternal punishment? Think of the lives it has blighted—of the tears it has caused—of the agony it has produced. Think of the millions who have been driven to insanity by this most terrible of dogmas. This doctrine renders God the basest and most cruel being in the Universe. Compared with him, the most frightful deities of the most barbarous and degraded tribes are miracles of goodness and mercy. There is nothing more degrading than to worship such a God. Lower than this the soul can never sink. If the doctrine of eternal damnation is true, let me have my portion in hell, rather than in heaven with a God infamous enough to inflict eternal misery upon any of the sons of men.

Second. With having spoken a few kind words of Robert Collyer and John Stuart Mill.

I have the honor of a slight acquaintance with Robert Collyer. I have read with pleasure some of his exquisite productions. He has a brain full of the dawn, the head of a philosopher, the imagination of a poet, and the sincere heart of a child.

Is a minister to be silenced because he speaks fairly of a noble and candid adversary? Is it a crime to compliment a lover of justice, an advocate of liberty; one who devoted his life to the elevation of man, the discovery of truth, and the promulgation of what he believed to be right?

Can that tongue be palsied by a presbytery that

praises a self-denying and heroic life? Is it a sin to speak a charitable word over the grave of John Stuart Mill? Is it heretical to pay a just and graceful tribute to departed worth? Must the true Presbyterian violate the sanctity of the tomb, dig open the grave, and ask his God to curse the silent dust? Is Presbyterianism so narrow that it conceives of no excellence, of no purity of intention, of no spiritual and moral grandeur outside of its barbaric creed? Does it still retain within its stony heart all the malice of its founder? Is it still warming its fleshless hands at the flames that consumed Servetus? Does it still glory in the damnation of infants, and does it still persist in emptying the cradle in order that perdition may be filled? Is it still starving the soul and famishing the heart? Is it still trembling and shivering, crouching and crawling, before its ignorant Confession of Faith?

Had such men as Robert Collyer and John Stuart Mill been present at the burning of Servetus, they would have extinguished the flames with their tears. Had the Presbytery of Chicago been there, they would have quietly turned their backs, solemnly divided their coat-tails and warmed themselves.

Third. With having spoken disparagingly of the doctrine of predestination.

If there is any dogma that ought to be protected by law, predestination is that doctrine. Surely it is a cheerful, joyous thing, to one who is laboring, struggling and suffering in this weary world, to think that before he existed, before the earth was, before a star had glittered in the heavens, before a ray of light had left the quiver of the sun, his destiny had been irrevocably fixed, and that for an eternity before

his birth he had been doomed to bear eternal pain!

Fourth. With having failed to preach the efficacy of "vicarious sacrifice."

Suppose a man had been convicted of murder, and was about to be hanged—the Governor acting as the executioner. And suppose that just as the doomed man was to suffer death, some one in the crowd should step forward and say, "I am willing to die in the place of that murderer. He has a family, and I have none." And suppose further that the Governor should reply, "Come forward, young man, your offer is accepted. A murder has been committed, and somebody must be hung, and your death will satisfy the law just as well as the death of the murderer." What would you then think of the doctrine of "vicarious sacrifice"?

This doctrine is the consummation of two outrages—forgiving one crime and committing another.

Fifth. With having inculcated a phase of the doctrine commonly known as "Evolution" or "Development."

The Church believes and teaches the exact opposite of this doctrine. According to the philosophy of theology, man has continued to degenerate for six thousand years. To teach that there is that in Nature which impels to higher forms and grander ends, is heresy, of course. The Deity will damn Spencer and his "Evolution," Darwin and his "Origin of Species," Bastian and his "Spontaneous Generation," Huxley and his "Protoplasm," Tyndall and his "Prayer Guage," and will save those, and those only who declare that the Universe has been cursed from the smallest atom to the grandest star; that everything tends to evil, and to that only; and that the only

perfect thing in Nature is the Presbyterian confession of faith.

Sixth. With having intimated that the reception of Socrates and Penelope at heaven's gate was, to say the least, a trifle more cordial than that of Catherine II.

Penelope waiting patiently and trustfully for her lord's return, delaying her suitors, while sadly weaving and unweaving the shroud of Laertes, is the most perfect type of wife and woman produced by the civilization of Greece.

Socrates, whose life was above reproach, and whose death was beyond all praise, stands to-day, in the estimation of every thoughtful man, at least the peer of Christ.

Catharine II. assassinated her husband. Stepping upon his corpse, she mounted the throne. She was the murderess of Prince Iwan, the grand-nephew of Peter the Great, who was imprisoned for eighteen years, and who, during all that time, saw the sky but once. Taken all in all, Catharine was probably one of the most intellectual beasts that ever wore a crown.

Catharine, however, was the head of the Greek Church, Socrates was a heretic, and Penelope lived and died without having once heard of "particular redemption," or "irresistible grace."

Seventh. With repudiating the idea of a "call" to the ministry, and pretending that men were "called," to preach as they were to the other avocations of life.

If this doctrine is true, God, to say the least of it, is an exceedingly poor judge of human nature. It is more than a century since a man of true genius has

been found in an orthodox pulpit. Every minister is heretical just to the extent that his intellect is above the average. The Lord seems to be satisfied with mediocrity ; but the people are not.

An old deacon, wishing to get rid of an unpopular preacher, advised him to give up the ministry, and turn his attention to something else. The preacher replied that he could not conscientiously desert the pulpit, as he had had a "call" to the ministry. To which the deacon replied, "That may be so, but it's mighty unfortunate for you that when God called you to preach, he forgot to call anybody to hear you."

There is nothing more stupidly egotistic than the claim of the clergy that they are, in some divine sense, set apart to the service of the Lord ; that they have been chosen and sanctified ; that there is an infinite difference between them and persons employed in secular affairs. They teach us that all other professions must take care of themselves ; that God allows anybody to be a doctor, a lawyer, statesman, soldier, or artist ; that the Motts and Coopers—the Mansfields and Marshalls—the Wilberforces and Sumners—the Angelos and Raphaels—were never honored by a "call." These chose their professions and won their laurels without the assistance of the Lord. All these men were left free to follow their own inclinations, while God was busily engaged selecting and "calling" priests, rectors, elders, ministers and exhorters.

Eighth. With having doubted that God was the author of the 109th Psalm.

The portion of that Psalm which carries with it the clearest and most satisfactory evidences of inspiration,

and which has afforded almost unspeakable consolation to the Presbyterian Church, is as follows :

“Set thou a wicked man over him; and let Satan stand at his right hand.

“When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin.

“Let his days be few; and let another take his office.

“Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.

“Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.

“Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labor.

“Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither let there be none to favor his fatherless children.

“Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out.

\* \* \* \* \*

“But do thou for me, O God the Lord, for Thy name's sake; because Thy mercy is good, deliver thou me. \*

\* \* I will greatly praise the Lord with my *mouth*.”

Think of a God wicked and malicious enough to inspire this prayer. Think of one infamous enough to answer it.

Had this inspired Psalm been found in some temple erected for the worship of snakes, or in the possession of some cannibal king, written with blood upon the dried skins of babes, there would have been a perfect harmony between its surroundings and its sentiments.

No wonder that the author of this inspired Psalm coldly received Socrates and Penelope, and reserved his sweetest smiles for Catharine the Second!

Ninth. With having said that the battles in which the Israelites engaged with the approval and command of Jehovah surpassed in cruelty those of Julius Cæsar.

Was it Julius Cæsar who said, “And the Lord our

God delivered him before us ; and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people. And we took all his cities, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women and the little ones, of every city, we left none to remain" ?

Did Julius Cæsar send the following report to the Roman Senate ? " And we took all his cities at that time, there was not a city which we took not from them, three-score cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og, in Bashan. All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates and bars ; besides un-walled towns a great many. And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon, king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city."

Did Cæsar take the city of Jericho " and utterly destroy all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old" ? Did he smite " all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings, and leave none remaining that breathed, as the Lord God had commanded" ?

✓ Search the records of the whole world, find out the history of every barbarous tribe, and you can find no crime that touched a lower depth of infamy than those the Bible's God commanded and approved. For such a God I have no words to express my loathing and contempt, and all the words in all the languages of man would scarcely be sufficient. Away with such a God ! / Give me Jupiter rather, with Io and Europa, or even Siva with his skulls and snakes, o give me none.

Tenth. With having repudiated the doctrines of "total depravity."

What a precious doctrine is that of the total depravity of the human heart! How sweet it is to believe that the lives of all the good and great were continual sins and perpetual crimes; that the love a mother bears her child is, in the sight of God, a sin; that the gratitude of the natural heart is simple meanness; that the tears of pity are impure; that for the unconverted to live and labor for others is an offense to heaven; that the noblest aspirations of the soul are low and grovelling in the sight of God; that man should fall upon his knees and ask forgiveness, simply for loving his wife and child, and that even the act of asking forgiveness is in fact a crime!

Surely it is a kind of bliss to feel that every woman and child in the wide world, with the exception of those who believe the five points, or some other equally cruel creed, and such children as have been baptized, ought at this very moment to be dashed down to the lowest glowing gulf of hell!

Take from the Christian the history of his own Church; leave that entirely out of the question, and he has no argument left with which to substantiate the total depravity of man.

A minister once asked an old lady, a member of his church, what she thought of the doctrine of total depravity, and the dear old soul replied that she thought it a mighty good doctrine if the Lord would only give the people grace enough to live up to it!

Eleventh. With having doubted the "perseverance of the saints."

I suppose the real meaning of this doctrine is, that Presbyterians are just as sure of going to heaven as all other folks are of going to hell. The real idea being, that it all depends upon the will of God, and

not upon the character of the person to be damned or saved; that God has the weakness to send Presbyterians to Paradise, and the justice to doom the rest of mankind to eternal fire.

It is admitted that no unconverted brain can see the least of sense in this doctrine; that it is abhorrent to all who have not been the recipients of a "new heart"; that only the perfectly good can justify the perfectly infamous.

It is contended that the saints do not persevere of their own free will—that they are entitled to no credit for persevering; but that God forces them to persevere, while on the other hand, every crime is committed in accordance with the secret will of God, who does all things for his own glory.

Compared with this doctrine, there is no other idea, that has ever been believed by man, that can properly be called absurd.

As to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, I wish with all my heart that it may prove to be a fact. I really hope that every saint, no matter how badly he may break on the first quarter, nor how many shoes he may cast at the half-mile pole, will foot it bravely down the long home-stretch, and win eternal heaven by at least a neck.

Twelfth. With having spoken and written somewhat lightly of the idea of converting the heathen with doctrinal sermons.

Of all the failures of which we have any history or knowledge, the missionary effort is the most conspicuous. The whole question has been decided here, in our own country, and conclusively settled. We have nearly exterminated the Indians; but we have converted none. From the days of John Eliot to the

execution of the last Modoc, not one Indian has been the subject of irresistible grace or particular redemption. The few red men who roam the Western wilderness have no thought or care concerning the five points of Calvin. They are utterly oblivious to the great and vital truths contained in the 'Thirty-nine articles, the Saybrook platform, and the resolutions of the Evangelical Alliance. No Indian has ever scalped another on account of his religious belief. This of itself shows conclusively that the missionaries have had no effect.

Why should we convert the heathen of China and kill our own? Why should we send missionaries across the seas, and soldiers over the plains? Why should we send Bibles to the East and muskets to the West? If it is impossible to convert Indians who have no religion of their own; no prejudice for or against the "eternal procession of the Holy Ghost," how can we expect to convert a heathen who has a religion; who has plenty of gods and Bibles and prophets and Christs, and who has a religious literature far grander than our own? Can we hope, with the story of Daniel in the lion's den, to rival the stupendous miracles of India? Is there anything in our Bible as lofty and loving as the prayer of the Buddhist? Compare your "Confession of Faith" with the following:

"Never will I seek nor receive private individual salvation,—never enter into final peace alone; but forever and every-where will I live and strive for the universal redemption of every creature throughout all worlds. Until all are delivered, never will I leave the world of sin, sorrow and struggle, but will remain where I am."

Think of sending an average Presbyterian to convert a man who daily offers this tender, this infinitely generous and incomparable prayer! Think of reading the 109th Psalm to a heathen who has a Bible of his own, in which is found this passage: "Blessed is that man, and beloved of all the gods, who is afraid of no man, and of whom no man is afraid!"

Why should you read even the New Testament to a Hindoo, when his own Christna has said: "If a man strike thee, and in striking drop his staff, pick it up and hand it to him again?" Why send a Presbyterian to a Sufi, who says: "Better one moment of silent contemplation and inward love, than seventy thousand years of outward worship?" "Whoso would carelessly tread one worm that crawls on earth, that heartless one is darkly alienate from God; but he that, living, embraceth all things in his love, to live with him God bursts all bounds above, below."

Why should we endeavor to thrust our cruel and heartless theology upon one who prays this prayer: "O God, show pity toward the wicked; for on the good thou hast already bestowed thy mercy by having created them virtuous"?

Compare this prayer with the curses and cruelties of the Old Testament—with the infamies commanded and approved by the being whom we are taught to worship as a God, and with the following tender product of Presbyterianism: "It may seem absurd to human wisdom that God should harden, blind, and deliver up some men to a reprobate sense; that he should first deliver them over to evil, and then condemn them for that evil; but the believing spiritual man sees no absurdity in all this, knowing that God

would never be a whit less good, even though he should destroy all men."

Of all the religions that have been produced by the egotism, the malice, the ignorance and ambition of man, Presbyterianism is the most hideous.

But what shall I say more? for the time would fail me to tell of Sabellianism, of a "model trinity," and the "eternal procession of the Holy Ghost"?

Upon these charges a minister is to be tried, here in Chicago; in this city of pluck and progress—this marvel of energy, and this miracle of nerve. The cry of "heresy," here, sounds like a wail from the Dark Ages—a shriek from the Inquisition, or a groan from the grave of Calvin.

Another effort is being made to enslave a man.

It is claimed that every member of the Church has solemnly agreed never to outgrow the creed; that he has pledged himself to remain an intellectual dwarf. Upon this condition the Church agrees to save his soul, and he hands over his brains to bind the bargain. Should a fact be found inconsistent with the creed, he binds himself to deny the fact and curse the finder. With scraps of dogmas and crumbs of doctrine, he agrees that his soul shall be satisfied forever. What an intellectual feast the confession of faith must be! It reminds one of the dinner described by Sidney Smith, where everything was cold except the water, and everything sour except the vinegar.

Every member of a church promises to remain orthodox, that is to say—stationary. Growth is heresy. Orthodox ideas are the feathers that have been molted by the eagle of progress. They are the dead leaves under the majestic palm, while heresy is the bud and blossom at the top.

Imagine a vine that grows at one end and decays at the other. The end that grows is heresy ; the end that rots is orthodox. The dead are orthodox, and your cemetery is the most perfect type of a well regulated Church. No thought, no progress, no heresy there. Slowly and silently, side by side, the satisfied members peacefully decay. There is only this difference—the dead do not persecute.

And what does a trial for heresy mean ? It means that the Church says to a heretic, " Believe as I do, or I will withdraw my support ; I will not employ you ; I will pursue you until your garments are rags ; until your children cry for bread ; until your cheeks are furrowed with tears. I will hunt you to the very portals of the tomb, and then my God will do the rest. I will not imprison you. I will not burn you. The law prevents my doing that. I helped make the law, not, however, to protect you, nor deprive me of the right to exterminate you, but in order to keep other Churches from exterminating me."

A trial for heresy means that the spirit of persecution still lingers in the Church ; that it still denies the right of private judgment ; that it still thinks more of creed than truth ; that it is still determined to prevent the intellectual growth of man. It means that churches are shambles in which are bought and sold the souls of men. It means that the Church is still guilty of the barbarity of opposing thought with force. It means that if it had the power, the mental horizon would be bounded by a creed, that it would bring again the whips, and chains, and dungeon keys, the rack and fagot of the past.

But let me tell the Church it lacks the power. There have been, and still are, too many men who own

themselves—too much thought, too much knowledge for the Church to grasp again the sword of power. The Church must abdicate. For the Eglon of superstition, science has a message from truth.

The heretics have not thought and suffered and died in vain. Every heretic has been, and is, a ray of light. Not in vain did Voltaire, that great man, point from the foot of the Alps, the finger of scorn at every hypocrite in Europe. Not in vain were the splendid utterances of the Infidels, while beyond all price are the discoveries of science.

The church has impeded, but it has not and it cannot stop the onward march of the human race. Heresy cannot be burned, nor imprisoned, nor starved. It laughs at presbyteries and synods, at Œcumenical councils and the impotent thunders of Sinai. Heresy is the eternal dawn, the morning star, the glittering herald of the day. Heresy is the last and best thought. It is the perpetual new world ; the unknown sea, toward which the brave all sail. It is the eternal horizon of progress. Heresy extends the hospitalities of the brain to new thoughts. Heresy is a cradle : orthodoxy a coffin,

Why should a man be afraid to think, and why should he fear to express his thoughts ?

Is it possible that an infinite Deity is unwilling that man should investigate the phenomena by which he is surrounded ? Is it possible that a god delights in threatening and terrifying men ? What glory, what honor and renown a god must win in such a field ! The ocean raving at a drop ; a star envious of a candle ; the sun jealous of a fire-fly !

Go on, presbyteries and synods, go on ! Thrust the heretics out of the Church. That is to say, throw

away your brains,—put out your eyes. The Infidels will thank you. They are willing to adopt your exiles. Every deserter from your camp is a recruit for the army of progress. Cling to the ignorant dogmas of the past ; read the 109th Psalm ; gloat over the slaughter of mothers and babes ; thank God for total depravity ; shower your honors upon hypocrites, and silence every minister who is touched with that heresy called genius.

Be true to your history. Turn out the astronomers, the geologists, the naturalists, the chemists, and all the honest scientists. With a whip of scorpions, drive them all out. We want them all. Keep the ignorant, the superstitious, the bigoted, and the writers of charges and specifications. Keep them, and keep them all. Repeat your pious platitudes in the drowsy ears of the faithful, and read your Bible to heretics, as kings read some forgotten riot-act to stop and stay the waves of revolution. You are too weak to excite anger. We forgive your efforts as the sun forgives a cloud—as the air forgives the breath you waste.

How long, O how long will man listen to the threats of God, and shut his ears to the splendid promises of Nature ? How long, O how long will man remain the cringing slave of a false and cruel creed ?

By this time the whole world should know that the real Bible has not yet been written : but is being written, and that it will never be finished until the race begins its downward march or ceases to exist. The real Bible is not the work of inspired men, nor prophets, nor apostles, nor evangelists, nor of Christ. Every man who finds a fact, adds, as it were, a word to this great book. It is not attested by prophecy,

by miracles or by signs. It makes no appeal to faith, to ignorance, to credulity or fear. It has no punishment for unbelief, and no reward for hypocrisy. It appeals to man in the name of demonstration. It has nothing to conceal. It has no fear of being read, of being investigated and understood. It does not pretend to be holy or sacred; it simply claims to be true. It challenges the scrutiny of all, and implores every reader to verify every line for himself. It is incapable of being blasphemed. This book appeals to all the surroundings of man. Each thing that exists testifies of its perfection. The earth with its heart of fire and crowns of snow; with its forests and plains, its rocks and seas; with its every wave and cloud; with its every leaf, and bud, and flower, confirms its every word, and the solemn stars, shining in the infinite abysses, are the eternal witnesses of its truth.

# Jesus Not a Perfect Character.

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BY B. F. UNDERWOOD.

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The advocates of Christianity are fond of dwelling on the character of Jesus. They never tire of extolling him. His character, they affirm, is perfect; and perfection, they say, does not belong to man; Jesus therefore, must have been superhuman and divine.

Accepting as correct, the record of his life as given in the New Testament, Jesus was, in my opinion very far from perfection.

A perfect being would not have taught that moral merit belongs to correct religious belief, or moral demerit to erroneous religious belief, when men's religious opinions are not under the control of the will, but are due largely to circumstances beyond their control, such as the views of their parents and early instructors, their education, opportunities for study and their characteristics inherited from their ancestors.

He would not, in pardoning a woman guilty of adultery, have exempted her from punishment on a *false principle*. The tenderness of heart that is lenient to the mistakes and faults of the unfortunate, is

deserving of praise, and when Jesus said to the woman, "Go thy way and sin no more," we admire his words; but when he said, "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone," he enunciated a principle, which if carried out in practical life, would exempt from punishment every criminal on earth.

He would not have said to a poor Syro-Phenician woman, when asked to heal her child (even though he granted her request) "It is not meet to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."

He would not have cursed a fig-tree, because it was without figs, when "the time of figs was not yet."

He would not have made the foolish promise to his disciples, that as a reward for adhering to him, they should one day sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

He would not have denounced whole cities because they declined to receive his disciples as teachers. *Mat. x. 15, and xi. 24.*

He would never have uttered the revengeful, retaliatory words, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my father which is in heaven."

He would not have said to frail, fallible man, "I will give unto thee, the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." *Mat. xvi. 18, and xviii. 18.*

He would not have predicted the end of the world, and declared, "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away until all these things are fulfilled."

He would not have been so far led away by unreasoning enthusiasm as to promise to his followers mir-

aculous "signs"—power to speak with new tongues, drink poison, etc., with impunity. Mat. xvi, 16.

He would not have told his followers that whatever they asked believing, they should receive.

A perfect being would not have taught men to "take no thought for the morrow;" nor would he have taught "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." "But woe unto you that are rich, for you have received your consolation." Luke vi. 20-24. When poverty is the cause of misery and crime, and when it is a duty and a virtue to acquire a competence in life.

He would not have condemned to endless punishment those who should refuse to assist believers, or be unrepentant at his promised coming.

He would not have talked foolishly of "everlasting fire," and the "Devil and his angels."

He would not have declared that a man who should obtain a divorce from his wife for any other reason than fornication and the man who should marry the woman so divorced would "commit adultery," since there are other just and sufficient reasons for divorce, than fornication.

He would not have encouraged bodily mutilation "for the kingdom of heaven's sake."

He would, in advising the Jews to pay tribute, have given the proper reason or none at all. He would have told them to pay tribute because it was just, or because refusal would have involved them in revolution which could only result in failure, and not simply because Cæsar's image and superscription happened to be on the coin, which was just no reason at all.

He would not have selected for an associate a man like Judas in whom Jesus admitted he was deceived when

he quoted and applied to himself the words of David :  
“ Mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.”

A perfect being would not have been so unmanned and terrified by the approach of death as to be in “ agony ” and sweat as it were great drops of blood. His deportment would have been more like that of the heathen Socrates, who conversed freely with his friends, endeavored to sustain their fortitude and lighten their grief, and when the time came, drank the fatal hemlock with as little concern apparently as though it had been a glass of wine. The agony and despair of Jesus increased to the fatal moment, and his last words prompted by his suffering and the utter hopelessness of his position—so it would seem—were words of reproach against his God, “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.”

A perfect being, assuming the office of a teacher and reformer, would have condemned human slavery, in clear and distinct terms, when it was one of the great and wide-spread evils of the day. This Jesus never did.

He would have pointed out the injustice, wrong and bad effect of despotic government. Jesus did nothing of the kind.

He would have taught that just governments derive their rightful powers from the consent of the governed. Jesus taught no such doctrine.

He would have recognized and enforced the great maxims of political and social freedom, contained in the manifestation known as the Declaration of Independence. He would have spoken unequivocally in favor of religious freedom and the rights of conscience.

In changing the Jewish law of divorce he would have provided for the separation of the wife from the husband, upon the application of the former, for proper reasons, and not have left woman as helpless as she was under the old Jewish law.

He would have taught the importance of thoughtfulness and provision for the future.

He would have spoken of the intellectual and moral progress of the race, confidence in which is no unimportant incentive to enterprise. Jesus preferred to talk about "devils" and everlasting "fire."

He would have encouraged the study of science, philosophy and art. Jesus gave these civilizers no encouragement.

We may add that Jesus taught no important original doctrine—not one. He gave to the world no new discoveries. No useful inventions. He furnished no new light to the understanding on any of the doctrines which he taught second-hand.

That such an individual as Jesus once lived there is reason to believe; that he was a devout, conscientious man is probable, judging from the half historical, half legendary accounts that have descended to us; that he said or did all the contrary things ascribed to him is unlikely; that we have any thing like a correct record of his life is highly improbable; but that as portrayed in the gospels, he is not a character to be held up for admiration and imitation in the Nineteenth century is very evident.

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# PROPHECIES.

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BY B. F. UNDERWOOD.

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MR. EDITOR:—The prophecies of the Bible furnish the theologian with one of his favorite arguments in favor of the Divine origin of the Bible.

The power to foretell events, however, is no proof of supernatural intervention. Lincoln was a prophet when he said, "This nation cannot remain permanently half slave and half free." Rousseau was a prophet when he predicted the French Revolution. There is a passage in the *Media* of Seneca that is certainly very prophetic. It reads thus: "Times shall hereafter come, when the chain of things shall be relaxed by the ocean; a vast country shall be revealed; the sea shall unfold new worlds, and Thule cease to be the most distant country." Berkeley's prophetic verses on America are familiar to the common reader, are indeed rather remarkable. "A prophetic pamphlet," says the *Edinburgh Review* of July, 1844, "published by the famous astrologist Lilly, was thought to be so signally verified by the great fire of London, that the author was summoned before the House of Commons and publicly requested there to

favor them with the prospects of the nation for 1852. Zadkiel, the English astrologist, published the nativity of Louis Napoleon, in which occurred the following passage: "But let him not dream of lasting honors or prosperity. He shall found no dynasty, he shall wear no durable crown; but in the midst of deeds of blood and slaughter, with affrighted Europe trembling beneath the weight of his daring martial hosts, he descends beneath the heavy hands of fate, and falls to rise no more; with none to mourn him, none to inherit his renown, none to record his good deeds and none to lament his destruction." Already the author of this prophecy is making use of it, in the late copy of his almanac to prove that astrology is a science, and to increase his reputation and business. One of the most remarkable prophecies on record is that of an old negro woman, who foretold Josephine's royal destiny. Josephine's own narrative, as related by her to the ladies of her court and reproduced by her biographer, Memes, is as follows:

"One day, sometime before my first marriage, while taking my usual walk, I observed a number of negro girls, assembled around an old woman, engaged in telling their fortunes. I drew near to observe their proceedings. The old sybil, on beholding me, uttered a loud exclamation, and almost by force, seized my hand. She appeared to be under the greatest agitation. Amused at these absurdities, as I thought them, I allowed her to proceed, saying, 'So you discover something extraordinary in my destiny?' 'Yes.' 'Is happiness or misfortune to be my lot?' 'Misfortune. Ah, stop! and happiness too.' 'You take care not to commit yourself, my dame. Your oracles are not intelligible,' I am not permitted to

render them more clear,' said the woman raising her eyes with a mysterious expression towards heaven. 'But to the point,' I replied, for my curiosity began to be excited. 'What read you concerning me in futurity?' 'What do I see in the future? You will not believe me if I speak.' 'Yes, indeed, I assure you. Come, my good mother, what am I to fear and hope?' 'On your head be it then; listen: You will be married soon; that union will not be happy. You will become a widow and then—then you will be queen of France. Some happy years will be yours. But you will die in a hospital, amid civil commotion.'"

Of this prophecy, Allison, the historian, says: "The history of Josephine had been very remarkable. She was born in the West Indies; and it had early been prophesied by an old negress that she should lose her first husband, be extremely unfortunate, but that she should afterwards be greater than a queen. This prophecy, the authenticity of which is placed beyond a doubt, was fulfilled in the most singular manner. Her first husband, Alexander Beauharnais, a general in the army of the Rhine, had been guillotined during the French Revolution; and she, who was also imprisoned at the same time, was only saved from death by the fall of Robespierre. So strongly was the prophecy impressed on her mind that while lying in the dungeon of the Conciergerie, expecting every hour to be summoned to the Revolutionary Tribunal, she mentioned it to her fellow prisoners, and to amuse them named some of them as ladies of the bed-chamber—a jest which she afterwards lived to realize to one of their number." In a note, Allison adds: "The author heard of this prophecy long before Napoleon's elevation to the

throne, from the late Countess of Bath and the Countess of Ancram, who were educated in the same convent with Josephine, and had heard her repeatedly mention the circumstance in early youth."

There is not a prophecy in the Bible as well attested or as remarkable as this one respecting Josephine, yet no theologian will attempt to explain it by supposing the old negress was divinely inspired to make these prophetic utterances.

All ages and nations have had their prophets. Sometimes they have hit the truth; sometimes they have missed. The proportion of failures probably equals if it does not exceed that of the successful guesses. Hundreds and thousands are uttering prophecies every day. Some of them are recorded, but the larger number, when repeated, are recalled from memory and related, often with artful, frequently with undesigned addition or omission to make them correspond with events that have occurred. When prophecies fail, and the failure is evident, they drop into forgetfulness, except when they are skillfully modified or twisted out of their original meaning and ingeniously applied to events never thought of by their authors.

Prophecies, as a rule, prove failures in proportion to their circumstantiality and particularity of statement. *Indefiniteness* is the characteristic of most prophecies that have come down from antiquity. Could many of the old Bible prophets return to earth and look over their own predictions, they would probably find it as difficult to explain them as it was for Jean Paul Richter in his advanced years to explain an obscure passage in one of his works. "When I wrote that sentence," said he, "God and I knew

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## **Bible Prophecies Regarding Babylon.**

—  
BY B. F. UNDERWOOD.  
—

The prophecies of the bible are frequently appealed to as evidence of the divine origin of that book. But a prophecy does not necessarily prove superhuman agency. Lincoln was a prophet when he said, "This nation cannot remain permanently half slave and half free." Rousseau was a prophet when he predicted the French revolution of 1789. The old negress, who told Josephine when she was a girl, that she would one day be the Empress of France, uttered a prophecy more remarkable perhaps than any contained in the bible. This prophecy according to the historian Allison, was often related in the social circles of Europe long before Napoleon ascended the French throne.

The Freethinker has a right to demand evidence that any bible prophecy appealed to in proof of inspiration, was uttered before the event predicted occurred ; that it has not been changed to correspond with the event ; that the account of the event has not

been modified to conform to the prophecy; that the prophecy is in clear unambiguous language; that it is not equally applicable to different events; that the whole prediction has been verified, and that the event predicted was clearly beyond the power of man to foresee.

Judged by these reasonable criteria there is not one prophecy in the bible that will sustain the claims of theologians. Take the prophecies respecting Babylon, which are so frequently appealed to in proof of the inspiration and divinity of the bible.

“And Babylon the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherd make their folds there; but the wild beast of the desert shall lie there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.” Isaiah, chap. xiii : 19-22.

Jeremiah says : “And it shall come to pass when seventy years [of Jewish captivity] are accomplished, that I will punish the King of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolation.” Chap. xxv : 12.

As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring cities thereof, saith the Lord, so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein.” Jere. 1 : 40.

It is evident from Isaiah, chapters xiii and xiv,

that this sweeping destruction was to be affected by an invading army.

Now what are the facts respecting the condition of Babylon since the alleged dates of the prophecies I have quoted. I will, in answer to this question, give a few extracts from Layard's *Ninevah and Babylon*, the highest authority that can be appealed to on this subject.

“After the defeat of Darius and the overthrow of the Persian supremacy, *Babylon opened its gates to Alexander* who deemed the city not unworthy to become the capital of his mighty empire.” p. 454.

“The last blow to the prosperity and even existence of Babylon was given by Seleucus, when he laid the foundation of his new capital, on the banks of the Tigris (B. C. 322). Only a few Chaldeans continued to dwell around the ruins of their sacred edifices.” p. 455.

“Still however a part of the population appears to have returned to their former seats, *for in the second century of the Christian era*, we find the Parthian King Evemerus sending numerous families from Babylon into Media, to be sold as slaves, and burning *many great and beautiful edifices, still standing in the city.*” p. 455.

“In the time of Augustus, the city is said to have been entirely deserted, except by a few Jews, who still lingered among the ruins.” p. 455.

“Amid the heaps that marked the site of ancient Babylon herself there arose (in the seventh century), the small town of Hillah.” p. 455.

“Hillah may contain about 8000 or 9000 inhabitants. A few half ruined mosques and public baths are its principal buildings. Its bazaar supplies the

desert Arabs with articles of clothing, arms, dates, coffee, corn, and contains a few Manchester goods and English cutlery—around the town and above and below it for some miles, are groves and palm trees forming a broad belt on both sides of the river.” p. 457.

“ A theory, put forward first by Col. Rawlinson I believe, that the ruins around Hillah do not mark the site of the first Babylon, has I presume been abandoned.” p. 456.

“ Hillah, like most towns in this part of Turkey, is peopled by Arabs once belonging to different tribes, but now forgetting their clanships in a sedentary life. They maintain however a friendly intercourse with the Bedouins, and with the wild inhabitants of the marshes.” p. 417.

From the summit of Biris Nimroud I gazed over a vast marsh, for Babylon is made ‘ a possession for the bittern and pools of water.’ In the midst of the swamps could be faintly distinguished the mat huts of the Kazail, forming villages on the small islands. The green morass was spotted with flocks of the black buffalo. *The Arab settlements showed the activity of a hive of bees.*’ p. 427.

“ Shortly after my arrival at Hillah, I visited the Biris Nimroud, accompanied by Zaid, and a company of well armed Agayls. Spying a party of the Kazail Arabs retreating from the marshes with their tents and cattle, they fell upon them, and under my shadow carried off a few cows and sheep, inflicting at the same time, some severe lance wounds upon the owners.” p. 422.

Thus we see that the city which was to be destroyed by a great army “from the north country,” the city

whose time was near at hand, whose days, it was declared should not be prolonged, which was to be "perpetual desolation," after the Jewish captivity and never to be inhabited nor dwelt in from generation to generation, where the Arab was never to pitch his tent even; the city which was to "be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah"—was a large and important city after the prophecies were written and after the captivity of the Jews, that Alexander intended to make it the seat of his great empire; that afterwards it declined gradually like other ancient cities, yet "Jews still lingered among the ruins" in the time of Augustus; that in the second century of the Christian era, it still contained inhabitants and "many great and beautiful edifices still standing;" that at a later date Hillah arose on the *site* of the ancient city; that the town has now a population of from 8 to 9 thousand, and is peopled chiefly by Arabs; that other portions of the ground on which ancient Babylon stood, are inhabited by Arabs whose settlement show "the activity of a hive of bees," while all around, the green morass is spotted with flocks of the black buffalo; and that a British traveler actually saw Arabs with their tents, retreating from the marshes which form a part of the site of the old city.

It should be borne in mind that according to the ancient historian, Herodotus, Babylon formed a perfect square of sixty miles—fifteen on each side. The same historian informs us that the whole plain of Babylon in the past had been subject to inundations, and that the city was protected by artificial canals and embankments, kept in repairs at vast expense. There was, therefore, nothing improbable in the idea

that a portion of the ground on which Babylon stood would sometime become "pools of water;" but when the fiery old Hebrew prophets, declared in pronouncing Babylon's doom, that the destruction of the city should be speedy and its desolation complete, and proceeded to give particulars of its future condition, they put on record what in the light of present knowledge, must be regarded as proof of the unreliable character of their prophetic writings, and evidence that they wrote not by divine inspiration, but from intense hatred of their oppressor and from impatience of her destruction.

Nelson and some other writers have attempted to vindicate the correctness of the prophecies to which I have referred by quotations from Rollin and Volney; but it seems not to occur to many who still quote these old authors, that discoveries made since their death render their work of no value, so far as they relate to the site or condition of Babylon, not to mention other cities named in the bible.

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## Ezekiel's Prophecy Concerning Tyre.

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BY B. F. UNDERWOOD.

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The prophecy respecting Tyre is among those the most frequently referred to by Christian clergymen, as evidence of the divine origin of the bible. Yet this very prediction furnishes the Freethinker with one of the strongest proofs of the liability of the old Hebrew prophets to make mistakes when they attempted to speak of the future.

The prediction is contained in the 26th chapter of Ezekiel. The "Lord God" is represented as saying:

"Behold I will bring upon Tyrus, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings from the north, with horses and with chariots and with horsemen and companies and much people.—v. 7.

"With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets: he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground.—v. 11.

"And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou

shalt be a place to spread nets upon, thou shalt be built no more: for I the Lord hath spoken it, saith the Lord.—v. 14.

“I will make thee a terror and thou shalt be no more; though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord.”—v. 21.

According to the prediction, clear and explicit as far as it goes, Tyre was to be destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, the destruction was to be total and complete, the city never was to be rebuilt, and the site, though sought for, was “never to be found again.”

The history of Tyre, instead of verifying the prediction, clearly shows that the prophet's indignation against the proud city that had exulted over the sad fate of Jerusalem greatly exceeded his ability to foresee and foretell the vicissitudes of fortune which awaited it.

In the first place there is no evidence that Nebuchadnezzar ever captured Tyre. Josephus who had access to histories not now extant, never intimates that such an event took place. Not a Greek or Roman author whose works have descended to us, makes any allusion to it. Writers in the latter part of the 4th century A. C. stated distinctly that there was no reference to the capture of Tyre by the Chaldeans in the historical writings then in existence of the Greeks and Phœnicians; and Jerome, the Christian Father, while noticing this fact, was unable to adduce any authority to disprove it. Even the prophet who uttered the oracle, sixteen years afterward, took back his own words, as the 18th verse of the 29th chapter of Ezekiel plainly implies that Nebuchadnezzar was unsuccessful in his efforts to capture Tyre. It is now generally conceded by historians and biblical schol-

ars that there is no proof that the Chaldean monarch was successful in his siege of Tyre, but that there are very strong reasons for the conclusion that the city was not captured by him.

In the second place, we know that Tyre continued to be a large and important city for centuries from the time of Nebuchadnezzar. In the year 332 B. C., it was besieged for seven months, and finally taken by Alexander the Great. It was then populous, wealthy and strongly fortified. Thirty thousand of its inhabitants, we are told, were sold as slaves. In accordance with the barbarous custom of the times, the defenders of the city were executed. It was subject to the Macedonia kings of Syria until the Romans took possession of it in the year 65 B. C., down to which time and afterward it continued an important and prosperous city. The accounts of Strabo and Josephus leave no doubt that, in the time of Augustus, it was more populous than Jerusalem. Its prosperity seems to have been uninterrupted from the first to the fifth century A. C. According to Jerome, who wrote about 414, the city in his time was "the most noble and beautiful in Phœnicia." He was perplexed to know how to reconcile its existence in his day—a thousand years from the alleged date of the prophecy—with the words of Ezekiel, that it should be destroyed and be "built no more." During the Arabian revolution that took place under Mahomet, it was again the subject of conquest, but its capture by the Khalif Omar did not put a period to its existence. When, five hundred years later (1144), it surrendered to the Christians, it was still a beautiful and flourishing city, and so continued down to the close of the thirteenth century, or 1800 years from the time the

Hebrew prophet said it should be destroyed by the Babylonian king and never be rebuilt. It was recaptured by the Saracens in 1291. Since that time, it has experienced fitful revivals of prosperity, but has gradually declined, until it is now reduced to a town of about 5,000 inhabitants. It is now known by the name of Sour (or Sur).

The fulfilment of the prophecy respecting Tyre, if literally verified, would be no evidence of the inspiration of the prophet, for when he wrote Nebuchadnezzar was probably already marshalling his hosts, and quite likely besieging the city; its capture seemed probable, and if totally destroyed and covered by the sea, its fate would have been identical with that of many other cities of the ancient world. But the prophet made a mistake, and furnished the Free-thinkers with an unanswerable objection to his claim that he wrote by the authority of "the Lord God."

Dr. Bellows, the distinguished Unitarian scholar and divine, in one of his letters from the East, wrote:

"We thought over the twenty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel, which so boldly and eloquently predicted the ruin of the proud city, which had already, in the prophet's days, become a synonym of luxury, prosperity and worldliness. The book-makers would have us believe that the prophecies in regard to the destruction of these cities that border on their sacred land, were verified with the most literal fidelity, and that every line of them had a special application and specific fulfilment. The real truth is, that the destruction of all great cities is certain, if only time enough is given; and that a thousand years might usually blot out the foundations of any town, or to build them over with

a new city. A few cities retain their names, after thrice as long a period, but they retain nothing else. Damascus, the oldest city in the world, is a city a dozen times rebuilt, and very often destroyed. Tyre has been destroyed and rebuilt and revived at least five times. To which of its destructions are the words of Ezekiel to be applied? The noble indignation of the prophet, venting his solemn sense of the destruction that waits on all the pride of this world, upon prosperous Tyre, *would have been just as carefully fulfilled if applied to any other sea-coast city which had reached prosperity.* It is of the providential nature of civilizations, as the world changes its wants, and starts new types of life on fresh soils, to decay, and no virtue or piety will save them from this fate ultimately. It is as certain as death for every man. . . . They (Tyre and Sedon) deserved doubtless the warnings, reproofs, and threatenings they received from the holy men who prophesied their downfall, but it required no miraculous vision to announce for them the certainty of a catastrophe which is universal and sooner or later, falls on all great nations and great cities.

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# HISTORY OF THE DEVIL.

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BY ISAAC PADEN.

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It is believed by many, that originally the face of the earth was smooth and pleasant, with gradual slopes and rises; no frozen oceans or lakes to chill the air; and vegetation grew spontaneous as food for man, free from toil, briars, thorns, thistles and obnoxious weeds; no mountains, craggy rocks, or dismal swamps to impede the path of the traveler; beauty and holiness covered the whole face of the earth; all good, and very good, throughout the vast creation. This was the condition of things, when man was placed upon the earth as its lord, with life and immortality stamped upon every living thing; and man in the image and likeness of his God, holy, happy and perfect. Thus man stood in all his glory, in the immediate presence of the great I Am. This period of man's happiness, is also believed to have been of short duration, and terminated in his fall. Death and mortality followed in the wake, as life and immortality once reigned throughout all the earth; now death and destruction commenced their ravages upon man and beast, together with all that had life,

and instead of spontaneous fruit for food for man, briars, thorns, thistles and obnoxious weeds covered the face of the earth; sorrow and trouble, vexation and misery, together with endless damnation, were the destiny of man, who had now to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow during his natural life, and then die and go to an endless Hell.

Under this mighty change or somersault, all nature groaned, man, beast, and everything that had life, rebelled against its maker—God, for forcing them into existence and leaving them unprotected, and all flesh wherein there was life became corrupt and desperately wicked.

God now seeing what he had done, became exceedingly sorrowful, and repented sore, and was grieved to the heart that he had made man, and shed a flood of tears over his folly and unwise act, and came near drowning the whole race of man (here he would have shown wisdom, had he made a clean sweep, and improvised another set, by way of improvement).

This mighty revolution and universal destruction, if theology be true, was the result of God placing too great a responsibility upon the first man and the first woman, and they fell, and all things fell with them; they being inexperienced in life, mistook a serpent, one of the beasts of the field, which God had made and pronounced it good; but here they were sadly mistaken (so says theology); instead of a friend it proved to be the Devil, and through his perseverance, they were induced to eat an apple or some other kind of fruit, which the theologians tell us is the cause of all man's trouble in this life and damnation in the next.

This serpent, who our divines say, is the Devil, is

he of whom we intend to give a short history ; in so doing, not having any personal knowledge of his majesty we are forced to rely upon hearsay evidence ; therefore as that which we hear may not be true, our object will be to make no statement except such as can be well backed up by infallible history, or the declarations of reverend gentlemen whose statements will not be disputed. A full and accurate description of his person is not possible, such as the color of his hair, the weight of his body, the color of his pants, the length of his tail, or the size of his horns, the number of wrinkles on them, and the same as to his cloven foot ; also his true name as he had, and has many, also his form and visage all suited to each generation and nation who formed his acquaintance. Whether his name was changed in honor for exploits, or in derision is not known ; and as for his origin this question is undecided whether he is a part of God's creation, or the result of some foreign power. Our divines tells us he was originally an angel of light, but that he fell from grace. This, if true, proves that he was not of the Calvinistic order, yet he may have been once a member of some other church, whose members are in the habit of falling from grace. Be this as it may, we have no knowledge of his peculiar views on religion, but we rather conclude he was a Free thinker, inasmuch as he taught Mother Eve the benefit arising from progression, or man would have remained in the blind path of ignorance, and a knowledge of good and evil would never have been brought to light, as God had forbid man to touch it, and man would not have known right from wrong. Our divines charge the Devil as being the prime mover in the overthrow of the happy and beautiful

condition in which God had placed man ; thereby the designs of the Almighty were thwarted.

This, if true, may have been more to try the strength of his power or his extra ability in matters of business than otherwise. Be this as it may, let it pass.

The first account we have of his personal existence and whereabouts, was in a beautiful garden filled with trees planted by God himself, bearing all manner of delicious fruits. Under the shade of one of these trees, history tells us, his satanic majesty made his first appearance on earth, by, or under the name of serpent (which now means a snake); here we find him in sweet conversation with a female though in a state of nudity, which proved that women at that age of the world did not run to fashion as they do now. Who but a man destitute of social feelings, would not envy his pleasure, under such circumstances, talking over the events of the day in social chat ? It is evident he was not aware at the time that she was a married woman, as he never was known to return the visit, which proved he was a gentleman of the first water. Being thus disappointed in his first attempt he never afterwards was known (Paul like) to touch a woman ; yet it is said he has children. From this fact, if true, he must have married. Nevertheless he may have remained a bachelor, and his children may have been adopted or assumed.

Our reverends tell us, he lied to this lady in the garden and deceived her. If this be true he is not to be believed at all times. This question is a matter of dispute, and remains undecided, whether he lied or told the truth. It is true he said to the woman, wisdom and knowledge was not calculated to kill her, but if she partook of the fruit of the tree of

knowledge of good and evil, she would be more like God ; this waked up her ambition, and she was determined to know more than she did, and not remain in total ignorance, and she partook of the delicious fruit, and gave also to her husband. This is the nature of women ; they love knowledge and delight in knowing things, and Mother Eve should be thanked, by every woman in the land, for her perseverance in attaining to the knowledge of good and evil, as it has proved to be the basis and foundation of all education and improvement.

It is also a fact, that, following the advice of this Devil, she became the mother of inventions, and introduced to man the use of the needle, in making clothes to cover man's nakedness ; shame and modesty before were unknown. Thus Mother Eve not only stands at the head of education and refinement, but the first inventor, and should any one examine the libraries of the world and the patent offices of the nations, he would see the result of the act of old Mother Eve under the advisement of the Devil. Nevertheless, it is claimed by infidels and unbelievers in sacred history that there is no personal Devil, and if there ever was one, he has long since disappeared. This we claim is not true, for the best of reasons. Two or three unimpeachable reverends say they saw and had a personal encounter with him ; one of them in Europe,—the Rev. Martin Luther, who threw his inkstand into his face, claiming as a justification the Devil insulted him ; however, it is evident Luther committed an assault and battery upon the person, whether justifiable or not, we can not say.

He was also seen of a later date, by Rev. Joseph Smith, in the State of New York, where Smith says

he had a "rough and tumble" with him, respecting the gold plates found by Smith, who says the Devil undertook to wrench the plates from him, and kicked Smith as Smith turned to leave him. If this be true, he did not act the part of the gentleman, provided he considered Smith his equal.

He was also seen by Rev. Bloomburg in Sweden, in a room, and when he left he carried the whole side of the house with him. This, if true, shows he must have had the strength of Sampson.

These facts are from the history of those Reverend gentlemen, and by the mouths of two or three witnesses the truth is established.

As for the credibility of Luther, Smith and Bloomburg there can be no dispute. If Luther saw him, there can be no doubt but that Smith and Bloomburg saw him. They speak of his cloven foot, but say nothing about his tail or horns. We infer from this, he had lost them in some battle.

His existence is thus proven beyond a cavil, (except his tails and horns, and they are accounted for.) he having been seen not only in Europe, but in America, as well as in the early history of man, when snakes ran on legs, and talked with human voice, and women stood out in the open air without petticoats or skirts, —nothing to obstruct a fair view of the beautiful form of nature so attractive to the eye of man. King David, though a man after God's own heart, yet he was unable to withstand the sight of Bathsheba, Uriah's wife.

Having now proved the existence of a personal Devil, we proceed with our history.

From the interview with the lady in the garden, we hear but little of him, until the days of father Job,

when he (Satan, who is now called the Devil,) was walking up and down upon the earth, viewing his possessions that had fallen to him, in the treaty between him and God. This noble Prince, while passing a state house, when, on a certain day, there was a convention in session, composed of the sons of God as delegates, and "Satan came also," whether as a delegate or spectator, (perhaps a lobbyist,) history does not say; but history warrants us in saying he was a delegate, or an old chum of the chairman, who was God. It is evident he was not one of the meddlesome kind, as he made no speech nor offered a resolution, until after the chairman asked him from whence he came, the same as to say. "We are now ready to serve you; what do you wish?" And Satan, (who is now called the Devil) answered, "From walking up and down the earth, viewing my possessions." Out of this friendly conversation, a dispute arose, concerning the goodness and integrity of a man called Job, the only man claimed in divine history to be perfect, and one who eschewed evil. Yet this man was a Heathen Prince; what an idea! that a Heathen Prince could be the equal of a Jewish King, it is absurd in the extreme, nevertheless it is a truth; and to decide this dispute, Satan offered a resolution, which was discussed, and being declared in order, was passed without opposition, and the Devil (Satan) made chairman of the executive committee, and was instructed to make report at the next session. The committee adjourned, to await the result, which was the confiscation of all Job's possessions.

On a certain day the convention again opened, and Satan came also, and after the same salutation, the Devil being chairman of the executive committee, re-

ported that the resolution had been executed to the letter, and the object was not reached; therefore the dispute was not settled, and the Devil offered another resolution; "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life; this resolution being duly discussed and passed, and the Devil again made chairman of the executive committee, the result of which was father Job lost his skin and came near losing his life.

In this matter we have drawn our own conclusions. But it looks very much like gambling, *on a bet of guessing*, and he had to pay the bill, as it was all done at his expense; yet we are told Job was well paid after becoming a heathen banker; and Job may have laughed heartily after it was all over, to think of the joke, and the grand speculation in doubling his pile. To all who have no higher aspirations than dollars and cents, it may appear just and right, though it cost old Job a sore side.

From this, there is but little known of the Devil, until he is again found in company with God's only son. What had become of all the sons of God in the days of Job; history leaves us in the dark. But here we find him in the wilderness, in the land of Judea, figuring in a big speculation—trying to sell out his possessions to the Son of God, and "move West."

Here let us say, in this transaction, he was called Devil; previous to this date his names were more or less respectful; Serpent was once universally used (especially in Egypt) as representing wisdom. Satan and Demon were considered angelic or spiritual personages, and ranked and named with the Lords and sons of God as can be seen in the days of Job, also in the days of King David, they were so much alike, that

the inspired writers, in giving an account of David numbering the children of Israel; one says it was the Lord, and another says it was Satan, who caused him to do it. If the inspired writers could not tell which one caused David to do what he did, we are justified in believing that at that time they were very near alike—of the same rank at least.

It is also claimed by the inspired writers, the Devil made the first move towards preparing or securing a sacrifice for man's salvation, by entering into Judas who delivered the sacrifice into the hands of the executioners; this entering into Judas, is rather against the position of a personal Devil; but we presume Judas was hollow; as it is said he bursted. As the Devil failed to sell out the kingdoms of the earth, we presume they are yet in his possession, though our divines say that the poor Devil did not own one foot of land at the time; and there is now a dispute in reference to his title. Nevertheless, if theology be true, he holds a chattel mortgage on man, executed by Adam in the Garden of Eden, and acknowledged before the Supreme Judge of the Ecclesiastical Court of Heaven, which he forecloses as they "pass over," except a few that are run off and secreted by the priests, who justify this act by claiming the Devil cheated or took the advantage of God through Adam in obtaining this chattel mortgage on man.

Be this as it may, the Devil's claims on man rest upon the facts claimed by our divines, in reference to the fall of man through Adam. If the fall of man is a fact, and was brought about by a fair and open day transaction, within the knowledge of God, and by him permitted, as every preacher tells us, then the Devil did not cheat the Almighty, and legally he is

entitled to all he claims, though he may have outwitted God in a business transaction. Legally the mortgage is good, so long as the fall of man is admitted, and the only safety of man is to hire some priest to run him off ; this question now decided we proceed.

We find by Divine record, that the Devil and the Son of God conversed together face to face, on friendly and social terms, the same as with his father in the days of Job, though they did not agree on every point the same as in Job's case, but nothing in this is strange or wrong, great men often disagree.

The Devil thus failing in his speculation with the Son of God, the priests have made it a profitable business, in running men out of the Devil's jurisdiction. One of the most successful ways used, is to run them through water, and in this way he loses their track. This running off business has given employment to thousands, and some have made themselves immensely rich, while others have nearly starved to death. This is a noble result arising from the existence of a Devil, giving employment to so many, whose disposition is to lord it over his fellow-men.

We again proceed with our history.

From his interview with the Son of God in the wilderness of Judea, he is only occasionally spoken of in the annals, until he is seen by Luther, Smith and Bloomburg. Yet it is claimed he was once an inhabitant of Heaven, where he caused a rebellion and had a big fight with one Michael, a Prince. In this battle his name was called Dragon, (which represents power) and from the facts claimed, he must have been a man highly esteemed, and one of influence, as it is claimed he induced one-third of the powers that were (supposed to mean the Southern States) to rebel, and fall in with

him, and thereby was enabled to make a big disturbance, in a place where our divines tells us all is peace, and quietness, and the weary traveler is forever at rest. There must be a mistaken view in this matter. However, it is evident there was not a man on the throne at that time of the firmness of Abaham Lincoln, or the Devil and his army would not have been permitted to secede. A question of policy may arise here. Lincoln denied the right of secession and whipped the rebels back into the traces again, while God accepted the right to secede as a matter of policy or choice, and got them out of Heaven as best he could. We cannot see but the right to secede is fully established by God ; (this may only apply to monarchical kingdoms, not republics). Lincoln braved the storm of war and brought the rebels to terms, and cast out the Dragon (supposed to mean human slavery) and there is now no place in America found for it.

But our divines tell us the Devil and all his forked-tailed host are here upon earth. This accounts for Luther, Smith and Bloomburg seeing him as they say they did.

Whether he had any thing to do in the late rebellion in the United States may be a question. There is one thing certain as far as peace and quietness are concerned, there can be but little choice between the theological Heaven and the United States. Both have been cursed with a rebellion and a war. If the Devil caused the rebellion and war in Heaven, he may have been the cause in America ; but not having been seen in person at the head of the rebel army, we conclude our rebellion was gotten up by the priests and other designing men of our nation, who more for the sake of profit than true honesty, taught the divine

right of human slavery as an institution of God, handed down from the days of Noah. This, the people of a free and civilized nation, resented as an imposition, and a war was the result.

We again return to our subject. Our divines claim the Devil is guilty of all manner of wickedness, that he lied to mother Eve in the garden, by which he thwarted the designs of the Almighty. How true this may have been, I am not prepared to say, but if true, the Devil is the smartest man of the two, he being a progressionist, and God a stationary orthodox. It is not to be wondered at; and it is the way with the orthodox world to this day; they are always behind, and the last to yield to a scientific truth; and should the Devil occasionally get the advantage, it is only a natural consequence. As for the Devil's origin, parentage, &c., together with his peculiar traits of character, we have to depend upon history and our divines, who say he was the son of the morning. Rather a peculiar father indeed, but so it is, they say so, and we take it for granted. He also is claimed to have been once an angel in Heaven. These facts, if they are facts, prove his parentage and origin to be good and respectable. How such a good fountain could send forth such a mean Devil, is a theological mystery. As his associates, both in Heaven and on earth, were none other than first-class, all combine to clothe the whole matter in a mystery, how such a mean cuss "could grow up under such influences" and surroundings. Every fact claimed gives the lie to the charge of his meanness. First, in a sweet conversation with a virtuous lady, under the shade of a tree planted by God's own hands; also in his travels up and down upon the earth; no place was found so congenial

and suited to his taste, as a convention of the sons of God, whose chairman was their father, into which he entered, and was cordially entertained in a social chat with the president. It is true, they did not agree in their judgment. Yet their dispute ended in a friendly bet. Whether they took any thing to drink on the occasion, history does not inform us. However, Job paid the bill and the dispute ended. This, we admit, is a stain upon his character, to gamble at the expense of an honest man, or to give his consent to afflict a man without cause. This being the only mean trick through his life, there may be some mistake about the matter. It is an admitted fact, he was the sole companion of the Son of God when on earth for forty days at one time. Who can say he did not keep the very best of company, both while in Heaven and also on earth? Yet it is true, he and his associates, did not fully agree in all matters, but where is the wrong in this?

As for his true character and standing, it can be better judged by the company he kept, than any other way. Nevertheless the clergy charge upon him all manner of crime. This is a trait in their character. They treated God's only son the same way, and in fact put him to death, their admissions of facts prove the contrary.

1st. They admit Heaven was the place of his origin and birth.

2d. He was the son of the morning.

3d. He was in office and an angel of light.

4th. Whenever seen always in the best of company; even the last time seen was by three reverend gentlemen. So far his character stands vastly ahead of an average class of reverend gentlemen of our day,

and we pronounce it good. The orthodox God could not dispense with his services ; he has no reason to be ashamed of him, as he never was known to get drunk, as was the case with Noah, and many other of God's servants ; neither was he ever seen in a house of ill-fame, such as was the house of Rahab the harlot, where the servant of Joshua—the acknowledged chief commander of the armies of the God of Israel—resorted.

But you will often hear his name mentioned in churches. Some have supposed he was a church member, inasmuch, as he first taught the advantages in knowing good from evil—one of the most essential lessons ever taught to man. Neither was he ever known to commit adultery with woman, either married or single, or in any way meddling with females, other than by way of giving encouragement to advance in wisdom and knowledge, which has given rise to the present refined condition of man and woman.

He was never known to be angry or in any way displeased, jealous or "full of wrath." These passions belong to the kingdom of imperfection. He was never known to repent or regret any thing he had done. This would show short-sightedness on his part. And was never known to be displeased with a man and kill him ; never known to take any delight in the shedding of human blood ; never went at the head of an army on earth, where they killed babes and sucklings ; never was known as having been pleased with seeing the heads of human beings cut off and stuck upon poles for the sun to shine on ; never was known to swear an oath or chew tobacco. The only mean trick proven against him, was the part he took in Job's case without cause. It is also admitted he

was a man of influence ; when he seceded from Heaven, his mother country, his native home and place of birth. In this he did nothing more than our forefathers did, when they rebelled and seceded from the Kingdom of Great Britain.

There are but few, but what would be proud of such a history of themselves, even such as the Devil is entitled to.

Thus we close our history, of him who is called the Devil, who while in Heaven was second to God himself ; now on earth stands despised by all church members. Yet they acknowledge him in their universal church creeds in the sectarian churches, as the second person in the Godhead, as seen by the following, and he cannot be dispensed with without destroying the whole theological theory of man's salvation. (Viz :)

1st person. God the prime mover in man's existence.

2d person. The Devil the prime mover in man's fall.

3d person. Christ the prime mover in man's redemption.

4th person. The Holy Ghost the prime agent in man's salvation.

Neither one of these four persons can be dispensed with without destroying the theological system or scheme in relation to man's destiny.

Without a God there would be no existence of man ; without a Devil, no fall ; without a fall no redemption ; without redemption no use of a Christ ; without a fall, and redemption no salvation for man.

*Second view of theology.* The salvation of man, rests wholly upon the crucifixion of Christ's body upon

the cross. This, if true, makes the act of the Jews in putting Christ to death indispensably necessary. Had the Jews obeyed God's command, "Thou shalt not kill," which theology claims they were under an obligation to do, or stand condemned as transgressors of God's command—if they had obeyed there would have been no salvation for man.

Thus, we see, if theology be true, man's fall was the result of Adam and Eve disobeying God's command, "Thou shalt not eat thereof," and man's salvation is the result of the Jews disobeying God's command, "Thou shalt not kill." If man's salvation rests upon the crucifixion of Christ's body on the cross, and it was optional with the Jews to do it, or not to do it, but from choice they did—the same as with mother Eve when she refused to live in ignorance, but from choice acted under the Devil's advice, and thereby man is capable of reasoning and judging between good and evil, right and wrong, the more man eats and partakes of the fruit called the knowledge of good and evil, the more elevated he is and the more refined he becomes. "We should thank the Devil, mother Eve and the Jews for all these blessings."

To talk about man falling in a refined or moral sense, when he was first so low, he neither knew good or evil, and stood on a level with the beasts of the field as to refinement, is absurd. And the theological view of man's fall can be comprehended in these expressions: "God set a trap, the Devil sprung it and man got caught."

Redemption is about the same, the Devil entered Judas, thereby surrendering his death grip on man, and placing the sacrifice in the hands of the Jews, who

offered it for man's salvation, which, if true, each party is entitled to their share of thanks, in proportion to that which they did. Will some theologian, or any body, tell which did the most to effect man's salvation, the procuring or betraying, the offering and making the sacrifice, or the sacrifice itself?

The foregoing is presented to the reader for no other purpose than to show the difference there is in certain statements, when covered under a robe or mantle of sacredness. The points here stated are the same in substance as claimed in theology, but they are stripped of their robe of sacredness, and stand unclothed and uncolored, and can be seen in a common sense view. Should the reader look upon the writer of this little pamphlet as one who has no reverence or respect for the God or truth, a greater mistake would be hard to make.

The time is coming, and now is, when these false imaginations that have blinded many and have so long been held as sacred truths, will yield to common sense, and submit to scientific truths based upon facts. Therefore let the reader reflect—not condemn, but act upon his better judgment, instead of his religious prejudices, and open his eyes of understanding, and exercise the undeniable right of every individual to do his own thinking. Bigotry, superstition and priestcraft have blinded men long enough, therefore let us come out and be God's men, and take an eagle's flight and soar over the mountains of knowledge and leave the little sectarian cage—the “seven by nine” religion for the moles and bats.

*Woodhull, Ill.*

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# The Jews and Their God.

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BY ISAAC PADEN.

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PREFATORY.

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**A**LL who write a book, pamphlet or lengthy article, deem a preface necessary, in order to have the reader's attention rest upon the object intended by the writer.

Therefore, the intention of the writer of these few thoughts upon the Jews and their God, is expressly to raise and discuss the question, whether the personage by them described as their God, was, and is the embodiment of Deity; or, in other words, the source of the power that rules the universe by unchangeable laws. The writer takes the negative side of the question, and sets forth a few of his reasons, and respectfully and earnestly requests any one or all who believe that in the God of the Jews is the dictating power that rules the universe, to come out before the world, and show, by good logic and sound judgment to hon-

est skeptics (as there are many, and they are rapidly increasing), that the personage whom the Jews held and worshiped as God, is worthy to be worshiped as such, by man throughout the earth.

The subject involved in the few thoughts of the writer, embraces one of the most important questions now agitating the religious world ; therefore, the reader is respectfully asked, not to pre-judge at first sight, nor condemn before investigating, but read, and then bring all the thoughts of the writer before the throne of justice and reason, condemning all claims on either side that have a tendency to degrade and bring the character of Deity below that of a civilized human being. This done, dear reader, and the wishes of the writer will be fully complied with, and he will have no fears of the result.

#### CHAPTER I.

We propose to pen a few thoughts in reference to the Jews and their God, who, some claim, is connected with a Devil, and theology makes a Devil indispensably necessary as the second person in what may be called the quartette Godhead, as the following will show :

1. God, the prime mover in man's existence.
2. The Devil, the prime mover in man's fall.
3. Christ, the prime mover in man's redemption.
4. The Holy Ghost, the prime mover in man's salvation.

This constitutes the sectarian creed, except of the Jews, who claim the Christians have stolen their God, calling him their Father, discarding themselves (the Jews) in a religious sense, and turning them out into the cold, as a God-forsaken people, despised by man,

and rejected by Deity, yet the Christians hold good the precepts, examples and opinions of the Jews, acknowledging their Priesthood and their God, as the standard of right.

✓ How the ideas, precepts and opinions of such a God-forsaken people can be the standard of right, in this civilized age, is a theological mystery. ✓

✓ Taking all the claims for facts, what preference have the Jews and their God over other nations and their God, and wherein does the preference lie? Were they the first nation? By no means. Did they remain as a nation longer than any other nation? They did not; China was a nation long before the Jews were in existence, and their God has preserved them as a nation to this day, without any allegiance to the Jews or their God.

✓ Did they, as a people, possess more moral goodness than any other nation? ✓

✓ If the shedding of human blood, and the destruction of property, is moral goodness, they excelled the world. As for murder, rapine, debauchery, theft, fraud, and deception, as a nation they have no equal; all of which they claimed was done under the sanction and command of their God. So far as they excelled other nations in this, their God was superior, but in no other sense. As for believers and followers of the Jewish God, including the present Christian world, compared with the balance of mankind, they are a small minority.

In this, the God of the Buddhists is far ahead, and as for governing ability, the Chinese God far excels the Jewish God. It is claimed, the Jews were destroyed on account of their wickedness. *As for their wickedness, there is no dispute, but why are the Chinese*

sustained, if wickedness is the cause of the destruction of nations? This needs no comment. As my remarks are intended for the Jewish God, we shall speak mainly of him, and leave the gods of other nations mostly unnoticed. Not having personal acquaintance with him, we shall be obliged to confine our thoughts to the Jewish records and theological claims.

While Abraham, Moses, and others say they saw and conversed with their God face to face, yet the Apostle Paul says *he is invisible and cannot be seen.* If this be true as to the God of the Jews, we shall fail to prove his personality. It is probable Paul at that time had reference to the God of the Universe, which is spirit, and cannot be seen as a person; therefore this God cannot be the God we intend to speak of. The Jewish God was seen by them, and talked with them face to face, as one man talks to another, yet it is claimed he has not spoken a word in the hearing of any man for about two thousand years, except to Joseph Smith and Brigham Young; and our theologians say that they are both liars. It may be said from the fact that, as the Jews ascribe to their God the power that belongs to the God of the Universe, their God was and is the same. There is no more proof of this than there was that the calf which Aaron made was the God that brought them out of the land of Egypt.

All nations make the same claims for their gods that the Jews do for theirs, and it proves nothing. Each nation and its God must stand upon their own merits; if the destruction of property, and the shedding of human blood is immoral and heathenish, the Jews and their God stood upon the lowest plane. Yet

the low and undeveloped condition of man, at that age, morally forbids any one to condemn, or to accept their religious views ; but they should be held and looked upon as we do on our childhood, when we had no higher conceptions of that which was right than to strike back when we were struck ; an eye for an eye ; a tooth for a tooth ; if you strike me, I will strike you. But that which we find fault with, is the teaching of theology, that we, at this age of man's development, are under an obligation to bow down and acknowledge the Jewish God and the Christian's Devil, and reject all other gods, though they may not be stained with human blood.

As for Moses, he was, and is considered the mouth-piece of the Jewish God, yet his position was the same as with many others who claimed to act direct under the dictation of their God. Menes, who lived 3900 years B. C. ; Christna, 3120 ; Buddha, (whose God was Brahma,) 1180 ; and Zoroaster, 1000 ; all these, and many others, lived under a theocracy, the same as Moses, whose God was supreme—Kings, prophets, priests and rulers, all acting under infallible, or divine authority, the same as the Jews. In this manner the world was governed, until civilization and common sense overruled. Divine authority in kings and rulers is now discarded in all advanced nations, except with Mormons and Catholics.

As for the man Menes, he was great in his day, and as for moral goodness, he far exceeded Moses ; it was claimed for him, he suddenly disappeared, and his death and burial were not known by any one. Christna was claimed to have been born of a virgin, and his body was carried off, but no one knew where or by whom. Buddha was claimed to have been translated

to heaven, the same as Enoch, Zoroaster was carried off in a ray of the sun. Moses died upon a mountain, and God buried him, but no one knew where.

Elijah was carried to heaven in a chariot of fire, drawn by horses. Osiris, of Egypt, died and arose from the tomb and went to heaven, and was made judge. Jesus was killed by his brother Jews, and arose from the tomb and ascended to heaven, and was made Judge to judge the world. Mohammed rode to heaven on a horse called Alborack, returned the same night, died, and was buried, and staid buried; and as for his followers, they have been equal, if not greater, than the followers of Jesus; and as for honesty and temperance, far in advance of any Christian nation. The Jews, as a nation, were despised and held in derision by all other nations for their dishonesty, rebellious and turbulent disposition, (and they hold their own well.) It is also claimed they are now disowned and forsaken by their God, which no other God has done. The testing of the power and strength of these national Gods has been the direct cause of rivers of human blood flowing like streams from a fountain. In this, the God of the Jews tried to excel, for the express purpose of getting honor and a great name among other nations and Gods; and we can truly say, if honor and glory arise from the destruction of property, the Jewish God had it. But is it not a fact, *true honor, and all that is grand and noble, arise where power is clothed with gentleness, the reposing and self-restraining attitude of strength*; these are the graces of an honorable Father, king or ruler, while an ambitious tyrant seeks honor and power through blood and carnage.

## CHAPTER II.

We will now notice the theological view of the Jewish God and the Christian Devil. Theology claims this God is now determined, and has been for at least six thousand years, to destroy the Devil and all his works, sooner or later, as opportunity may offer, and make a clean sweep, leaving neither horns nor hoofs. Though the struggle may be long and hard, thousands are now and have been enlisted in this great battle. These generals, colonels, and captains are paid by the people; the conquering and subduing of this Devil being the object, upon the claims that it is for the happiness of man, and the glory of Israel's God.

This justifies us in looking into this interesting subject. Theology tells us, this God, for some cause, permitted or suffered this Devil to get the advantage of him, and thereby has become the enemy of man's happiness and the opponent of (an Almighty) God; therefore we will take a general view of matters and things as we find them on record, and claimed by theologians. In the beginning, it is said God created the heavens and the earth (out of nothing); the first move that was made, *God said let there be light, and there was light*; if this be true, this God originated in or out of darkness; the idea that God had his origin in total darkness, is a theological mystery.

Quite a contrast this, between the origin of the Christian Devil, who, it is claimed, was the son of the morning, an angel of light in heaven, while God, the great I AM, came out of a dungeon of darkness. Mystery No. 2.

The next move was three days' work, with their evenings and mornings, before the sun existed, which, by

by the way, is the only thing that gives existence to evenings and mornings ; mystery No. 3.

On the fourth day he made the sun, moon and stars. Why it required five days to make this earth, one of the smallest planets known, when the whole balance of God's creation, including countless worlds, with their suns, moons and stars, was made in one day, is mystery No. 4.

On the sixth day, he created the animal kingdom, and man was made in his own likeness, and in the image of himself, male and female created he them. How a male and female could be made in the image and likeness of one person, is mystery No. 5.

To them, male and female, God gave for meat (food), the fruit of every tree bearing seed ; the earth and all belonging to it were pronounced by him who as claimed never errs, very good. He (God) now encloses or sets apart a portion of land suitable for a garden, in which he sets or planted an orchard of fruit trees, and took the man Adam, whom he had made, and put him into this garden to keep and dress it. In this garden, four rivers had their origin, flowing therefrom. If this be true, this garden embraced a very large country ; mystery No. 6.

Here the man Adam was told not to eat the fruit of every tree. If this be true, God had changed his design from that which he intended, when he said the fruit of every tree is for meat for man ; mystery No. 7.

He then charged Adam not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, notwithstanding it was loaded with delicious fruit, pleasant to the eye, and good for food. What this tree and its fruit were for, is mystery No. 8.

It is said while every beast was passing before the eye of Adam, each with its mate, God saw Adam's lonely condition, and had compassion upon him, and said: "It is not good that the man should be alone;" sympathizing with Adam, said: "I will make him a help-meet for him," and did so. Why he did not say "Let there be a woman," is mystery No. 9.

But we conjecture a woman could not be made out of nothing, so taking the advantage of Adam when asleep, he took out one of his ribs and made a woman, and called her name Eve. If this be true, he did not make man male and female, at the same time; mystery No. 10.

Yet it is possible the female, made when Adam was, got lost among the orang-outangs, and may have been Cain's wife's mother. Eve now filling her place, and becoming Adam's lawful wife, they were well prepared to obey God's first command, multiply and replenish the earth, they being now organized in a family capacity, and by their God placed in a garden called Eden. Peace and quietness reigned throughout the face of the earth.

Here, it is said, in the absence of God, this Devil commenced his work by teaching Adam and Eve wisdom and knowledge, thereby upsetting and breaking to pieces God's plan, whatever it may have been. And God has been laboring day and night ever since to destroy this Devil and his works, and to get matters and things straightened up as good as they were before. This, our divines tell us, will never be done, as there will be a loss of a large portion of mankind, inasmuch as the damnation of every soul is the work of the Devil. Should the Devil himself be destroyed, his works will remain, just as long as damnation lasts;

poor encouragement this. It is evident, if it was God's intention man should remain ignorant of the knowledge of good and evil, he was sadly disappointed; and if it is now his intention to destroy the Devil and all his works, if theology be true, he will fail in the end, and his disappointment will be great, unless hell and damnation be abolished.

✓ We would here call the reader's attention to a nation or an individual, who does not know good from evil, and you can have a faint idea of the condition of man before the Devil commenced his work. This whole affair is one stupendous theological mystery. ✓

✓ It is said when God found Adam and Eve had got possession of the knowledge of right and wrong, he feared the result, and turned them out of the garden and cursed the earth. Whatever became of this garden and the trees that were in it, is mystery No. 11. ✓

✓ It is claimed God more or less dictated the affairs of Adam and his family throughout their natural lives; called Cain to an account, and settled up with him for the killing of his brother; put a mark upon him, lest some (pious Christian) might find him and kill him. This is the only murder case on record where God is claimed to have compromised and settled on such easy terms. A great change indeed in the days of Moses. Mystery No. 12. ✓

We suppose he changed his notion, which he had a right to do, if he was in any way like man, who, it is claimed, is in the likeness of himself. It is said in the days of Enoch, God had an organization, and Enoch stood at the head and walked with God (while going to and from church), but in what condition do we find this organization in the days of Noah? Completely broken up, all flesh had become desperately

wicked. Theology tells us the Devil had got full possession of man and beast ; all that had the breath of life was now under the control of this Devil. Under this sad condition of things, we find the Jewish God on the stool of repentance, and it is said of him, he was grieved to the heart that he had made man ; disappointed again, and failing to accomplish his designs, he became desperate, and exclaimed in his anger, "I will execute my wrath and avenge myself upon all flesh, wherein there is the breath of life." In this was his only hope. Having tried his skill in governing man, from Adam to Noah, yet man grew worse. He was now driven to despair, and in the agony of his soul he exclaimed : "It repenteth me that I made man." Adding action to his words, he sent the whole race of man to an endless hell, except Noah and his family, and again commenced to people the earth anew ; but using the old seed, the Devil was in it, and there was no reform ; the fruit was the same, and Noah got drunk the first chance he had, and cursed the posterity of his son. Upon this, it is claimed, the institution of human slavery had its origin. The new stock from the old seed proved a failure, and it is said God saw the condition of man, that it was evil continually (not discovering it before), he now made a promise to Noah never to drown mankind again. He (God) now adopts a new plan, by choosing a man whose name was Abraham, and said "from this man I will raise up a nation, a peculiar people, zealous of good works, all other nations shall be unto me as heathens and dogs, but to this man, Abraham and his seed, I will bestow favors and blessings without number," and this nation shall be head and not the tail—a peculiar people, a holy nation—whom he clothed with

the power of the priesthood, promising to Abraham to give to him and his seed a large tract of land, a country flowing with milk and honey, and that they should have it for an ever lasting possession, he and his seed forever.

✓ This was a failure from the beginning ; Abraham never possessed a foot of it as his own, if the bible tells the truth ; and his seed, the Jews, failed to kill off all the Canaanites, who finally succeeded in subduing and driving the Jews out of the land as invaders. This man, Abraham, the chosen of God, was called by Paul the father of the faithful on account of the confidence he had in his God ; yet he refused to trust him, resorting to lies and deception in preference, thereby deceived King Pharaoh, and also King Abimelech, and exposed his wife to prostitution, through fear of his life ; here King Abimelech was the more righteous man of the two, and upbraided Abraham for using deception. Abraham's excuse proves he labored under a mistaken view, in regard to the religious notions of other nations and their Gods.

Here we find this man, Abraham, who is held up as the father of the faithful, and as a model man for our day, refusing to trust his God, having more confidence in deception, thereby exposing his wife in prostitution to a people that he believed was under no restraint to do evil. Notwithstanding all this is justly charged to him, yet our theologians will hold him up as a model man, and as our standard in a moral sense. ✓ What lower step could a man take, than to deny his God and refuse to protect his wife when among strangers ? King Abimelech was justified when he rebuked him. ]

## CHAPTER III.

In this chapter we will notice Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, who was the father of the twelve tribes of Israel, and others, in relation to their God. First, we will place these men and their God in a proper light, or as we understand their true condition to be. We have already said, the undeveloped condition of man, at that age of the world, is a justification for their childish ideas ; that these men may have been model men in their day—candid, and as far as they knew, honest—we have no doubt, yet they labored under many wrong impressions, the same as Abraham did when he believed King Abimelech was under no restraint to do evil, which was a gross mistake, yet it caused him to do that which would disgrace any man. But such things were more justified in those days than now, and were practiced by the Christian Church for centuries. The writer has no disposition to vilify the characters of the Jewish fathers, further than to show they were honestly deluded, deceived, and labored under many mistakes, the same as all other people, and that their religious views are not to be relied on as a standard for this generation, having had no higher source than other nations, all of which had their origin from the spirit world, each corresponding in character with man at each age. And how could it otherwise be ? This true, it accounts for all the savage and revengeful disposition manifested by those who the Jews called Lord God and angels, (according to their appearances).

Many of those spiritual personages assumed great authority (one at least), and oft times executed it with a vengeance, and savage in the extreme, foreign and unlike a god worthy of human sympathy. As in the

case where one hundred and sixty thousand Assyrians were destroyed in one night (Isaiah xxxvii. 36,) and many other like cases too numerous to mention. Therefore, the Jews and their God, together with the angel (spirit) world, cannot be looked upon in any other light than that they acted wholly under the law of force, in all its bearings, the same as the beasts of the forest, low and undeveloped as to moral goodness. These facts, with their religious prejudices, account for all the Jews claim for themselves and their God, he being of no higher order than the spirit of some ambitious king, who the Jews held and believed to be God, and in fact was their God. It was the same with other nations, (except in the plural of gods,) and that their God regulated and arranged all their domestic affairs in life. If a man was found dead, or any person died prematurely, or was killed accidentally, or in any way lost his life while young or in his prime, it was believed to be on account of the displeasure of their God, as in the case of Onan, son of Judah (Gen. xxxviii. 10).

In all things wherein they prospered, it was evident to them their God was pleased with what they did, and thereby considered themselves blessed of their God, regardless of the means, though they were degrading and dishonest. On the other hand, a failure on their part was proof of their God's displeasure, and an offering had to be made to appease his wrath. In principle the Jews in no sense differed from other nations, except the Jews held one God and the balance were angels. Other nations acknowledged Gods in the plural, as they made their appearance on different occasions, all having spiritual communications from the spirit world, **all having prophets, priests,**

seers and mediums, each having its superstitions. One nation believed their God rode in a carriage on wheels, drawn by twelve men, called the juggernaut, while the Jews believed their God rode in a box or chest carried on four men's shoulders, called the "ark of covenant." One nation believed a woman who drowned herself was turned into a Kingfisher. The Jews believed a woman when leaving her home, looked back to see if her house was on fire, was turned into a pillar of salt, (or perhaps a barrel of salt). One nation believed a man was turned into an ox (the ox was afterwards considered an incarnate god, and worshiped). The Jews believed a man was turned out to pasture and eat grass like an ox. A thousand such cases could be shown, all equally false as to fact.

As for the Jewish nation, it had its origin in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. These three were the founders of that nation, and their God was named after them, (as he was not known before), and he retains this name throughout the Christian world, and for this the Jews claim the Christians have stolen their God. Be this as it may; Jacob being a twin brother, his God, before he was born, is said to have loved him and hated his brother Esau; though his brother, a little smarter fellow, got into the world first, this made him the lawful and legal heir of his father's estate, and was entitled to his father's blessing, in which lay the promise made to Abraham. Here is a theological question, "Did the Jewish God arrange the conception and birth of these twin brothers?" If he did, there are but two conclusions. 1st, He did not realize what he was doing; or 2d, he preferred lies, fraud and deception, to that of truth and honesty.

How this conclusion can be avoided, we leave the reader to decide for himself.

As for myself, I cannot bring my conceptions of God (as I conceive him), low enough to meet the demands of theology. Therefore, I choose rather to charge the origin of the controlling power under which the Jews had their existence as a nation, of no higher order than man or the world of spirits, whose origin is man, and that the God-power that rules the universe is above and beyond the present spiritual sphere of man.

Jacob being the favorite of his God and the idol of his mother, readily became the tool of them both in deceiving his father, thereby obtaining the blessing of his father, which legally and rightfully belonged to his brother Esau, according to the custom of nations at that time, and by the Jews carried out. Jacob having already taken the advantage of his brother's necessity, had bought his birthright for little or nothing. In these days we would call it an act of fraud, a cheat. Jacob, by the help of his mother, the blindness of his father, and barefaced falsehood, obtained his father's blessing, and thereby became in possession of the promises made to Abraham. A failure on the part of Jacob, supplanting his brother Esau, in obtaining the birthright and his father's blessing, would have thwarted and destroyed the designs of him who is claimed to be the Almighty, the fountain of justice. Here we exclaim with honest indignation, *What an idea this!* Yet, if theology be true, God, before the boys were born, "loved one and hated the other, and the elder shall serve the younger," or in other words, "Jacob have I chosen to stand before me as the head of the twelve tribes of Israel,

and Esau have I rejected," thus making it indispensably necessary that Jacob's father should be blind—for all heaven knows Jacob could not have deceived him if he had not been blind. Therefore theology makes it necessary, in order to have the designs of the Jewish God carried out, that Jacob's mother, when she counseled her son, should induce him to lie and deceive his father. No man is justified in finding fault with a Jew when he cheats him in a trade, so long as he justifies Jacob and his God cheating Esau, and deceiving father Isaac.

I have now set forth the origin and foundation of the Jewish nation under the direct dictation of their God, and it is left with the reader to decide for himself the question whether its origin had its foundation in a God of justice and moral goodness, or in fraud and deception. There is one undeniable fact, the Jewish nation ended in a disgraceful destruction, which is proof in favor of the latter. We close on this point, by asking a few questions. What treatment can be more foreign and in opposition to the golden rule laid down by Jesus, than the treatment of Jacob toward his father and brother? Yet nowhere in the Bible is the conduct of Jacob and his mother found fault with. If the Jewish God had preferred, or loved truth and honesty, having power to control, he would have had his chosen one, Jacob, to have been born first, thus avoiding the necessity of fraud and deception, but perhaps he did not think of it in time. But instead, justice was murdered and trampled under foot by him who it is claimed said: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," but in this case a man bears false witness against his twin-brother, and deceives his father, yet the same God condemns

and justifies the same act ; also, " thou shall deal justly with thy neighbor." Yet from the fact Jacob cheated his brother and deceived his father, for which he was promoted and placed at the head of God's people ; and the cheating of his father-in-law in raising cattle, (his God helping him,) he was placed among the wealthy of the land, thus blessed in all he did.

There is Rahab, the harlot, who for her lies and deception in saving Joshua's spies, and turning traitor to her own nation, was saved by him who, it is said, says " No liar or whoremonger shall enter the kingdom of heaven." It is possible, however, there may be a preference in favor of females. Taking into consideration the claims of the Jews in regard to their God, much may have been imaginary. But as for the real facts, they cannot be dispensed with, better than to charge them, as the acts of a spirit of some savage king, whose vengeance and wrath had not yet subsided, neither had his ambition abated. Is it not a fact, the character of such a personage would be compatible with the character of the Jewish God? This is evident, and the evidence is stamped upon almost every page in the bible. The whole trait of his character bears upon its face that of the low, uncultivated attributes of a man living a savage life. *Just so long as there was nothing to displease him, he was tender, kind, merciful and full of love.* On the other hand, when displeased, (and this was the most of the time,) there were no limits to his wrath and vengeance. The foregoing being warranted by the record of the Jews called the unerring word of God, no matter how immoral, false or ridiculous, all the same, it is sacred and should not be called in question ; such are the claims, also, for the Koran, the Shaster, the Vedas and all

the sacred writings or books of the different nations, each claiming their religion to be of their God, and were superior to all other religions and gods, the Jews did the same, and it is the same now with the Christians, *we are of God, and all the world lies in wickedness*, the latter none other than an outshoot of the Jews, whose authority was of no higher order than man, either in earth or spirit form. This accounts for all that was said and done by men, angels or their Gods among all nations. Believing as they did, the Jews in particular, that hail-storms were the effects of their God's vengeance, that tornados, earthquakes, eruptions of the earth, and volcanic fires came direct from God; all premature deaths were the effects of God's vengeance, and thus long life on earth was a special blessing; an eclipse set forth God's displeasure; a defeat in battle, or a failure in anything was the same. Should a man marry a wife, and she bear him a son, she was blessed of God, but if barren, she was cursed of God. This was the natural result of their low, undeveloped condition. Those who now firmly believe the bible to be infallible, are more or less tinctured with the same superstitions and false ideas, by whom all scientific truths have been met with senseless opposition. Death being the greatest curse known, all who dared to advocate truth in opposition to these religious ideas, lost their lives. Jesus in like manner lost his life under the religious persecution of the Jews, God's chosen people, who did it to please their God, and thousands of others were put to death for the same purpose.

Notwithstanding the Jews killed Jesus, yet he is now a spiritual personage, and by his believers held and worshiped as their God. This is consistent with

our position. Brahma is one of the most noted Gods known in the world, and his worshipers are now the most numerous on the earth, and they persecuted unbelievers the same as the Christians did ; and all who do not now acknowledge Jesus as God, no matter how much moral goodness they possess, are condemned. The present condition of the Christian world is similar in other respects. Earthquakes, tornadoes, hail-storms and volcanic fires are all right, providing no lives are lost, no great amount of damage done, God's name is not called in question. But should there be a great loss of life and destruction of property, the greater, the more evidence there is that it is an act of God. But you will never hear the name of Jesus brought in, that his vengeance is thus executed. Inasmuch as he is acknowledged to be the Christian real God, "why does he not execute wrath and vengeance?" The wrath of Jesus, or the vengeance of Jesus, is not named by our divines ; while the wrath of God, and the vengeance of God (having reference to the God of the Jews, the God of the bible), is heard from every pulpit. The vengeance of Jesus would be laughed at, while God is declared to be "a man of war," "a jealous God," and "vengeance is his, and he will repay."

#### CHAPTER IV.

Theology claims man fell from a high station of moral perfection, in which God had placed him, to that of total depravity. Being thus outwitted by the Devil, it has been, and now is, the sole object of the Jewish God to destroy this Devil and all his works ; and to do this he calls to his aid his son—who, theology claims, is as old as his father, equal in power and

in wisdom—and an innumerable host of angels, together with the assistance of man, in an organized capacity.

We have already shown the organization in the Garden of Eden, that it was vanquished by the Devil, and the designs of their God thwarted and a general smash-up took place; also the organization in the days of Enoch was demolished by this Devil, and a general state of wickedness prevailed over the face of the earth. Here ended the second organization in a general triumph of the Devil over God, his opponent.

We shall now speak of the third organization, which was commenced with Abraham, carried out through Jacob, and completed by Moses. First a trade was made between Abraham and his God, and a land contract entered into, the same as any two land speculators, each party covenanting to fulfill certain stipulations named in the agreement. Abraham was to do thus and so on his part, and for so doing his God agrees and promises to give a warranty deed to him and his seed forever, an everlasting possession of a certain tract or parcel of land, naming and describing its boundaries, flowing with milk and honey, indicating its extra goodness above all other lands. This tract of land was at that time inhabited by a race of people called Gentiles, the same as America was by the Aborigines of this country. The treatment of our American Indians at the hands of our professed Christians faintly shows the treatment the Canaanites received at the hands of a nation who acted as the executioners of a God of vengeance who had commanded their utter destruction. We would ask here, if that is called a possession in the promised land of Canaan

above, as the land of Canaan is claimed a type, may we expect the Aborigines of heaven will be driven out at the point of the sword after the resurrection of the Jewish and Christian saints, as theology grants heaven to no others?

✓ How was the possession of the promised land obtained? Was it in accordance with justice and the Golden Rule? We answer, no! The land was found in the possession of a strong, war-like people. And the Jews were commanded by their God to kill and destroy, and to take possession by force. To this they demurred, with tears in their eyes (see Numbers xiv), which caused their God to fly into a desperate rage, upbraiding them for cowardice, declaring in his wrath, they were unworthy even to see the land. We will illustrate: A covenants with B to give him a certain tract of land; B finds C upon the premises who shows fight. B informs A of the fact, A flies into a pet, and swears, "you cowardly pup, you shall not set your foot upon it; but I will give it to your children, who will accept my conditions." And the possession is taken afterward in a sea of human blood.

Friendly reader, the Jews taking possession of the land of Canaan under the dictation of God is now before you in its true light. It truly is a case without a parallel. Here was a nation of people, whose God was their Lord, and who had commanded, "Thou shalt not kill;" also, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed;" likewise, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods." This same God now curses and upbraids this same people for refusing to kill and to take that which belongs to another. Here our Christian friends may meet us by

claiming the Canaanites had forfeited their title to life and property by transgressing God's laws. Supposing we admit this, and apply it in all like cases (which would be just), that the transgressing of God's laws works a forfeiture of life and property, *what a hell on earth this would make if put in practice, and the Christians the authorized executioners.* Nevertheless upon this idea the Jewish religion was based; and was by the Christians carried out for centuries, and would be now if they had the power.

The blessing of religious freedom, the value of which can not be estimated, arises from the fact that the power of the Jewish God grows weaker in proportion as man advances in civilization, and human rights are respected. But the Jews failed to conquer the world, and the Christians have about given up the idea, except Catholics and Mormons. The latter persons organized in Kirtland, Ohio, under a bible pattern; three persons forming the presidency of the church, the same as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost form the head of all things; and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob formed the head of the Jewish nation. Next are their twelve apostles, representing the twelve sons of Jacob, and the twelve apostles of Christ. Then seventy elders, representing the Jewish sanhedrim, and Christ's seventies. All under the power of the two priesthoods, Aaronic and Melchisedek. With this bible organization, and the acknowledgement that Jesus is the Jehovah God, made flesh and dwelt among us, now enthroned in heaven, who had "set his hand again the second time to recover his people." (We would say the second time proved the first a failure.)

Under a firm belief in the Jewish God, and the ful-

filment of the prophecies written in the bible, they assumed, and firmly believed they were the chosen of God; and taking the bible view that the Gentile world had filled up their measure of iniquity, and were ripe for destruction.—Isa. xi:11, 24, 25.

The reader can better realize the position the Mormons held by reading the prophecies in the bible, and in proportion as his confidence is in the prophecies, so will he justify the movements of the Mormons. They commenced in doing and carrying out the fulfilment of the prophecies in Kirtland, Ohio, then in Jackson Co., Mo., then at Nauvoo, Ill. But civilization and human rights overpowered them, and drove them out, the same as the Jews were. A firm, unshaken belief in the God of the Jews, and in the fulfilment of prophecies in the bible, was the soul and life of their religion, and is justly chargeable for every move the Mormons made. The result of this people has placed the Jewish God and the bible, as infallible guides, before the world in the truest light of any other sect now on earth. Yet our Christian friends call them a deluded set. *Why?* we ask. The answer is easy; the Mormons carried out the prophecies, precepts and examples in practical life which are recorded in the bible, while the Christian relies upon his faith in his God and bible, without practice, selecting a few of the rites and ceremonies that suit the times, and the balance of his time he uses in prayer, asking his God to do that which he won't do himself.

We shall examine the third church of God, or religious organization, as found on record. At the commencement, or the time this national church separated itself from other nations, Moses killed an Egyptian, hid him in the sand, and fled his country; and this

was claimed to be a sign that God had appointed him as their deliverer. In due time, after this, Moses had an interview with a spiritual personage whom he sometimes calls God, at other times he is called an angel; at times he could be seen and talked with face to face, not only by Moses but by others. Invariably when seen he was in the form of a man, having all the attributes and disposition of a savage king: Uncivilization was stamped upon almost every act on his part, corresponding in full with the low, undeveloped condition of man at that age of the world. And how could it be otherwise, he being one of them, having only changed bodies and location, without reform? Possessing power as he did he undertook to organize and raise up a nation, with a full determination to conquer the world, and bring all nations to bow in subjugation to him. The Jews were by him intended to stand at the head of all nations; who should come and worship at Jerusalem, as the capital of the earth. But in all this he failed, for the want of wisdom. He not only failed in conquering the world, but failed in governing the Jews as a nation; whom he cursed and turned off as unmanageable, and has never shown his face since, and who can blame him after such a failure?

What, or who, can better portray the character of the Jewish God than in the character of an ambitious tyrant, who seeks glory and honor through blood and carnage, meting out acts and threats of unsatisfied vengeance to the full extent of his power?

Next to Moses killing the Egyptian were the plagues in Egypt. In this Moses and his God barely succeeded; the power and influence of other like spiritual personages, influencing and controlling the

magicians or mediums of Egypt, the same as all other nations, show as their records do, a universal similarity throughout. As for blood and carnage, Moses and his God starts out to excel all other Gods and nations, all for the express purpose of glory and honor. But not being satisfied on this point, when death and mourning filled the land of Egypt, Moses' God brought his psychological force, or spiritual power, to bear upon the organs of the mind of king Pharaoh, that he thereby might achieve to himself a great name and get him honor among other nations and their Gods. For this purpose he controlled and changed the king's mind until he completed the king's ruin. It would make my thoughts too lengthy on paper to give the one-hundredth part of the exhibitions of blood and carnage that followed in the wake of the Jews and their God. As for the contentions and disputes between Moses and his God proves Moses was more than God's equal in wisdom and reasoning powers, and often in these disputations God came out second best, yielding to Moses' superior wisdom, abandoning his own purposes and adopting Moses' counsel instead of his own.

This may be a theological mystery No. 13, yet easily accounted for. Moses had the advantage of a later and better education, being learned in all the wisdom and arts of Egypt in his day, and was well calculated to give counsel. This his God well knew, and to execute his savage, revengeful disposition upon his own people, would have shown his weakness, and it would have been a proverb in the land, and a disgrace among the nations. This Moses saw, and persuaded his God not to execute his wrath upon his own people. This proves Moses possessed more wisdom, reason

and humanity than God, and God appealed to him in these words: "Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them." This also proves Moses had held him in check before; it also proves Moses was master as to wisdom and reason, but not in power. In the latter Moses feared his God, and oft times had to be still and quiet, lest God could not be restrained.

We have often thought it was well for the children of Israel, that Moses and God had not both been mad at the same time. As it was, only three thousand lost their lives, instead of the whole nation. Can it be true Moses prevented God from killing off about four hundred millions of human beings? If he did, he did well.

This whole affair is ridiculously absurd under any other view, than that God was of no higher order than himself. See the destruction of the lives and property of the Canaanites, infants and mothers, each alike suffering death, while virgins, young and beautiful, were saved alive, to be used as wives and concubines. Theologians may tell us, it was God's object in all this, to destroy the Devil and his works. But where can the Devil be brought in, in the case of Pharaoh changing his better judgment, in not letting the Israelites go, when the Jewish God said he did it himself? (Yet it compares well with the Devil's general character, according to theology.) But the destruction and tormenting of King Pharaoh and his host, was the work of the Jewish God, not the Devil. *Mystery No. 14.*

Nothing but a revengeful tyrant would punish a man for doing that which he himself caused him to do. We find on several occasions this God doing a

Devil's work, supposing no other person than a Devil would deceive a man, and then punish him for being deceived. But what do the Jewish prophets say on this subject? They say the Lord, who was Israel's God, deceived them.—Jeremiah xx. 7; Ezekiel. xiv. 9. These men were inspired to write the truth. They also say their God or Lord put a lying spirit in the mouth of four hundred of King Ahab's prophets at one time, and they lied. We ask, how could they help it? Can theology tell us? The bible says the lie they told was concocted in heaven, suggested by a spirit, and sanctioned by the Jewish God, while sitting on his throne, in the midst of all his angelic hosts.—1 Kings, xxii. 23. It was the same with King Pharaoh, when God controlled his mind expressly to get him a great name, all at the expense of the king.

We pass over, without noticing one thousand and one circumstances of a similar character, low and savage in their nature, that would now disgrace any of our present heathen nations, yet we will name one or two instances where the wrath of the Jewish God was appeased. In one case, the heads of seven men were cut off and stuck upon a pole, so as the sun could shine upon them; this was well pleasing in his sight. One other case: The God was displeased with King David, and not being fully avenged on David, exposed to shame his wives upon the housetop, by his son Absalom, who, in the sight of the sun, prostituted his father's wives, and the Lord said "he should do it in the sight of all Israel." It truly shows wisdom and good sense in other nations to look with scorn and contempt upon the Jews and their God, (being under his tuition and his direct dictation,) yet

they grew worse and worse, more wicked and steeped in crime, living as they did under, "thus saith the Lord," which proves the control their God had over them did not lead to moral goodness.

The Romans, as a nation, were far superior in kindness and moral goodness, yet were driven, by necessity, to kill them on account of the blind faith they had in their God, which prevented them from surrendering. (See Josephus.)

Theologians claim that their God forsook and left them as a nation on account of their wickedness, and the bible sustains this orthodox view, and it proves the correctness of our reflecting thoughts, that the Jews, as a nation, and their God as a moral governor, was a complete failure. The third organization closing as it did, under the most heart-rending destruction, without a parallel in the history of man. Thus ended the third organization, got up by this Jewish God, according to the claims of theology. A reform in the moral condition of man, was never more necessary, so far as the Jews were concerned.

The Devil thus gaining a victory over the third organization, and but little done, if any, toward destroying him and his works. (Poor encouragement so far.) But it is claimed by our theologians, the Jewish God left the Jews, that he might associate with the Gentiles, who he once called "heathens" and "dogs;" but in fact they possessed more moral goodness than the Jews; such as old Cornelius, his equal was hard to find; also Father Job, the only perfect man named in the bible, were Gentiles.

Thus the condition of man gave rise to a new and better system of religion, and a new organization was entered into, embracing equality and universal broth-

erhood, taking the place of bigotry and tyranny in a great measure. This organization had in it the spirit of reform and progression, with many other things leading to virtue and moral goodness, which originated in a social band of angels (spirits), which caused the angelic world to rejoice, and many made their appearance at the time, singing songs of gladness with great joy.

This system of religion being so foreign and different from that taught by Moses and his God, it was said by the Jews to be of the Devil, and they treated it as such, and put to death the founder and prime mover in this grand reform. But the same God was acknowledged by a large portion of the adherents, yet he was never known throughout the organization to have shown his face or any of his parts. But our divines say he overshadowed a virgin, and she brought forth a son, and he officiated in his stead. But be this as it may, he did not act in any sense like the Jewish God, providing he was by him begotten. He took no delight in murder and rapine, he discarded revenge, and condemned retaliation, sympathized with man in all his afflictions, a friend to the sinner and those who erred, taught moral goodness in all he said and did, was mild and loving in his ways, except when talking with the Jewish priests. For this no one will blame him, who can realize what a cursed set they were. (This expression does them no injustice, though it is harsh.) It is out of the question for a father to produce a son so unlike himself. He resembled the Jewish God in no sense whatever as to character, disposition or animal passion. It was a libel and gross slander, to charge him as being the son of the Jewish God. He acknowledged the God of

nature, only referring to the Jewish God when remonstrating against them, but claimed universal fatherhood and brotherhood, and himself the son of man in the common sense of blood relation. This the Jews called blasphemy, and treated as such.

This organization was like all before it, inasmuch as it had the ruling passion of man ; and having gained a victory under the generalship of Constantine, tyranny ruled, and the sword and bludgeon again was instituted. Here the fourth organization fell, merging itself into what was called the Church of Rome, and from that into the present Roman Catholic Church, called by the Protestants the Devil's church. Here ends the fourth organization, falling as it did into the hands of the Devil.

Here we would say, notwithstanding its fall and failure, there were prophets, seers or mediums in it, who looked down through time, saw this organization represented to their spiritual view under the figure of a woman, called "the great whore, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth," and she was drunk with the blood of those who had respect for moral goodness. How strange indeed, that blood and carnage were once the delight of a merciful God! Now the Church of Rome is charged with being drunk with the blood of saints, those who belonged to the class of which Jesus was one, who suffered and died under the hands of God's high priests, clothed with the power of the priesthood.

#### CHAPTER V.

After some five or six thousand years, with all the aid and assistance that theology claims for him, the Jewish God has so far failed to establish a church,

or an organized kingdom on earth ; and as for destroying the Devil, by insnaring, catching, chaining, or imprisoning him, there is no encouragement, by way of getting rid of so loathsome a creature. He remains an eye-sore to the clergy, *and yet their best friend.* We will now look after those who perished under the priesthood of the Jewish God. It is not to be wondered at, that John the seer, saw the church organization, by which the priests held their power, and by it thousands were put to death ; that it was drunken with human blood, being controlled as it was by the Jewish priesthood, which put to death all who dared to oppose its authority, Jesus not excepted.

The church under the control of Constantine, a tyrant in every sense, whose genius failed him in inventing ways and means to kill, torment and punish heretics, as they were called under that organization, (or witches and wizards by the Jews.) The estimate we have made of the Jews and their God is based, as a foundation, upon their own record, sacred and profane ; but we will not vouch for the truth of it in all its fullness and particulars. Nevertheless it is held by many as the unerring word of God. If the Bible account is reliable, we have not misrepresented the Jews or their God ; but believing it is not all strictly true, justice demands this qualification. The Jews charged their God with many things he was not guilty of, by saying, " Thus saith the Lord," when the Lord had not said it ; yet it is so recorded.

Second, they did many things themselves to gratify their own dispositions ; if successful they ascribed it to their God, and it comes down through their records to us, as being sanctioned and dictated by him.

Third, many things arose from superstition,

imagination ; yet were recorded as facts. What I say of the Jews on this point, I say of all nations. There is a universal similarity, and there is nothing more wrong in the Hindoos believing Alayone, daughter of Æolus, who drowned herself in grief for her husband, was turned into a kingfisher, (a bird) than for the Jews to believe Lot's wife, for looking back, was turned into a pillar of salt ; all from the same cause (ignorance) and equally untrue.

We have now shown the failure of the fourth organization, which was swallowed up by the Church of Rome, "the great whore," seen in a vision by John, a seer and medium, as being the "mother of harlots," out of which most of the present religious sects have sprung. These four failures prove one of these things. The Jewish God was incompetent to govern man in the capacity of a nation or church. If this is not true, then it proves all these organizations had no higher origin of authority than man, in and out of the earth form. If this is not true, then it proves the Devil, after achieving a victory in the garden of Eden, has kept the field ever since, in spite of all the efforts on the part of God, man and angels. As we have heretofore relied upon the Jewish history, in reference to the Jews and their God, we do the same in looking after those who perished at the hands of, and was put to death by the authority of the Jewish priesthood ; and those in power. The Jews in no instance claim or admit they ever put a man to death without just cause ; therefore their laws and statutes were so worded there was no trouble to convict and put to death all who violated their laws, under which Jesus, with thousands of others, suffered death. Jesus spoke to those Jews then in authority, who held the priest-

hood, forming the grand Sanhedrim, who sat on the judgment seat and condemned him to death, he whose motto was to do good, and he said, "Woe unto you for ye build the sepulchers of the prophets, and your fathers killed them." From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias which perished between the altar and temple, embracing a period of some four thousand years. Luke xi. 47-51. Who dare say this testimony is false? If true, it speaks louder than the thunder of Sinai; and what does it mean? If true, and we take it as such, it amounts to this. The Jewish priest, and those in authority, had been in the habit of killing, stoning, and putting to death a certain class of people that Jesus called prophets and apostles. We will call them mediums; the Jews called them witches, wizards, blasphemers, necromancers, persons who talked with the spirits of the dead. For all this class, they had a law that all such should be put to death; if the testimony of Paul can be relied on, where he speaks of the treatment and condition of such. Heb. xi. 37-38 "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." These were considered as violaters of those laws, the same as in the days of king Saul. It is evident the woman that is called by our present priests, the Witch of Endor, who was banished by king Saul, and had secreted herself as best she could, was one of these. In this case we will quote from Josephus' history—a well authenticated work, and one that may be relied on. In his 6th book, 14th chapter of the "Antiqui-

ties of the Jews ;" a much fuller account is given of this woman than in the Bible. "When Saul had heard this, he could not speak for grief, and fell down on the floor, whether it were from the sorrow that arose upon what Samuel had said, or from his emptiness, for he had taken no food the foregoing day nor night, he easily fell quite down, and when with difficulty he had recovered himself, the woman would force him to eat, begging this of him as a favor on account of her concern in that dangerous instance of fortune-telling, which it was not lawful for her to have done, because of the fear she was under of the king, while she knew not who he was, yet did she undertake it, and go through with it, on which account she entreated him, to admit that a table and food might be set before him, that he might recover his strength and so get safe to his own camp. And when he opposed her motion, and entirely rejected it, by reason of his anxiety, she forced him, and at last persuaded him to eat.

"Now she had one calf that she was very fond of, and one that she took a great deal of care of, and fed it herself, for she was a woman that got her living by the labor of her own hands, (I wish this could be said of our clergy,) and had no other possessions but that one calf ; this she killed, and made ready its flesh, and set it before his servants and himself, so Saul came to the camp while it was yet night. Now it is but just to recommend the generosity of this woman, because when the king had forbidden her to use that art whence her circumstances were bettered and improved, she did not remember to his disadvantage that he had condemned her sort of learning, and did not refuse him as a stranger, and one, that she had no

acquaintance with ; but she had compassion upon him, and comforted him, and exhorted him to do what he was greatly averse to, and offered him the only (calf) creature she had as a poor woman, and that earnestly, and with great humility, while she had no requital made to her for her kindness, nor hunted after any future favor from him, for she knew he was to die ; whereas men are naturally either ambitious to please those that bestow benefits upon them, or are very ready to serve those from whom they may receive some advantage. It would be well therefore to imitate the example of this woman, and to do kindness to all such as are in want ; and to think that nothing is better nor more becoming mankind, than such a general beneficence, nor what will sooner render God favorable, and ready to bestow good things upon us. And so far may suffice to have spoken concerning this woman."

We would ask where does that woman live, in all Christendom, that is worthy of a better character than the one Josephus, the great historian, gives this poor despised woman, stigmatised with the name of the "witch of Endor," nevertheless as for her moral character she is the person whose life, habits, and disposition, are the nearest and most like Jesus'—always ready to do good. How did the life and death of Jesus stand among the Jews ? He was in like manner condemned ; pronounced and looked upon as an impostor and put to death, by what the priests called the law of the Lord, under which thousands before him lost their lives ; of whom he spoke, when he said, "your fathers have killed them." Notwithstanding all this, our present teachers of theology are threatening us with hell and everlasting damnation if we do not

acknowledge the Jewish God, declaring Jesus (who was born of a woman, the same as all children are) to be the legitimate son of this personal God, who talked face to face, with Abraham, Jacob, and Moses ; when his character, disposition and manner of life, had no more resemblance to the character of Jesus, than a ravenous she-bear, (such as destroyed forty-two children) has to a dove which was the emblem of Jesus' God, the spirit that abode with, and controlled him through life on earth ; while these two she-bears, carried out and executed the curse of Elisha, when under the influence or spirit of the God of the Jews when he cursed the children. *Who dare deny this, that believes his Bible*, and who dare say, these two she-bears did not portray the God-power under which Elisha cursed the children, whose offense was a childish retort, upon a man who had a bald head ? Who dare say the dove does not portray the God-power by which Jesus was controlled through life ?

There can be no doubt, but that Abraham, Moses and others who acted under authority were influenced by the spirit of a savage king, whose disposition had undergone no change perceivable, by way of reform, who was by times petulant and cross, at other times noble and grand, varying from the sublime to the ridiculous, never above, but often below that of humanity ; while the prophets, who Jesus says were killed and put to death, were controlled and influenced by spirits more mild, such as the one he was ; and for instance, John the apostle, who was controlled and governed by a God-power that was all love. ✓ What a contrast between the God-power that controlled Jesus and John ; and the power that dictated these words : " I am a jealous God, and a God of war, I

will stir up nations to battle ; vengeance is mine and I will repay ; I will laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh. I the Lord have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel. Also the Lord had put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets." Can it be possible, a man possessed of common sense can sink his ideas of the God of the universe, the fountain of truth and perfection, low enough to meet the demands of those recorded facts, and the teaching of theology ? I confess I cannot.

In connection with the examination of this subject, the existence of spiritual beings inevitably comes in for a share of our attention. In the Bible various accounts are given of these spiritual personages being seen, under various circumstances and conditions. The seeing of them is not an opinion, but a *fact*, claimed by all nations and ages of the world, and even at the present day. To deny their existence, would give the lie to all nations, and to some of the best men of our own time. This, perhaps, should place it beyond a doubt. But here is a mystery, the extreme Materialist, who denies the immortality of man, and our Christian friends agree, that there are none seen and talked with at the present time. In this the materialist is far the most consistent, as Christians claim they were once seen and talked with, but not now. If the question rested upon the claims of the Christian, and those who deny man's immortality, presumption decides the question in favor of the Infidel ; if none now, there never was any.

Here the Christian, in his defense, replies to this reasonable decision : " Yes, there may be spiritual

personages or spirits now seen by those who are mediums, but they are all of the Devil and his angels or evil spirits, but those seen and talked with by Abraham, Jacob, Moses and others, were God himself and his holy angels." Here we propose to take our Christian friends at their word, and admit their claims, that God and his holy angels administered in person in the affairs of man, from Adam to Constantine, and that the Devil and his angels have been exercising in person to rule ever since, or at least from the days of Swedenborg, and are now doing all in their power to govern the affairs of man. This is the substance of the claims of the Christian world on this point. And the thing most necessary is to realize the condition of man *then and now*.

How was it then, commencing with Abraham, when the idea of one God and angels were first introduced, previous to Abraham's day? Gods were in the plural, and the original Greek from which the Bible was copied, begins with the words, "In the beginning the Gods created the heavens and earth, Gods in the plural was used throughout" in the creation of man, which agrees with all ancient records of the different nations. Abraham and his God, entered into a covenant of circumcision, changing and altering the private member of each male as a mark of distinction, the same as a stock raiser cuts off a piece of the ear of his calf or pig. There was also a land contract entered into, the possession of which cost rivers of human blood and the destruction of property, the value of which is beyond figures. This was all done by the command of Abraham's God in person, aided and assisted by angels. As for the slaughter and carnage throughout, there is no parallel.

It is also recorded, Jacob had a wrestle (rough and tumble) with the same personage that he calls God, and prevailed, but in the fall got his thigh put out of joint. Here he refused to tell his name, but blessed Jacob and left for fear of daylight. We would ask, was he afraid some one would see him and know him ?

It is an undeniable fact, wars and bloodshed were the only means advised by the Jewish God to settle national disputes; in fact death was the penalty for all crimes, and in some cases the criminal's father's house had to suffer with the criminal. Fraud, deception, theft and robbery were the national character of the Jews; polygamy, whoredom and concubinage were tolerated. Human slavery and selling females for wives and concubines were the practices of the day. A compound of drugs, that would poison a horse, was given to the wife of a jealous husband, but no redress for the woman, who was cursed with a dishonest companion. Where is justice to be found in such a law. The priests and those in authority, put to death all who dissented from them in religious views—their God aiding and assisting in all this. Tyranny was the ruling power.

But our Christian friends may tell us, God and his angels have not spoken to man on earth, nor made their appearance since the New Testament was written, therefore God is not responsible for what Constantine and the Pope did. Not so, friends, you claim the commands, statutes and laws recorded in the Bible, were put there by God himself, to govern his people in after days. This Constantine and the popes believed and acted in accordance therewith.

How are things now, under the reign of the Devil

and evil spirits, who now appear in person, conversing with men and women face to face, such as Swedenborg, Judge Edmonds and thousands of others, who, for truth and veracity, stand unimpeached? These spirits or spiritual personages are, and have been, using all their power and influence to wean the affections of man away from the God of the Jews, and to abandon all the Jewish and heathen relics of savage barbarism. I ask, how is it now? Wars and bloodshed are being now discarded, and arbitrations are now about to be instituted to settle national difficulties. Crimes of all kinds are now being punished according to the aggravation in the case, and the death penalty is now limited to only murder in the first degree, and that is discarded by our best humanitarians. Polygamy, whoredom and concubinage are prohibited by law. As for jealous wives and husbands, our laws are the same for both. As for priestly power and divine authority, by which thousands were put to death, they are becoming things that once were, and men and women are now permitted to worship God according to the dictation of their own conscience. As for human slavery and selling females to the highest bidder, it is almost universally abandoned. Fraud, deception, theft and robbery are now individualized and punished by law, except in war, which is a Jewish relic, and cannot be avoided, until the god of war and of vengeance is discarded, and the god of peace and good-will to man adopted. The reader is left to decide and judge between the condition of *then and now*.

We have said, there was a plurality of gods before the days of Abraham and Moses; and it is true. The Jews, as a nation, were the first people who claimed

one God, and all other spiritual personages were angels. Before this they were all called gods, and many were named according to circumstances. Thus, Mammon was the god of riches, Bacchus was the god of wine, Cupid, the god of love, Æolus, the god that ruled the wind and lived on an island in the sea. There were the god of war and the god of peace. There were gods many, and lords many, but with the Jews there was but one God, all other spiritual personages were called angels. Thus their God and his angels were believed by the Jews to constitute the spirit world.

How was it with Abraham? He saw three men, which were three spirits who were materialized, so as to be a tangible substance, a *fac simile*, but could have vanished and disappeared at pleasure, the same as the hand that wrote upon the wall. Abraham called them men, and they were men in every sense; they ate, which proves their condition was the identical same as Jesus' was, when seen on the bank of the sea, eating broiled fish. Two of these men or spirits were afterward called angels, whose interest it was to inform the Sodomites that a volcano was about to burst upon them. But on account of ignorance and religious superstition, the history of the facts in the case are very imperfect, yet we may get the outlines. Abraham believed one of these three men was God the Lord, and held a conversation with him as such; and he was God in the sense he conceived him, when, in fact, he and the other two were angels or spirits materialized, the same as now. How was it with Jacob, who said, I have seen God and my life is preserved. Yet he calls the same person a man. How was it with Moses at the bush? He some times says it was God, at other times the angel of the Lord. It is

recorded God got angry several times with Moses, and one time declared he would not go with him on their journey, but would send his angel. And the next thing you read, "And the Lord spake unto Moses saying." In all cases the power of an angel (spirit) was the same as he whom they called God. The idea of a god showing fear, as is recorded in the case of the building of the tower of Babel, that a man could build a road to heaven with brick, when he, God, said, "Go to, let us go down," etc.; also in the case of Sodom he came down—but there were three distinct persons—to see if the report he had heard was true. Are such ideas calculated to represent the true character of the Jewish God? If so, no wonder he yielded to the counsel of Moses, and asking Moses to let him alone, that he might execute his wrath. All this proves his inferiority and petulant passions. As for his name, he refused to give it to Jacob, but gave his name Jehovah to Moses. By this name he was not known among the gods. This proves he assumed this name, or was a new god.

Even in the days of Moses, the Lord himself makes Moses a god to Pharaoh, and claims to Moses that his origin is back of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but says he was known to them as God Almighty, but by the name of Jehovah he was not known to them. The idea of this Jewish god existing or figuring in anywise in the singular, previous to the days of Abraham is assumed and unwarranted. It is true he called himself God Almighty; but this proves nothing, when the plurality of gods is not only sustained by the records of all nations but admitted in the original Greek, and so expressed in the fore part of the Bible as being the order of the day previous to Abraham.

From Adam to Abraham he is not spoken of in the plural (Gen. i: 26; iii: 5-22 ; xi: 7), to Abraham and the Jews in the singular. The Lord appeared unto Abraham, etc. (Gen. xii: 7), to Hagar he appeared twice. First he is called the angel of the Lord, then Lord, and spake unto her; she says, "Thou God seest me;" also he says, "I will multiply thy seed," etc. (xvi: 10-13). Next the angel of God speaks out of heaven, tells Hagar what to do, assuming the authority of God himself as before. "For I will make him a great nation." It is evident the angel of the Lord, the Lord, thou God, the angel of God, and God who opened his eyes, were all one and the same person (Gen. xxi: 17-19). He again is said to appear to Abraham as the Almighty God, proposes to make a covenant with him and to multiply, etc. (Gen. xvii: 1). On another occasion he appears as a man, one of three. In this case the plural is used the same as before Abraham, except the first salutation after seeing them. Abraham addresses the singular and includes the other two by saying, "Comfort ye *your hearts*," and *they* said, "so do," etc. And *they* did eat; after dinner the *men* (not one) rose up from thence and Abraham went with *them* to bring *them* on the way. It is evident here they parted, and two went to Sodom—Lot's house; the other one Abraham called Lord, who said he had come down (from the spiritual sphere) to see if what had been told him was true. After a chat with Abraham, the Lord (in the singular) went *his* way unto *his* place (Gen. xviii). Two angels are next seen at Lot's, and stay with him over night, and Lot calls them Lords. He now appears to Jacob as the Lord God of Abraham, and having charge over a ladder upon which the angels (spiritual personages) ascended

etc., (Gen. xxviii: 12, 13). He again appears to Jacob as a man, the same as he was when he ate dinner with Abraham—being alone he is called God, seen and handled by Jacob (Gen. xxxii: 24-30).

This same personage appears to Jacob, and orders him to build an altar, and is called God Almighty (Gen. xxxv: 1-11). His first appearance to Moses was that of an angel of the Lord in the burning bush, and said, "I am the God of thy father Abraham," etc., (Ex. iii: 2-6). When presented to Pharaoh he was called the Lord God of Israel. Pharaoh asked who is the Lord, and was told he is the God of the Hebrews (Ex. v: 1-3). Again he appears to Moses, and says his name is Jehovah; by this name he was not known (Ex. vi: 3). Before this he claimed his name to be I am that I am (Ex. iii: 14). He also tried to kill Moses and is called Lord (Ex. iv: 24). He makes Moses a god to Pharaoh (Ex. vii: 1).

When killing the first-born in Egypt it was necessary to put blood upon the door-post of each house in which the Jews lived, lest the Lord might make a mistake (Ex. xii: 7). He was called Baali, but this name he refused and was called Ishi (Hos. ii: 16); these names mean man, husband, etc.; the name Baali got mixed up with other gods. [See Hitchcock's Bible Margin]. His name, for common, was the Lord; or, the Lord of Hosts, which means *boss* or *chairman* over a goodly number of his equal lords, or one in charge. For instance in council sitting as chief (1 Kings xxii: 19; Job i: 6 and ii, 1). In both of these councils there were different grades of characters, yet all on friendly terms, attending to the business of the times.

We have given a few quotations in regard to the

personages, whom the Jews claimed to be their God. We will now give a few others in regard to the places of his abode. Darkness was his secret place (Ps. xviii: 11). Darkness was under his feet, and round about him, dark waters and thick clouds (2 Sam. xxii: 12-12). Dwells in thick darkness and Sol-  
 on him a house—a settled place to abide forever (Isa. viii: 12, 13). 2 Chron. vi: 1 says the same. We now give a few quotations as to his disposition. On this point he is well mixed. One moment he is full of love, mercy and human kindness, and the next, as it were, he burst open in the most horrible rage like a savage monster. In fact in almost every page of the Jewish history, he is stained with human blood and most heart-rending threats: on this a few quotations will suffice. He is as a bear in wait and a lion in secret places (Lam. iii: 10). I will pour out my wrath like water; as a moth, and as rottenness to the house of Judah (Hos. v: 10-14). I will be unto them as a lion, as a leopard by the way; I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and devour them like a lion (Hos. xiii: 7, 8). The Lord is a man of war (Ex. xv: 3). Hath sworn that he will have war with Amalek from generation to generation (Ex. xvii: 16). Full of vengeance, wrath and is furious (Nah. i: 2). The Lord goes forth as a mighty man; he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war. Yea more, will cry like a travailing woman, destroy and devour at once (Isa. 42: 13, 14). This is the day of the Lord God of hosts, a day of vengeance, the sword shall devour and made drunk with their blood (Jer. 46: 10). I will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when they call I will not answer; they shall seek me early but they shall not find me (Prov. i: 26-26). Dear

reader, my soul sickens when reflecting on such a savage god, now imposed upon humanity by our theologians. One of the most changeable and excitable beings on record ; one moment full of love and tender kindness, overflowing with compassion, the next minute in a rage of anger, bursting open with wrath and revenge, finding fault with that which he does himself (Gen. vi: 6 ; 1 Sam. xv: 11, also 35 ; Jer. xxvi: 19 ; 1 Chron. xxi: 15 ; 2 Sam. xxiv: 16 ; Ex. xxxii: 2-14 ; Ps. cvi: 45 ; Deu. xxxii: 36.) Notwithstanding his savage disposition, yet in the same record many acts and sayings are recorded that would be an honor and credit to any man. All of which goes to show he was a personage not only subject to, but absolutely possessed of all the imperfect attributes of a man from the sublime to the ridiculous. In no sense whatever above men, only in spiritual power and angelic majesty.

The whole end and aim of the Jewish God, (a spiritual personage, as we have no doubt he was), was to create and get to himself a great name among the nations and their gods. This accounts for his jealousy, as he had many to compete with, and thus every Jew, that would not acknowledge him to be greater than all other gods, was put to death. I will here say, he has got bravely over his jealousy, or lost his power, or lacks executioners. Yet there are many priests who would now do it, but they lack the power. Whom shall we thank for these priceless blessings, the Jewish God or the Jewish Devil ? I propose thanks to the god of progression for the religious liberty we now enjoy. It is said, God told Moses he could not see his face (he must have been making believe as he did to Abraham, when he commanded him

to kill his son, when he did not intend to have him do it, which proves he did not know the confidence Abraham had in him until after the experiment. He was then satisfied and said so) as Moses had before that, talked face to face with him, and so had others.

But our Christian friends claim he was now in a halo of glory. We are ready to admit this, but what does it prove? He was only in the same condition in which Moses himself appeared in company with the prophet Elias (Elijah) on the Mount, a thousand years after their decease, which proves the spirit of this heathen king could assume a glorious body, the same as Moses and Elias. The assuming of this glorious body, seen by Moses, did not make a god of him, any more than did Moses and Elias. As to what he said to Moses, it only showed the position he claimed.

We now pass over many facts recorded, co-operating with our views, proving the Jewish God to be none other than the living spirit of a heathen monarch, as can be seen in the offerings of animals as sacrifices, commanded by him, with their dung, their entrails or inwards, their galls, cauls, livers, shoulders and blood; pigeons, turtles, doves, bulls and heifers, (can a heifer represent the same sacrifice as is claimed for a he-goat) rams, lambs, oxen and sheep; all these go to show he was of heathen origin, and delighted in the shedding of blood, uncivilized and savage in all his requirements. Our position is sustained on almost every page of the Bible. Dear reader, if you have never realized the silly rites and ceremonies of the heathens and savage nations, in their zeal and religious exercises, just read Leviticus, or the twelfth chapter, if no more; "A woman having a child born,

a sin-offering was required, and this heathenish idea was held sacred even at the birth of Jesus, who is claimed to be God in human flesh; yet it was a sin for his mother to be delivered, and an offering of a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons was required to satisfy the law of this Jewish God.

As for the conception, birth, and all things pertaining to Jesus' nativity, without doubt, it was managed by angels or spirits, but God, as a person, is denied in the New Testament—see Tim. vi: 16. But the spiritual personages spoken of are in perfect keeping with our position from the beginning—an angel proper is a spiritual personage. Moses and Elias, when seen on the Mount, were angels in a full sense. The Holy Ghost is a spirit. Your dictionary will tell you a ghost is a dead man's spirit, and these spirits vary in character, in the same proportion as when in the flesh. This accounts why so many of the Jewish prophets were deceived, believing as they did, they supposed it was God that deceived them, and it was their God that did it; but who having common sense, can believe the God of the Universe uses deception; but as the Jewish God claimed the exclusive right of communicating, the prophets were justified in charging him as they did, and of being the author of evil, acting direct in all the domestic affairs of life. If there was evil in the city, it was their God that did it. If a prophet was deceived, it was his God that deceived him. If they prophesied lies, it was their God that put lies into their mouth.

If a man at any time was influenced by a good spirit, and on the morrow by a vicious and revengeful spirit, it was said of him, an evil spirit of God troubled him. And should a prophet's vision or sight be

such as to enable him to see spirits, and should in open vision see them in council, having an object in view, he would suppose the chief spirit or the one who conducted the council was God. Thus the prophet Micah says, "I saw the Lord (God) sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven (perhaps one hundred) on his right hand and on his left (which council was and is a common thing). The object of concourse of spirits being made known by the chief, one said on this manner, another on that, (each one made his proposition) and there came forth a spirit and made his, (the fact was, they were all spirits, and could talk, and did counsel together, and the Lord (the chief) being satisfied with the plan proposed by this one, commissioned him to execute it. Thus the prophet exclaims after seeing what he did, "Now therefore, behold the Lord (Israel's God) hath put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets. We have called the reader's attention to a few facts recorded by the Jews. We think enough to satisfy a reasonable mind, one free from religious prejudice, that our position is fully sustained. It is an undeniable fact, that the actions of the person claimed by Moses to be his god, and the council seen by Micah, and the actions of angels in general, fully corresponded with the low, savage, and revengeful condition of man at that day, which in fact, sets the question at rest, that our position accords with the facts in the case.

## CHAPTER VI.

We now propose to look after spiritual mediums, and the present condition of man, as well as the former, which shows man in his earthly career, has been traveling on the path of progression, the same as an individual, from conception to embryo, infancy and childhood to youth, and is now becoming as it were twenty-one, a proper age to do our own individual thinking, living as we are upon a plane of eternal progression. This present period was faintly seen by many who mediumistically saw our day, and rejoiced that religious freedom, as well as political, would be tolerated, and every man be permitted to sit under his own fig-tree [in his own house] and none should make him afraid, and be permitted to worship him who is spirit power, and the life of all existing things, and do it in spirit and truth; and this beautiful theory will increase till it covers the whole earth, thereby uniting and binding together all nations in love for one Father and one universal brotherhood, and learn war no more. This is the age of man we are now entering, and it was seen by many (mediums) out from under a dark cloud of despair, when dens and caves in the earth were the only places of safety from the savage disposition once the ruling power over man, when ignorance and the God of the Jews ruled the nations. But, thanks be to the god of progression, love and humanity, brotherly kindness will in time supersede the present religious superstition, which claims that moral goodness is inferior and worthless in the absence of Church membership.

We find their gods were of the same disposition, character and temperament as the people, and it could not be otherwise; a savage people always had a savage

God, and all spiritual communications were the same, while the present communications are now more or less seasoned with universal love and brotherly kindness, similar to the greetings of the heavenly hosts at the birth of Jesus, yet more mild. Hell fire, and endless damnation, and the surging billows of a lake burning with fire and brimstone are not now the teachings from the spirit world, and it is a fact this doctrine is not heard from the pulpit, as was fifty years ago; it was then the hue and cry from the tall steeples to the shanty. I will venture to say at this day and age, a man cannot be found on earth (a lunatic or savage excepted) that he having the power to save or destroy in endless misery, would do the latter, independent of ancient precepts and examples. Let every man test this question by divesting himself of religious prejudice and pass judgment in the case. Therefore, looking back upon the past life of man, under our present developed condition, we are not justified in condemning our forefathers and their God, neither are we justified in worshiping the same God. In fact, there is no such a god now in existence; such a god as the Jews worshiped is inconsistent, and must have been more or less imaginary, and will pass away like all other heathen gods.

As for mediums, they are a class of men and women designated and known as prophets, seers, revelators and men of God in past ages, female included. All of these, both male and female, who acknowledged the authority of the priesthood and the divine right of kings, were more or less connected with in all important matters, but should any speak against those in authority, they were punished with death as blasphemers and seditionists. For it was written in the

law of the Lord, "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of my people." What tyranny! Yet there were a few whose development and mediumistic powers were sufficient to sustain and protect themselves by spirit power, as Elijah did when he destroyed the fifties sent to him by the king, and others of the same development and power. Jesus had this same power, and could have protected himself the same way, but refused to exercise it, choosing rather to suffer, than to revenge himself upon his enemies. There were others who did not acknowledge the Pharisee's order. These were looked upon as outcasts, and were held under condemnation, and by the priest, called neromancers, witches, wizards that peep, and those having familiar spirits, such as the woman of Endor.

Taking a retrospective view of the ancient mediums in all their grades of development, we naturally conclude, if we were in possession of all that was said and done by them, it would not add to the credit or respectability of that which is recorded. In addition to the foregoing, many of the prophets, rulers and priests of Israel were bribed and hired to lie, while others were honest, yet directed by lying spirits, and charged to their God, though he may have been innocent. Others acting under the influence of wine and strong drink; upon the whole things were badly mixed up at times. Those who were bribed and those who acted under the influence of wine or any other spirit, except himself, were condemned. We also call the reader's attention to the mediums of other nations, all having mediums and their gods, from whom the people received communications, whose powers were equal to the power of the Jewish mediums, and about the same with their gods, which gave rise

to jealousy. Balaam was a heathen medium, whose powers were not surpassed by any of the Jewish prophets, and to his credit he could not be bribed. As for the Gentiles as a race of people they were more honest than the Jews. As for priests, prophet, seers, revelators and mediums, they were all similar. They were all religious and devotional. The Jews, as to immortality, had no preference—Moses not being a teacher of immortality, it not being congenial to the position he held. Therefore, in a manner, they were disbelievers in man's immortality (see Josephus' Wars of the Jews, Book 7, chapter 8, ph. 7).

Then Jesus came, who was a teacher of immortality, and through his teaching it was brought to light, but the Jewish priests claimed he was in league with the Devil, the same as the priests now say of spiritual mediums. Socrates was a medium, and talked with spirits; Confucius was one, and taught the principle involved in the "Golden Rule." Plato was a medium, and talked with spirits. It is in perfect keeping with my position for the followers of Jesus, who believe in him to hold him as their god, and offer prayers and worship to him as such. The Catholic offers prayers not only to him, but to Mary his mother and other saints, and it is consistent with past ages.

Swedenborg was a medium, and an honorable, truth-telling man, and we give credit to his statements, not claiming for him nor any others infallibility. Perfection in its full sense lies far above man's first sphere in spirit life. Judge Edmonds, of New York, whose character was unimpeachable, saw and conversed with the spirits of the dead, recognizing them. There are now in the United States about 9,000,000, besides a vast number in other countries, who are con-

vinced of the fact of an intercourse between earth and spirit life, and of this class of thinkers are mediums. But here is a wide difference between the Jewish mediums and those of our day, and it is worthy of notice. The Jewish mediums, when once deceived, accused their God of deceiving them, and of putting lying spirits into their mouths, and that evil spirits from their God troubled them, and if evil was done in the city, the Lord did it. Not so with our mediums. They have a higher and more exalted opinion of a god of justice and the father of mankind. They discard the idea of such a god. How do our present mediums stand in the estimation of those who hold the present priesthood? They are held and looked upon as the Jewish priests looked upon the class of mediums to whom Jesus and the woman of Endor belonged, and those who suffered death and banishment at their hands, from Abel to Jesus, whom they nailed to the cross. Comment is not needed on this point. Yet it is a well-known fact, many of our present priests, had they the power, would willingly do honor to the Jewish God by executing his wrath upon spiritual heretics (mediums).

The idea that progression is limited to this life is a small idea of a God. As for the present condition of things, the character and standing of mediums, together with the spirit world and the manifestations therefrom. Kind reader, if you will grant us the privilege of presenting to you our best mediums, and the best spiritual manifestations, the same as has been done with the Jewish records, (rejecting thousands,) we give you a record corresponding with civilization, far in advance of that of the past, beaming with love and good-will to man, flowing forth from the spiritual

mansions of heaven to the elevation of man on earth.

We now sum up our case, and after a thorough search we fail to find evidence in favor of the Jews and their God, in a moral or refined sense, "and why should we, if our positions be true?" But in shedding of human blood, and the destruction of life and property, if this be a proof of greatness and moral goodness, we yield the point. But as this is no credit to man in civilization, how can it be to a God? A king or ruler that kills off at least one-half of his subjects to frighten the other half into obedience, and fails at that, proves he lacks wisdom, and is not worthy to be a ruler. This is our honest logical conclusion, *theology with all its anathemas notwithstanding.*

Here our Christian friends may meet us by claiming we are judging God in the capacity of a man, which is not a parallel case, "for God's ways are not man's ways, neither are man's ways God's ways." This we cheerfully admit, but ask, where is the difference? Are God's ways above or below man's ways? Can a king do an act that would disgrace a subject and not tarnish his own character? We think not. We readily admit, man and his ways are far below God and his ways; similar to that of a child and its father. Should a father stoop to do childish acts, he would degrade himself and dishonor his fatherhood. This claim, when properly applied, adds proof to our position.

We also admit, to charge Abraham, Moses and all the Jewish prophets as lying impostors, who speak of spiritual personages, is that which we are not warranted to do under the existing circumstances. It would give the lie to all nations, including many individuals whose characters, for truth and veracity, are

above impeachment, such as Job, Zoroaster, Cicero, Plato, Socrates, Confucius and many others among the heathen nations, and many worthy men in our day, such as Swedenborg, Judge Edmonds and thousands of others, all men of truth, who say they saw and conversed with spiritual personages face to face.

On the other hand, to say all that the Jews claimed is strictly true applied to Deity, is equally unwarranted and absurd. The first gives the lie to truthful men of all nations, past and present; the latter would be absurd and a disgrace to a civilized God, and has no corroborating evidence.

Therefore the chain of three positions is before us. First. Discard all human testimony, past and present, in relation to the existence of spiritual personages and spirit power.

Second. That God, whose power and greatness fills immensity of space, was, and is, (unless changed) subject to all the passions and attributes of an uncivilized and savage king of the lowest grade.

Third. That the statement of the Jews, together with other nations, in reference to the existence of spiritual personages and spirit power are in the main true, inasmuch as it accords with the claims of this our day.

Therefore, taking all things into consideration, past and present, we assume the responsibility to say the Jews were mistaken in their *man-God*; the personage who appeared to Abraham, Moses and others, and by them seen and talked with, appearing in every sense a man, in form, shape, size and features, and in fact was a man having only passed into spirit life, possessing a spiritual body, yet grasped for more power and

affluence, with the sole object of excelling all other Gods like himself.

This accounts for his jealousy. A God who is Almighty, in fact has nothing to be jealous of ; jealousy arises only where there is fear of rivalry. This man-God idea runs throughout Christendom, as well as heathendom, as can be seen as to the man Jesus, who is now a spiritual personage, and by the Christians declared to be their God, claiming his presence in spirit in their revival meetings, similar to that of the Hindus and other nations do for their God. As for justice and moral goodness, the Christians have no reason to be ashamed of their God [Jesus Christ]; that which he taught and practiced was, in every sense, a great improvement in moral goodness, as well as in civilization. Nowhere is he heard cursing the earth for man's sake, neither do we hear of him bragging, "I am a man of war ; I shall stir up jealousy like a man of war." "Yea, I will cry like a woman in travail to destroy and devour at once ; I am a jealous God, and vengeance is mine, and I will repay." "I will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh." What can be more savage ? Such a disposition carried out, would disgrace a Nero.

King George of England, whom our fathers rebelled against in all his tyranny, was far in advance in civilization to this. But Jesus, unlike the Jewish God, his teachings were seasoned with moral goodness and universal brotherhood. Should his worshipers be more like him, they would be more consistent ; but, as it is, they mix up their God with the Jewish God, and call the plural *one*. Thus you see a mixture of brotherly love and human kindness combined with hate, bigotry, persecution, hell and endless damna-

tion. It is quite common for theologians to quote all the law and dastardly acts and sayings of the heathen nations and their gods, without calling in question their many good acts and sayings, in order to give favor on the side of the Jews and their God. This is unfair and dishonest on the part of theology.

Be assured, kind reader, the imperfections of the heathen nations (as they are called) and their Gods did not exceed that of the Jews and their God; neither did the moral goodness and human kindness of the Jews and their God excel that of the heathen. But it is reasonable to believe many of those whom the Jews and Christians call "blind heathens," will stand before the judgment seat of justice on equal grounds with many who acknowledge the Jewish God and call Abraham their father. In this have I not got the man Jesus to back me, who said to the Jews, it would be more tolerable (that is, better) for Sodom and Gomorrah (two Gentile or heathen cities that had been engulfed by a fiery volcano) than for you Jews. Having now, dear reader, presented to your views a position, perhaps somewhat new or strange, and upon first thought may appear absurd; nevertheless, I have written out a few thoughts on this important subject with care and honest candor, knowing, assuredly, there is a mistake of great magnitude in the claims of theology. But if that which I have written does not carry upon its face a reconciliation of the sayings and doings of the Jews and their God, that no other position can do, then you may condemn. But if I have done honor to the God of the Universe, by discharging him of the authorship of so many low and degrading acts, charged by the Jews to their God, which would be a disgrace to any man or king in civiliza-

tion, please give me credit for that at least. I have no anathema, to pronounce upon you for your disbelief, should you do so, neither have I praise or reward to bestow for your adhering to my theory; I consider you are your own master in this matter, and it is each and every one's individual right to exercise their best judgment. Therefore pause, reflect, consult justice, true honor and honesty, seasoned with good common sense; then decide.

So long as theologians are unable to reconcile their idea of the fall of man with justice, and leave their God holding the position of an honorable father, let them cease their claims as expounders of mysteries which they nor no one else can understand. Let the clergy of our day show wherein God or man was benefited in cursing the earth, as is claimed their God did. Providing the result was, and is good, it proves his curses are the same in result as his blessings, then it makes but little, if any, difference which he does. Let them show the justice of the effects, or results, claimed for the act of one man, and that before he knew good from evil. Let them show the wisdom in, or the benefit arising from, the flood as they view it. It may be claimed it was done to cleanse the earth of the wickedness of man. This is absurd and untrue, as it had no such effect. Let them show the fact, that Christian religion has a saving power over man, more than other religions. Let them show the fact that a believer in the Christian religion *is* better off in the life beyond the grave, than a moralist, whose end and aim is to do right.

As for the Jewish history of their God, if it is reliable or has any truth in it, he appeared to them in the form of a man, having all the passions of a man, such

as hate, love, revenge and a warlike disposition, over-anxious to receive the admiration of man in reference to his greatness over other gods, and that he gave precepts and commands in person to Abraham, Moses and others during a period not less than four thousand years. During that period he was frequently seen and conversed with. At one time Aaron, Noah, Abihu and seventy elders saw his feet and what he stood on; Moses saw his *back parts*, (is it possible he could have back parts and not have fore parts); besides this, he eat dinner with Abraham, *and Aunt Sarah had a good laugh at what was said.* But for the last two thousand years he has changed his manner and custom, in communicating with man, and keeps himself out of sight—no part of his body, neither the fore part nor the hind part, are now seen, or his voice heard to say, "Thus saith the Lord." *But as he was confined to the Jews as their God, the failure of the Jews as a nation, is proof of his incompetency to govern and manage them as a nation, may account for his absence.* But be this as it may, there are now no corresponding evidences of his existence in the manner in which he displayed his person and power among the Jews.

All the facts in relation to the Jews and their God, as they stand recorded in the Jewish history, go hand in hand with our position. Also see the agreement our position has with the facts claimed in reference to the appearing of spiritual personages throughout all ages and nations also at the present. These personages were in the early days of man, called gods and lords, thus there were *gods many and lords many*, but the Jews acknowledged only one as God, the balance were called angels, ghosts and spirits of them that were dead; this latter name was rejected by the

Jews, inasmuch as it was calculated, in its nature, sooner or later to destroy their God. This gave rise to all the inhuman treatment by the Jews and their God toward the mediums of their day, who Jesus said they killed, who saw and conversed face to face with the spirits of those whose earthly bodies were dead, the same as Abraham, Moses and others did to their God; also the woman of Endor, who spoke face to face with the spirit of Samuel, in like manner as Jesus and his three disciples conversed with Moses and Elias some thousand years after the death of the body. This same universal custom among all nations, of seeing and conversing with spiritual personages, has undergone no material change, remaining the same, only different developments, with a marked improvement from a low, savage and revengeful nature, to that of love and good will to man on earth.

This spiritual intercourse is fast becoming a scientific fact, and the sworn statements of thousands could be added to these few thoughts, sufficient to make this a large volume of many hundreds of pages, not only from persons in the United States, but from all nations now known, thus bearing corresponding evidence of the claims herein set forth by the writer. Here let me say, notwithstanding Gods in the plural were the common belief of man before the days of Abraham, and is the same now with some nations, yet it is proper to say many individuals believed in a higher Power of rule far above and beyond their comprehension. The idea of a Power or ruling influence that forms and controls the Universe, including worlds, planets, suns and satellites, throughout space, giving life and motion to each and all in accordance with the nature of their existence; to be confined or repre-

sented through a personage of the size of a man, say five feet eleven inches high ; has all the features of an *absurd inconsistency*, the same as to claim the water that runs in the Mississippi river would run through a goose quill.

All the facts in the case unite in the position taken by the writer, that the God that rules and governs the Universe is not the Jewish God. Therefore the God that rules is not responsible, and is hereby honorably discharged as being in person the doer of those low, savage acts which the Jews charged to their God ; yet their God spake many truths, and did some good things, but this falls far short of proving he was God in the full sense of the word Deity.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

We now close, after giving a few scattering thoughts upon God's foreknowledge and his foreordination, which involves man's free agency (as it is called) and a question of some importance between our Arminian and Predestinarian brethren. Those of the Arminian order deny foreordination, and denounce it as false and untrue, yet they claim God foreknows all things before they come to pass. The Predestinarians hold that God not only knows, but predestined all things whatsoever comes to pass. The writer of this has often requested of those who deny foreordination to show wherein the difference lies between God (if he is God) knowing a thing and foreordaining it. Thus far he has failed to be answered. The main argument (or rather assertion) in favor of a difference is, that God, knowing a thing, yet in the future does not necessarily make it take place (provided he is a man

instead of God, we admit the truth of this idea). But as they claim God foresaw all that takes place, and had a perfect knowledge of the same by bringing all things yet in the future present before his sight, as though they were, destroys the argument. The fact (if it is a fact) of God bringing all things present before him, is positive proof they will take place; unless his seeing and knowing a thing is unreliable, and subject to be a failure, in such a case God's foreknowledge would be of but little use to himself or any one else.

A Reverend gentleman once claimed that man could look forward, see and foretell an eclipse many years ahead, and that knowledge had nothing to do in causing the eclipse, and surely God could do as much as a man. This we admitted, but claimed neither God or man had any foundation for the knowledge of a thing before it existed, only as the result of unchangeable laws ordained and in force. Therefore all the knowledge that a man can have of an eclipse or anything yet in the future, arises from a knowledge he may have of unchangeable laws now in force. The Rev. gentleman claimed I destroyed man's accountability. To this I replied, so long as he was unable to show there was a difference, I was justified in claiming the result under each theory to be the same. The thing necessary to be done is to show there is a difference in principle, and the result will also be different. But wherein can the difference be, when foreknowledge is the result of unchangeable law?

We fearlessly say, in the absence of unchangeable law, there can be no foreknowledge. We also say, if it is impossible for God to be mistaken, or to fail in foreknowing a thing, then of necessity it must take

place. We likewise say, it is impossible for a man to change the thing God saw he would do, unless his foreknowledge is a failure.

We will here illustrate a case, "it was a fact, Booth killed President Lincoln by shooting him with a pistol, and it also was a fact, God saw and had a knowledge of the act long before we were a nation." I now ask how Booth could have avoided the act, and God's foreknowledge remain good and unimpaired? I also ask, is the power of God's foreknowledge more easy for man to change, alter or disappoint than his power to ordain upon which foreknowledge is based?

These foregoing points under consideration, have in reference to the God, who is acknowledged by the Arminian as well as the Predestinarian; each claim he is the all-wise and almighty ruler, creator and preserver of all things. All who adopt this last have no just right to complain in regard to his manner of ruling, on any other claim than that they consider he is either deficient in wisdom or power. Yet they are the first to raise the question, does God, man or the Devil rule? or do all three rule jointly? or is it each one acts his part in the drama of life? It is claimed by the Arminian, as well as the Predestinarian, that the Devil is the prince and power of the air, and that he holds a ruling power over a large portion of man, if not all. They also hold man is a free moral agent, and acts from choice to suit himself, *having good and evil set before him*. Here I must call the reader's attention to the fact that there can be no mistake in the matter, in reference to man's destiny, providing his path is the result of his own choice. Thus, under the idea of the power of the Devil, and man acting from his own choice, this God-ruling pow-

er is cut off, and he, as Almighty ruler, is thrown into the shade. Under such a theological view, who would wonder or think strange that God, after seeing the effect of the Devil's power, and the determination of man to do just as he pleased, that such a God would exclaim in the agony of his soul's disappointment, that it repented him he had made man, and was grieved to the heart. This theological view of a personal Devil, and his power over man, together with man's free agency, completely destroys and annihilates a personal God as supreme ruler, either by way of foreknowledge or foreordination; both are equally destroyed, and he is driven to the painful necessity to await his chance and accept at the hands of man and the Devil, such as are not capable or not able to act for themselves.

Here we have three theological systems or view, before us. God, an Almighty ruler, who has, before man existed, foreordained whatsoever comes to pass; second, "God, an Almighty ruler, whose unalterable foreknowledge governs all things whatsoever comes to pass;" third, then, under the power and influence of the Devil, acting from his own choice a free moral agent, does just as he pleases." Add to this never-ending damnation for all who know not God. Here is the conclusion of theology. It is an unfathomable mystery, thousands of years have been spent, talent and money thrown away, the brain of man destroyed, monomaniacs produced trying to reconcile the theological views in relation to man's moral and religious condition. I close with this consolation, *truth is immortal, and cannot die; while error is mortal, and cannot live* where the freedom of thought is exercised.

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I have to laugh to myself, even to this day, when I think back to my boyhood days and remember the scenes of fear and mental anguish I passed through, being constantly rendered miserable by the instructions of my parents and Sunday-school teachers concerning the end of the world, the day of judgment, the Devil, death, hell, the grave, etc., etc. Oh! how many sleepless nights have I passed—all curled up under my quilts and feather-bed—trembling in every nerve, for fear that I should die before morning, and go to hell, there to wail and howl forever, gnashing my teeth and spouting red-hot flames from my mouth, kicking the fire-brands in every direction. I can't help but laugh now to think what a little heathen I then was, and weep to think what *big* heathens my parents and teachers were. I became pale and wan,

and really do believe that I should have died, if my mind had not got relief. The idea that the Devil was constantly on his roaring rounds, looking out for me or any one else that he could lay his Devilish paws upon, was constantly before my mind. The harder I tried to shake it off, the stronger its hold upon me.

I possessed a very timid, sensitive organization, and was always very uneasy when I was out in the woods and was always very careful to avoid dark hollows and lonely places. I never could muster the nerve to venture alone into such places, for if I did I felt almost certain that the "old hell roarer" would get after me. I have often imagined that I heard him coming, roaring, over the hills after me, and then, oh Lord! wouldn't I cut dirt for home?

The tallest running, and, I think, the best time I ever made, was when I was a boy about eleven years old, running from an imaginary Devil. Down from the hills and woods I flew—over the fences I leaped like a deer—bareheaded and barefooted, shoes and hat left far behind. As I approached the house, my aunt Mary Ann, who was living at our house, came running out to meet me, crying at the top of her voice, "John, John! What on earth is the matter?"

"Matter enough," says I; "don't you hear the Devil coming, roaring, over the hills after me?"

Then aunty exclaimed, "Oh, John, John! you little white-headed fool! Don't you know that is neighbor Jones' bull? Look, yonder he is now, coming down the hill. Go back to the ridge and finish gathering your hickory nuts and chestnuts, and never let me see you act the fool so again! There is no Devil roaring about among these hills—I don't care if you did hear the preacher read it in the Bible last Sunday.

And besides, if there was one, I am sure he could never catch you, judging from the way you came down that lane. You would be much more likely to catch him than he you. I would be quite willing to risk five dollars that in a fair race you could 'beat the Devil.' Go back, go back, you little white-headed simpleton, and bring home the nuts you have gathered."

Any parents who are ignorant and wicked enough to teach their confiding children such nonsense, are committing an unpardonable sin, for which they cannot be forgiven. Such teachings, when they are *really believed* by children, take the sunshine, love and beauty all out of their young and innocent lives, and force upon them a blue, barren, unnatural, miserable existence, and fill the young mind with clouds, shutting out the pure sunlight of reason and truth.

In times of old they say the Devil went about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he might devour. But what has become of him? I hear little or nothing about him any more. Has he quit the business, or has he caught all he wants? I guess he has quit his roaring about on the earth, and gone home to reconstruct his hell-hole, sweep down his smoky walls, whitewash and fix up things, making them decent and respectable, a fit abode for the company now crowding into his domains. His business has prospered so unexpectedly that he has now beaten the Lord at his own game. He gets almost all respectable and thinking people of brains. About ninety per cent. of the whole human family now go straight to him at death—that is, according to the teachings of old Orthodoxy, for she swears by her sacred altars that the thing is simmered down to this—

*"Come into the church, or go to hell!  
Believe (us) or be damned!"*

And now, as the scientific world—men of true knowledge and civilization—will, as a general thing, have none of the church in theirs, therefore they are the "*Devil's meat,*" sure.

They say Luther threw an inkstand at the Devil, but he dodged it. The old agitator might have known that he could not hurt so hard a case as the Devil, even if he had hit him with an inkstand. Why didn't he take a brick-bat, a flatiron or a hatchet? The Devil laughed, no doubt, when he saw the great reformer coming at him with such weapons!

But I believe in giving the Devil his due. In fact, almost everybody says he believes the same thing. The only question is, *What are his dues?* I have been looking over the accounts a little lately, and find that we all owe him a great deal. His dues are immense, much more, I fear, than we shall ever be able to pay. It was he, you will recollect, who helped us out of the scrape, when our first parents were penned up in the garden. Through his agency alone we were enabled to escape out into the great world, and acquaint ourselves with its ten thousand inimitable beauties—its forests, its lakes, its rivers, its cataracts and cascades, oceans, islands, seas and continents. God, who had power to create a Universe, certainly could have done much better by us than to shut us up in a little garden, less than a mile square, on a world twenty-five thousand miles in circumference. What did he intend the other portions of it for, I wonder? He even did not create any clothes for us, but left us naked, like the animals. And I guess, if the e ruth were told, we were nothing more or less than animals, and never would

have arisen to the dignity of manhood, had it not been for the kindly assistance of a friendly Devil. He—good old soul that he is—let down the bars, and gave us a chance to escape from the narrow confines of that little cabbage-patch out into the great world—thus giving us a chance to expand, to progress in wisdom, knowledge and power, and work our way up into the manhood and civilization which we now enjoy. If there is any one thing that I know better than another it is the fact that I shall never be able to fully repay the debt I owe him, for the many ten thousand kindnesses he has shown to our race, in other ways and manners besides helping us to overleap the narrow confines of Eden.

Look through the history of the world, and see what he has done. What great invention or discovery was ever made, but what the orthodox swore was *the work of the Devil?*

Now take another look, and see what God has done. Look at the nations he has destroyed. Look at the cities he has burned up—*that is*, if the Bible tells the truth. Look at the wars he has carried on; look at his jealousy and revenge. Look how relentless and unforgiving, even to his own chosen people the Jews. He could never rest easy, nor sleep well of nights, until he had destroyed their great capital, the city of Jerusalem. He declared that he would bring against his people from afar a fierce nation who would reduce them to the great extremity of eating their own children; and all for some little, petty, imaginary offense, amounting to nothing more, perhaps, than making a mouth or crooking a finger at him. And if his preachers are to be believed, he has not improved much within the last five thousand years, for many of them

stoutly affirmed that he burned the city of Chicago! But if he had wanted to show us a good test of his power, why did he not burn up lake Michigan? It would have been so easy then to have argued that nobody but God could burn water. Besides, in burning up the city he destroyed much of his own property, in the shape of God-houses. What inducement is there to dedicate their new temples to him; which they are now building? Have they any pledges that he will not soon destroy them again? He is liable, according to the character drawn of him in the Bible, to fly into a passion at any time, and *smash things!*

A being clothed with the power that he has, should never let such angry passions rise. *It is absolutely dangerous.* He does things when those spells come on him, that would hang you or me higher than Haman; yet we are asked by his self-constituted vice-gerents to fall down and worship him for the same. Now my worshipful organs won't work a bit, when I direct them towards a being who is so full of vengeance towards his children that, for almost every trifling offense, he will reduce them to such straits as he declared he would, in the fourth chapter and twelfth verse of Ezekiel.

Take down your dusty Bible and read it. I dare not quote it, for the Bible has been declared an obscene book by our courts, and to quote it without note or comment has become *absolutely dangerous.* At least, so thinks George Francis Train, and others who are pretty good authority. I used to quote the Bible, but dare not do it now. I only give you chapter and verse. No, I cannot worship any being who would serve his own dear children such a mean, dirty trick, as to force them to use such peculiar shortening

in their biscuits and "flap-jacks" as he said he would in Ezekiel iv : 12.

But look at the noble record of the Devil! Through his counsel we gained the privilege of a world, while God only gave us the privilege of a garden. His curse upon man was that he should earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. This imaginary curse has done more to make labor unrespected than all things else combined. The Bible says that God avenged himself upon Satan by knocking off his trotters, but how many legs he lost is not stated, for as to whether he was a biped or a quadruped is yet an unsettled question. 'Tis true his rations were a little rough, as his bill of fare was dirt for breakfast, dirt for dinner, dirt for supper, and dirt all the time. But if the Lord really did do as the Bible says he did, in making Satan eat dirt, then all I have to say is, that it only adds another to the great number of his *dirty tricks!* But the pleasure and happiness derived from the self-consciousness of having performed a great and good act, more than repaid Satan for all the legs he ever lost. But said legs must have been restored to him again, for in after ages we find him going about like a roaring lion, and lions don't crawl on their bellies, you know.

But the Devil is no fool. He is a scientific old *Customer*, full of invention and progress. It was the Devil that discovered steam you know—at least the orthodox people said it was the work of the Devil, and they know, you know. The art of printing they also said was his Devilish work, yet they thought they would beat him at his own game by seizing hold of his great art, and publishing God's book, the Bible, and thereby turn his discovery against himself. They

declared also that the Devil invented lightning rods, yet they were willing to have them put upon their meeting-houses to keep God from striking down his own houses with his own lightning, if he should ever get in a pet and feel inclined to do so. The Devil, too, invented the telegraph, and now runs it upon general natural principles. Yes, the Devil has almost annihilated time and space by his inventions. When friction matches were first invented orthodox people cried out, "Behold the work of the Devil! Now we shall soon see every man setting his neighbor's house and barn in flames!" And they called them "Lucifer's matches," and I believe they are by many so called to this day.

All the great reformers of the world were first sent out on their missions by the Devil. At least so their orthodox opponents affirmed, and you know they won't lie! Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Newton, John Knox, John the Baptist, John Wesley, and John Syphers were all pushed out before the world and inspired by Satan!! And there was Jesus, the barn, bridge and house carpenter of Judea, who starved himself forty days and forty nights to superinduce mediumship, they declared that he had a Devil, and cast out Devils by Beelzebub, who was notoriously known to be the great head boss of all the Devils! But Jesus, the great Reformer, when he had abandoned the saw, the square, and the jack-plane, never to take them up again, looked at the poor fools with pity, and said unto them, "If the light that is in you be darkness, then oh how great is that darkness!" "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, (orthodox) hypocrites! How can you escape the damnation of hell?" But the ignorance and religious intolerance of his times made it *absolutely dangerous* for any man to make such

punches as that into the great religious hornet's nest of his day, so they went for him on general principles, and, as they thought were doing God service, by setting the "rough-scuffs" and "blood-tubs" on his track, who, backed up and "egged on" by the priests, hunted him down. Putting him through the farce of a mock trial upon a trumped-up indictment, they condemned and killed him, shamefully nailing him to a cross. The punch which he gave into the hornet's nest proved his ruin and cost him his life. With him, non-resistance was a great virtue. If it had been I, I should have spunked up to the Devils, and sold my life to them as dearly as possible. I would have said to them, "Look here, my good fellows, you must learn that with me the first great law of life is self-preservation. Now stand back, or some of you will get hurt!"

But so it goes. Even to-day there is a new spiritual dispensation flowing in upon the world, bringing with it the demonstration of man's immortality, and the orthodox preachers or rather "soul-roasters," I should call them, swear upon their (un)holy alters that it is, to a dead certainty and without a doubt, the work of the very DEVIL HIMSELF! 'Tis laughable! Poor blind bats! It would take a thousand shocks from the great batteries of eternal damnation which they preach, to knock off or even to loosen the scales from their eyes. No, the world will never be able to give the Devil his due. There is too much due him on the old score, and the debt is running up fast, for he is doing wonders for us in these modern times. Gerald Massey need not ask any more why God don't kill the Devil? He can't do it. The Devil is the best man of the two. He has got the inside track in his great race with the Lord, and he is able to keep it.

In fact, we owe him for almost everything that we have and are—*i. e.*, the orthodox say that he is the author of these things, and of course they won't lie. In consideration, then, of his great services to our race—for his many inventions and discoveries, I move that we take steps immediately towards rearing for him a monument—an alabaster shaft of fame, whose lofty heights shall pierce the stormy clouds and lift its towering head to heaven, bearing in golden capitals this inscription:

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# Old Abe and Little Ike.

BY JOHN SYPHERS.

**O**LD Abraham you know, is complimented by ignorant people, by applying to him the title of "The Father of the Faithful." To me, he is nothing more nor less, than a crazy, ignorant, superstitious, heathenistic old simpleton, who came within an inch, during one of his crazy spells, of committing a horrible murder by the slaying of his infant son. If such a man as he is to stand as the type and representation of a religious order, called "The Faithful," then I for one will never be found training in the ranks of the faithful—never! I should take the chances of the unfaithful every time. This old father of the Jews, notwithstanding he came so near murdering his little Isaac, is continually held up before the eyes of our children, both in the pulpit and in the Sunday School as a great and shining example of trust in God under severe circumstances. They say this great title of "Father of the Faithful" was won by him, by the commission of one act alone, and that act, (I am

ashamed for humanity to write it) was the slaying, or attempting to slay, his own dear child in obedience to the imaginary command of an imaginary God. The history of this extraordinary case, looks like the history of an intended cold-blooded murder. The full intent of his mind and heart was to commit a most brutal and unparalleled crime, by the slaying of an innocent child—his own beautiful little son Isaac—for God's sake ! He was going to offer him a sacrifice to his God. Are men so ignorant, as to think that it palliates the crime in this case to call it a *sacrifice* ? was not the offering of *all* sacrifice, but the result of the heathenistic ignorance and superstition ? The fact is it would have been *murder*—nothing more and nothing less. He being a monomaniac on the subject of sacrifice, thought he had a command from God to do so, what a heathenish and dark idea !

What would we think now, of a man who would make preparations to slay his child, claiming that God commanded him to offer him up unto Him in sacrifice ? He would be sent to the Lunatic Asylum by lightning express—a *special* train, chartered for his benefit. Old Abe was a first class monomaniac upon the subject of religion, and that was the trouble with him. God never did subject any of his creatures to any such inhuman trials in any age of the world, nor for any purpose whatever, and much less would He do it for the purpose of establishing a religion in the world, which is now well known to be false in all its dogmas, doctrines, ordinances, manners, customs and usages.

For a moment turn your eye backward and see in the dim misty ages of the past, an old crazy heathen preparing an altar, upon which to sacrifice his son.

See him! hatchet in hand he goes forth, cutting, splitting and carefully arranging the wood so as to produce the hottest fire in the shortest space of time. All is now ready. The awful crisis draws nigh. The long cherished idea of offering his son, a sacrifice to his God, is now about to be consummated! He grasps a knife—a large long knife—examines the edge carefully, shakes his head, a little too dull to execute so fine a piece of human butchery. He proceeds to the grindstone, calls little Isaac to come and turn; the boy obeys. Look ye, see the old father of the faithful fools. He grinds and grinds away! Anon he tries the edge. He must have it keen and sharp. Now see the little innocent, blue-eyed curly-headed boy! He is still ignorant of the desperate intentions of his father, with a face beaming with angelic smiles, and a heart full of sweetness, he looks up into his father's face and asks, "Father, where will you get your sacrifice?" That question, coming as it did from the lips of that pure and innocent child, should have paralyzed the old heathen's arm, and caused the blood to flow back in cold torrents upon his wicked heart. The music of that sweet voice, which he intended so soon to hush in the profound stillness of an awful death, should have rung like peals of thunder in his ears and carried conviction to his guilty heart, but nothing of the kind took place. If the old monomaniac had possessed three grains of reason, and one grain of common sense, he would have kicked down that altar and broken that knife into atoms, and then said to his God; "*I cannot stand the pressure—I will not endure the test. If you cannot accept me unless I slay my child, then you will not accept me at all. If you choose to burn my soul in Hell for disobeying that command, then*

*burn away!* I think I can stand it if you think *you* can. At all events if I can have my choice, I had rather go to hell with a clear conscience, than go to heaven with the guilt of murder upon my soul." But all this had little or no effect on the heart of this old sinner, nothing daunted, he goes on performing his part in this dreadful piece of high tragedy. He has all things now ready for the sacrifice. The implements of death are all in order. The old lunatic with fire gleaming in his eyes binds his son and lays him on the altar; he summons all his courage, and calls upon his God to nerve him to the awful deed. He raises his arm, one moment more, but one short moment more, and he will plunge the fatal knife to the heart of his innocent child, and the foul stain of an awful murder will be fixed upon his soul forever! *But hark!* Above the cries and wailings of the boy, *a voice is heard!* A friendly spirit from the angel world, happened to be passing along that way, and seeing this old lunatic about to slay his child, cried with a loud voice unto Abraham, saying, "*Stop! stop!* stay thy hand, let not the stain of blood be found upon thy soul." His arm falters. He turns about to see from whence came the voice, and beholds a ram entangled in the branches. An idea struck the old man; I will offer this ram a sacrifice unto the Lord, a substitute for my boy. He cuts the bonds, the boy escapes and flies from the scene of danger, and relates to his mother a history of his late adventure and hair-breadth escape from death at the hand of his father.

It is supposed that Mrs. Abraham took counsel to have the old man arrested for lunacy and for an assault with intent to kill, but I cannot say how true it was, but at all events Abraham proceeded to offer up

his ram. I have heard it affirmed by some, but on what authority I know not, that old Abe, subsequently discovered that the angel *had pulled the wool over his eyes!* and that his Lord would have been much better pleased with the nice sacrifice of his son, than he was with the offering of an old horny, woolly ram.

What a comment is this story of Abraham upon that most disgusting and heathenish system of sacrifice offering, practised among the Jews. What a low and animal idea of the great God to suppose that HE ordered those things to be done, or that he took any delight in those wicked acts of ignorant, brutish men. What droves and droves of animals were sacrificed, while that silly form of religion called Judaism, was running its course.

I believe they burnt some animals alive upon their altars. This should have been stopped promptly, by enforcing a law against cruelty to animals. Who but the lowest heathens, ever thought that burning and roasting animals in the fire, writhing and groaning and kicking the fire-brands in every direction, could please God. The slaying of dumb brutes and shedding their blood might be some source of pleasure to dogs, but never be anything else than disgusting in the sight of God. The history of religious sacrifice, is the most disgraceful chapter to be found in all human history. This great superstition grew upon their minds, until they actually offered human beings upon their hellish altars.

The preachers (who have constituted themselves God's lawyers, and opened offices, (churches) where they practice only on Sundays,) say that the slaying of animals was typical of God offering his son a sacrifice for the sins of the world. But if God was absolute

monarch, and clothed with universal power, why could he not forgive men their trifling shortcomings as well without the slaying of his son, as with it? Would his death help the matter any? Whither have the reason and common sense of the people fled?

But anciently it was not fashionable to use *that* precious article when treating on the subject of religion. But the world in its progress in knowledge, became ashamed of the sacrifice business at last. The eyes of men's understanding began slowly to open, and as they opened the light poured in, and the reasoning powers were aroused from their long sleep; the world moved up to a higher plane and left sacrifice, circumcision, and hundreds of other heathenish rites far behind. I would move that the books containing a history of these disgraceful things, should be all burned so that our children and children's children could never know that the forefathers of our race ever practiced such disgraceful things. It belittles us in our own estimation and destroys self-respect to even think of such things. God was never the author of any system of sacrifice whatever, neither did he ever offer up his only-begotten son a sacrifice for the sins of a world. It is a monstrous religious fraud, practiced upon an ignorant world. God never had any children. It is true that Mary had a little lamb, who priests tried to make the people believe was "*The Lamb of God,*" but the trick has now become "*thin*"—the story stale, and everybody knows there never was a word of truth in it.

God never had any wife; if he had *only-begotten* sons, and yet never had any lawful wife, then they were born outside of wedlock; and I must infer that

scandal-mongers had at least one "square meal" in the ancient times, which I have no doubt they enjoyed as well as the moderns do who are now picking their teeth, after having enjoyed a long feast, at the expense of Henry Ward Beecher.

If God did do as they say he did, then the evil arising from his bad example in this case will more than overbalance all the good the sacrifice of his son will ever accomplish. It is from those bloody sacrifices, that the Christians get the idea that they must have blood in their religion. They have given up the slaying of animals through shame, and taken the death of Christ as a standing sacrifice, which they say will run through all time.

Look at their bloody mouths; they say that unless they eat his flesh and drink his blood they have no life in them! Hence they eat and drink him in *symbol*, in sacramental bread and wine. A low species of religious cannibalism. The reason why they eat him in *symbol*, is because they can't get hold of the thing symbolized, (his God.) If they could get hold of him, I should infer that they would chew him up worse than so many starved wolves, or hyenas; and who would blame them for practicing their belief, that unless they eat his flesh and drink his blood, they can have no life in them?

Some sects eat their God every Sunday, while others think once or twice a year will do, being less cannibalistic than their neighbors. But there is now a new dispensation of religion fast flowing in upon this dark world, like a wave from the great ocean of spirit life—a religion that has not got one single drop of blood in it. It is addressed entirely to the spiritual part of man's nature and not to the animal part, as is

the bloody system of Christianity, now fast passing away. Judaism, and Christianity, (so called) which grew out of it, were both based upon blood, and blood has marked their course all along down through the ages.

Look at the silly quarrel of the Christians about the grave of Christ, a mere hole in the ground! which led to the long and bloody wars of the crusaders which cost over seventy-five millions of human beings their sweet lives. Poor, silly, infatuated, ignorant fools, fighting about nothing; about so worthless a thing as a grave. They had to die on the plains, and do without graves themselves. Whole regiments, battalions, corps, and armies,

Whose bones lay bleaching on the shore,  
Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore,

found out when it was too late, what an immense price they had paid for their whistle. Old experience keeps a dear school, but fools cannot and will not learn in any other.

In view of the great evils which have arisen out of Christianity, and cursed this world, it has become a grave question with many whether it would not have been better for the world if Christ had never been born!

The new religion will take the Bible of nature for its text-book. It will not be opposed to the revelations of nature and science, but will be in strict harmony with them. They will not be the fore-runners of the new religion preparing the way for it by making the paths straight. The priests will be the interpreters of the Bible of nature instead of interpreters of the Bible of men. The great war between science and religion,

which is now going on, will be at an end, and victory perch upon the white banners of progress. Then dove-like peace will reign from shore to shore, and war and pestilence disturb the world no more. The wars of the world will never close until old bloody Christianity fails. She represents her God as being a God of war; a great General, who never lost a battle. Their hymns, their prayers, and their sermons are intermingled throughout with war terms. They call Christ the captain of their salvation; their God the God of hosts, and when they get on the rampage at a general revival, they open a recruiting office and beat up for volunteers to join the army of the Lord! They then will sing; am I a "soldier" of the cross, &c. Now this religion filled with war terms and war ideas, must all pass away, before the millenium will, or can come, when we shall beat our swords into plow shares, and our spears into pruning-hooks! The new religion, will be entirely free from all gross, vulgar, coarse, material ordinances. Men will no longer be foolish enough to think that they can remember Christ any better, after they have eaten bread and drank wine than they could before they did so; nor that their consciences are more clear or good after they have been dragged through the creek by a priest than they were before. The new religion will have a refining and spiritualizing influence both upon the souls and bodies of all its votaries. It will drive out of our lives all antagonism, and fill us with harmony—which is heaven—a peculiar people, very zealous of good works—knowing that there is no condemnation to them who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. The kingdom of heaven shall be within us, and we will have all those spiritual gifts which were once

possessed by the early Spiritualists and by Christ their great medium, who said: "greater things than these shall ye do." Modern times will yet see greater pentecostal out-pourings and displays of spiritual power, than the people did anciently, even to take the exaggerated descriptions, which the bible gives us.

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# COME TO DINNER.

BY JOHN SYPHERS.

It is said the man who made the world, also made a book. *I don't believe it.* It is also said that the men made the book, whose names are attached to it. I scarcely believe God knows there is such a book in existence, or if he does know it that he cares much about it. I don't believe he ever was in the book-publishing business. The only book he ever published is *the great book of nature*. Geology and the sciences open that book. It is the world's *only* source of true knowledge. Man-made bibles, contain nothing but the notions of ancient ignorant, imperfect, fallible men. It is now demonstrated that they were mistaken in every position they took and in every thing they taught.

Priests because they found a living in the religious business and by it, were enabled to fetch substance, and vast sums of money from the people. They

have found it to their interest to try hard to make people believe that the salvation of the whole world hinged on that book ! I am sorry to say that the humbug has succeeded entirely too well. The salvation or damnation of the world *cannot* be made to hinge on any man-made instrument or document, couched in so uncertain a thing as human language. Language changes almost as often as the moon. No translation of the bible is now in existence, *nor can be given* that will come anywhere near giving the original ideas of those who wrote it. The original copy of the detached books composing the bible have long been lost. If it is God's book why does he not tell some one where to find them ? If he knows all things, he knows where those copies are. He knows precisely in what old monastery or obscure nook or cranny they are hidden away.

It is conceded by the learned that our bible is from a very imperfect copy of the original.

God ought to be able lay his finger on that lost copy at any time. Why don't he do it ? Only think of it. The eternal salvation or damnation of a world hanging upon a certain book, and yet that world is only in possession of a copy of it containing thousands of errors. Hundreds of incorrect passages and the interpolation of whole verses, and yet the book declares that he who adds to it shall have the plagues written therein added to him. I think that if this was strictly carried out, some of our translators would find themselves *pretty badly plagued*.

From the fact that God does not look up this old lost volume for us, it is to my mind proof positive that he knows nothing and cares a great deal less about the great book of which the Christian world makes

an idol. The bible has always been translated and made to speak the particular belief and tenets of the party who made the translation. Trinitarians translate it in the language of trinitarianism. Catholics in the language of Catholicism. The Baptists and Campbellites are now getting out a new testament, making it speak the language of their peculiar hobby, on the subject of baptism. "He that believes and is *immersed* shall be saved," so reads this *newest* of our new testaments. This new testament has got a very appropriate name. Its friends are determined to keep it *new*, by giving a new version of it every few years.

There is hardly a verse in the new testament but what has been changed more or less, and the old is just as bad. The first verse of Genesis in the oldest copies, affirms that the world was created by gods (in the plural and with a little g)—thus, "On primal matter the gods were working, producing the heavens and the earth."

The transposition of the nominative, putting it sometimes before and sometimes after the verb was very common. Take that celebrated passage in Job for instance, reading thus, "If a man die shall he live again?" This has been transposed in the translation. The pronoun "he," should come before the word "shall," then the author's meaning would be understood at once. It should read thus, "If a man die he shall live again." The passage should never have been in the interrogative form, but in the declarative.

And again, "Thou did'st not leave my soul in hell," etc. The true reading is, "Thou did'st not give my life to Saul." Another bogus translation: "Many are called but few are chosen." It should read, "Dissenters are many, eclectics are few," and thus we might go

on through the whole book. I must, however, change the subject and dish up for you a Jewish dinner, as I see it is now almost dinner time. One particular period in Jewish history is chiefly noted for the people having bad bread.

The Jewish ladies were good cooks and as a general thing got up excellent dinners, but bad bread spoils the whole mess, you know. The bread was bad not from any mismanagement of the bakers, but from the fact that their offended Lord had *compelled* them to use certain ingredients that was most disastrous to the production of good biscuits or nice "flap-jacks!" This peculiar ingredient for short cakes, may be found in the new receipt for barley loaves, recorded in Ezekiel iv. 15. *Read it.*

The bible declares that the Lord got angry at his children the Jews, for some *very small* offense; some one crooked a finger at him, and another made a mouth at him. His ire was kindled fiercely. He was very sensitive and nervous. The least indignity even, if only imaginary, destroyed his equanimity and threw him into spasmodic convulsions of anger.

He declared that he would reduce his Jewish children to such straits as never were endured by any people before. He would trouble them for their satanic stubbornness. *He* would limber their stiff necks for them. He would crush their proud spirit.

He would show them who was "*boss*" and who was "running this thing."

He would reduce them to starvation's very point and make them "lay on one side" for over 300 years! (see Ezekiel chap. 4.) But then their bread, their bread; my God, only look at *it*. When their neighbors would stay to dinner and break open a biscuit, they

would say as the young man from the country did to his companion, when they were taking dinner in Chicago. He had never seen codfish balls before and when he broke one open, he looked up at his companion and said, "See here Tom, I say that there is something dead here." Those Jewish cakes had a bad smell. *What shortening.* I am ashamed to name it. But then why be ashamed to quote the word of God? It was no less than *human excrement.*

It was the dirtiest trick that ever was played on human beings, or even animals. No parallel to it can be found within the annals of all dirtiness! What do you think of human excrement as an ingredient of bread anyhow? Nice, ain't it? God-like, ain't it?

The poor bedeviled Jews when they heard what the sentence against them was, began to wail and howl. Their lives had always been kept pure and clean. Nothing unclean had ever entered them, and now this thing was too bad.

The Lord seeing this, had a little compassion and in his *great mercy* reduced the sentence to cow's dung! Ezekiel iv. 15, but from this sentence he would not give an inch.

When the Lord came to look at the thing squarely, after his anger had cooled a little, he concluded that it was a little rough on the boys, and so reduced the thing to a cheaper kind of shortening! It is reported that the Lord came very nigh snatching the life out of a young, daring Jew, who told him to his face that the act was the lowest, meanest and dirtiest trick that any God would ever be engaged in, who possessed the least spark of decency or self-respect. Read the 15th verse of the 4th chapter of Ezekiel, and if you don't say with me that it contains the very *upper crust* of

*nastiness!* then I'll eat my hat. To my mind it is not only the upper crust but the very *essence*, *quintessence* and *effervescence* of hyper-super-sublimated *nastiness*.

It makes my heart ache to think of those poor dear black-eyed, curly-headed Jewish sisters, at their dinner and tea parties, surrounding the festal board, and feigning that they had forgotten the bread. See the mistress at the head of the table, when asked to pass the bread. See how she looks down her nose. The parties in silence look at each other and say not a word. They silently submit to the logic of events, and quietly accept the situation. But in their hearts they cried out, "when, oh when will the wrath of God be removed and an innocent people be allowed decent bread to eat?" "When shall we be allowed to turn over on the other side, to no longer drink our water by measure and eat our meat by weight, and our bread defiled in a way and manner disgraceful even to mention—a disgrace to a dog."

Christ is said to be the *bread* of life. If so I should hope that said bread contained but few ingredients of that ancient bread baked in Jewish ovens. He prayed, give us this day our daily bread. I wonder if he wished it made according to the receipt found in Ezekiel iv. and 12. How true it is, as Col. Ingersoll says: "An honest God is the noblest work of man."

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## Fog-horn Document. No. 1.

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BY JOHN SYPHERS.

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The preachers (who I would call God's self-styled vice-regent and hell fire cremationists), are still blowing their fog-horns! But, nevertheless, how rapid is the soul growth—how fast the mind expands—how serene becomes the conscience, and how sweet the sleep, of the man or woman, who once comes out of the fog, and completely empties their souls and throws up from their cramping stomachs all the dark load of filthy, nasty, putrid stuff that the fear of God, fear of the devil, fear of death, hell and the grave, which old corrupt theology has peddled out to us ever since we were innocent children in the nursery and in the Sunday-school. With such stuff as this they filled us up full to the neck.

Bless God, bless God, for the removal of these mountains of sin and human misery that have been rolled away within the last quarter of a century by

the inflowing light of a new dispensation, whose cheering waves are still rising higher and higher, and are becoming stronger and stronger, until they have swept clear around the world and now come lashing back, increased in strength and vigor, to the place of beginning.

How beautifully the skies are clearing away, and what a world of dark mysticism, which the soul-roasting clergy have blown into the minds of the people from their fog-horns, has been swept away. Each denomination has adopted a different fog-horn, and as the clergy are all sounding these gospel trumps at once, the sound becomes so uncertain that the people are confused, and know not which way to go. The scripture says that if their horns give an uncertain sound, how shall the people gather themselves to battle? The church has always had a certain number of scarecrows, by which they endeavor to scare the people into their folds. But *now* the people have become bold thinkers for themselves and don't scare worth a cent.

She can't scare *even a Hottentot*, with her big volcano of brimstone, hell fire and blue blazes. Intelligence has spread among the people on all subjects, but especially upon religious subjects, and among many other things they have discovered that this hell, fed with cheap brimstone, over which they have been held so long, is purely an imaginary scarecrow.

King James' translators manufactured the bible hell out of the names of a couple of valleys near Jerusalem. Gehenna and the valley of Hinnom were their names.

An Eastern traveler tells us how he roared and laughed when he went down into this hell of the bible

and there found great trees growing *right in the very bottom* of it!

What an age of discovery! only think of it—*trees growing on the very bottom of the bottomless pit!* But the fog-hornists, and soul roasters know so little of the nature of a soul as to think that fire can burn it. Of what crude material they must think a spirit is composed. Spirit-matter cannot be touched by any decomposing agent in nature, fire not excepted. In fact it will quench the very essence of fire. Fire coming in direct contact with spiritual beings would not, nor could not be felt by them.

The spirit being so much more powerful than any other element would put out and quench any fire (*even hell itself,*) infinitely quicker than a Babcock Extinguisher would put out a candle. Yet the soul-roasters get huffy because we don't believe a word they say, when they tell us that God is going to cremate our souls in hell if we don't do and believe as they tell us, and come into the church which is his only insurance office against hell fire. They will carry our policies for a certain amount of greenbacks a year. Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian and many other protestant insurance offices will carry policies for the people much cheaper than the Catholic office will. But then she is the oldest, richest, and possesses the most paid up capital of any other religious insurance company now doing business in this country. In fact, she is the great old "Etna" of the world! I have heard in my time, old hard-shell Baptists and other followers of John Calvin, preach that there were "infants in hell not a span long."

But old John was a hard old sinner; he had a world of "brass" and "cheek" to set himself up as the founder

of a church. But many of his followers are just as "cheeky" as he was. In my way of looking at things old John was a murderer—a *cremationist*. But he generally burnt his subjects alive. He burnt poor Michael Servetus, yea roasted him alive, merely for an insignificant imaginary offence. Old John was very successful in making points.

He made five points, and won you know. One of his points declared that Christ was the eternal son of God. Servetus would persist in reading this *backward*, affirming that Christ was the son of the eternal God. Then old John boiled over with wrath, and a spirit of intolerance possessed him. He told Mike that he must recant or burn—Mike "couldn't see it."

John then told him to make ready, for to-morrow he must burn. Old John always had great faith in fire, especially hell fire! He believed in treating his opposers to heavy doses of *red hot arguments*. He believed from the bottom of his heart (if it had any bottom) that *fire* could be successfully used in religious controversy.

It is no wonder to me that David Swing, with his native goodness of heart, got ashamed of old style Presbyterianism and made an effort to modify and bring it up to a standard of a more enlightened age. The cremation of souls is a humbug. "The thing can't be done." But as to the cremation of the *body* I am in favor of it. It is a horrid idea to be eaten up by worms; but a nice and scientific idea to be purified by fire. I have no doubt the worms are already whetting their teeth and rejoicing in the prospect of a square meal and a feast of days, on the body of your friend John—but it's no use—I shall disappoint them.

There was poor old Wickliff; his religious enemies

dug up his bones and cremated them, scattering his ashes upon the river Avon. I remember a verse a college student made upon the occasion, thus :

“ The Avon to the Severn runs—  
The Severn to the sea—  
And Wickliff’s dust shall spread abroad,  
Wide as the waters be.”

Wherever particles of his dust were carried, there his principles sprung up and flourished, throughout all lands. His were scattered by his enemies—I wish mine to be scattered by my friends.

I saw a most laughable piece of heathenism set forth in a late Presbyterian catechism for *children!* The child in answering questions is made to say, that if he dies out of the church, he will go to hell with the wicked, there to burn in endless torments, in a big lake blazing with fire and brimstone, and that there his wages will be paid to him in the coin of death and hell, and that his principal business in hell will be to writhe, to roar, to curse and kick the fire brands in every direction, blaspheming the name of God forever and forevermore! Any man, I think, would make a good exchange by leaving a church that teaches such things to their children and going and joining the Hottentots!

It is said that Jim Fisk has got a corner on brimstone in hell and is likely to make a nice thing out of the speculation. Now if some ingenious Yankee doctor can invent a salve that will draw *hell fire out of burns*, he can make a fortune by peddling it through the lower regions! But I believe from the very bottom of my heart, that those old cast-iron, soul roasting, hell-fire cremation preachers lie on God when they tell us that he spends much of his time in damning the

souls of men—not even sparing the beautiful little dove-like, blue-eyed, curly-headed, innocent, prattling infants of our bosoms. His only *begotten* son admired and loved those little ones so that he took them in his arms and caressed them saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." But then what is the use to talk about Christ, and tell what he did. *He has no followers!* he was a poor man, and preached against the rich, against money influences; but the churches have now made merchandise of his gospel; preaching has become a matter of money—a "bread and butter" arrangement; just as much so as the dry goods or grocery business has.

The modern bogus concerns called churches are run altogether upon money, and cost the people of this country nearly a hundred millions a year. They claim Christ as their founder, but look, how poor he was—not two suits of clothes to his back—never had ten dollars in his pocket at a time, *that is*, after he gave up the carpenter trade and turned preacher; he and the strolling crew that followed him, were "dead broke," more than half the time. When the tax collector called on Christ and Peter to settle their poll-tax, Christ sent Peter to the lake to borrow a *denarius* from the fish to settle the bill. Christ was an improvident man who didn't seem to care a d—ime whether he had a "red" in his pocket or not, nor whether he had a roof to shelter him when night overtook him. Says he: "The foxes who have nothing but holes in the ground, the birds of the air who possess nothing but nests in the branch, are rich compared to the son of man, who has no where to lay his head." He never went a cent on rich folks but his cry was "How

hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of heaven."

To be a follower of Christ we must preach just what he preached, act just as he acted and be just as poor as he was.

But look at his pretended followers—rich and aristocratic—their gospel shops glittering with gold and silver—pulpits ornamented—aisles carpeted, and pews cushioned. If a poor man was to stick his nose in there, he would soon be made to understand that it was a rich man's church—and no place for him.

The most ludicrous thing on earth is to see those preachers, priests, and bishops, as I have seen them, dressed up like a clown—a great cross upon their breast—a watch chain, the size of a young log chain around their neck—a ring on their fingers with a set in it the size of a brick bat—a chew of tobacco in their mouth not quite as big as your fist, and a plug of the same filthy tobacco in their pockets! Followers of Christ indeed!

What a spectacle Christ would have made, going out to preach and attend to his father's business, with a big ring on his finger, a chain round his neck, and a big plug of tobacco in his pocket, after the style of Bishop Dougan for instance, of Chicago. I have no doubt, if Christ was to return, that his first exclamation would be, "Oh for a whip in the hands of every honest man to lash such frauds and hypocrites naked through the world."

I don't think Christ himself ever intended that men should so far lose their individuality as to become slaves to him by calling him "Lord and Master." I recollect a young man on a certain occasion, called him "good master," but he hushed him up quickly

by stamping his foot and pointing his finger up to heaven, declaring that there was none good but God up there. Christ in spiritual things was quite a reformer; but in business matters he was a signal failure. He advised his followers to take no thought for the morrow. If we should do so, this world would become a great poorhouse filled with beggars and *lazaroni* in less than three years. And again he set a premium on theft, when he taught that if a man take away your coat you must give him your cloak also.

If a man should take my coat, instead of inviting him to get my cloak, thereby enabling him to go warm and saucy, while I must shiver in the winds, I would publish in the papers thus : I hereby give notice to the man who stole my coat that he is known ; you will please return it inside of five days, or I will mash you.

Christ as a religious reformer had many merits, but since his enthusiastic followers have made an idol and a God out of him, his benefits to the world have been almost entirely lost. One man's merits cannot be applied to another. There is no salvation by proxy. "Every tub must stand upon its own bottom." If Christ had merits they can only be applied to his own case. They can save him, but not you nor me; you and I must have merits of our own, for they alone can do us good in the coming day. I have learned that "there is no name given under heaven nor among men whereby I can be saved," save the name of *John Sypfers*. Nor you gentle reader, no matter how much you endeavor to throw yourself upon the merits of some one else; you will find in the end that you *must fall back upon yourself*, and that your case cannot be reached either by the merits of Christ "or any other man."

## The Devil Still Ahead!

BY JOHN SYPHERS.

---

According to the teachings of old, rotten theology, there are at least two gods in this great Universe. They are represented as being of about equal power. It is true they call one of them "the Devil," but it makes no difference what they call him; their own history of him shows that he is a being of as much power, and even greater in some things than his opponent, and much better success attends many of his operations. If God is God, then the Devil is God too. No one can do what they say he has done, and is still doing, unless he be possessed of godish attributes and powers. They say these two gods are at war with each other—perfectly antagonistic in all their operations. When one says *yes* the other says *no*. When one pulls *up* the other pulls *down*; but the downward pull seems to be the long pull, the strong pull, the pull all together, and takes the crowd.

The upward-pulling God, although all-powerful, finds it an up-hill business, and the consequence is that his gospel-net is taking, and has taken but very few fish

from the great ocean of humanity, and those generally of a very small fry! One of these Deities they call God, the other the Devil, but both they say are *real* persons. Both great, big masculines, but not supposed to have any wives. One of these Deities they say has had children, at least an only begotten son, and this said son often spoke of his brothers and sisters, which leads one to infer that this god-family embraced quite a number of persons.

But Mr. Deity No. 2 had also something of a family, that is, if a certain ancient writer is to be believed, for I remember that he on one occasion, when he wished to spit a little fire and be unusually severe on his enemies, said to them: "You are of your father, the Devil, and his works will ye do." But then there is no ancient or even modern writer who has ever affirmed that this creature of orthodoxy, the Devil, was ever engaged in the *regular, natural, old-fashioned begetting business!* His children, according to the heathen writer mentioned above, are only his because they *work* for him. "His works will ye do," etc. But if God never had any wife, how could he have an only begotten son? The only reasonable natural conclusion must be that he used somebody else's wife. Born out of wedlock! 'tis monstrous, oh 'tis monstrous; what an example! But the idea of big masculines, without any feminines—only think what an anomaly in nature!

They say that one of these gods is very good, while the other is very bad, and that one is very black, while the other is very white. Theology represents these two great antagonistic gods as having set out on a very long race many thousand years ago. The prize for which they run is the human race, a race for the

human race. The thing is laughable. Theology also demonstrates that in this race the *Devil is still ahead!* It is now demonstrated by a little close figuring, that if theology be true, the Devil will get, and has already got, about nine out of ten of the entire human family. Rather a losing game that, and to be played too by an *Almighty player* on the losing side. He had better invest his almighty power and material used in making men and women in something else, than to make them, and then have them gobbled up by a cunning Devil, who invariably beats him at his own game. It don't pay. If God represents good and the Devil represents evil, then the great question before the world is to tell why it is that *good* is so continually outstripped by *evil*, especially when everybody knows that good is the most powerful principle of the two.

Why didn't the Lord exchange positions with the Devil, and get the down-hill side of the question himself? If he is as all-wise and all-powerful as he is represented, why does he let the Devil outwit him and get the advantage of him in every case? Why did he not have the advantage of the broad, smooth and down-grade road for his followers at the start, and not have his friends going around through this world all the while singing the doleful songs, "How tedious and tasteless the hours," "Jordan is a hard road to travel," and that "Sweet prospects, sweet birds and sweet flowers have lost all their sweetness," etc.

Why should this be the condition of the special favorites of an Almighty? If God is all-mighty, of course he could have had everything his own way. If he has not, there is nobody to blame but himself.

Why does he allow himself to be thus beaten in everything, even on grades, and per consequence lose ninety per cent. of the whole human family, all of whom naturally belong to him by the rite of creation. Why build so great a house of many mansions in the heavens, and then be cheated out of men and women to occupy them? But why ask questions? I could ask ten thousand right here, not one of which old theology could answer to the satisfaction even of a man possessing only an ounce of brains. Such doctrines are ridiculous. They are awful. They are old reminders of heathenism. How humiliating and derogatory to the character of the great God to thus suffer himself to be beaten at his own game by a subordinate being of his own creating. *How very like a God!*

But O! methinks I now see how this matter all is. I have discovered the key that unlocks the whole mystery. *God is sick.* If not so, why do they have so many Doctors of Divinity? The D. D's. have been at work on their patient for thousands of years, and still he is neither healthy nor happy. No being can be happy while he is angry, and God's doctors say that he is angry with the wicked every day. I pity him, or any other being in a like state of mind. But the god-doctors are too much divided among themselves to accomplish anything. They represent too many schools of medicine. They have too many plans of salvation. Methodists feel certain that God is a Methodist and the author of the Methodist plan of salvation; Presbyterians are just as certain that their peculiar plan is God-given; Catholics think the same of theirs.

These are the old regular allopaths in religion, and

believe in giving strong medicine, and lots of it. They administer to sinners tremendous doses of *hell fire and damnation*.

Universalists and Unitarians are Homœopaths. They use small pills, *sugar-coated*.

The Campbelites and Baptists are Hydropaths, and believe in sacred hydraulics and hydropathic salvation, using *rivers of water*, applied externally. But if Deity is not sick, his affairs on earth are. He has got things into a pretty pickle by entrusting them to the hands of those different orders of priests. His kingdom, which should be a unit, is all cut up into sectarian factions, *riotal institutions*, presenting the finest specimen of a house divided against itself that the world ever saw. The kingdom of the Lord is now fearfully demoralized, and sadly needs reconstructing. He must either come himself, or send another only begotten son, clothed with full powers, as minister plenipotentiary direct from the High Court of Heaven. His present corps of ministers (carpet-baggers) have made merchandise of his gospel, and think only of ways and means whereby they may be able to *filch substance out of the people*.

This demoralized condition of affairs pertaining to the Lord's kingdom, has brought his religion into general disrepute with all the thinking, progressive minds of the age, giving the Devil all the best minds—the very flower of the intellect of Christendom, leaving all the imbeciles and fools for the Lord.

What a singular mystery this great system of theology is, anyhow! What great effects, without any natural, appropriate cause! Nature teaches us that all effects must have *natural causes* sufficient to produce them. This is reason and philosophy. It fol-

lows, then, that the great systems of theology now in existence, being founded on no natural principles whatever, are purely imaginary and superlatively *bogus*. Now what is the *cause* of this great loss of so large a per cent of the whole human family? Analyze the whole bogus system down to first principles, and we will easily discover that it all resolves itself into this silly story, laughable as it is. That Adam and Eve made a slight mistake in a garden and ate a few apples from off the wrong tree. A certain walking, talking serpent persuaded them to just *nibble* a little, if nothing more, at that forbidden fruit, whose mortal taste brought death into our world, and all our woe. A religion that has nothing better to present to the thinking, reasoning mind of this Nineteenth Century, should not be astonished that the whole world is fast running into *Infidelity*. Our present theological systems, based as they are upon the ignorant, superstitious stories of a dark and by-gone age, are a disgrace to the present light, knowledge and intellect of the time. The sectarian *Infidelity* of the churches is the meanest Infidelity that was ever born from the great kingdom of darkness. The only hope of the world is now centered in the success of the new dispensation, now being ushered in, full of science, light, progress and spiritual salvation.

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## SLIPPED UP AGAIN!

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*Another Grand Fizzle—a Wreck of Matter and Crush of Worlds that didn't take place—the Lord failed to come to time!—and Adventism gone to seed.*

---

BY JOHN SYPHERS.

---

Yes, Millerism and Adventism are dead at last. They died of a broken heart because the thing wouldn't work. They have set now four different times for Gabriel to blow! for the crack of doom to smash things, and introduce a little phenomenon in the way of a wreck of matter and crush of worlds!

April 19, 1875, at midnight they had prepared themselves at Chicago, to go forth to meet the bridegroom. But the wedding did not come off. The bride, the lamb's wife did not appear. Gabe didn't toot his horn. Now I tell you that horn is no fool of a horn! Let's reason a little. If all the horns in the world was made into one horn, and all the men in the world were one man, and all the breath in the world was drawn into the lungs of that one man, he would not have force enough to give that horn one toot loud enough that all the world could hear it. They base all their

reasoning and chronological figuring upon Daniel and the revelations of John. I guess that now they will begin to look upon these two great lights with open eyes, and declare that the light which they saw in them was all darkness, and oh how great that darkness! I myself, individually, discovered long ago that Daniel had the nightmare, and John the delirium tremens! They now begin to think as I do, that the man is a fool, who will throw his whole weight on, or risk a single cent on any old religious prophecy that has come down to us from the dark ages when those scriptures were written. These repeated failures and humiliations will all have their use. They will help each one a little to open the eyes of an ignorant world who have made an idol of an old religious book, and a God out of a Jewish house carpenter who once shoved the jack-plane in Judea.

These Adventists have worked themselves up into the silly belief that God has no better things in store for the souls of the dead, than to sleep in a nasty mud-hole called the grave, with the body, until Gabriel shall blow! I suppose when the body rots in the ground the soul will rot with it. What an idea, to think that the souls of spirits of all the nations of the dead, are at this moment *down in the ground*. They say they sleep there till the resurrection! I tell you they *do not* sleep, nor anything analogous to it. When a man sleeps, he is still alive, and draws his breath. Are they still alive in the grave? Have all the departed nations of the earth been buried alive? What fools men can make of themselves and never suspect it. But say they, we can quote lots of scripture to prove these things—the scriptures establish nothing. They never did establish anything but the sublime

ignorance of those who wrote them, and the equal ignorance of those who have proclaimed them the very infallible words of a God. That book of books, as they call their idol, had much more properly be called the book of spooks! It is full of spooks and ghost stories from end to end. How much scripture did they quote in favor of American slavery?—yet scripture could not save it. It must stand or fall upon its merits, and not upon scripture. The more scripture you can bring to bear upon any subject, as a general rule, the less truth there is in it. The man who has no more sense than to teach that the salvation of a world in any way hinges upon that old Jewish book is not aware of just exactly how big a fool he is, nor of what an injury he is doing to himself and the people who listen to him. How much better for the world if John and Daniel had never lived nor written. I would like to see the man who was ever benefited one particle by their writings.

But on the other side look at the evil they have done. Look at the regiments of victims they have sent to the lunatic asylums. Look at those lunatics in Chicago. A congregation of *Advents* waiting for *events!* They ate the last supper and made ready on general principles. *They washed each others feet!* This was the most sensible thing they did; it showed that they were going to glory with *clean feet!* If they had extended the washing to the whole body with plenty of good soap and soft water, it would have greatly enhanced the chances of glory, as nothing that is unclean or defiled can enter there. Those lunatics had all faith in old books, made by men but very little or none at all in the laws of Nature—the only Bible, book and laws that God ever issued, or

that he knows or cares one cent about. If men had spent the brains and money upon the Bible of Nature that they have upon the Bible of priests—this world would be a paradise, and filled with a race of philosophers to-day. Light, knowledge, happiness and civilization would cover the earth, as the waters cover the great deep. But now look at the ignorance, blindness, whiskey, tobacco, superstition, dirt, filth, and general damnation and abomination of nastiness that rests upon the race! I think when John saw those vials of wrath poured out upon the world, he was only depicting the effects of his own writings. The world might have stood his *vials*, but when his writings were combined with other men's writings, then the vials became barrels, and even hogsheds of slop and filth, and wrath, that in the name of religion has deluged our world in blood, and piled up mountains of human bones. When the storm came swooping down on the city of Chicago on the eve of the 19th, the faithful felt sure that the preliminaries of the great final bursting up of the affairs of this planet had commenced. You should have seen their eyes "bug out;" poor creatures—how I pity any people who are the victims of a religious superstition. But as a general thing, there is no curing them, unless you can break their faith in their idol—that old book. When the hour and minute hand on the clock both cut the figure 12 at midnight and no disturbances were heard or seen in any direction, *then* it became apparent to the Adventists that—which the world's sinner knew very well all the time—the thing was a "*grand fizzle!*"

Revelations, as a book, has done our world a great deal of harm. It used to make my eyes bug out to read them when I was a boy. I asked my mother

if the throne of God was a big cage full of animals, for John said that they were in the midst of his throne. This seemed to settle the question whether there were animals in the spirit world. John saw whole droves of them both sitting and capering right close around the very throne of God. But some of John's animals were monsters; they had eyes before and behind. Some of them had three pair of wings, and then they could talk and speak the English language, for they continued both day and night to cry, "holy, holy, holy art thou, Lord God Almighty." And God seemed to have nothing to do but to sit there and listen to those animals praise him both day and night. If I should ever get to heaven, and they come bellowing around me after that fashion, I will haul off and let into them with a double-barreled shot gun that will give them something to howl for. If God made all things, both in the earth, under the earth and above the earth, then he made those animals. Now what did he make so many wings for, especially as they never fly, but sit still all the time? Why did God give so many wings to animals in heaven, where they never use them, but down here on the earth, where wings are of some account, he never was known to give an animal more than one pair of wings. If that is wisdom, then I don't know what the word means. On the earth wings mean "fly," but in heaven they mean "sit still." The more wings they have there, the stiller they sit. John saw a far better menagerie of show animals in heaven than Barnum ever had in his hippodrome. I wonder if they don't have animal shows in heaven, anyhow? I have an idea that John's vision was but a clairvoyant squint into a heavenly menagerie. But I really do think

that God could greatly improve his mansions on high, if he would set some of his idle angels—who seem to be lying around loose and out of a job—to work, and let them clean out those animals and drive them out of heaven. I would rather have fourteen thousand wolves, lions and jackasses howling, roaring and braying around me than to listen to the eternal din and clatter of what John says he heard in heaven. We would all look funny if it should turn out after all that John was only trying to amuse us with big stories, and that he never dreamed that anybody would believe them to be literally true.

I was once passing along the streets of Knoxville, Illinois, and looking up, I saw a great symbolic canvass stretched across the street. It was full of the pictures of all the strange and unearthly looking animals that ever danced through the imagination of a man wild with delirium tremens. Said I, "when is this show of animals coming to town?" An advent preacher standing near by stepped forward and said: "Young man, the Lord from heaven will exhibit these things to your astonished eyes before long." "Very well," said I, "it don't matter who. If it is P. T. Barnum, the Lord, or any other man. I'll take stock in that concern. Please save me half a dozen tickets for me and my friends. I can't afford to miss as good a show as that; only look at your animals for instance, some with 7 heads and 10 horns, others with 3 or 4 pair of wings, and full of eyes within and without, before and behind! Bears, sheep, lambs, and huge old rams. One animal, I see, has two horns; one a big horn, and the other a little horn. The one was long, but the other was short!" I said to the preacher, "You are bill-poster to the Lord, I presume?"

How do you like the show business anyhow? Does your Lord make this show business pay pretty well?" He put on a very long and solemn face, and replied:

"Young man, I perceive that you are yet in the gall of bitterness and the bands of iniquity. These things represent the purposes and will of God concerning the destiny of this world and the inhabitants thereof. Come and hear me preach to-night, and I will give you a proper interpretation of this chart."

"But see here now, Mr.," said I unto him, "if all these animals that you have got on your show bill live in heaven, then I would rather not go there. I always was naturally a little skittish and afraid of wild animals, especially of such, or if they looked like those on your bills. But then I suppose if we ever should be so lucky as to go to heaven we will have to make up our minds to stand it, for I have always believed that heaven was full not only of animals, but also of snakes and creeping things. You recollect that Peter saw all those in that great drag-net that was let down from heaven; that net was drawn up into heaven again, you recollect, animals, snakes and all, and as a matter of course they are there yet, and if they have been breeding and multiplying according to the laws of their being, then heaven by this time must be a perfect den of ferocious animals, snakes and crocodiles!"

I went to hear the brother hold forth, and for nearly two long hours he swayed and staggered to and fro, back and forth, up and down among the prophecies. He trotted out his animals and made them 'cut all kinds of capers. Every one had a prophetic meaning. Bears and lions, and rams and goats, all were symbols—just as if God had not sense

enough to speak in plain language, and throw mystifying symbols to the dogs, especially in a book, upon a proper interpretation and belief of which, eternal issues hang. A book, as they preach, in which the salvation or eternal damnation of a whole world is written. But great and marvelous, oh Lord, are the mysteries of *humbug!* This weak brother had the entire Old and New Testament scriptures at his tongue's end. I never saw the fact more clearly demonstrated to my mind than on that occasion—that the more scripture a man can quote, the more ignorant he is. He stirred up his animals and made them howl—each one declaring that the day of judgment was close at hand, even at our doors, and that Gabriel was actually getting ready to sound his big horn, and wake up the sleeping nations. (Advent in a horn !)

After the lecture the brother asked me how I felt. I told him first-rate. I now felt more certain than ever, if it was possible, that there was nothing in the humbug at all, and that his blind eyes would yet be opened to see what a darned fool he was, and what an ass he was making of himself. I told him that the prophecies of John or of Daniel would fool the oldest man living, if he had no more sense than to study and believe them in the literal sense, as he had done. I know that God had no intention of firing the fuse that was to ignite the bomb that was to burst up this world generally. It was a libel upon the Almighty, and if his animals, or even the prophets, said anything to the contrary, they *lied*, and the truth was not in them. But so it goes. The world has always had outstanding bids for gods and demi-gods all the way down through its history.

Once there was a Messiah expected; this was a bid

for some one to come along and declare "*I am he.*" Considering the great demand for gods, anyone might have seen, if he was the least bit sharp, that a man like Christ, the Jewish carpenter, who could, because of his mediumship, perform a few things which *seemed* out of the ordinary course of things, would be seized upon by an ignorant world and made a god of; they could see in him plainly an answer to one of their outstanding bids, and they of course would not let the opportunity slip. They declared that there was no mistake. He was the very one of whom Isaiah, Moses and all the prophets did write. And thousands and tens of thousands still fool themselves with that idea, and declare stoutly that Jesus was a god, and the son of a god, and that in his blood alone there is salvation. Yes, great is the influence of humbug!

At the present day there is a bid before the world for some one to appear, and he will come, too, declaring that he is the second coming of Christ. If he has control of a few phenomena outside of the people's narrow conception of natural law, they will declare them miracles, and accept them as direct proofs of his Godship or Messiahship. *There will yet come an answer to this now outstanding bid.* The people are ready and waiting to be fooled again as they were of old about the coming of a Messiah. The meeting of fanatics in Chicago and at many other points on the night of the 19th of April, is one proof of the truth of my statement. Yes, great is the influence of humbug! But let it come, oh Lord, let it come, for nothing can cure the desire of the human mind for humbug but *humbug itself!* Nothing can cure hunger or a desire for food but food itself.

The people are hungry for a God—one manifest in

the flesh—human flesh, one that they can see, and hear, and talk to, one tangible to their senses. They have had demi-gods, heroes and saints enough, they are sick of them, and nothing will satisfy but a real, genuine first-class god ; but of course they will call him the second coming of Jesus, as that is the nature of the bid they have now standing out in the great god-market of the world !

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## Joshua's Stopping the Sun and Moon.

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BY D. M. BENNETT.

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[FROM THE TRUTH SEEKER of April 1st, 1875.]

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Of all the remarkable tales that have ever been narrated by any story-teller, or written in any book, whether "Baron Munchausen," "Gulliver's Travels," "The Arabian Nights," "Robinson Crusoe," or in the wild nursery tales for children, in point of extravagance, improbability, impossibility and absurdity, there is nothing that equals the account of Joshua's causing the sun and moon to stand still, as related in the tenth chapter of the book called by his name. After this mighty military man had demolished the cities of Jericho and Ai, putting to death every man, woman and child, "leaving not a soul to breathe," some of the neighboring nations very naturally became alarmed at these blood-thirsty Israelites, and deemed it best to placate them and make friends with them. Thus the

men of Gibeon dressed themselves in tattered garments, with worn-out shoes and clouts on their feet, and with mouldy food, and rent wine-bottles, appeared before the Israelites, pretending to have come a long journey and were anxious to make a treaty with them. Joshua and his men were deceived by this stratagem, and entered into a solemn treaty that they would do no harm to the Gibeonites, and swore to it in the most sacred manner by their God.

When the five kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon, heard of the treaty thus made they were very much incensed at the Gibeonites, and united their own forces to destroy the nation at which they had become offended. Whereupon the Gibeonites deeming their danger imminent, called upon their new allies, the Jews, to "help them out." Joshua, with commendable alacrity, went to their relief, and the fighting and bloodshed were soon in active operation. He evidently had a great fondness for this business of carnage, as nearly his whole time was occupied in that direction. The number of men engaged, however, was very insignificant compared with many other armies the world has known. "The nations," so-called, were small, being little more than tribes, occupying a single city each. Nevertheless it was evidently a pretty lively time, and Joshua deeming the day too short to properly finish the slaughter so vigorously prosecuted, commanded the sun and moon to stand still, and they obeyed him, for nearly the space of a whole day, thus giving him and the Jews time to be avenged upon their enemies.

We repeat, this is the most monstrous and utterly impossible story that ever was told. To say a flea swallowed Bunker Hill Monument, that a spider and

a bed-bug built a ship five hundred feet long, or that a grasshopper hauled a train of twenty loaded cars five hundred miles in ten hours, would be tame and insignificant compared with this Bible story. What is it to stop the sun and moon in their courses? The sun is an immense body of matter nearly a million miles in diameter. One hundred globes the size of the earth, placed side by side, would not equal the diameter of the sun. It is more than a thousand times greater than the earth, and nearly a hundred times greater than all the rest of the solar system. The momentum of such a vast body in rapid transit is utterly inconceivable. The moon is smaller than the earth, and only two hundred and forty thousand miles distant, but what can a man, or all the men that ever lived combined, do towards stopping it, much less the sun, ninety-five millions of miles away? Those orbs have doubtless for millions of years been in incessant and rapid motion, performing their regular circuits, pursuant to laws and forces impossible to be set aside for an instant, and how idle to say a man ever stopped them, or even that a God ever stopped them. They are minute parts of the boundless Universe which move in harmonious accord and co-operation, and were it possible to stop a part, the most inconceivable confusion would ensue. To go into an immense machine shop where numerous huge and ponderous wheels are running with great velocity, the larger matching and fitting into the smaller, and all being impelled by a tremendous power, gives a very imperfect idea of the countless worlds and suns filling the Universe, moving in perfect unison in their intricate connection; and should a heavy bar of iron or stick of timber be thrust between two of the wheels so as to suddenly

interrupt the movement of the machinery, it would afford a very imperfect conception of the utter confusion and destruction it must cause in the Universe should a part of its machinery be suddenly stopped.

No machinery made by man can give an adequate idea of the machinery of the Universe. As well talk about a fly at the Cape of Good Hope stopping the Falls of Niagara, as Joshua stopping the sun and moon. The thing is too preposterous to be thought of seriously for a moment. The silly argument so often used—"all things are possible with God"—will not avail. God cannot act against himself, and to subvert the forces of the Universe would be to act against himself.

Perhaps it is hardly worth while to allude to the trivial matter of the sun and moon both cheering the Israelites by shining upon them at the same time, in their bloody work of carnage, the one being on Gibeon and the other in the Valley of Ajalon. It would seem unnecessary for Joshua to have detained both of them, and it may strike some as singular how the moon could give much light while the sun was pouring down his rays; but people are required to have faith and believe what the book says.

It may be justly urged that if a day was to be increased in length, it would not be necessary to stop the sun, but the earth. This does not remove the impossibility of the story, but simply illustrates the total ignorance of the motions of the heavenly bodies on the part of the person who wrote the book of Joshua. It was then believed day and night were produced by the sun every twenty-four hours, making a complete circuit around the earth. The fact that a person so ignorant of the actual movements of our

sun, moon and earth, should be held up to us as one writing the "word of God," is sufficient reason why we should not believe a word he utters. As well might we believe the ancient false supposition that the earth had *corners*, that it had *foundations* and rested on the backs of huge elephants, tortoises, etc. True, astronomers assure us the sun has two distinct motions, one upon its own axis, and another with the entire solar system around a more immense and far distant sun; but the writers of the Bible knew nothing of this, and supposed the sun and moon every day performed a journey around the earth.

It would be no easier for Joshua to stop the motions of the earth than the sun. It has been whirling for unknown ages at the speed of one thousand miles an hour in its diurnal revolution, and through space at the velocity of sixty-eight thousand miles an hour in its yearly course around the sun. It has never stopped for an instant, and never will, so long as the matter which composes it retains its present form. How idle, then, for any story-teller to talk about a man, or any other being, stopping it for a day.

If for one moment we admit such a possibility, would not that day, "unlike any before it or since," and nearly double the length of other days, have been known elsewhere than at the city of Gibeon? The same sun that shone there, sent his rays to every part of the earth, and the intelligent nations of Egypt, Persia, India, China and other countries whose history runs much further back than the time of Joshua, would assuredly have known it and had some account of this most wonderful occurrence, had it ever taken place. But not a word do we hear of it from any part of the world, or any being except the anony-

mous author of the book of Joshua. Who this writer was, no one knows. It could not have been Joshua himself, for it refers to events that occurred long after his death, and in several instances uses language that has no meaning, unless the book was written long after the events were said to have transpired.

The motive or reason assigned for this most wonderful miracle that ever was related, is as improbable and as unreasonable as the story itself. It is, that a few thousand, at most, of poor, hapless mortals—offspring of the same Universal Power of which we claim to be emanations—might be cruelly slaughtered by the merciless Israelites, pursuant to a treaty they had been wheedled into by fraud. Can any sane person, for a moment, believe the Architect of all worlds, if he had the power, would stop the machinery of the Universe for a reason so contemptible, as to give time for one barbarous nation to slaughter a few thousands of another barbarous nation? Reason, justice and common sense forbid! Such a disposition may have been in keeping with the warlike, blood-thirsty and partial character as credited to Jehovah, the tutelar Deity of the Jews, but it does not inure to the Universal Force and life-principle pervading the immense Universe, which shows no partiality to one nation over another, and delights not in carnage and bloodshed. The two should not be mistaken, one for the other; there is no similarity between them. If Jehovah wished to destroy those unfortunate Amorites, why not accomplish it suddenly, as he is said to have exterminated much larger numbers on other occasions? Or why not slay them by continuing the throwing of rocks upon them out of heaven, as the same

chapter says he did on this occasion? It asserts he "slew them with great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah. And it came to pass as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died. There were more which died from hail-stones than they which the children of Israel slew with the sword." It appears the Lord had a special ill-will toward those poor people, to treat them in that harsh manner, and it would seem his ammunition must have been exhausted—the heavenly rocks—or he would have kept up the fire until the last man was killed, and thus save him the trouble of interfering with the machinery of the Universe to lengthen out the day, so that Joshua and his bloody cohorts could slaughter the few that remained. One would think the killing of a few hundred exhausted men, a much easier task than stopping the sun and moon, or the earth. By the by, we wish to enquire right here, is it a strictly god-like occupation for a deity to stone his offspring to death in that kind of manner? And is that the best use he could put them to?

Now, reader, this narrative is true, or it is false—the idle fancy of a silly brain, unfit alike to edify men and women, or to amuse little children. How stands the evidence? One unknown, nameless, anonymous writer who once lived, but nobody knows when, and nobody knows where, says it was so. Science, philosophy, reason, the negative testimony of many nations, truth and common sense say it is untrue. Which shall we believe? Those with brains, and who are

free to think for themselves, must accept the latter testimony.

In Isaiah xxxviii: 7, 8, a story of similar credibility is narrated, when merely to give Hezekiah a sign that his life should be prolonged fifteen years, the sun not only was stopped, but moved back ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz. Here we have a reiteration of a similar impossibility. Our Christian friends, however, swallow it as readily as six-year-old children do the tales and melodies of "Mother Goose," and are ready to doom all who cannot, to the endless torments of hell.

Such belief, they assure us, constitutes virtue, and to doubt it is a heinous crime. We are rejoiced, however, to see their idol is losing its hold upon the minds of intelligent men; the sun of reason and truth is breaking through the clouds of ignorance and error, and its course cannot be stayed any more than the sun of the solar system. Mankind will, in due time, emerge from the mists and fogs that for ages have enveloped them, when they will no longer give credence to idle, silly tales that do such gross injustice to the great Source of Life, Light and Truth that permeates and impels every atom in the entire Universe.

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# SAMSON AND HIS EXPLOITS.

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BY D. M. BENNETT.

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[FROM THE TRUTH SEEKER of April 15th, 1876.]

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Among the stories in the Bible that may well be classed as *improbable*, is the strange one of Samson and his remarkable muscular strength. His history commenced before his birth or before he was begotten. An angel of God appeared unto his father and mother and predicted they should have a son, that he should be a Nazarite and no razor should touch his head. The woman in due time bore a son and he grew up and the "Lord blessed him."

As is common with other young men, he soon fell in love. He saw a young woman at Timnath, among the Philistines with whom he was well pleased, and he importuned his parents to go down and procure the young lady for him. They consented to do so. He accompanied them and while on the way a lion confront-

ed them, but our young hero was not at all dismayed. His affection for the young Philistine damsel was so ardent as to make him immensely strong, and though the lion roared against him, and though he had no weapons of any kind, and "nothing in his hand," he rent the lion as he would have rent a young kid.

The lion is held to be a most formidable beast, and for agility, quickness and great strength he is not surpassed in the whole animal kingdom. It is remarkable that a young stripling, as Samson was at that time, unarmed, and without even the assistance of a walking-stick or club, could easily demolish the king of beasts. But as the book asserts it, we are perhaps not at liberty to doubt it.

He had the desired interview with the Philistine maiden, and they were mutually pleased with each other. On his return he stopped to look at the carcass of the lion, and found that bees had taken possession of it, and had already accumulated considerable honey, of which he freely partook and gave to his parents. The bees must have been pretty lively in their operations to have taken possession of the carcass and partly filled it with honey in so short a time, or Samson must have unduly protracted his stay with the maiden.

It may be inferred, also, that bees in those days were less fastidious about their dwelling-place than now. Modern bees are too nice and particular to have sweet, clean hives, to take the putrefying carcass of an animal for a home; nor would our bees permit a person to abstract their hard earnings without vigorously defending their property and severely stinging intruders.

Samson gave a riddle pertaining to the lion and the bees on a subsequent visit to the Philistines, and his

young wife gave his visitors the solution, at which he was displeased, and the spirit of the Lord coming upon him, he went down to Ashkelon and slew thirty-seven men, and took their spoil and garments and divided them among those who solved the riddle, and his wife was also given away. It seems a little singular that the spirit of the Lord coming upon him should make him so murderous; but in those days God appears to have been particularly bloodthirsty. Slaughter and carnage seemed to please him better than anything else.

Samson's fox trick is worthy of notice. Wishing to injure the Philistines he caught three hundred foxes and tied them together, tail to tail, and placed a firebrand between every two tails, and after he had lighted the brands he let them go, and they ran through grain fields, setting fire to, and burning all the grain in shocks, all the standing grain and the vineyards and olives as well. Were this story anywhere else than in the Bible it would be pronounced silly and incredible. It is hardly probable a man could catch three hundred foxes, no matter how strong he might be. They are extremely shy and difficult to catch, and a man can hardly be found who could catch a single fox by himself, much less three hundred, and they to stand still while he tied their tails together and attached firebrands to them. It was cruel on the foxes, to say the least. It is not very likely standing grain, vineyards, and olive trees would be set on fire, even if foxes should thus run through them. Growing vines and trees are not easy to ignite. The sap in the twigs and green leaves renders them quite incombustible, and a brand going swiftly by would hardly affect them. The Philistines to be avenged for this cruel wrong took Samson's wife and her father and burned them

with fire, all of which we should call a burning shame.

Samson greatly distinguished himself when his brethren bound him with strong cords and delivered him to his enemies, when he suddenly burst the cords and with the jaw-bone of an ass slew one thousand of them. It was indeed an *ass*-tonishing feat, and never before or since was an ass' jaw-bone known to do such service. What those thousand men were doing while a single man was beating them to death with a jaw-bone we can hardly imagine. It would seem some of them ought to have been able to get in a blow once in a while. That jaw-bone must have been a peculiar one, for after beating a thousand men to death with it, Samson being exhausted and thirsty, asked the Lord for a drink, whereupon "God clave a hollow in the jaw, and there came water thereout" and Samson refreshed himself. It is not often jaw-bones can be found with such fountains of water in them. That specimen of jaw-bone seemed capable of dispensing both life and death. The ass that owned it must have been remarkable, and the jaw-bone still more so.

Samson was probably satisfied with these achievements, for twenty years passed before we hear anything further relative to his feats of strength, until he went to Gaza and had intercourse with a prostitute, and when the Gazites would catch him, at midnight he got up and walked off with the gates and gate-posts of the city as an ordinary man would with an armful of oven-wood.

Like most men in modern times, he had a decided fondness for women, and they got him into great trouble. He fell in love with a fancy woman named Delilah and was fond of dallying with her, and going to

sleep with his head in her lap. After a number of trials on her part to learn where his great strength lay, he misleading her on several occasions, she at length wheedled him into divulging the secret that his great strength lay in his hair ; so when he was again asleep she called in a barber or hair-cutter and had his head shaved clean, and alas, when he awoke he found his strength was gone. The Philistines easily took him and plucked his eyes out, bound him with fetters and made him grind in the prison-house.

But his hair at length grew out again, and he became strong as before ; and when the Philistines gathered together in great numbers to offer sacrifice to their God, and to rejoice that he had delivered Samson unto them, he was called by the people to make sport for them.

He was placed between the main pillars of the temple ; and while the building was full of men and women and three thousand were on the roof, he took one pillar in his right hand and the other in his left, and bowed himself with all his might, and the house fell upon the lords and upon the people, completely crushing them to death, and himself also.

Now we are free to say we do not believe this remarkable narration, which is detailed by an unknown person, with no corroboration or substantiation save that found in the Jewish scriptures. We do not believe the man ever lived who was able to take the columns of a large temple, one in each hand, and hurl the structure to the ground. It is too big a story for our credulity to accept as truth. There have been many strong, muscular men in the world, but none capable of performing such a feat as that, though their hair was ten feet in length. By the by, it is not in keep-

ing with the known physiological laws that hair imparts immense strength, or that the loss of it produces weakness. There is no special connection between the hair and the muscles. The hair is a desirable covering for the head, and when well dressed is regarded as an ornament, and in health usually grows luxuriantly, but it was never known to impart muscular strength. 'Tis safe to judge of the past by what is known of the present.

Samson is often said to be a plagiarism or copy of Hercules, who was also a mythical character, to whom was imputed very remarkable strength, and who performed astonishing feats. In his infancy while still in the cradle he is said to have strangled venomous serpents, which the jealous Hera sent to destroy him. He is also famed for twelve prodigious exploits performed by himself called "labors," among which were the slaying of a hydra, a boar, a lion, the harpies and other monsters. He had a big club which he is said to have wielded in a most fearful manner. The cleansing of the Augean stables was a feat which has immortalized him. We see there are some points of resemblance between Hercules and Samson, especially in the leonine part of their history. Both had slain their lions. Both also seemed to have been susceptible to the influence of the softer sex. Hercules was enslaved by a passion for Omphale of Lydia who made him spin for her and wear her clothes. The influence she exercised over him was much the same that Delilah wielded over Samson; thus we see the strongest men are liable in some points to become very weak. Hercules was said to have come to his death by putting on a poisoned shirt given him as a

love-charm by his false wife, who had received it from the centaur Nessus.

With the exception of Samson's last feat of pulling the temple down on the heads of ten thousand people with three thousand more upon the roof, Hercules was undoubtedly the greater man of the two, but in that crowning exploit in Samson's career there can be no doubt he threw Hercules completely into the shade. There is an old saying that "the one who tells the last story, has the advantage."

While we accord to every person the right to believe either in Hercules or Samson if they choose to do so, we claim for ourselves the right to doubt. We cannot see that we have any more ground to believe there were such men, than Jack the giant-killer, or Sinbad the Sailor. Some unknown writers have stated that such persons once lived, and that is all we know about them. We are at liberty to believe in them, or not just as the proof strikes us. We of course will have to be classed among the unbelievers.

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## The Great Wrestling Match.

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BY D. M. BENNETT.

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[From THE TRUTH SEEKER of May 15, 1875.]

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In noticing the extraordinary Bible stories which are too improbable to gain our credulity, it is fit, probably, that we should not omit the most remarkable wrestling match which has ever been reported, the parties to which were God and his favored servant Jacob, as narrated in the thirty-second chapter of Genesis.

After Jacob had tarried twenty years with his father-in-law, Laban, securing his two wives, and by a system of sharp practice in cattle-raising which the world has never anywhere else exhibited, he became very wealthy in flocks, herds, camels and asses, ~~it~~ seems God had an interview with him in a dream and instructed him to get out of that land and return to his own kindred.

e accordingly, when his Father-in-law was absent from home shearing sheep, stole away, taking all the wealth he claimed to have made from Laban's possessions, and his wife Rachel stole, also, the gods and images that were her father's. They thus early showed the disposition for acquiring property, honestly or dishonestly—a reputation which their descendants for centuries have persistently maintained.

When Jacob neared his father's residence, he seemed to have some misgivings as to the kind of reception he would receive from his brother Esau, probably growing out of the sharp game he had played upon him many years before, in the matter of the birth-right and the mess of pottage; and with his characteristic shrewdness he sent servants with valuable presents to Esau to placate him and allay any unfriendly feeling that might linger in his breast toward his long absent brother Jacob. The ruse seems to have been successful, for Esau went out and met Jacob in a commendable brotherly spirit, quite contrary to the fears the latter had entertained.

The most remarkable part of this narrative is the account of the extraordinary wrestling match between God and Jacob during the night immediately succeeding the day on which the presents aforesaid were sent. Jacob seemed to be fearful, notwithstanding the very generous presents he had made to Esau, as to the reception he would meet with, and he arose in the night and sent his two wives, his two concubines and his eleven children and all his treasures over the ford of Jabbok, and he was left alone, and God came in and wrestled with him till the break of day. The match seems not to have been conducted precisely upon the rules which since have governed the prize

ring and boxing and wrestling matches. Usually seconds are chosen and an umpire appointed to see that fair play to both sides is used. In this case there were no seconds nor umpire—the two wrestlers were alone, with none to witness the contest which for several hours was so evenly kept up.

Although in no other parts of the Bible are we told of any remarkable muscular strength or bravery exhibited by Jacob, he must have been one of the most powerful athletes ever known, to hold an even contest with God for several hours so vigorously. We do not believe any of the most noted acrobats, gymnasts or prize-fighters that ever lived would be able to hold God an even contest for hours, if God did his best. If he would consent to meet the ablest of them in a contest of this kind, had we money to risk on the result, we should bet on God every time.

Jacob, however, must have the credit of acquitting himself remarkably well in the encounter, for God seems to have gained nothing upon him until he took an unfair advantage and put Jacob's hip out of joint. By modern rules such conduct would be called "foul," and would lose the game and the "stakes." But God, doubtless, considered it *fair*, or he would not have resorted to that course, especially as daylight had come, and it was important he should be off. He asked Jacob to let him go, but Jacob refused unless God would comply with his demands, so the putting out of his hip was, perhaps, after all, justifiable.

We recollect in our childhood days wrestling was tabooed by the strictest teachers of morality as being of an immoral and objectionable tendency, but if God engaged in it, and gave lessons to a person he was so partial to as he was to Jacob, we cannot see upon

what grounds the exercise should be pronounced immoral. What was done by God and Jacob would seem to be good enough for anybody.

In this instance of God's wrestling with Jacob for hours, he must have been more thoroughly "materialized" than on usual occasions when he exhibited himself. We have accounts of several occasions where he made himself visible and talked with men; as in the Garden of Eden, where he walked in the cool of the day and conversed with Adam and Eve, afterwards with Cain after he murdered Abel, afterwards with Noah in reference to building the ark and shipping his live cargo. He afterwards appeared to Moses, first as fire in the burning bush, afterwards on Mount Sinai during the forty days they were up there together cutting the ten commandments on tables of stone. On still another occasion, he showed Moses his back parts. Why he showed his back parts and not his front parts, the account does not state, except that no man could see his face and live. That he had front parts as well as back parts, there cannot be a reasonable doubt, for no personage was ever seen with back parts but what had front parts also.

He consented, however, to put Moses in the cleft of the rock and place his hand over him while he was passing by, letting him see his back parts only, as just stated. It looks to a disinterested person as though there was a clash between these statements as to God's being seen. That God was seen on several occasions, we have the most positive Bible assurances, and when John says, "No man hath seen him at any time," and Paul says, "No man hath seen him or can see him," it would appear they had borne false testimony, or that the persons who made the other statements

had done so. Though these passages from "God's Word" may seem contradictory to a natural man, to one having spiritual discernment it is to be supposed they are perfectly consistent.

In this wrestling case, though God saw fit to put Jacob's hip out of joint, he did not leave him in that unpleasant predicament without doing something for him in return. Before this time he had simply been called Jacob; but God now gave him the name of Israel. Jacob may have considered this full compensation for the injury inflicted, but for our own part we would not have our hip put out of joint for a dozen new names. The two evidently parted in the best of spirits, and Jacob called the place "Peniel, for I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved."

The question may arise: If Moses could not see God's face and live, how could Jacob? It must be borne in mind, however, that they were two different men. If Jacob had the muscular strength to hold out against God for hours in a wrestling match, it is not improbable he would have strength enough of the optic nerves to see his face, and not die from the effects of it.

Seriously, these Bible stories of God's wrestling with men, of his showing his back parts, of his talking face to face with various individuals are significant of the crude age of the world in which they were written. At that time it was supposed the earth was the centre of the Universe, that it was flat and stationary, and that the sun and moon made daily circuits around it, and that the stars were small bodies of light placed in a solid firmament a short distance from the earth. Their ideas of God were equally as crude and imperfect. They supposed him to be a

being, having the form and appearance of a man, who had a throne above the firmament from which he could oversee all parts of the earth, and who spent much of his time in war and bloodshed, leading one nation against another in the most bloody conflicts, and often betraying one army into the hands of another more cruel, without any adequate reason, and frequently putting scores of thousands to death on a single occasion.

Since the world has learned to have more enlarged and correct views of the Universe, that the earth is but a very small portion of the solar system, and that the solar system is but a very small fraction of the Universe—that systems and constellations fill the immensity of space in all directions, as far as the mind can think, many have come to entertain grander conceptions of deity than those crude notions of him held by Jacob, and Moses and Joshua.

When it is remembered that the earth not only revolves on its axis at the rate of one thousand miles an hour, but that in its course around the sun it flies with a velocity of more than a thousand miles a minute, and that the entire solar system is rushing with an accelerated velocity in another direction around a much greater and far distant sun, the inconsistency of the idea of a local God, seated on a fixed throne in some particular point in the heavens can be easily comprehended.

When we realize that the same deity that presides in our land must necessarily be equally present on every side of our globe and through it, and not only the same in the sun and moon and planets, but in the numberless other systems and worlds—in the distant constellation of Orion and millions of others, still

billions of times further removed—in all these trillions of worlds just as much as here—we can perhaps have a faint conception of the utter absurdity of the theory of olden times, that God was an organized being; that he occupied a single point in immensity; that his attention was given specially to the affairs of a single nation of roving brigands, that he was fickle, cruel, revengeful and malicious, and that he spent any portion of his time in a wrestling contest with Jacob, or in showing his back parts to Moses.

The more appreciative are our ideas of this boundless Universe, the more expanded will be our conceptions of an unorganized, impersonal, ever-present Deity, wherever matter and worlds and space exist.

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A DISCUSSION  
UPON  
NOAH'S FLOOD  
AND OTHER TOPICS,  
BETWEEN  
ELDER J. C. SHELTON, of Alabama,  
AND  
THE EDITOR OF THE TRUTH SEEKER.

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[The following appeared in THE TRUTH SEEKER of  
March 15, 1875.]

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We recently received the following pious, but not very gentlemanly letter, from a zealous Christian Elder in Alabama. If he had a little less *faith* and somewhat more of good manners, we think he would be considerably benefited by the change. We forgive him for the lack of courtesy he exhibits, presuming he has done as well as he knew how. It is by no means uncommon for members of the clergy to forget to be gentlemen, and to deem it perfectly right to be

insolent toward unbelievers. We "consider the source." etc.:

BROOKSVILLE, BLOUNT Co., ALA., Feb. 10, 1875.

MR. D. M. BENNETT :—Sir: Some of your poor, foolish, deluded readers of your abominable stuff, called **THE TRUTH SEEKER**, handed me No. 4 Vol. 2d, printed Oct. 15th 1874, in which you tried to make sport of the Bible account of the flood. Now we don't wish to try to enter into any arguments with a man who does not believe, or is liar enough to say there is no God, but will simply state that the power that brought on the flood, first created the animals and also Noah and his family, and of course that *Power* was sufficient to preserve those animals on the amount of food that Noah was directed to take into the Ark. But a man of your great self-conceited sense and learning might say there never was any flood.

I say there was just such a flood in times past as is represented in the Bible, and I am going to prove it by your God (Matter). Close to me in Blount county, Ala., is a man by the name of H. Scott, who lives on a small free-stone gravelly ridge. This man Scott, last Summer digs a well, close to his house on this small ridge, and when he gets down some 36 or 37 feet, digging through clay and gravel, he comes to a chestnut stump that has been broken off from the main body of the tree, also limbs of trees imbedded in rich soil some two and a half or three feet thick, with a black, brackish water oozing out of the soil. He continued his well below this, through clay and gravel some thirty feet, and got no water, he then goes about one hundred yards farther on this same ridge and digs another well, and he comes to the same black soil with timber, &c., which hundreds of people can witness to. Also there is no large water course in twenty miles of these wells. Also there was another well dug in four miles of this place, and there was an Elevated ridge west of this well close by: some thirty or forty feet down in the well the man came to a poplar log near two feet through. There was a skeptical man in our county that did not believe in a Bible flood, and he also would not believe that the log was in the well until he went down and examined for himself. These evidences show conclusively, that

there was a great flood once, that washed the dirt and gravel from the high ridges and formed these small ridges on top of this soil and timber where these wells have been dug.

But Sir, you in your self-conceited logic, will say that this timber would not last from the time of Noah's flood until now. But my logic says that when *matter* of any kind is entirely excluded from the action of the air that it will remain in that condition thousands of ages. So the Christian has abundant proof of the flood, and the truth of the Bible, but you have nothing but your Infidel prejudices against it. If a man will cavel at the Bible, and Christian Religion, he must do so as much as the devil will give him power to do. There are some men who can find no wisdom anywhere, except in their own heads. Such men, however, are no judges of wisdom. We should not set up a *Mouse* to explain the great phenomenon of the Earth's creation and formation. It is necessary that a man should be honest at least, and have a share of common sense before Christians need to discuss with them. A man that is born with his eyes open, and can look around on all created things, and say there is no God, no Christ, no Hell, no pure and vital Christian religion, is either a fool or a notorious lying *Monster*, who would wantonly tear down, everything that would give a foundation to truth, morality, virtue and a civil Government ; and none but poor, deluded, sinful, degraded men will take, read or countenance such men's trashy writings.

Sir, your trashy Infidel notions can do the true Christian no harm, and especially in the world to come, because, according to your teaching of things, even bad Christians and the HEATHENS of the *Heath* will have as quiet a sleep in a state of nonentity, when this life ends, as you Infidels, but on the other hand, if you are wrong, an eternal hell will be your portion. What is the use for an Infidel to say anything about the Bible, when according to their notions, mankind is just as safe without it as with it? Sir, we are fearful you are making merchandize of men's souls, and we are fearful you don't care so you make a living by it in the present world. It is the blind leading the blind, and all will fall into the ditch. It would

be far better for you, if you would leave off your writing, even if you had to take hold of the plow and the grubbing hoe for an honest living.

Do just as you please with this composition, and be sure to read it every night before you say your Prayers.

Yours in Christian sincerity, ELD. J. C. SHELTON.

REPLY.—Our Christian Elder evidently thinks he has given us a “knock down” argument in favor of Noah's flood, but if he has nothing better to offer in proof of it than a poplar log or two in a gravel ridge, we fear the world will still remain in doubt as to that remarkable freshet. Doubtless he has stated the facts correctly as to the finding of the logs, and it is also a good argument that at some unknown time, in the past, a flood or floods have occurred in that locality. That local floods have taken place in nearly all parts of this and other countries there are too many proofs to admit of a doubt. That great changes in the topography of the American continent have occurred in the past we have the strongest evidence. These have been produced by floods, and alluvial deposits in the mouths and the deltas of rivers, and more especially by tremendous upheavals that have from time to time occurred. In very early times the American continent was, doubtless, largely under water. That much of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska and other States, were once thus submerged, there is abundance of evidence. The character of the prairie soil presents strong proof that it was once the bed of the sea. Sea shells have often been found in hills and elevated grounds one hundred feet at least above present water lines.

The upheavals of this continent have been tremendous ; the extensive mountain ranges of the Allegha-

nies, the Andes, and the Rocky mountains, with the volcanoes and volcanic debris so frequently found, afford the strongest evidence of this. This, in part, is the explanation of the deposits of gravel, earth and rock so often found over the coal strata of Pennsylvania and other coal districts. That these deposits or stratifications have been caused to some extent by local floods, but far more by upheavals, there is no room for doubt. Prostrate trees of different kinds of wood—similar to the cases mentioned by our correspondent—have frequently been found in various parts of the country. Whole trees even, perfect in form, though changed in character, have been found imbedded in strata of coal, but it is in nowise probable they were indebted to Noah's flood for such imbedment.

We readily admit the facts asserted about the buried logs, but utterly fail to see how they prove that in Noah's time the earth was covered over its entire surface with water to the depth of five miles; that the animals and birds from all latitudes and zones of the earth gathered together of their own accord, and voluntarily marched into the ark in pairs or sevens, lions and calves, wolves and lambs, dogs and rabbits, cats and mice, hawks and chickens, swallows and flies, poisonous serpents and gentle doves, in all, over three hundred thousand animals—fowls and insects of all varieties of character and disposition—crowded into an ark pitched without and within, with a single door and window, and they closed, and thus deprived of air, light and appropriate food, they remained over a year—Noah's family, stench, filth and all. If our friend's poplar log convinces him that all this occurred, perhaps it also reveals to him where all the water came from that covered the earth to the depth of five

miles; where it was stored previous to its descent, and where it went to when dry land again appeared! He is probably one of those credulous mortals full of "saving faith," who can just as easily believe that Jonah swallowed the whale, as that the whale swallowed Jonah, if the book only says so. We, will, however, take this occasion to assure Elder Shelton that, in maintaining so zealously that the flood occurred just as related in Genesis, he is entirely antagonistic to the position on this subject now held by his more intelligent brethren of the cloth in this locality. We fear he is getting behind the times. No intelligent orthodox clergyman of New York or Brooklyn now claims that the Bible account of the deluge must be understood literally. They hold Genesis to be merely a poem, or fable, or legend, and that it is not longer to be regarded as incumbent on the Christian to believe its literal language. Rev. De Witt Talmage, one of our most prominent clergymen, not long since said quite as much in his pulpit, and insisted that skeptics and Liberals in representing enlightened Christian clergymen as adhering to the letter of the Genesis narrative were wrong and slanderous, and that a very small portion of the learned, sensible clergy now preach the Bible account of creation and the flood. In the advances made by science, it is difficult for a man of sense and education, though he be a clergyman, to longer insist that the story narrated in Genesis is true.

Brother Shelton, the world is progressing; the old foggy notions of the past are gradually yielding to the good sense of to-day; mythology and fable are giving place to scientific truths and reason. You had better study up a little, and take a few steps forward, or we

fear you will be left away behind among the stumps and pitfalls of the Dark Ages.

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[The following appeared in THE TRUTH SEEKER of  
May 1, 1875.]

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### Elder Shelton Once More.

Our pious, Hard-shell Alabama Elder has again favored us with the following brilliant effusions. While we cannot for a moment doubt his implicit faith in the big stories of the Bible and the dogmas of orthodox Christianity, we regret he has not studied more closely the manners of a gentleman. Why need he call attention to our long ears? By the way, does he really know we have long ears? Will he risk a pint of peanuts that, by actual measurement, our ears are longer than his? We make room for what the pious man of faith has to say.

BROOKSVILLE, BLOUNT CO., ALA., April 5th, 1876.

MR. D. M. BENNETT, *Sir*:—I would not write to you at present, but seeing some of your Philosophical nonsense, together with some of your low, vulgar, satirical slang, used by you in the place of argument against my Article written in defense of a Scriptural Flood, I now proceed to write, not that I expect to convince such a wise man as you are, who has in his own estimation got all the Oracles of Wisdom treasured up in his own cranium. But I write in order to try to reach some of your readers, whom I trust have not gone so far away from the revealed word of God. I feel sorry for all men that are in total darkness and are lost. Now, *Sir*, you tried to answer my Article written on fourth page TRUTH SEEKER, printed March 15th, 1875, by first speaking of my harshness and uncourtiousness in my argument. I will make some

apologies for that, by merely stating that Christians sometimes have to deal very roughly with *Long Eared Brutes*. Now, *Sir*, if a man will but once admit that there is a Creator, who has created all things, he must admit that this same Creator can do anything that he wants to do, even if it is to bring on a big flood, such as was in Noah's time. Now we believe that the flood was altogether a *miracle* wrought out by God in order to show wicked, unbelieving men, in the early existence of the world, that he was God. Now Mr. Editor if God had not performed such huge *Miracles*, all along in the early age of the world, men never would have been convinced that there was a God. They all would have been poor, ignorant, benighted creatures, such as Infidel writers and Deists are in the present day.

Secondly, you tried to meet our arguments by stating that there has been some tremendous upheavals in the Earth, which has caused Timber, Animals, etc., to be found in places deep under the Earth. Now, *Sir*, I deny that there has ever been any upheavals of the Earth since the flood. The Bible does tell us that the fountain of the great deep was broken up, and this is the only upheavals that ever was. *Sir*, I defy you to prove by living witnesses that any such upheavals have ever taken place in North America. I am not going to allow you to bring up the blind ideas of philosophy. I want you to understand that a *Learned* fool, and a philosophical fool, is the biggest fool of all fools. Don't talk to me of volcanic upheavals in the old world, which only turn up Dirt and Rock enough to make an opening for the melted Lava to issue forth, that argument will be too thin for a man of your paper.

Again, you ask where did such an amount of water come from to make this mighty flood, and where did it go to when the flood was over, &c. That is a mighty foolish question to ask a faithful Christian. The Christian knows and has faith enough to believe that God can prepare water enough to drown a thousand such worlds as this, if he saw proper by that act, to convince all intelligent beings that he is a Sovereign God. See how many intelligent men and women that have come into the world since the flood, that have been noble-hearted Christians in con-

sequence of the every-day proof of that flood being found all over the Earth.

Again you ask, how is it possible for the number of animals that was taken into the Ark to live when there was but one door and window in the Ark. SIR, we answer you by saying that they were sustained by the same power that preserved Jonah in the whale's belly. We can only account for it on the ground that it is a miracle wrought out by God, in order to save a remnant to re-people the earth again with better people. It seems, Mr. *Editor*, that the people before the flood had become to a vast extent just such unbelievers and Deists as you and THE TRUTH SEEKER are, which justly enkindled the wrath of God against them, and he determined to sweep them off and save eight christians, to wit, Noah and his family, in order to re-people the earth with better folks. And Sir, I will say to you ty-day, that if the people of the world as a general thing were to become believers in your doctrine, God would get awfully mad at us again, and would sweep us off again by a flood of fire or water in less than twenty-four hours. But we are thankful that there is still a few Josephs, Elijahs, Rebeccas and Marys in the world. Though Christianity has its *Beechers*, the world of mankind knows that *they* are only Infidels at heart, while they hypocritically take upon *them* the cloke of christianity. And Mr. *Editor* you say a great deal in your collums about *Beecher*, in order as you think to, to throw a slur on Christians. Sir, I say to you that all men would more or less become Beechers if they believed as you do. Beecher is just such a man as you are, at heart, *an unbeliever*, only he tries to put on a Christian cloak to deceive the world. Sir, if your doctrine of Infidelity was believed by every body, it would make miserable Prostitutes of the female sex and miserable Beechers of the men, because the fear of God and a burning hell would not be before their Eyes. Sir, your system of belief makes miserable cut-throats, and robbers, out of men and miserable base creatures out of women. This is the reason why, in Alabama, such men as you are not allowed to give testimony in open court against any one; from the fact that the public does not believe that such a man would swear the truth, especially if he was interested in the case. And

justly too, from the very fact, that there is no foundation in such men for the truth, from the fact that there is no fear of God and his judgments in their minds, consequently we had as well swear one of those creatures that Baalam rode, and expect to get the truth out of it, as to swear an Infidel. Now, Sir you profess not to believe one word that is written in the Bible. Now, we know what you don't believe, now please tell us what you do believe. And we defy you to undertake with *truth* to prove what you think you do believe. Now if you and your readers won't have the Bible, please give us something that is better, as you go along, or the world won't have it.

Now Sir, if you undertake to reply to this Article, be serious about it, and don't try to poke fun at us and the Bible instead of argument. If there is any solid argument about you, let us have it, and don't give us suppositions for truths.

ELDER J. C. SHELTON.

REPLY.—There!—if that is not a regular Simon-pure Christian letter, what is it? It abounds in *faith* and *ignorance*, and these are certainly Christian characteristics. True, there are forty or fifty errors of orthography, capitalization, and bad grammar, and a dozen or two misrepresentations and prevarications, or, “not to put too fine a point upon it”—*lies*. But those are not un-Christian; they are just what the system is made up of.

The Elder has spread himself considerably, and evidently wants us to reply to him. He is specially anxious that we be serious about it, and use solid arguments. We hope we shall treat his letter in a proper spirit, and be at least as courteous in language as he has been to us. We do not wish to be outdone by him in politeness, truthfulness, or gentlemanliness.

We will notice some of his inaccuracies:

First. He intimates we used low, vulgar slang in our former reply to him. It is wrong for the dominie to so misrepresent us. It is neither just nor true.

We used no slang nor improper language towards him.

Second. He says in our "own estimation, we have all the oracles of wisdom treasured up in our own cranium." He could not have made a greater mistake. We are painfully sensible that there is very much that we do not know, and we here acknowledge the fact with becoming humility.

Third. He says "there have been no upheavals since the flood." Wrong again! Earthquakes have many times taken place. The surface of the earth has frequently been elevated in some places and depressed in others. Islands have risen in the ocean that were once unknown.

Fourth. He says "a learned fool and a philosophical fool is the biggest of all fools." False and absurd! The most of a fool is he who knows nothing. If he has learning and philosophy, he certainly is less a fool than he who possesses them not. The Elder must take care that his readers do not class him with those who have neither learning nor philosophy.

Fifth. He says "the Christian knows that God can prepare water enough to drown one thousand such worlds as this." The Elder rather stretches the truth here. The Christian knows nothing of the kind! Let him contract a little and make it five hundred. That number will, we think, a good deal more than cover the Christian's absolute knowledge.

Sixth. He attempts to prove the flood by the story of Jonah and the whale. Ah! Elder, that will not do! You might as well undertake to prove "Old Mother Hubbard" by "Jack the Giant-Killer."

Seventh. He says "there were just such unbelievers before the flood as we and THE TRUTH SEEKER are." Another mistake. The Elder is simply drawing upon

his imagination. He has not the papers for that. Our sort had not come into fashion at that early day.

Eighth. He says "God got mad at his creatures." We assert that this is false, and very unjust to God. True, the Bible makes such a statement, but it is wrong. God does not *get mad* nor fly into a passion. All such statements, wherever found, are grossly incorrect. God never gets mad, nor runs crazy. He would be unfit to govern the Universe if that was his character.

Ninth. He says we are such a man as Beecher is. Has it come to this? Is it our fate to be thus accused? Are our grey hairs thus to be brought down in sorrow to the grave? We call on the Elder for proof. Let him show when we have ever been in the Beecher business, or the paroxysmal business. What families have we broken up? What Elizabeths have we ever been after? When did we ever perjure ourselves? We have received many stabs and thrusts, but this is the unkindest cut of all.

Tenth. He says "Infidelity makes miserable prostitutes of the female sex." A greater falsehood never was uttered! The women who have embraced Infidelity have been pure and virtuous, and ornaments to society. We have only to point to Harriet Martineau, Margaret Fuller, Frances Wright, and thousands now living, to prove the Elder a clerical slanderer and falsifier. What a cheek the man must have to claim all the virtue for Christian women, and deny it to Infidels, when want of chastity exists in almost every church in the land. A paper can hardly be taken up now, but what we find an account of some sister in some church being on too intimate sexual relations with the shepherd of the fold, some godly clergyman. And this Elder has the assurance to tell us that Infi-

delity will make all the women do that way. He ought to be ashamed of such vile slanders.

Eleventh. He says our system of belief "makes miserable cut-throats and robbers of men." False as hell! Not a word of truth in it, and none but a liar can make such an assertion. Those who have had the intelligence to doubt the errors of superstition, and the honesty to avow their sentiments, have been the noblest men the world has known. We claim as ours all who have not believed in Christianity, and we are proud to acknowledge them the noblest moral heroes and benefactors of our race. We begin back with Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras, Zeno, Aristotle, Marcus Antoninus, Cicero, Seneca, and come down to Hobbes, Bolingbroke, Condorcet, Spinoza, Descartes, Gibbon, Diderot, Voltaire, Volney, Shelley, Helvetius, Goethe, Schiller, Humboldt, Byron, Paine, Franklin, Jefferson, Ethan Allen, Parker, J. Stuart Mill, Buckle, Lecky, Tylor, Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Tyndall, Helmholtz, Lincoln, Sumner, Schmidt, Draper, Fiske, and a host of others that might be named. They are among the grandest men that ever lived. They were not Christians, and did not require the fear of a devil nor hell to keep them from being cut-throats and robbers, as the Elder tacitly admits Christians do.

Who are they who people our prisons and penitentiaries?—Christians. Infidels are seldom found there. Who are the murderers?—Christians, or they become so after the deed is done. Very few Infidels are numbered among the murderers. Who have been the cut-throats of the world? Who have shed the most blood?—Christians, two to one. They have taken scores of millions of lives, and caused human blood to flow in rivers, for centuries together. When have In-

fidels done anything like this? Talk, indeed, about the great virtue of Christianity, and the bloodthirstiness of Infidels! The thing is preposterous. There are no more honest, honorable class of men than Infidels, who discard alike the fear of hell, a devil, and a maddened Deity, who flies into a rage at trifles, and kills and destroys innocent people and children by thousands and hundreds of thousands. No class of men excel Christians in villainy, dishonesty, and rascality. No nations are more dishonest and unjust than Christian nations.

We were a few days ago conversing with a gentleman connected with the Navy, and stationed many years in Japan. He had been nearly two hundred miles in the interior. We asked him about the religion and habits of the country. He informed us a large share are Buddhists, who are absolute Infidels and disbelievers in revelation or a personal God. Christianity, though it has sent many missionaries there, has obtained very slight foothold. He assured us the people are very intelligent, virtuous and happy. Stealing, robbery and murder seldom occur. Locks or fastenings are not generally used on dwellings or stores. The goods and chattels of one are rarely disturbed by another. Though some of the lower class go naked, adultery and sexual promiscuity are almost unknown. In heathen China, also, travelers tell us the people are very industrious and honest. Stores are often left open and unattended. The goods are marked, and if a person wants anything he leaves money to the amount of the price and takes the goods. How would such a system answer in any Christian country in the world? How long would the goods remain? How much money would be left in place of

them? The Elder must try and keep nearer the truth. Christian virtue and Christian honesty will not do to tie to, as too many have cause to know.

Twelfth. He says "Infidels have no foundation for truth," and argues that consequently they must swear to a lie. This is false and base. Infidels have as great respect for the truth as any class of men that live. They love truth, honor and virtue for their own sakes, not because of an angry God whose judgments may be hurled upon them. Give us one real lover of truth who follows it from the reverence and respect he bears it, rather than six cringing slaves who only tell the truth from fear of some God or some Devil.

Thirteenth. Elder Shelton says we profess not to believe a word that is in the Bible. That is an "awful whopper." We do n't profess any such thing. We believe many words and many sentences the Bible contains, just as much as the Elder himself does. It is not difficult for us to believe such passages as these: "Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him." "Wisdom excelleth folly as far as light excelleth darkness." "The churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood." These passages are not perhaps as elegant as many quotations that might be made from Shakespeare, Byron, Tennyson, and scores of writers, but nevertheless we believe them, and many other similar extracts, not because they are in the Bible, but because they contain the evidence of truth.

We do not therefore take the Bible as a guide in the study of astronomy, geology, chemistry, physi-

ology, botany, or natural history. We do not look into it to learn the multiplication table, or how to extract the square root. We find it of no use in agricultural pursuits, in the art of printing, or the science of telegraphy. It gives no instruction relative to railroads, or the power of steam. We find nothing in it touching photography, galvanism, the telescope, the spectroscope, or the microscope, but a great deal about wars, carnage, and bloodshed, and much of obscenity and vulgarity. We judge it was written in a barbarous age of the world by men of limited knowledge, and if it ever was adapted to the wants of men in any age of the world, it was long ago; and that if it was of any great value then it has long ceased to be so. We cannot for a moment believe God ever wrote it, or employed any other persons to write it. It is doing great discredit to him to charge it upon him. To do him justice in this matter is one reason we occupy the position we do.

Elder Shelton's letter contains several other misstatements, but we will let them pass. He asks us so earnestly to tell what we believe, we will try and comply with his request. We wish to be obliging so far as possible. We have no views we want to conceal. If we can say anything to enlighten him or any others who are in the dark, we will say it most cheerfully.

First. We think he asks too much, that we admit there is a Creator who made the Universe in six days from nothing. We can admit nothing of the kind. We do not believe there is one atom of matter in existence that is either destructible or creatable. That it may change forms and conditions thousands of times we readily concede, but not by the combined skill of all the scientists in the world can an atom of

it be forced out of existence, nor can a similar atom by any known power be brought into existence. If Elder Shelton and the other sixty thousand clergymen in the United States, and the five hundred thousand priests in the different varieties of religions on earth, together with the one hundred millions of priests which are estimated to have lived and preyed upon man in the last five thousand years; if all these were gods and worked in concert, we do not believe they could make a Universe of nothing. By the by, this Universe is a big thing to make. The sun, the earth, and all the other planets, asteroids, and satellites, are but an infinitesimal portion of the Universe, whose millions of suns and systems reach so far into the abyss of space that it would require light, traveling at the rate of 200,000 miles per second, millions of years to travel from them to our solar system. As distant as these farther suns are, space and the Universe still extend trillions of times farther, and so on forever without limit, without end. What absurdity to talk about all this being made by a being and from nothing!

The Elder says *if* we admit there is a Creator who has done all this, then we must admit he could create the water to drown this world. Ah! but there's the trouble. That *if* is in the way. We can admit nothing of the kind.

We can comprehend *his* Deity is a very watery one, and that his belief in his God's ability to make water is unlimited, but a body of water five miles in depth—for it is that distance to the top of the highest mountain—over the entire earth—25,000 miles in circumference—is an immense quantity, and we cannot comprehend how one God could make it all in forty days and

nights. Our friend, however, gets along with the difficulty easily enough, and stands ready to believe God could make a thousand times as much more if he only felt like it. If the old legend had stated that, to produce this water, God had planted a cucumber vine and that from one of its fruits he had squeezed water enough to cover the entire earth to the tops of the highest mountains, and then to get rid of it he had from a bed-bug made a frog, which drank the water all up and then jumped off out of the way, Elder Shelton doubtless could have believed it perfectly easy. There is nothing like implicit faith. We, however, are differently constituted. We cannot believe impossibilities. If we admit there is a God we hold he must be subject to laws, and that *all* things cannot be possible with him. For instance, he cannot make twice two to be five; he cannot make a straight rod just three feet long without two ends; he cannot make two mountains without a valley between; he cannot make a three years old colt in five minutes; he cannot act against himself; he cannot commit absurdities; he cannot make something of nothing.

It is idle, perhaps, to conjecture what God is, or what he is not. It is a subject beyond our reach, but for ourselves we are satisfied he is not such a being as Elder Shelton and others who draw their ideas from the Bible, suppose him to be. And before we can admit miracle No. 2 was performed because miracle No. 1 was, we must be convinced that No. 1 was a reality. We view it as a very weak argument that the truth of all absurdities and monstrosities must be admitted because "all things are possible with God."

In nearly all the religions of the world *miracles* have been assumed and claimed to prove the religions

true. The greater the ignorance of the people, the more the miracles have been urged. The Jewish Scriptures were far from being first in this business. Not one of all these miracles was ever true. Not one was ever possible. The hydropathic one that Elder Shelton believes in so strongly turned out to be particularly futile—labor completely thrown away. Mankind afterwards continued right on as wicked as before, and the wholesale drowning of men, women, and children, animals, birds, insects, and all vegetation was worse than useless. The Elder's claim that it made mankind know God is as silly as the rest of the story. The world has never known God, and even to this day it remains in total ignorance of him. God-makers and worshipers have told all manner of tales about Him, but unfortunately they knew not a particle more about Him than the masses. All have been in the dark together.

We would suggest that if God wanted to send a flood upon the earth, a flood of knowledge would have been better than a flood of water. It would have been immensely more profitable to the inhabitants of the earth, and inconceivably less cruel to children, babes, horses, cattle, sheep, kittens, doves, larks, linnets, nightingales, and millions of other kinds of beasts, birds, and insects which had done nothing to cause a reasonable god to send death and extermination upon them. A flood of knowledge even at this day would do a vast amount of good. We believe the people down in Alabama would be benefited by it. Elder Shelton himself would, perhaps, not be injured by such a flood. If they were in that State well suffused with such a flood, they would, doubtless, be willing honest Infidels should testify in courts of law.

One of the greatest mistakes Elder Shelton and his Christian friends make, is in imputing demoniacal characteristics and conduct to the God of the Universe. They make him cruel, malicious, revengeful, and bloodthirsty enough for a first-class devil. The trouble is they have mistaken God altogether—they have adopted the Jewish deity, Jehovah, and try to pass him off for the God of the Universe. A greater error could not be made. They are totally unlike, and it is the greatest injustice to the God of the Universe to displace him with the Jewish god Jehovah, the older Hindu god Brahma, the Egyptian god Osiris, the Grecian god Jupiter, the Scandinavian god Odin, or any of the thousands of other gods invented by mankind. What the world needs to do, is to discard all these ancient gods of superstition and ignorance, and revere the only God that exists, the God of the Universe and whose highest expression is in Humanity, exalted and enobled by knowledge, truth, and good lives.

Second. We deem it unreasonable that Elder Shelton requires us to prove by living witnesses that upheavals have ever taken place on this continent, when he ought to know that the man who was here when that little commotion took place has been dead several years. The Elder does not believe that the Andes, the Rocky Mountains, the Alleghanies, the Catskills, the White Mountains, and all the other mountains on the continent were once thrown up by internal convulsions produced by the formation of various gasses, but that it did once occur there is the strongest proof in the world. The strata of limestone, sandstone, granite, conglomerate, etc., the natural position of which is comparatively level, are found where these

upheavals have occurred, in all conceivable angles and sometimes even perpendicular, and often carried hundreds of feet above the same strata in adjacent localities, showing the force producing the rupture must have been tremendous. Our good Elder, however, finding nothing of this in the Bible, cannot believe a word of it. But as long as this very rational theory is sustained by such learned scholars and close students of nature as Lyell, Hitchcock, Humboldt, Miller, Denton, and other learned geologists, who have spent their lives in investigating the subject, we shall be compelled to be guided by them, though even Elder Shelton should exclaim, "what fools they all are to disagree with me," and "a learned fool is much more of a fool than an unlearned one like myself."

It is indeed an ignorant person that will insist that there have been no topographical changes upon the earth. They have taken place on a large scale not only on this hemisphere, but on the Eastern also. Some have been sudden and explosive, as when mountain ranges have been thrown up, others have been gradual and almost imperceptible. Professor Draper, one of the ripest scholars of our time, in his "Intellectual Development of Europe," in touching upon this subject gives a clear statement of the changes that have taken place upon the Eastern continent. He says: "For countless ages Asia has experienced a slow upward movement, not only affecting her own topography but likewise that of her European dependency. There was a time when the great sandy desert of Gobi was the bed of the sea which communicated through the Caspian with the Baltic, as may be proved not only by existing geographical facts, but also from geological considerations. It is only necessary

for this purpose to inspect the imperfect maps that have been published of the silurian or even the tertiary period. The vertical displacement of Europe during and since the last period, has indisputably been more than 2,000 feet in many places. There is not a shore in Europe which does not give evidence of changes: the mouths of the Rhine, as they were in Roman times are obliterated; the eastern coast of England has been cut away for miles. In the Mediterranean the shore-line is altogether changed; towns once on the coast are far away inland; others have sunk beneath the sea. Islands, like Rhodes, have risen from the bottom. The North Adriatic, once a deep gulf, has now become shallow; there are leaning towers and inclining temples that have sunk with the settling of the earth. On the opposite extremity of Europe the Scandinavian peninsula furnishes an instance of slow secular motion, the northern part rising gradually above the sea at the rate of about four feet in a century. This elevation is observed through a space of many hundred miles, increasing towards the north. The southern extremity on the contrary, experiences a slow depression.

“These slow movements are nothing more than what have been going on for numberless ages. Since the tertiary period two-thirds of Europe have been lifted above the sea. The Norway coast has been elevated 600 feet, the Alps have been upheaved 2,000 to 3,000, the Apennines 1,000 to 2,000. The country between Mont Blanc and Vienna has been thus elevated since the adjacent seas were peopled with existing animals.”

The same causes which have produced these results upon the Eastern continent have produced similar results on the Western. Where we now find high

grounds and even hills we have indubitable proofs that they were once a part of the ocean. Even in the short time our history extends into the past, changes in the mouths and deltas of our rivers, and shiftings in the sea-coasts have unmistakably occurred. The main upheavals, causing the mountain ranges of the continent to rise, may have occurred millions of years ago, but that they did once take place we shall continue to believe, Elder Shelton to the contrary notwithstanding. We shall accord to the geologists and scientists we have mentioned far more credibility than we possibly can to the pious Elder, who is, evidently guided more by blind faith in that which he knows nothing of, than by education and knowledge.

Third. We think it rather unkind in the Elder to "go back" in the way he does upon Brother Beecher. How would he like it, if he was sitting upon the ragged edge of despair and remorse, to have his brothers of the cloth turn their backs upon him? Many eminent clergymen have been just as bad as Henry Ward, but were not all so unlucky as to be caught just as he was. How do we know but Elder Shelton himself may not sometime have been just a little bit imprudent and loved the sisters of the fold a little too well? He ought to be more charitable toward an erring brother, and not cast stones unless he is sure he is without fault himself; and even then it would perhaps be unkind. He seems to doubt the genuineness of Brother Henry's orthodoxy. True, the Plymouth pastor has said some funny things and uttered some singular sentiments, but certainly he is all right on Jesus and the Holy Ghost. He goes very strong upon those, and in the sportsman's language, they are the "best cards in the pack." In fact, Henry Ward and

the Holy Ghost have some points of resemblance, if all reports are true; both have been attracted by females, both are said to be great comforters, both operate in secret, and both have engaged in the "overshadowing business." We hope the Elder will excuse us for the opinion that, in point of knowledge and talent, Henry Ward Beecher knows more in a minute than J. C. Shelton does in a week. He certainly ought to stick to him like a brother. The Plymouth pastor needs the sympathizing aid of every friend, lay and clerical; let not Elder Shelton desert him.

Fourth. Our friend asks us to point out what books we believe better than the Bible. That is rather of a heavy contract, and we will not undertake it. There are so many, our columns would not be sufficient to contain the titles. We will, however, indicate a few. We think the Spelling-book, the Reader, the Grammar and Arithmetic are better than many parts of the Bible. Works on Astronomy, Chemistry, Geology, Physiology, Botany, History and all the Sciences are better. Among the special authors we would prefer to the Bible, are Shakespeare, Pope, Byron, Moore, Burns, Combe, Macauley, Buckle, Leckey, Froude, Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Mill, Tyndall, Fiske, Draper, Emerson and many, many others. These teach a man something he ought to know, and the knowledge improves him and leads him on to higher and grander elevations of usefulness. Whereas with the Bible there is no advance in knowledge or progress. It presupposes man was made faultless and upright at first, but that in a few hours he fell into great disgrace and degradation, and with all the help that gods and angels have been able to extend to him, he has not yet near recovered the position from which he fell,

Science and knowledge are what the world needs to help us on in our upward journey, and they are ever calling us up higher and higher. But the Bible remains on the low plane whence it emanated, maintaining its same crudities and imperfections, its same silly and obscene stories, illy calculated as they are to enlarge the mental calibre of the world, or to impart knowledge, usefulness or value. The Bible is a reflex of the ignorance and superstition of past ages with no provision for progress or advance in knowledge, and is far behind the more reliable, needful, practical and truthful information which science is to-day giving the world.

Fifth. We think, inasmuch as they are Christians who believe in Christ, and that there could have been no Christians before Christ, it is a singular process by which the Elder makes Christians of Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives. Let us enquire if Noah was a Christian, was it a proof of it when he got drunk and lay naked in his tent in a drunken sleep, and when afterward he cursed his son Ham for laughing at him when in that condition, thus dooming the innocent descendants of Ham to abject servitude and degradation for thousands of years?

Sixth. We are decidedly of the opinion that Elder Shelton, like thousands of other Christians, is greatly behind the spirit of the age in still hugging to his bosom the antiquated and absurd fables and vagaries of past barbarous ages under the vain delusion that, in those old legends and unreliable stories, he finds true wisdom and knowledge. It is getting along too far in the Nineteenth Century to give preference to the idle, exaggerated tales of three thousand years ago, written, as they were, by persons who scarcely

had the first glimpses of scientific truth, in place of the advanced thought and scientific research of far abler minds of the present day.

Priests, as a rule, are slow to accept the teachings of science. For centuries they have zealously fought it with acrimony and hate, knowing well it is calculated to lessen their rule over the minds of men. But in spite of their opposition, in spite of the fetters they have sought to place upon the growing limbs of young science, she has already far outgrown their reach, and bids fair soon to liberate the world from this rule of bondage which for so many centuries priestcraft has fastened upon it. We hail the auspicious promise of the near future of the world, and would gladly see all Priests and Elders throw away the effete errors and mythological absurdities of olden times, and embrace the better teachings of truth and reason which are illuminating the mental and moral horizon.

We are pleased in some directions to see indications of progress and intelligence on the part of the clergy. The Rev. T. W. Fowle, M.A., Vicar of St. Luke's, Natford Place, London, in a work of over four hundred pages, recently published under the title of *The Reconciliation of Religion and Science*, and which was dedicated to the Dean of Stanley, a dignitary of the Church of England, next perhaps in authority to the Archbishop of Canterbury, gives utterance to most advanced and liberal sentiments when we consider the contracted and sectarian views the clergy usually take upon this subject. The distinguished author, assuming that science and religion stand face to face in deadly conflict, proposes the following as preliminary to peace: "The mode of reconciliation suggested in

this book consists in the absolute and unconditional surrender of the province of religion to the methods of scientific investigation." He then draws a striking illustration from history. The advent of Modern Science he compares to the invasion of England by the conquering Normans, who, after their decisive victory at the battle of Hastings, were themselves absorbed into the common life of the subjugated race. He then continues in the following eloquent passage :

"The application of our parable is easy. The hour is coming when upon this field of intellectual controversy, the army of science will storm the last stronghold of religion regarded from the intellectual side. Reason will conquer herself the kingdom, which, even in the act of admitting the inevitable result it seems so hard to believe, can really belong to her. But 'Magna sunt facta et prevalebunt.' The methods, the dogmas, the assumptions, the opinions, the creeds of Christendom will pass under the yoke of scientific enquiry, and will continue to exist only so far as science permits and approves. And with the death of the old theology will begin the new religion, just as when the Norman soldiers sat down on English soil to eat their meal on the night of victory, began, then and there, that process which was to make them more English than the English themselves." The book is filled with similar sensible utterances.

The sentiments of this clergyman strike us as far in advance of Elder Shelton's, and we would, in the kindest manner, urge the latter to open his eyes and look about himself ; to brush away the mists that obstruct his vision, and endeavor to obtain a clearer view of the sun of science and truth. In another half century but few clergymen will be found who will insist

that the stories in Genesis are to be taken literally, but that they are simply a legend or fable, and of no practical value save to exhibit the literary taste and ability of olden times.

Speaking of the conflict between science and superstition, we like the way in which Dr. Draper thus states it: "As to the issue of the coming conflict, can any one doubt? Whatever is resting on fiction and fraud will be overthrown. Institutions that organize impostures and spread delusions must show what right they have to exist. Faith must render an account of herself to reason. Mysteries must give place to facts. Religion must relinquish that imperious, that domineering position which she has so long maintained against science. There must be absolute freedom for thought. The ecclesiastic must learn to keep himself within the domain he has chosen, and cease to tyrannize over the philosopher, who, conscious of his own strength and the purity of his motives, will bear such interference no longer."

We would willingly give Elder Shelton more of our views, but our remarks have already far transcended the limits we prescribed. We know not whether he will consider our arguments "solid," but if he will come again, we will be only too happy to enlighten him to the extent of our ability.

[From THE TRUTH SEEKER of June 1st, 1875.]

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## Another Blast from Elder Shelton.

This doughty defender of the old flood story has favored us with another of his luminous epistles. We hesitated some before cumbering our columns with such senseless twaddle, fearing our readers will not thank us for intellectual pabulum of so low a grade; but the Elder, doubtless, likes to be heard, and we will humor him this once more.

If regrets were availing, we would indulge in sorrow that this man of great faith should be so deficient in civility and common courtesy, and should employ expressions gentlemen never use. We do not care very much about his calling us "a dirty fellow;" his calling us so does not make us so; nor we cannot see with what propriety he gives us such an appellation. We bathe pretty often, and do not grovel in filth or dirt. Does the good Elder think we are "dirty" because we cannot come to the same absurd conclusions he does? We imagine he and his foul names are hardly worth minding. We remember, when a boy, of passing through a farm-yard, when an old gander pursued us, and hissed at us fearfully. We, of course, felt insulted, and wished to be revenged. We soon, however, regained our equanimity and remarked to ourselves, "don't mind him, he is only a goose." The same remark is appropriate in this case. Since our boyhood we have met more than one insolent goose, but we try not to be annoyed at their hissing.

Now listen to what our amiable and intellectual Elder has to say. We render him *verbatim et literatim et spellatim*:

BROOKSVILLE, BLOUNT CO., ALA., May 7th, 1875.

MR. D. M. BENNETT, *Sir*:—I received one of your so, called Truth seekers, or more properly, one of your, Falsehood Depositorys, in which you have in vain, tried to answer the flood question.

First you complain of my bad grammer, I will say to you that it is good enough for Infidels to read, and no Christian will complain against it. You have also accused us of 'lieng.' but the beauty of it is you have not shown that it is so. The fact of the thing is, Mr. Editor you are a kind of a dirty fellow anny how, and you are not the first dirty fellow I ever gothold of. I come in contact with one of your sort a few years back, and in our debate which lasted two days, he got so mad he swore by the seven Stars and every thing else he could think of. He showed his Ignorance and want of truth and veracity to the whole audience. But Sir, he did not go so far in folly, and madness, as you have gone, in trying to answer my truths which is founded on the Bible, Science, and Philosophy. I thought at the start; you would get mad, but did not think that you would betray your Ignorance so far as to Blaspheme against the Holy Gohst, in comparing poor old Beecher to the Holy Gohst, and accusing the God of Heaven of Whoredoms. Sir, by this you have brought upon yourself the Contempt of all Christians who read it, and even the Just Censure of all moderate Infidels that read your Paper. This shows at once the Viper blood, that is in you, and shows too, the deep seated malice, and hatred, you have against the Christian, and that you are not actuated by the love of Truth as you hypocritically contend. And my private opinion, is, Mr. Editor that you have been a Preacher in your young days among some of the Orthodox Christian denominations, and probably have been turned out for some unchristian act, and then turned around with a malicious heart, and try to wage a war of extermination against the poor Christians. If it is not so in your case, it has been so in many cases.

Second, we called on the Editor in our last Article to prove by indubitable witness, or evidences, that there has been upheavels in the Earth on the continent of America, since the flood. The Editors pitiful excuse is, that the man is dead that knew about it. 'yes' and the next time

you hear a puffing Infidel talking about those upheavels in the Earth, the Witnesses will be dead again. The fact is if the Editor would receive the Bible declaration, about the great deep being broken up he would understand how it is that the different Stratas of Sandstone and Lime, are mixed up together in a conglomerated mass in certain Localities, and if he could believed that it rained 40 days and nights as the Bible states he could have told how that ridge which H. Scott, lives on in Blount Co, was formed some 40 feet above a Strata of Soil, Timber &c he could see that the 40 days rain would make a flood sufficient to wash the dirt and gravel from a high ridge, close by and from this small ridge, above this soil and timber, but he has entirely failed to give us any thing, but his bare assertions and when called on to prove them, stated that the witnesses are dead. The fact is the Editor is driven to his last shifts, and to the wall, so much so that he became extremely absent minded in trying to answer our last Article, and got entirely out of soap and Tallow too, and went to planting Cucumber Seeds, and turning bed bugs into frogs. I laughed; when I saw the poor old grey headed Editor engaged in turning bedbugs into frogs, but from what I see of the Truth Seeker he had as well go on with the Bedbug business, and if the Editor lacks a supply of the little Pesky Creatures, we will send him some from Alabama by Express clear of freight charges. The People of Alabama would not care if he would turn all their bedbugs into frogs. Thirdly, after the frog matter, he tries to gass us Considerably, he is silly enough to try to make us believe that the Rocky and other Large Mountains, have been upheaved or formed from the force of Gass beneath. Now a man that would resort to such pitiful Subterfuges, in order to get rid of Bible truths, the Devil ought to get him, and then he would get Gass enough, but it would be Sulphuric Gass. Now Sir, as little as you think of it I have read Volumes of illustrious scientific works from noble minded and generous hearted Philosophers and Scientists, but none of them will agree with you in your Gass Theory. There is none but a few poisoned hearted Infidel writers that Claim Such a Theory. I wish Sir you would give me one hundred Dollars for every acknowledged Scientific man

that will say that the Bible and Science is in Harmony with each other, and go hand in hand. I would be willing to give you a hundred Dollars for every one to The Contrary. The Bible itself is full of Science; for instance, David in one of his Psalms calls the world the round world and bids it to rejoice. Job says he maketh the weight for the wind Job was Scientific, and understood that the air had weight, and again he says, He Stretcheth out the North over the Empty place, and hangeth the Earth upon nothing.

Solomon Says, all the Rivers run into the Sea; yet the Sea is not full; unto the place from whence the Rivers come, thither they return again. Then Sir there is a grander and more Sublime Science taught in the Bible, and that is the Science of mans Salvation. You told us a great tale about a traveller from Japan and China, how honest they were and how fine they were getting along in Infidelity; you will have to prove to me, that man was a truthful man, before I will have it. But in order to prove to you that he Lied, I will take you to some Large Sea-port Town, and I will Show you a Jappan or Chinaman Water Craft, or trading vessel, I will bring it along side of an American or European Ship of trade, and draw the contrast and say here is Infidel or heathen, and here is Christian, here is Bible, here is Science, and the blessings of civil and religious Institutions, it would compare about as favorable as a small Bird Trap, set up by the side of a fine mansion. Then go with one to the interior of Africa where they eat Snails and Bugs and also among the tribes of Indians and then turn to the Bible and Christian lands, and see the difference. Sir all the elevation and refinement you have about you, you owe it all to the Bible. Sir we do not displace the God of the Universe as you say about us, for a Jewish God, but we worship the great Jehovah or Creator of the Universe, who rules and governs all things, he is the first great Cause of all things, we prove this from Revelation, but you have no Revelation to back your blind Ideas, and in your blindness suppose an impossible thing, and that is that the Universe was always in existence. Sir I thought I had an opponent when I commenced correspondence with you, but unless you give me something better than Gass, Cu-

cumbers, Bedbugs, and Frogs, you had better turn the matter over to some of your brother Infidels. I have written this Article as short and condensed as the subject will allow. You Can answer it if you see proper, if you do, dont waste so much Ink and Paper in trying to answer it, but I suppose the Ink and Paper is your own property and the Columns of your paper had as well be filled with that as any thing Else.

ELD. J. C. SHELTON.

REMARKS. We have heard of people who knew so little that they did not know when they were whipped, and we think Elder Shelton is one of them. After we pointed out explicitly a baker's dozen of his falsehoods, uttered in his last article, and proved them to be positively false, he now exultingly says, "the beauty of it is you have not shown it is so." He reminds us of the fellow who stole a sheep, and after he and his family had eaten the flesh, the pelt, or skin, was found at his house and identified. When arrested for sheep stealing he chuckled and said: "Aha! you found the pelt, but the beauty of it is you didn't find the mut-ton!"

The Elder informs us he met a man in debate a few years since. He fails to tell us what subject they debated but we are left to infer the other fellow came off second best, for the Elder made him swear by the seven stars and every thing he could think of. The Elder ought to have told us what the fellow got mad at. Possibly it was at the Elder's suavity and good-breeding. We fear the unfortunate man did not have our early experience with the goose. If this man was the equal of Elder Shelton what a pair of intellectual giants they must have been! We would willingly perform a "Sabbath day's journey" to see such brave knights measure their steel. Just think of it! For two whole days these mental gladiators astonished and electrified

their audience. Great as this unknown man must have been, to go through what he did, it is perhaps not strange that his mind gave way at last, and he swore by the seven stars. Possibly he thought the Elder was seven giants in one. We are pleased that while this opponent must have been great, the Elder thinks he did not equal us in some points.

We are more pleased with this compliment than with the following one, that he thinks we have at some time been a preacher in an orthodox church. We really can't take that as much of a compliment: and notice how he puts it. After calling us a "dirty fellow," after accusing us of blasphemy, hypocrisy, and falsehood, he comes to the conclusion that we were once a preacher. It seems, then, the Elder thinks these qualities go together. If it is so we deem him more correct in this than in most of his other positions.

We wish to disabuse the Elder's mind, as well as to vindicate our character. We may have had our faults; we may have erred on the right hand and on the left; we are poor, and have some poor relations, but thanks to our stars, or some other good influence, we have never yet got so low as to be a preacher. We have never taken money from simple-minded and mistaken people under the pretense of dispensing to them the bread of life, of interceding for them at the throne of Deity and pretending to know more about God and the Devil and the future world than they did. No, no, we have never been a preacher! We have been a son of toil. The little money we have been able to get possessed of has been honestly procured. We have been conscientiously opposed to taking something for nothing, and have meant to tell the truth; hence we could not have been an orthodox

preacher, and would not be one, were we to live a dozen lives. Neither have we ever been expelled from any church, society or association. The Elder will have to try again.

Equally at fault is the Elder when he sees us a "poor, grey-headed old man." We are not poor in flesh, having as much on our bones as we find convenient or useful. We do not know that we have a grey hair in our head, but if it was all grey, it would be no disgrace. Neither are we quite as old as Mathuselah was said to be. While we are fully as old as we ever were, we have seen the time when we were as young as anybody. We mention these small points to show the Elder how easy it is for him to be mistaken. In fact, we think him mistaken in nearly every instance.

The Elder seems rather pleased with our mention of the bed-bug and frog, and just for his pleasure we are perfectly willing they should be incorporated into the flood story, so he can have the satisfaction of referring to them often, thinking about them, and believing in them. He suggests that we change all the bed-bugs into frogs. We beg to be excused. It is not in our line. We cheerfully refer him to his God and to Moses. They are said at one time to have been very extensively engaged in the frog making business; literally filling a large country with them, including the fields, houses, chambers, beds, ovens and kneading troughs. As the Elder is a man of prayer, and as he wishes the bed-bugs to be changed to frogs, if he will just ask his God to do the little job for him, possibly he may be gratified. Perhaps he would not like quite as many frogs as were produced on the occasion referred to, for it will be recollected old

Pharaoh became very much annoyed with them and importuned Moses to kill them off, and that caused a terrible stench in the whole land. We think upon the whole, it will be better for the Elder to try and make out with what frogs he has down in Alabama, and if he is overrun with bed-bugs, to wash his beds with soap-suds, and apply a solution of *corrosive sublimate*, mixed with spirits turpentine or kerosene. We assure him it is effectual, if thoroughly applied.

The Elder asserts we are "driven to our last shift." He is greatly mistaken; he is not half so powerful as he imagines he is. In the first place, we do not wear *shifts*, and have not for several years. If he means *shirts*, he is still wrong, for we are happy in assuring him we have half a dozen clean ones ahead. It has not always been so with us, but just now happens to be. He says, also, we are "entirely out of soap and tallow." We don't know how he should be so well informed about our soap and tallow, unless he has been prying around our premises. So far as soap is concerned, he is mistaken; we have several pieces on hand, and never allow ourselves to get entirely out. Tallow we have very little use for, and keep no supply by us. By the elegant metaphors the Elder uses, we are led to infer that, in addition to preaching, he is engaged in the soap manufacture. If this is so, we think he ought to succeed in making large quantities if he can only procure the tallow, as he has *lie* enough to fill all emergencies.

The pious Elder seems a little horrified at our allusion to the third part of his deity, or the third member of the firm—the trinity—(and which it is, the world will never know), and says we have thereby brought

upon ourselves the contempt of all Christians. That may be so, and it may *not*. If it *is*, it is wholly immaterial, for their contempt is so much beneath ours that no harm at all is done. We did not say anything about the God of Heaven committing whoredoms. We briefly alluded to a circumstance imperfectly described by Matthew and Luke, the only authorities we have upon the extraordinary subject. The former merely says, Mary "was found with child of the Holy Ghost," without telling us who found it, what means were taken to determine the Holy Ghost to be the father, or without describing the process by which the business was accomplished. Joseph is said to have dreamed it, and as the whole story rests upon what somebody dreamed, it is hardly worth while for the world to attach much importance to it, or for the Elder to be very much shocked if we briefly allude to it.

Luke does not inform us how the remarkable operation was performed, nor does he even say it was performed at all, but says that an angel appeared to Mary and told her the Holy Ghost should *come upon her* and the power of the Highest should overshadow her, but he fails to tell us whether this wonderful event ever did occur, so all that the Christian world has to build their stupendous edifice upon, of their human deity being begotten by God or the Holy Ghost rests upon what a man said Joseph dreamed, and a vision another man said a Jewish maiden had. Weak authority indeed! When an unmarried girl gives birth to a child in these days, it cannot be explained upon any such theory. Nobody would think a dream or a vision a sufficient basis for such an event. And even if the girl should claim she had been overshadowed by

God, or that the Holy Ghost had "come upon her," nobody would believe her. They would sooner think some priest, with real body and organs like Parson Beecher or Elder Shelton had called upon her to administer comfort and consolation. The passage should probably have been translated holy *priest* instead of Holy Ghost.

We have no reason to suppose Mary ever claimed anything so absurd as the Holy Ghost cohabiting with her, but that a century or two later, when the story and the system were fixed up, some unknown person wrote the tale about Mary's vision, and it has been attributed to Luke, and his book at the Nicene Council came near being rejected as uncanonical, being retained by a single vote. If the vote of that one priest had been cast the other way, or he had been absent, the book called Luke would not have formed a part of the Bible; the world would have known very little about the *overshadowing* business, and we would not necessarily have shocked Elder Shelton or the Christian world by referring to it.

There is an indefiniteness about this overshadowing operation which is rather unsatisfactory to a person of an enquiring turn of mind, who wants to know what he believes and *why* he believes it. Physiologists and most well-informed persons understand that human beings, and animals too, are begotten through the agency of sexual organs, and they cannot conceive how the result can be produced in any other way. Is there any sense in supposing Jesus was begotten by a process entirely different from all other persons who have come into the world? If a natural father was needless in his case, why not a mother also? If the sexual organs were not employed, why would it not

have answered just as well for the Holy Ghost to have overshadowed a wash-tub or a meal-bag? There is, indeed, a mystery about this overshadowing matter, that believers and all others, inasmuch as their eternal happiness depends upon their believing it, are entitled to have better explained.

The Elder certainly has no occasion to be horrified at our brief allusion to it. The idea is not originally *Christian*. It was borrowed entirely from the Pagans. The belief that God had sexual intercourse with women prevailed in the world many centuries before Christianity was invented. The idea was common in many nations, and Mary was by no means the first virgin said to be made pregnant by Deity. *Christna* was said to be begotten by God, and born of the virgin Devanaguy a thousand years earlier than the story was revamped in reference to Mary and Jesus. Nearly in the same age of the world, Buddha was believed to have been divinely begotten of the virgin Mahamia. Alankee, the Gengkiskan's grandmother, was held to have been impregnated when a virgin by divine influence, by a ray from heaven. The Greek mythology is also full of the stories of Gods and females cohabiting together, thus producing demi-gods. Mercury was the son of Jupiter and Maia, (almost Mary); Apollo, the son of Jupiter and Latona; Hercules, the son of Jupiter and Alcmena; Bacchus, the son of Jupiter and Semele; Proserpine, the offspring of Jupiter and Ceres, and she was afterwards carried off by Pluto, and gave birth to Vulcan. Juno was the daughter of Saturn and Ops and became the wife of Jupiter; Pallas was the daughter of Jupiter and Metis, though the monstrous fable has it that as soon as he discovered Metis was pregnant, he ate her up, and in

consequence he conceived, and Pallas came forth ready armed from his brain. That she and all the rest of these offspring of gods came from somebody's brain, is very apparent. All these fables were believed in many centuries before Jesus or his Holy Ghost-father was thought of. It is needless to multiply these instances in heathen mythology of the gods cohabiting with females and producing offspring. The Titans, the Cyclops, the Heroes and the Giants were all descendants of the gods and women. It would be too tedious to mention them all, but the fact is fully assured and positive, that Christians have no patent for the sublime idea of a god holding sexual intercourse with a woman. They borrowed it, as we have seen, from the Pagans, as they did all others of their dogmas and creeds; and now such men as Elder Shelton are shocked if we allude to it, and they imagine we are sacrilegious and blasphemous to speak of such absurdities. They are not offended if we doubt the story of Christna, and Buddha, and Apollo, and Mercury, and Bacchus, and Æsculapius, and Hercules and all those other cases which are much older, more original and more reasonable than their story, but are immensely shocked if we doubt their inspired tale about Mary and the Holy Ghost. We cannot, however, see much difference in the sanctity of these different deities and fables, and we speak of one with the same freedom we do of the other, and we have no fear of being smitten or punished in consequence. If Elder Shelton thinks he can influence any of these gods to visit us in their dire wrath for our temerity, let him go ahead and do his worst. If this is "viper blood," let it be so. It is only the truth. Vipers and snakes, however, have much to do with his religious

belief and nothing with ours; so he probably has quite as much of the "viper blood" as we have.

The same veneration which the Christian feels towards his system, the Mahometan feels towards his, the Persian towards his, the Buddhist towards his, the Jew towards his and the Brahmin towards his. Even the deluded wretch who bows down to a crocodile, feels an amount of awe and veneration, and, like Elder Shelton, thinks a doubter or scoffer of his god ought to be smitten with vengeance most terrible. These devotees are all equally in the wrong—all deluded and mistaken, all equally superstitious; and we trust the light of science and truth will ere long shine in upon them and convince them of their darkness and error.

Apropos of the Holy Ghost, what does Elder Shelton know of him? We apprehend nothing. He does not even know how to spell his name correctly. He persists in spelling it G-o-h-s-t instead of G-h-o-s-t. If there is such a person as a Holy Ghost, and Elder Shelton should ever be fortunate enough to come into his presence, we fancy the Ghost will serve a writ of ejection upon him for bad orthography, and tell him to go back and attend spelling matches until he can learn to spell ghost correctly.

The Elder, by the-by, has a "bad spell" upon him with several words. He has made improvements upon Webster—at all events Webster and he disagree. We notice he uses one more "s" in spelling gas than Webster uses, but that is nothing. He probably has the right to two or three esses in gas if he wishes to use them, and to put a capital at one or both ends if he pleases. He also has a right to suppose there is such a gas as *sulphuric* gas, and he may have

found an account of it in some of the elaborate scientific volumes he boasts of having read; but ordinary scientists know nothing of such a gas. There is a sulphuric acid and a sulphurous acid, but they are different compounds. The first contains three equivalents of oxygen to one of sulphur, while the latter has but two of oxygen to one of sulphur. In the form of gas oxygen and sulphur do not combine in the proportions of three to one, but of two equivalents of oxygen to one of sulphur, and hence is sulphurous gas, and not sulphuric gas. In the nomenclature of chemistry the prefixes and suffixes have much to do in designating the exact constituency of the numerous compounds in existence. Of this Elder Shelton seems totally ignorant. Why should he not be?—there is nothing of it in the Bible. Let him remember the gas which he superstitiously supposes prevails in hell, and which he devoutly hopes we may some day have to breathe, is spelt with one “s”—not two nor three—and that a small “g” is usually thought to be big enough when writing it. We really hope before Elder Shelton is called upon to take that gas for a regular diet he will learn how to spell it and how to write it. So much for the Elder’s “*Gass*.”

We are not a little amused to hear the Elder quoting the Bible-scientists. He tries to make us think David knew the world was round because in Psalms lxxxviii in speaking of the terrors of God, it says: “They came round me daily like water, they encompassed me about together.” This passage has reference to troubles and afflictions, and not the slightest allusion to the shape and form of the earth; and there is not the least certainty that David ever wrote a word of it. There is no authority for asserting he

did. When King James' translators rendered this compilation of wild strains and extravagant invectives and cursings into English they labeled them the "Psalms of David," but, as we said, nobody knows that he wrote a word of them. Possibly he wrote some of them, where he wants his enemies cursed; but no Bible scholar thinks he wrote them all. In our opinion this "man after God's own heart" knew better how to be a brigand, and how to slaughter, rob and despoil neighboring nations, and how to obtain a poor man's wife with whom he had become enamored and wished for his own sensual gratification, by having her husband placed in the front of battle where he would be almost sure to be killed—we say he knew better how to do this, than to write psalms, or that the earth was a round ball. The Elder may be able to find much science in the Bible that we cannot. We can find nowhere in Psalms, or any part of the Bible, any mention of the earth or the world being round. The *ends* of the earth are often mentioned, the *foundation*, the *lower parts*, and the *uttermost parts* are frequently spoken of, but nothing is said about its roundity. The reason is, the writers knew nothing about its being round, and the sources whence they drew their inspiration—if they had any—were equally ignorant. Abraham did not know the earth was round, Moses did not know it, David did not know it, Solomon did not know it, and Jesus did not know it. None of the apostles, none of the Christian Fathers, none of the martyrs, none of the saints, none of the early popes bishops, nor priests knew it. A ten years old child of this day knows more of this great truth than all those distinguished men combined.

Copernicus, in the sixteenth century, was the great

mind who first made the grand discovery that the earth is round and revolves upon its own axis, and for giving utterance to this scientific truth the Christian Church persecuted him and sought this life. He was driven from friends and home, and was compelled to seek safety in a foreign country. Even Martin Luther, the great Reformer, called Copernicus "an old fool" for asserting that the earth is round. The fact of the rotundity of the earth contradicted all the old Bible philosophy, and the Church did its best to suppress it.

After the death of Copernicus, his disciple, Galileo, again gave utterance to the truth that the earth is round, that it revolves every day upon its own axis, and makes a revolution once a year round the sun. The Church again refused to suffer such dangerous doctrines to be taught, and the noble martyr to science was seized by the Church officials — was thrown into that infernal Christian torture-house called the "Holy Inquisition," and here the brave man was subjected to cruel torture for enunciating one of the most palpable truths of the Universe; and to save his life, being feeble and old, he was compelled to deny his firm and honest convictions, and to admit the earth stood still. He lived but a short time after his release, but he died exulting in the truth that "the earth still moves."

Solomon is another of Elder Shelton's Bible-scientists, and credits him with discovering that the rivers all run into the sea. Did it take "the wisest man" that ever lived to find out that fact? And is that the reason why he was called the *wisest* man? It might be supposed Solomon's seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines would have kept him so busy

that he could hardly find time to study geography or prosecute science. We conjecture the *woman science* was the science he understood the best of any.

Job is another of the Elder's Bible-scientists, and he quotes him as speaking of the "weight of the wind," "stretching out the North," and "hanging the earth." These ideas are perhaps sublime enough, but are not correctly expressed as modern scientists state them. It is thought Job investigated the subject of boils pretty thoroughly, for between God and Satan, he had a very hard time of it. Had he written a scientific treatise on "boils" we think he would have been accepted as good authority. The book of Job contains much beautiful language and many grand ideas. We have often thought it the most sensible book in the Bible. It makes nowhere any allusion to any character or event mentioned in other parts of the Bible. There is no date given by which its chronology can be even guessed at, though it is doubtless older than any part of the Jewish scriptures. The person who wrote it evidently knew something of astronomy, and talked freely about the stars, Arcturus, the Pleiades, and Orion, whereas these names are used nowhere else in the Bible, nor did its writers have any knowledge of astronomy. The book of Job is probably a drama or poem from the Chaldean language, and was borrowed or adopted by the Jews. The best scholars, Hebrew and others, agree that it is not Hebrew in character, that it was not written by a Jew, hence its divine origin and inspiration fall to the ground, for even Elder Shelton will hardly claim that anybody in olden times could have been inspired except a Jew.

After the Elder enumerates the delectable sciences

of the great book, he says, "there is a grander and more sublime science taught in the Bible, and that is the science of man's salvation." This shows the Elder does not know what science is. Is what he refers to, science? Let us see how much science it contains. The theory is about in this wise: God made the world according to a plan he had cogitated upon for thousands of years; he also made a nice garden, and in it planted a tree which bore inviting fruit: he made man of the dust and placed him in the garden, but finding he was lonely, he put him to sleep and took out one of his ribs, out of which he fashioned a young, plump, blooming, fascinating female. The man and woman probably would have got along very well had it not been for the fruit just mentioned and a big snake that God had also made, and which afterwards became the big, roaring Devil, the adversary of God, who has since successfully opposed God in every instance and defeated him in every encounter. God told the man he must not eat that fruit, although he had placed it there before him; but while the man was away in some other part of the garden the snake came along and got into conversation with the woman and persuaded her to taste of the fruit. She found it pleasant and induced her "old man" to try some when he came back. This little affair made God very angry and he turned them out of the garden he had prepared for them, cursing them severely, and placed a watchman at the gate to keep them out.

The man and woman however went into the business of raising children, and in a short time the earth became well populated. It seems the people did not do so well as they ought, and God became very sorry that he had ever made the world, or such a race of

troublesome beings. He concluded the best thing he could do would be to drown them out, and begin anew; so, after talking the matter over with Noah, and telling him how to get up a boat that would preserve himself and family, and a pair each of all the animals, birds, and insects, he opened the windows of heaven and let the rain fall down at such a rapid rate that in forty days and nights the whole earth was covered to the tops of the highest mountains, or five and a half miles deep, and everything was drowned except the fishes and the Noah-family in the ark.

More than a year passed from the commencement of the rain before Noah and his family could disembark to begin again the business of life; and the whole thing seems to have been another failure; for the people after the flood were just as bad as before it, and nothing was gained by the great freshet. God next felt as though he wanted a small portion of the human race to attach himself to, and who should share his special favors, so he entered into a contract with one Abraham, the son of an idolator, that his children should be his peculiar people, and that they should have more of his care and attention than any other portion of the human race. He agreed to stick to them forever, and that they should become as numerous as the sands of the sea-shore; but he had a great amount of trouble with this chosen tribe of his, and often got vexed with them almost beyond his powers of endurance, and he frequently threatened to wipe them off the face of the earth. In fact he did several times, for trifling offenses slay twenty, and forty, and fifty, and seventy thousand at a time. He also sold them into slavery, and then emancipated them; then led them forty years through a desert wilderness to

the land of Canaan, where he caused them to wage most cruel and exterminating wars upon the nations who occupied the country, and after a while they got to fighting among themselves, and tentwelfths of them wandered away and got lost, and have never been heard of since. The two-twenths continued to make him great trouble, absolutely destroying his peace of mind. He finally permitted their best city to be taken, and the magnificent temple they had built, to worship and honor him in, to be utterly destroyed, and let them go several times into slavery to be treated like beasts of burden. He finally seems to have given them up as a bad lot, and for two thousand years they have had to shift for themselves, having no more of God's special care than other folks. Thus it seems, to use a common expression, God rather "went back" on his contract with his chosen people. They never became one thousandth part as numerous as the sands of the sea shore, nor nearly as numerous as many other nations, and finally he seemed to take no greater interest in them than in other people.

Though God met with these repeated failures and disappointments he resolved to carry out the grand plan he had for thousands of years meditated upon, and in a most sublime and god-like manner to rescue from eternal destruction the miserable race he had created. So he came down out of heaven, and was born of a little Jew girl who had never had any sexual intercourse with any person of the male gender, except one Ghost. After he was born and grew up, he worked at the carpenter trade till he was about thirty years of age, when he began to preach about the country, and had a dozen fishermen who followed

him about from place to place something less than two years, when his peculiar and chosen people—the people too, he had come specially to save—put him to death in the most ignominious manner. He did not, however, remain dead; after thirty-six hours he came to life again, and in forty days he ascended up into heaven where he stays now most of the time.

This beautiful doctrine did not spread very fast for two hundred years, and the believers had to live part of the time in caves and other hiding-places; but at last a great heathen emperor named Constantine who had murdered his wife, his brother-in-law, his nephew, his eldest son and his father-in-law, and who was re-used absolution for his crimes by the pagan priests, but finding the Christian priests would grant it, and seeing he could use the new sect to his advantage he became a Christian, and though it never has had but about one-twentieth part as many followers as the older systems of religion in Asia, from that day it soon became the most fashionable and aristocratic religion in the southern part of Europe, and at the same time the most cruel and bloody in the whole world. Over fifty millions of unfortunate people have been put to death in its name, and millions of priests have been fed and pampered in idleness, simply to dole out dogmas to the ignorant, superstitious masses, assuring them that those who bow in submission to their dictation shall go to heaven and wear a crown, and a white robe, and bow eternally before a white throne singing a song which has no end; while those who do not thus bow in submission, or cannot believe the story, will be cast into outer darkness and roast for millions of years in the eternal flames of fire and brimstone, with nothing to breathe but “sulphuric

Gass." Is it not a pretty picture? If it is a true one, it is indeed a great pity that God ever experimented in making a world of human beings. Non-existence would have been infinitely better than such a fate. This is Elder Shelton's grand, beautiful "science of salvation." If it is a science, he, and such as he are welcome to the whole of it! We want no part in it. We much prefer the article of science taught by Galileo, Humboldt, Darwin, Spencer, Huxley and Draper. Their teachings possess so much more of truth and consistency, so much less of superstition, absurdity and falsehood that we altogether prefer them.

A very noticeable trait in Elder Shelton is his demand for living and reliable witnesses. We spoke of the upheavals that have occurred upon the earth, and he demands a living witness. Probably some of these upheavals took place tens of thousands of years ago and perhaps millions of years ago; yet he says, "I want a living witness." We gave as authority Prof. Draper of this city, a man now alive and who is second in scientific attainments and reliability to no man in this country, in proof that upheavals have recently taken place in Europe, that half of Norway was elevated two feet or more, and that parts of the Alps were raised three hundred feet; but as the Bible says nothing about it, Elder Shelton won't believe a word of it. The same when we told him of information we received from an intelligent, honorable gentleman, an officer of the navy and a son of a respected patron of ours. Yes, when we, a man of veracity and a Truth Seeker, narrated a correct account of the happy and peaceful condition of the people of Japan, and which is corroborated by many writers, he hoots at it and calls the gentleman "a liar." While he is so incredu-

ious about events and occurrences of modern times, which, too, are entirely authentic and probable, it is amusing to see how easy it is for him to accept without the slightest difficulty the most absurd tales that unknown persons said occurred 5000 or 6000 years ago, and of an impossible character, written nobody knows when, nobody knows where, and nobody knows by whom; but because they are bound up in a book and called *the Bible*, and priests affirm it is the "word of God," he can swallow every word of it without a grimace, and look up for more. How would his Bible fare if living witnesses, or known witnesses, even, were required to sustain it? It would certainly go down! But Elder Shelton and all like him are so full of faith, and are so ready to accept every absurd tale marked "Divine," that they care not who the writer was, or whether the story is impossible or absurd. So it purports to be Jewish or Christian, "it is all right"—"it is the word of God."

The Elder talks about producing scientists who sustain the Bible story, and wants us to pay one hundred dollars a piece for them. We happen not to have a very large amount of money to spare, but we hesitate not to guarantee him \$100 each for every first-class scientist that will say he believes the Universe was made in six days from nothing, less than 6000 years ago; that the earth is older than the sun, and brought forth trees, and plants, and vegetables, perfecting seeds and fruits before the sun existed to impart light and heat; that it ever rained to the depth of 80,000 feet in forty days over the entire earth, or seven hundred and fifty feet per day, over thirty-one feet an hour, or six inches a minute for six weeks, without intermission; that such a vast body of water could evaporate

and be held up by the atmosphere, or otherwise disposed of ; that a man could cause the sun and moon to stand still merely by speaking to them ; that there ever was a time when neither rain nor dew fell upon the earth for three and a half years ; that three men should be thrown into a fiery furnace, made seven times hotter than usual, without their being burned at all, or a thread of their garments scorched. We say, that for every eminent scientist that will affirm he believes all these absurdities, and scores more of similar ones with which the Bible is filled, we will hold ourselves in readiness to pay the Elder his price, and feel that the money has been well invested. But remember they must be *Scientists*, not Elders, Sunday-school teachers, bigots nor fools. We do not believe a single sound scientist can be found who, for a moment believes any such nonsense ; and the men of ordinary common sense are getting very scarce who longer accept such idle tales. Sensible clergymen, even, are fast disavowing such silly stories and are trying to modify these statements, or make the language mean something else. The Rev. O. A. Burgess, Professor in the Theological Seminary of Indianapolis, a man who, in natural or acquired ability, would, in any community, rank several degrees higher than Elder Shelton, in a recent debate with B. F. Underwood admitted that Noah's flood was only local in character, and probably did not extend beyond Asia Minor. But Elder Shelton will have it that it extended to the opposite side of the globe, even to Alabama, and covered the ridge on which Mr. H. Scott lives, in Blount county — poplar trees, and all — with gravel forty feet deep. We presume it requires an Ignoramus like the Elder, to believe such an event possible ; and

it is probably useless to make much effort to get good, hard sense into the heads of such. They have so much *faith* there is not much room for *sense* and *reason*.

As the Elder calls for a living witness to convince him of the truth of upheavals on this continent, we will, before dropping him, humor him in this respect. The witness is one who stands as high as any living man, one who is extensively known over the entire civilized world, and though his philosophy may not in all cases be accepted, his facts always are. The name of this distinguished witness is Charles Darwin A.M., F.R.S., of London. In 1831 and '32 the British Government sent out the ship *Beagle* to South America on a voyage for scientific purposes. Prof. Darwin was commissioned to accompany the expedition to make observations in Natural History, Geology, etc. While in South America he had excellent opportunities to witness the effects of earthquakes and volcanoes, as well as upheavals which in various places occurred. In describing a severe earthquake which took place in South America, Feb. 20th, 1832, while he was in the country, and which comprised in all, some three hundred separate shocks of greater or lesser magnitude, the effects of which extended over one thousand miles, he mentions the towns that were destroyed; numberless buildings that were utterly demolished; the frightful fissures that were made in the earth, and goes on to say: "The most remarkable effect of this earthquake was the permanent elevation of the land. There can be no doubt that the land around the Bay of Concepcion was upraised two or three feet, at the Island of St. Maria (about thirty miles distant) the elevation was still greater: on one

part Capt. Fitz Roy found beds of putrid muscle shells still adhering to the rocks ten feet above high water mark : the inhabitants had formerly dived at low water spring tides for these shells." [This proves the upheaval must have been twenty or thirty feet.] "The elevation in this province is particularly interesting from its having been the theatre of several other violent earthquakes ; and from the vast number of sea-shells scattered over the land up to the height of 600, and I believe, 1000 feet. At Valparaiso similar shells are found at the height of 1300 feet. It is hardly possible to doubt that this elevation has been effected by successive small uprisings such as that which accompanied or caused the earthquakes of this year ; and likewise by an insensibly slow rise which is certainly in progress in some parts of this coast."

After narrating the powerful effects of the earthquake seven hundred and fifty miles in one direction and our hundred miles in an other, he takes occasion to say, "we may confidently come to the conclusion that the forces which slowly and by little starts uplift continents, and those which at successive periods pour forth volcanic matter from open orifices are identical. From many reasons I believe the frequent quakings of the earth, on this line of coast, are caused by the rending of the strata necessarily consequent on the tension of the land when upraised and then injection by fluidified rock. This rending and injection would, if repeated often enough (and we know earthquakes repeatedly effect the same areas in the same manner, form a chain of hills ; and the linear island of St. Mary, which was upraised thrice the height of the surrounding country seems to be undergoing this process. I believe the solid axis of a mountain differs in

its manner from a volcanic hill only in the molten stone having been repeatedly injected instead of having been repeatedly ejected." In this way he believed the vast mountain ranges were gradually thrown up from time to time as these exterior earthquakes occur, and he also believed the surface of the earth was as variable from the accretions and explosions of internal gasses, as the surface of the water, in a comparative degree.

In speaking of his observations on the northern coast of Chili, he uses this language: "I have convincing proofs that this part of the continent has been elevated near the coast four hundred to five hundred, and in some parts from one thousand to thirteen hundred feet since the epoch of existing shells; and further inland the rise has probably been greater." "At Lima a sea-beach has certainly been upheaved eighty to ninety feet within the Indio-human period."

Mr. Darwin narrates finding sea shells and other washings of the ocean in many places hundreds of feet above the surface of the water, showing at some time or times great upheavals have taken place. He also speaks of a pyramidal island in the ocean, around whose borders soundings are seventeen hundred feet, showing at some time it was thrown up by the internal forces. He also gives an account of a new island coming to the surface by the effects of an earthquake. He also believed in England, France, Switzerland, and many other countries, the same condition of internal commotion had at some age of the world taken place, by which the mountain ranges had been produced, and that quietness had succeeded the spending of their internal forces. But we cannot quote him

further now. These interesting statements may be found in his *Journal of Researches in Natural History and Geology, during the voyage of H. M. S. Beagle*; two volumes; published by Harper & Brothers.

Prof. Darwin is one of the men Elder Shelton thinks a poison-hearted Infidel, and one who resorts to "pitiful subterfuges" in order to get rid of Bible truths, and one whom the Devil ought to get, and immerse in the flames of hell forever, for presuming to bring any facts to light that clash with the Bible story. Let the Elder enjoy this beautiful thought if it affords him pleasure. In the meantime the sensible portion of the world regard Charles Darwin as one of the greatest minds, and one of the most reliable authorities our time has produced. By him we have proved the positive occurrence of upheavals on this continent, and we hardly think Elder Shelton, by his ignorant sneers and idiotic slurs, can gainsay the facts Darwin establishes.

We are not sure such ponderous minds as Elder Shelton's can accept testimony so obscure as Prof. Darwin's, and he, doubtless, will still insist that there have been no upheavals on this continent because the Bible says nothing about it, and will still claim that all the mountain ranges were caused by Noah's flood, when the "foundations of the great deep were broken up"; and that no changes have taken place in the earth except what are mentioned in the Bible. Is it not a little curious that the flood which was sent to cover the tops of the highest mountains should at the same time have brought these very mountains into existence? This is a specimen of Elder Shelton's logic. What a great mind!

We will not object, however, should the Elder

still believe in the flood and all the other monstrous Bible stories, if he finds they suit his grade of intellect. We are convinced, nevertheless, that people of good sense are ceasing to believe them, and fast turning their attention to scientific authors, and informing themselves on subjects of which the ignorant writers of the Bible had not the slightest conception.

We will be content to let the Elder continue to imagine in his simple heart that the world is indebted to the Bible for the advances that have been made in knowledge, education, civilization, law, and the arts and science, though there is not a word of truth in it. It has given the world none of these; but has been the source of incomparable error, mental blindness, superstition, carnage and bloodshed—which can be easily shown. But if the great Alabamian derives pleasure from the follies and absurdities he fondly clasps to his bosom, it is not in our heart to tear them from him, and thus render him unhappy. Let him be “joined to his idols,” let him still dream on about miracles and floods, and ghosts and gods, and devils and bibles and revelations, until he has lived out his days and gives place to those who will exercise their thought, their reason and their common sense.

We can follow Elder Shelton no longer; we have, we fear, already given him more attention than his mental calibre and his low estimate of good-breeding would seem to justify.

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*Boston, Mass., January 29, 1875,*

BY B. F. UNDERWOOD.

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*Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen:*—I was prevented this afternoon, by fatigue of travel, and illness consequent on my very efforts to reach this city in order to participate in these demonstrations, from speaking, and did I not feel a special interest in this occasion, I should not attempt to speak this evening.

I understand, although I have had no time to engage even in the most informal conversation with the managers of these meetings since my arrival, that the object is to honor the name of Thomas Paine, to commemorate his services, and to dedicate this Hall to Freethought. I deem these objects worthy of the demonstrations that I have seen, and I almost wish, nay, I surely wish, if the theory of our Spiritualistic friends be true, that Thomas Paine would give us a "materialization" to-night, (applause and laughter); that he were present on this occasion, that he might

see this sea of faces before him, assembled for the purpose of hearing words in honor of his name, and dedicatory of this Hall; that he might himself stand up before us, apparently a living, flesh-and-blood human being, and give us some trenchant, stirring, thrilling sentences, such as individualized the writings which he left behind him, and express his gladness at the great advancement that has been made since the time in which he lived and walked the earth. (Applause.)

I delight to speak the praise of Thomas Paine, not because I concur in all the sentiments that he advanced—for perhaps there are few persons who are not extremely orthodox in their views who differ more widely from Thomas Paine on some philosophical and scientific questions than myself; but I delight to speak the praises of Thomas Paine because he was a pioneer in the cause of Freethought, because he prepared the way, made it easy for others to follow him, and to go far beyond the position that he took. Thomas Paine was a man who did great and noble service in his day and generation, and we should be ungrateful if, because we think we occupy more advanced positions than he did, we should neglect to give him his meed of praise.

In the first place, Thomas Paine's services have been ignored, and they have been ignored because of his very honesty, his frankness, and his fidelity to himself and the truth. He did great and noble service to this country, and had it not been for the fact that after he had given up his political services, he went still further and gave us his honest opinion on religion, he would be one of the men most honored by the present generation.

Every person who has but a smattering of American

history, must know that at the very time when our fathers were sending their petitions to Great Britain, full of assurances of their loyalty, full of assurances that they were devoted to the mother country, and that they only wanted to be placed back where they had been up to the year 1763—every person, I say, must know that at that time Thomas Paine came out and told our fathers that fidelity to themselves, that honor and happiness alike demanded that they should assume a different attitude toward the oppressive and infamous British Government; that it was their duty, not simply to whine about grievances, but to tell Great Britain that they were no longer bound to yield obedience to the Government; that they had a right to affirm their own sovereignty and their own independence. His little book "Common Sense," a work remarkable for its terseness, was published January 17, 1776.

The effect of that work was wonderful. It attacked monarchical government; it attacked the idea that we were under a duty to pay obedience and allegiance to the British Government. It portrayed the excellence of Republican institutions; it pointed out the practicability of independence; it called upon the Colonies to rise in their dignity and in their courage, and to establish a Republic—a Republic in which there should be no distinction between the peasant and the peer; in which there should be no titles of nobility nor badges of prerogative; in which there should be no religious disabilities; but in which there should be, on the contrary, real equality among mankind; where conduct and character should be the only conditions of preferment and of honor; where the voice of the people should be the supreme law of the land; and

which should be an asylum where the oppressed of all nations might come and find protection and brotherhood.

When these sentiments were first advanced, it is difficult for us to understand the effect they had, because we are now familiar with Republican institutions; we are familiar with criticisms of the British Constitution and monarchical government; but at that time, our fathers, with very rare exceptions, were devoted to Great Britain; they thought the British Constitution was the perfection of wisdom; they thought the British form of government could not be surpassed; and when Thomas Paine came out and advocated rebellion and revolution, the great mass of the American people were shocked, and there was actually a committee appointed to answer his work, by some of the leading statesmen of the country—not because they did not endorse in their own hearts, but because they thought the promulgation of such doctrines was premature, and would have a tendency to defeat the very object they had in view, which was to obtain a redress of their grievances, and to be placed back in the position in which they were before the tea tax and the paper tax were imposed. At first "Common Sense" aroused indignation, but it met a response in the hearts of the people, and the work spread rapidly. Edition after edition was issued, until a hundred thousand copies were circulated; even at a time when we had a population of only about three millions. The opposition diminished, and the tide grew stronger and stronger, until it bore down all opposition, and from New England to the Carolinas there was apparently but one voice, and that voice called for the Declaration of American Independence and the establishment of

a free country. In the July following—that July which we have pleasure in celebrating every year—appeared the manifesto that is now known throughout the world as the Declaration of American Independence. (Applause.)

The effect of this work of Thomas Paine to which I have referred, has not been sufficiently appreciated by the ordinary reader, because our historians, fearful, perhaps, that if they should give the exact truth, it would render their works unpopular, or from prejudice against Paine's religious position, have either entirely omitted any reference to the facts, or else they have only given a paragraph where pages alone could do him anything like justice. So, if we want to know the facts in regard to the influence that work produced, we must go back to the very sources of American history, to those sources which Bancroft and other historians have consulted; we must go back to the chronicles and correspondence of those times; and we shall find that they speak in unmistakable language regarding the influence which Paine exerted in forming our Government. For instance, Washington, two months after the publication of "Common Sense," speaks of it as working a "powerful change" in public opinion. Gen Lee, in a letter to Washington, says: "I own myself convinced by the arguments of the necessity of a separation." Lossing, in his "Field Book of the Revolution," says: "Common Sense was the earliest and most powerful appeal in behalf of Independence, and probably did more to fix that idea firmly in the public mind than any other instrumentality." Morse, in his "Annals of the Revolution," says: "That the change in the public mind in consequence of "Common Sense," is without a parallel." Sam.

Adams, in a letter to Paine, in 1802, wrote: "Common Sense awakened the public mind and led the people to call loudly for independence."

We certainly can not be unmindful of, or ungrateful for, the services of the man who took such a prominent part in stirring up our revolutionary fathers to the great idea of establishing a government, and especially when such pains have been taken entirely to ignore his services. And then we should not forget that after Thomas Paine had helped to inaugurate, nay, when he had done more than any other man, not even excepting Sam. Adams of this State, or Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, to inaugurate the Revolution, he was not less brave and consistent in sustaining the spirits of our soldiery, and in helping forward the great work in which the country was engaged. He threw his whole soul into the movement. Accompanying Washington's army and accepting the fare of a common soldier, he wrote words of encouragement and hope, often upon a drum-head, by the flickering light of a torch, and scattered them among the troops. He suited them to the condition of the army and the aspect of public affairs.

The first of these pamphlets appeared just after Washington's defeat on Long Island, when he had been driven from Forts Washington and Lee. The air was filled with gloom. Traitors were in the camp and tories were in the town. Our soldiers were disheartened. Embarrassments and hardships were growing heavier, and fear pervaded the land. In this sad condition of affairs, in this night of despondence and gloom, when the ranks of our army were thinned by battle and disease, when our soldiers were half starved and poorly clad, and reddened the snow over

which they walked with bare and bleeding feet, rang out in clarion tones the thrilling words of Paine: "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and sunshine patriot will in this crisis shrink from the service of his country, but he that stands it now deserves the thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered, yet we have this consolation, that the harder the conflict the more glorious the victory." (Applause.)

These words have come down to us, and they are repeated now, as they frequently were during our terrible civil war, by thousands—may I not say by millions?—who never knew the circumstances under which they were first given to the public. And Thomas Paine continued his great and noble services during that entire Revolution. He followed the army through sunshine and through storm. If our country was in a terrible strait, he pictured, with perhaps more or less of exaggeration, the weakness of Great Britain, and magnified the resources of the Colonies; so that when our soldiers read those words, they hastened back, as if they had deserted from the army, to their regiments, and those in the country who had been despairing had their courage renewed, and they were glad again to affirm their determination never to give up the struggle until the Colonies of America should be recognized as free and independent States.

The last of these papers, called "The Crisis," was issued at the close of the war, and congratulated the country on the patriotism and the bravery of the army, on the persistency and devotion of the people, and on the great and glorious results which had followed from the efforts of those men, both to them-

selves and the unborn millions that should come after them. Thomas Paine lived to see his great aim achieved, his great object finally accomplished.

“The times,” he wrote, “that tried men’s souls are over, and the greatest and completest revolution the world ever knew gloriously and happily accomplished.” “It is not every country (perhaps there is not another in the world) that can boast so fair an origin. Even the first settlement of America corresponds with the character of the revolution. Rome, once the proud mistress of the world, was originally a band of robbers. Plunder and rapine made her rich, and her oppression of millions made her great. But America need never be ashamed to tell her birth, nor to relate the stages by which she rose to empire.”

Now, when we consider these facts—and I have stated them in the plainest language, and without any exaggeration, as any person by consulting history can establish—would it not be ungrateful in us, even if we had no sympathy with the religious sentiments of Thomas Paine, since his name has been covered with so much obloquy, since his character has been so much misrepresented, since his services have been so entirely ignored—would it not be ungrateful, even ungracious, in us to be unwilling to give him his meed of praise on such an occasion as this?

Then, as Fræthinkers, we are unquestionably indebted to Thomas Paine in an eminent degree. I believe that there are many Fræthinkers in this country, men of culture, men of the most unfeigned heartiness in the cause of Fræthought, and who would not willingly do injustice to Thomas Paine, who yet do undervalue the real services which he rendered to the cause of Fræthought. They never think that the

value of Thomas Paine's services consists in the value of his religious works as historical criticisms, and because other writers, more learned, having the advantages of modern research and modern investigation, have gone further than he was able to go, they seem to think that Thomas Paine ought to occupy a secondary place in the history of Freethought. But, my friends, let us stop and consider a moment. The services of Thomas Paine to the cause of Freethought do not consist chiefly, not to say exclusively, in the value, as a criticism, of his "Age of Reason," or his other writings, but it consists in this: that he took the arguments that had been confined chiefly to the learned, to men like Collins and Bolingbroke, and clothed them in his own peculiar language, so lucid and so clear that a child cannot misunderstand them, and thereby he made them terribly effective, to a degree that they had never been made before. There had been before the time of Thomas Paine more learned Freethinkers than he, who had made use of the arguments which he presents in his little work, but there never had been a man who was capable of producing those arguments in the same effective style, so adapted to the mass of the people, and so calculated to produce an effect. Thomas Paine's style as a writer, in some respects, has never been equaled; at least, has never been surpassed. We are told that Talleyrand once said that the object of language is to conceal our thoughts. If that be the real object of language, Thomas Paine was a failure, for he never could write to conceal his thoughts, but, on the contrary, every sentence that he wrote was suffused with the light of his own luminous mind, and stamped with his own intense individuality of character. Aristotle

says : " He who would be a leader must think as wise people do, but speak as common people do." In that sense, Thomas Paine was a real teacher, for he was certainly a sagacious and very clear-headed man, and he presented his thoughts in language so terse and clear and simple that even the most uneducated mind could not fail to understand them, while the most learned, even to-day, cannot read them without profit or without interest. (Applause.)

The researches of modern scholarship have undoubtedly added a great deal to what Thomas Paine was able to give in his day. It is a fact which we must admit, and the man who does not admit it is a man, who is not up with the times, that modern science and modern scholarship have made us acquainted with arguments of which Thomas Paine was entirely ignorant. There are questions of historical criticism, of which he knew nothing whatever, which have since assumed prominence ; but while we admit this fact, we nevertheless cannot deny that Thomas Paine, considering the age in which he lived, gave to the world a little work (his " Age of Reason ") which has perhaps done as much for the cause of Freethought as any work that has ever been written. It has had a larger circulation than any other Infidel book ever published in the English language ; it has been read and understood by a larger number of minds, and has perhaps produced a greater impression than any other book of its kind. Its influence has not been confined merely to those who have read it, but has extended throughout the land ; and to-day, in all our churches, there are men and women who are shocked when they hear the name of Thomas Paine, who nevertheless have largely accepted his views, although they

would feel insulted if accused of holding the opinions of "Tom Paine." I say, then, that Thomas Paine is entitled to our sympathy and our gratitude as a pioneer in the cause of Freethought. He cleared the way, and made it possible for others to go beyond him.

Well, in the second place, I understand that our building is dedicated to Freethought, to Universal Mental Liberty; and in this sense the occasion is worthy of our presence, and worthy of any words we may utter. It may be said, however, (and I notice that the fact has been mentioned as an objection by the religious press,) that this Hall has been built by those who do not accept the sentiments of Thomas Paine, but, on the contrary, go far beyond him in the rejection of the claims of religion. That is true. I presume that the majority of the contributors to this Hall do not coincide in the Deistic opinions of Thomas Paine: on the contrary, they would reject both his views respecting a personal Governor of the Universe, and the immortality of the soul. But, at the same time, I do not see that that is any reason why we should not give prominence to the name of Paine, or why this Hall should not be reared for him, because, in the average mind, there is no doubt that he stands for the very principles which we represent. He has been the target at which every intolerant religionist has blazed away during the past hundred years, and in the minds of the great mass of the people there is no man who stands out more prominently as the embodiment of Freethought and the embodiment of "Infidelity," as it is called, than this very man, Thomas Paine.

And then it must be considered further, that we have not accepted Thomas Paine as a leader. No

Freethinker, I do not care what phase of Freethought he represents, will allow any body, be he priest, or pope, or king, or prelate, to dispossess him of his direct relations to Nature, whatever they are. No person who is entitled to the name of Freethinker will acknowledge any man, living or dead, as a leader, or himself as a disciple. (Applause.) But it is proper enough that we should recognize Thomas Paine as a pioneer in Freethought, and therefore give his name to this Hall, without implying, as many of the religious press have supposed, that we endorse all the Theistic opinions which he may have presented in the "Age of Reason."

But there is another thing to be considered. This Hall is a necessity. As long as we shall find a disposition on the part of some of our fellow-citizens to dispossess another portion of their rights, it will be our duty to erect halls of this kind, and dedicate them to the principles to which this is dedicated. As long, for instance, as we shall find men excluded from our courts of justice simply because of their religious opinions, as a gentleman was excluded two or three weeks ago, in the city of New York, I understand at the instigation, I regret to say, of one who is herself an unbeliever in the Christian religion, and is perhaps as thoroughly Infidel as the man who was excluded—so long as we see men excluded from the witness stand because they do not believe in a personal Governor of the Universe, so long as we shall see any State endeavoring to support the sacredness of the Sabbath, so long as we shall see the Bible read as an authoritative book and religious instruction continued in our public schools, so long as we shall see chaplains supported by our State and General Governments, so

long as we shall see churches and religious institutions exempted from taxation, and we Freethinkers thereby required indirectly to support them, so long as we shall see Jesuitical priests and weak-minded or bigoted men and women assembled together in conventions, trying to evangelize the Constitution of the United States, and to secure a recognition therein of God, Christ, and the Bible, and thereby trying to make a Procrustean bed on which every man and woman shall be stretched; so long it will be our duty to sustain every effort that is calculated to advance Freethought; so long will it be our duty, not simply to advocate Freethought theoretically, not simply to tell about the absurdity of many religious dogmas, but it will continue our duty to do more than that—to prevent the aggressions and the schemes of those plotters, however honest they may be, (and the more dangerous because they are honest). And it will be our duty, further than that, to secure those rights of which we have already been dispossessed, so that when any man comes to the witness stand he shall no longer be questioned with regard to his religious convictions, but the only question will be with respect to his character and worth, so far as his competency as a witness is concerned. (Hear.)

And there is another thing. This Hall ought to remind us that we should be on our guard against regarding our opinions as the ultimate truth. The history of all religious reforms (hardly one can be excepted) shows that when, after having been subjected to persecution and every kind of obloquy, they have finally been established, they have become somewhat encrusted and stereotyped, and have made their Procrustean bed, by which they have tried to test all other

facts and all other truths outside of their immediate province. I do not care whether a man is a Christian or an Infidel, so long as he attempts to bind other people on a Procrustean bed, and to lop off their heads or their feet until they shall just fit his own peculiar opinions, I say that implies bigotry, implies a stationary position, if not actual retrogression. I believe that Freethought has a tendency to prevent that, but I believe, notwithstanding, that among Freethinkers there is more or less of that very disposition to regard their convictions as the ultimate truth, and to ignore that great ocean of truth that lies out beyond. When I find a Freethinker who is content with a mere disbelief of the Bible, who tells me he does not believe, and who thinks it a great merit that he does not believe in the story of Jonah and the whale; that he does not believe that one nation was ordered by God to cut the throats of another nation; that he does not believe in the miraculous conception—when a man tells me that that is his position, and takes special pride in it; when he considers that the *sumum bonum* of Freethought; when he utterly ignores the great thinkers of the past hundred years; when he ridicules Darwinism; when he regards evolution as a mere visionary theory, because he has never taken the pains to understand it; when he recognizes the great reforms of modern times as merely subordinate to that negative opinion that Jonah did not swallow the whale, or the whale did not swallow Jonah, (laughter.)—I say that man does not comprehend what Freethought is, and whatever be his name, whatever phase of Freethought he represents, he does not belong to us, he is not of us. (Applause.)

And not only should this building be a memorial of

Thomas Paine, and a reminder of our duties, but it should be, and I trust it will be for years to come, a beacon, a monument, that will give encouragement and hope to thousands who are working in isolation in unpromising localities, socially ostracised, and subjected to disgrace and obloquy. I trust that they may find courage in the thought, that if the name of Thomas Paine, at the end of nearly a hundred years, has thus been vindicated, and this fine and noble structure erected in his honor, in the cultured city of Boston, right in the heart of New England Puritanism, they too may work without entirely forfeiting their character forever, and that the time may come when their services, however much ignored to-day, will receive recognition from a brave and generous public. (Applause.)

And then, again, this building marks the progress of Liberal thought, and as such it appears as significant as in any other aspect in which it can be viewed. I was in this meeting a few minutes this afternoon, and I listened to some remarks which I certainly could not endorse, and if I considered this a proper place for criticism, I should be inclined, instead of endorsing them, to submit them to considerable criticism; but I consider that that would be out of place, and therefore I will briefly say, that in my opinion we have every-where the evidences of the advance of Free-thought. "Times change, and men change with them." Thomas Paine had something to contend with of which we know nothing to-day. On every hand east and west, north and south, there has been progress; and the individual who says that Free-thought and the expression of unpopular truth has the same to contend with to-day that it had a hundred

years ago, it seems to me is not sufficiently acquainted with the history of the past, and does not comprehend the present. I believe, and I do not hesitate to say it frankly, that a man may go now throughout the length and breadth of the United States and advocate the views which were advanced by Thomas Paine with impunity. Nay, it had been my experience to go even into the Province of Ontario, in Canada, where they are many years behind us, and I find that even there, there is no serious danger to be apprehended from the promulgation of unpopular sentiments. But while we as Freethinkers should be proud and anxious to advance our views, let us not mistake simply that dislike which is manifested towards us for liberality, when sometimes our views are advocated with acerbity, with temper, with vulgarity, and with a blackguardism, which, wherever it is seen, is equally discreditable. If a man is a Freethinker, it makes his blackguardism and his abuse a great deal worse than if he is a Christian, because the Freethinker has no theory of a great scapegoat upon which he can throw his sins, and thereby escape the natural consequences of his wrong doing. (Applause.) The Freethinker has no great bankrupt salvation scheme by which to get rid of paying his moral honest debts. (Laughter.) Because a Freethinker stands on his own merits, he must always be a gentleman, and never descend to blackguardism, simply because some half-educated, miserable priest, intoxicated with bigotry, has seen fit to set the example. (Applause.)

Now, I say, if Freethinkers will present their views courteously, if they will avoid mere declamation and vituperation, if they will maintain the character of

gentlemen, and keep up with the spirit of the age—I say (and my experience has been as wide, perhaps, as that of any public lecturer throughout the country,) they can go before an audience in any city of the United States, in any town or hamlet, and advocate their views with impunity. They may avow the most radical sentiments, I do not care if it is Freeloivism itself, if it is done in a spirit and manner that shall not excite combativeness by its very rudeness, and I believe they will receive respectful attention anywhere in the United States.

I have no sympathy, therefore, with those remarks which were made this afternoon to the effect that we are living to-day in the midst of an intolerance which is comparable in its intensity with the tolerance of the days of Thomas Paine. I believe, nay I may say I know, that we have made great advancement, not only in our views, but in the manner in which those views are treated by the great mass of Christians themselves.

In the first place, the creeds have been pulverized, they have been utterly discredited. You can go into the pulpits to-day and listen to sentiments that are so thoroughly radical that you are surprised that they come from a Christian minister. You can go into the pews, and hear there the expression of liberal and heterodox sentiments which are utterly inconsistent with the creeds and dogmas of the church. You can examine the newspapers, from Maine to Oregon, and see evidences of liberality such as you have never seen before. The press reflects, as a rule, the general sentiments of the people; it is really an index of it. There are a few papers, among which I am proud to mention the *Investigator*, the *Index*, *The Truth Seeker* and the *Banner of Light*, which are in advance of the

religious sentiments of the age, but the great mass of the daily papers do not attempt to lead public opinion. If the editors of these papers are Freethinkers themselves, they suppress their sentiments, and simply attempt to express the views of the common people. I have a wide acquaintance with the editors of this country, and I think I may say with certainty that as a class they are sufficiently Infidel. They are Freethinkers, and have no sympathy whatever with the dogmas of the popular religion or with the general superstitions of the country; but looking upon them as the nominal faith of the country, in deference to the wishes of the people, they avoid attacking them with violence; at the same time, they gave them a sufficient number of thrusts to show their general position and their general wish. [Applause.]

We see evidence of this advance also in the general literature of the country. Take up any of our magazines, and see what a change has taken place in this respect. It is not more than eighteen years since Oliver Wendell Holmes, of your city, published the "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" in the *Atlantic Monthly*. That was a serial that was exceedingly mild in its heterodoxy, judged from the standpoint of modern thought to-day, and yet for that he was severely censured, and the religious press of the country said it would be impossible for the *Atlantic Monthly* to obtain a circulation when such a man as Oliver Wendell Holmes was allowed to contribute to its pages such heterodoxy as that. But the "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" would be milk-and-water to the Liberals of to-day, it is so mild in its heterodoxy. Gerrit Smith, whose death has just been announced, to the grief of so many millions of people, paid Horace

Greeley, himself a heterodox and liberal-hearted man, thirteen hundred dollars for the publication of one of his sermons in the *Tribune*, and Mr. Greeley took especial pains in a leaded editorial to call attention to the fact that that sermon was not published as a communication, but as an advertisement. But since then the *Tribune* has been glad not only to print the mild heterodoxy of Gerrit Smith, but to accept the writings of such men as O. B. Frothingham, Mr. F. E. Abbot, Mr. Higginson and others who go as far or farther than they, and to send them broadcast among the people. Glad to get them, not simply because the editors of that paper were perhaps in sympathy with our views, but because they knew that there was such a large liberal element all over the country that it would make a demand for their paper, and increase their circulation.

Go to the city of Chicago, the Queen City of the West, and you will find that if a Freethinker speaks from the platform like this on Sunday, he wakes up on Monday morning and sees his speech reported *verbatim* in the daily papers, side by side with the speeches of the clergymen of the city. And this is done, not simply because they may be in sympathy with the opinions of Freethinkers, but because they know from experience that that is requisite in order to enlarge the circulation of their papers and make them popular among the people. The papers that have the largest circulation in the West, are those that give the most space to Freethought sentiments and to the most advanced views. Is not this an indication of the progress of Liberalism, and a most significant indication, too?

Then, again, look at the publishing houses of this

country. The Appletons are, if I mistake not, a Methodist house, but they do not hesitate to bring out the works of such men as Tyndall, Huxley and Darwin, and we find some of the most thoroughly heterodox works brought out by those houses that have been supposed to be orthodox. They do it, as I have said in regard to the papers, not because they are in sympathy personally with the views of these writers, but because they know there is a demand for this kind of reading, and that is the way to enlarge and increase their business.

When we see these facts, when we see the writings of such men as Huxley, and Darwin, and Tyndall, and Spencer and Lewes circulated broadcast, having a larger circulation than orthodox literature, it is a pretty good indication that Freethought is advancing. And, more than that, I can state from personal observation, that there are cities and towns throughout the western country where Freethought is the predominant sentiment, and where, if I were a policy man, and wished to establish myself in business, and wished to get the good will of the community, I would rather announce myself as an Infidel than as a Christian, because that is the public sentiment of the place. [Applause.]

Then I see Liberalism in the attitude of the clergy. None of the clergy teach now what they did a hundred years ago,—that God took little infants from the breasts of their mothers and sent them splurging down into the flames of hell. A clergyman who should utter such a sentiment as that would be deprived of his pulpit, or his salary would be cut off at once. All through the country, the clergy are losing their prestige and their power. They are either conforming to

public sentiment, or else they are leaving the profession, turning insurance agents, and insuring against fire in this world, instead of threatening us with hell fire in the next. [Applause and laughter.] The great mass of the people who are not brought into contact with the clergy, hardly understand all their heterodoxy. I frequently have conversations with them, and sometimes discussions, and I know whereof I speak when I say you can hardly ever get a clergyman to affirm a positive dogma.

I not long since had a discussion with a gentleman who occupies the position of professor in a theological seminary in Indianapolis, and he took the ground, when the question came up, that a man might believe what part of the Bible he chose to be divine, and what part he chose to be uninspired. He took the ground that the story of the flood, of which the Bible speaks so unqualifiedly, was a little affair, perhaps confined to Asia Minor, and before he got through he did not know that there was anything saved except Noah and his family, his pigs and his chickens, this affording an opportunity for one of the city papers to say of this professor, that he had brought the flood into the limits of a wash-basin, and to ask, "are you disposed to reject the Bible on such a small amount of water as this?" [Applause.]

Some of you have read in *Scribner's*—rather an orthodox journal—the articles written by Dr. Blauvelt, an orthodox man, in which he admits that the advances in Freethought are so rapid, that unless something is done in the next decade, unless lawyers, merchants and unprofessional men come to the assistance of the clergy, we shall be doing precisely what they are doing in Europe to-day: that men will go up and

down the land, lifting their hands in despair and exclaiming, "Our faith is gone!" Dr. Blauvelt himself has given offense to the Christian world because he has stated the truth so plainly and frankly. He tells Christians that they have no men who can meet the champions of Freethought; that such men as Strauss, Renan, Darwin and Spencer are too strong, that their investigation has been too thorough by far to enable the Christian clergymen to meet them with success, and calls upon them to obtain a higher culture, and a more thorough acquaintance with the subject, before they attempt to compete with those men.

Let me say, in conclusion, that the advance which this Hall significantly marks, has been made in every department. In geology, destroying the old cosmogony of the Hebrews; in archæology, destroying the old notions of the primitive perfection of mankind; in Egyptology, showing that mankind were in a high state of civilization at the very time the flood is said to have occurred; in philology, showing us that the languages are in utter opposition to the notions that God composed them, and that the old Hebrew language was probably the primitive one; in natural history, and in every department in which science has extended her researches, she has gone so far as to destroy the authority of the Bible in its historical and scientific teachings, and also to advance and strengthen the principles of Freethought.

I say then, friends, that we have every reason to feel grateful and to feel especially joyful on this occasion, since the erection of this Hall is actually an indication of the advancement of Freethought; and when we consider what kind of halls were spoken in by Freethinkers in the days of Thomas Paine, and

look at this building, we must feel something of pleasure in the progress that has been made.

Lct me say, before I conclude, that this Hall has a value to us, and is, as it were, a prophecy, not simply because it indicates the progress of Freethought, but because it is to be the home of the Boston *Investigator*, a paper that has been in existence for more than forty years, and has done valiant service in the cause of truth. [Applause.] It is also something that shows an appreciative recognition of the services of our friends, Mr. Mendum and Mr. Seaver, both of whom have labored long, faithfully and well, whose lives from their early youth have been given to the advancement of Freethought; and there cannot be any one in the whole wide country who is in sympathy with the Liberalism of the day, who will not heartily respond to what I say, when I declare that we feel grateful to these men for the great and good service they have rendered to the cause of Freethought, and we hope that their lives may be spared for many years to come, so that from this splendid edifice they may send out their paper, to make its weekly visit to the thousands in our country who give it such a hearty welcome, and who hold it in such high veneration. [Loud applause.]

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## Bible Contradictions.

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**READER:** Is the Bible Divine or Human? Is it the word of God or the work of man? If the first, it must be perfect, true and uncontradictory; if the last, it may be imperfect, untrue and contradictory. If it is found to be the latter, it cannot be of God. Have you searched the Scriptures? Have you attentively read the Bible? What do you think of its truthfulness? We commend a few passages to your consideration.

I have seen God face to face. . . . No man hath seen God at any time.

With God all things are possible. . . . And the Lord was with Judah, and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.

I am the Lord, I change not. I will not go back, neither will I repent. . . . And God repented of the evil that he said he would do unto them, and he did it not.

There is no respect of persons with God. . . . Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.

Is not my way equal? . . . For whosoever hath, to him shall be given; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

I am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children. . . . The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father.

It is impossible for God to lie. . . . If the Prophet be

deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet.

Take no thought for the morrow. . . . But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.

All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. . . . He that hath no sword, let him sell his sword and buy one.

Provide neither gold nor silver nor scrip for your journey, neither shoes nor yet staves. . . . Take nothing save a *staff* only; no scrip, no bread, no money, but be shod with *sandals*,

Be not afraid of them that kill the body. . . . And after these things Jesus would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. . . . The new moons and sabbaths I cannot away with; it is iniquity.

Thou shalt not commit adultery. . . . All the women children keep alive for yourselves.

Whore-mongers and adulterers God will judge. . . . Then said the Lord unto me, Go yet, love a woman, an adulteress.

If brethren dwell together and one of them die, the wife of the dead shall not marry without; her husband's brother shall take her to wife. . . . If a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing.

I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment. . . . But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king commanded.

Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. . . . Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said: Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

For rulers are not a terror to good works but to evil. . . . And the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ.

The powers that be are ordained of God. . . . Both Herod and Pontius Pilate.

And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. . . . It was about the sixth hour, and he saith, Shall I crucify your king?

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene unto the sepulchre. . . . The first day of the week came Mary Magdalene and the other *Mary*.

Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James, and *Salome* brought sweet spices. . . . It was Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James, *and other women*, that were with them.

And the men which journeyed with him [Paul] stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. . . . And when we were all fallen to the earth, *I* heard a voice. And they that were with me heard *not* the voice.

Therefore Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child until the day of her death. . . . The five sons of Michal, the daughter of Saul.

And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel. . . . And Satan provoked David to number Israel.

And David's heart smote him after he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, *I have sinned greatly in that I have done*. . . . David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

*I* bear witness of myself, yet my record is true. . . . If *I* bear witness of myself my witness is not true.

By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified. . . . The doers of the law shall be justified.

A man is not justified by the works of the law. . . . Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified.

The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised. . . . He that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.

My yoke is easy and my burden is light. . . . All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,

✓ There shall no evil happen to the just. . . . Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.

Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. . . . In much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

✓ It shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days. . . . Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power.

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him. . . . Tho' thou shouldst bray a fool in mortar, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.

The rich man's wealth is his strong tower. . . . Woe unto you that are rich. . . . The destruction of the poor is his poverty.

Blessed be ye poor. . . . Give me neither poverty nor riches, lest I deny thee, or lest I be poor and steal.

The above quotations are correctly given; though, for brevity's sake, chapter and verse are omitted. They are but a small part of the contradictions the Bible contains. They may, indeed, be recorded by hundreds and thousands, to say nothing of other fallacies and absurdities.

Those who wish a larger collection of Bible contradictions, are referred to a pamphlet called *Self-Contradictions of the Bible*, containing forty-eight pages. Price, 25 cents. Sold at the office of THE TRUTH SEEKER.

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## Underwood's Prayer.

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In March, 1872, B. F. Underwood held a debate two evenings with the Rev. Mr. Taylor at Westfield, Pa. On the first evening Mr. Taylor opened the exercises with a regular orthodox prayer, and on the second evening Mr. Underwood opened with the following, and his friends thought it a decided improvement upon the prayer of the Reverend gentleman of the previous evening:

Thou incomprehensible Being, Power, or Essence, said to exist and to be the Author of Nature, called by different names—Brahma, Jehovah, Lord, Jupiter, Allah—worshiped as a Negro in Africa, as an Indian by the untutored savage of America, and by the mass of Christians as a Caucasian seated on a throne, with a crown on thy head and a scepter in thy hand, and angels all around chanting thy praises and ministering to thy wants—believed among the more thoughtful of thy worshipers to be something of which no correct conception can be formed, and recognized by us un-

regenerate Infidels only as the aggregate of the forces of Nature inherent in and inseparable from matter, constituting the soul of the universe—that which

“ Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,  
Glows in the stars and blossoms in the trees ”—

whatever thou art, we make no attempt to extol thy name, for if but half as great and good as many of thy worshipers profess to believe, thou canst not be pleased with the flatteries or praises of men. We make no attempt to give thee information, for they who claim to be in special communication with thee declare that thou knowest all things, even the inmost secrets of the heart of man.

We do not ask for any special favors for our opponent, for he has already told thee what *he* wants, and he is supposed to know his own needs better than we can set them forth. We ask no special favors for ourself, because, in the first place it does not comport with our notions of fair play to invoke thine aid in an intellectual contest with a gentleman who has come here to discuss with *us* and *not with thee*; in the second place, we think we can sustain our position in this debate with no other assistance than that afforded by the silent but powerful aids which lie on the table before us; and in the third place, however much either of us might desire special help from thee, we do not believe thou wouldst interfere to give one the slightest advantage over the other.

But a few years ago our beloved country (this is not said for thy information) was suffering all the horrors of civil war, our hearts were saddened by the sight of “States dissevered, discordant, belligerent and drenched in fraternal blood.” Millions of prayers went up from pulpit, fireside and tented field, both North and

South, intreating thee to interpose—stop the terrible strife between brothers, and stay the effusion of blood. But the sanguinary contest continued without any intervention by thee, and was brought to a close only when the South had been exhausted in resources, and was no longer able to offer resistance to the armies of the Union. How then can we expect thee to interfere in an insignificant contest like this between our friend and ourself ?

We realize the fact that the intellectual work of the debate must be performed by the disputants, and we think it unwise for either of us to look to thee for victory. Whether "Providence is on the side of the strongest battalions" or not, we notice that they generally *win*, and without regard to the right and justice of the cause in defense of which they fight. We have not forgotten that the patriot army of Hungary was overwhelmed and defeated by the powerful and disciplined hosts of perjured Austria. "Trust in God, but keep your powder dry," said Cromwell to his soldiers. As we are satisfied that in physical warfare more depends upon the quality and condition of ammunition than upon mere "trust in God," so in an intellectual contest like this we believe that acquaintance with the subject, and power and skill in presenting arguments, are more important than "reliance on thee." Fred. Douglas said he prayed fifteen years, but the prayer most certainly answered in his case was the prayer that he made with his legs, when he ran away from bondage.

An amiable, but evidently visionary individual, frequently called thy son, and believed by many to be "God manifest in the flesh," is reported to have said that with faith to the amount of a grain of mustard seed men could remove mountains. Now we are satis-

fied from observation and experience that with a mountain of faith we should fail to remove even a grain of mustard seed, unless adequate physical force were applied.

We cannot help noticing that *Christians* have but little faith in thine interposition in practical affairs. Having built a church and dedicated it to thee, they are not content with asking thee to save it from the thunderbolt of heaven. Just like us "unconverted sinners" when we put up buildings for business purposes, they go to the expense of attaching lightning rods to their houses of worship.

Had we any faith in the efficacy of prayer, there are many favors we might solicit; but since we are certain that we can obtain nothing by addresses to thee which would not come just as surely without the prayers, we close these prayerful remarks to turn our attention to our opponent, and to the important subject under consideration. AMEN.

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# Honest Questions and Honest Answers.

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BY D. M. BENNETT.

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[The following appeared in the *THE TRUTH SEEKER* of  
June 15, 1875.]

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The following interrogatories were sent us by a friend in quest of truth and they are entitled to our respectful consideration. We claim to know no more of "the unknowable" than common mortals, but we will cheerfully answer these questions according to the best light we have.

MR. EDITOR:—Having read a few articles in your paper with regard to the conflict between Orthodox Christianity and Naturalism, I would like to ask a few questions suggested thereby.

1. Do you not think that a universal disbelief in the Bible and its sacred teachings, will eventually lead to the universal demoralization of the human race?

2. Do you believe in a great first cause, the author of nature and yet its superior, whose character and attributes are infinite and eternal?

3. If there is no God but nature, in what part of material creation shall we look for intelligence ?

4. Do you not think it more reasonable and truthful to suppose that the inferior races of men are evidence of the result of degeneracy, rather than of natural development from a still inferior race ?

5. How can an inferior animal produce its superior on strictly natural principles ?

6. If the laws of nature are fixed, who can turn them aside ?

7. If plants grew into animals, and animals into human beings, in the long ago, why is it not so now ?

8. Do you believe in the infinite progression and development of good and evil ?

9. Will the present ungodly state of society eventually result in the reformation and happiness of the human race, independent of divine agency ?

10. Does it not require more faith to be a sceptic than to be a Christian ?

11. Is it easier to believe in nature than in God ?

12. Do you know everything that you believe ?

13. Please give us the name and articles of your faith, and oblige

A TRUTH SEEKER.

REPLY.—We confess to a partiality for the pseudonym our correspondent uses ; and, without stopping to enquire whether his interrogatories might not be better stated, we proceed to reply to his questions :

#### ABOUT THE BIBLE.

1. This we must answer in the negative. We do not think a general disbelief in the inspired character of the Bible will lead to universal demoralization of the human race. We believe the Bible to be a human production, in every sense of the word, the same as every other book that has been written or printed, including the ancient Puranas and Vedas of India, the Shaster of Persia, the Pymander of Egypt, the Koran of Arabia, and the book of Morman of our own country. If this is *true*, we think not the slight-

est injury will result from its being universally accepted. Truth will not produce demoralization, locally nor generally.

In point of language, correct composition, fine sentiment, beautiful imagery, or pure morality we fail to see that the Bible is at all superior to very many other books which men have written, while we find much in it that is crude, coarse, indecent, absurd, extravagant, improbable and impossible. In short, we cannot find a passage in the whole book that a man of fair intelligence could not easily write, and that has not been equaled many times and very often surpassed.

It seems to be a compilation of writings, differing widely in character, by different persons, written in very different eras, and with different objects and motives. It may have been well designed for the wants of mankind in the ages in which it was written, but it appears very imperfectly fitted to our time and the present intellectual condition of the world.

There is very little authority for asserting it to be the "word of God." Very few of the writers of the book claimed they wrote at the command of God, or that they even were inspired. And the parts of the Bible which are more especially pronounced inspired, among which may be named the Prophecies and the Book of Revelations, are more unmeaning, more incoherent, more unreliable and more like the ravings of a lunatic than the other parts. No one can reasonably claim it is necessary for a person to be *inspired* to write a historical account of the generations of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or the incidents, adventures, successions of kings, wars, battles and reprisals of the Jews, any more than of the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Britons or the roving,

barbarous hordes of the north of Europe, called "Goths and Vandals." If it is not necessary for a historian of the Gauls or the Russians to be inspired, why any more a historian of the Jews ?

It also would appear no more necessary for a biographer of Jesus to be inspired in relating the incidents of his life and the events connected with it, than of Mahomet, Alexander, George Fox or Joseph Smith. Why is it any more probable that Matthew and Luke were inspired to write the life of Jesus than Strauss, Renan, Scott, Beardsley, Henry Ward Beecher and scores of others who have essayed to write his life, and *all* upon very insufficient data ?

When a man has written a book or a pamphlet, and says at the beginning or end that God inspired him to write it, we have perfect liberty to believe him or disbelieve him according to the evidence presented to our minds ; but when books are presented to us whose authors' names even, are unknown to us, are not given in the books, whom nobody has any means of knowing, and which make no claim to being inspired by the Creator of the worlds, we cannot understand how any man, or any number of men, priests or laymen have the authority to declare to us we must believe it is absolutely the word of God, or be damned forever. Until we meet a person who has better facilities for knowing the origin of the books of the Bible than ourselves, and has superior authority to enforce his opinions upon our minds, we shall continue to exercise our own best judgment upon this, the same as all other subjects.

We are aware many people believe the Bible has wielded a moral influence in the world vastly superior to that of any other book. We are compelled to dissent

from this view. We find not in the book any better nor purer morals than are found in other books, nor do we discover that the nations and peoples who have accepted it as the word of God, have lived more morally or peacefully than those who did not so accept it. The reverse is the truth. In the first place, the greater portion of the morals of the Bible are of a very questionable character. It treats largely of carnage, bloodshed, unjust wars and oppressions which the God of the Jews and the Christians often incited, and in which he fondly participated; and aside from the foul books which the police authorities of our country, under the class *obscene literature*, prevent from being circulated or sold, there is no book to-day in the English language which contains so much that is indecent and unfit for the rising generation to read, or which is so much an apology and authority for incest, bigamy, polygamy and excessive sexual intercourse as the *Holy Bible*. In these regards the Puranas, the Vedas, the Bhagavad-Gita, the Shaster, the Koran, the Talmud and thousands of other books are superior to it.

As an illustration of the immoral character of the Bible, we have only to state the case of George Francis Train, who was imprisoned six months in a damp, gloomy, noisome prison in this city, called the Tombs, for no other offense than publishing a few quotations, without a word of comment, from that book. What other book is there in existence, which is recognized by decent people, for quoting which a man in this nineteenth century would be confined six months in a foul, unhealthy prison, to the great injury to health, comfort and business?

Were a book to-day, introduced to the people of this

country, containing all the indecencies, all the extravagance, all the contradictions and all the imperfections of the Bible, and no claim were set up that it was inspired or God-given, it would not be tolerated among decent people, and would be unceremoniously tabooed from all cultured society.

It is a well-known truth that the nations who have accepted the Bible as the word of God, have been vastly more murderous, bloodthirsty, warlike, oppressive, unjust and otherwise immoral than many other nations who were not governed by it at all, and that there are many nations now in existence who know nothing of the Bible, who, in point of morality, sobriety and honesty are far ahead of nations who acknowledge it as their guide. Volumes of proof can be given to sustain these propositions.

The Bible is, by its adorers, converted into an *idol*. They fall down before it, look up to it, worship it and revere it for imaginary excellences it does not possess, as is nearly always the case in idol-worship. It is also used as an engine by priests to elevate themselves into power, and is by them wielded like a sceptre over the heads of the people in the way to perpetuate their own authority and to cause the people to be subservient to them. Everything they demand or command is with a "*thus saith the Lord.*"

We do not say there is no good in the Bible, that it contains no beautiful language, no elevated sentiments; on the contrary, we cheerfully admit it does, but we do assert it contains nothing truer, nothing better, nothing more beautiful than is found in other books which lay no claim to having God as author. The Bible having been written by persons who knew little or nothing of the truths and discoveries of modern science, philos-

ophy and art, it almost necessarily teaches much that is untrue, much that is worthless, and much that is pernicious.

The claim so persistently urged by Bible-idolators, that the sacred book of the Jewish nation has been the grand cause of the civilization of modern times, is absurd and unjust. Theological ideas doubtless have had much to do in moulding the character of civilization, but to it only rightfully belongs a fractional part. Natural and physical causes have much to do in determining the civilization of any portion of the earth's surface. The soil has very much to do with civilization. When this is rich and encourages agriculture, civilization advances rapidly, bringing in wealth, literature and refinement. In sterile or barren countries, where the inhabitants are compelled to pursue a wandering, nomadic life, and cities are very sparse, barbarism long holds sway, and civilization advances slowly. The civilization of mountainous regions differs from that of level countries, and the inhabitants show marked differences in habits and characteristics. Climate has also much to do with civilization. The temperate zones are far more favorable for advanced civilization and an enlightened intellect than the torrid or the frigid zones. Every belt of the earth's surface exerts a varied influence in the process of mental advancement.

Prof. Draper, in his incomparable work, "The History of the Intellectual Development of Europe," gives us much light upon this subject. In speaking of the basic causes of civilization, he says, it "depends upon climate and agriculture," and teaches that the meteorological condition of different countries has much to do with intellectual advancement. Very

rainy countries are unfavorable to the most rapid mental progress, and he argues that the rainless condition of Egypt had greatly to do in the early civilization of that country. He shows that the gulf stream had much to do in determining the civilization of Europe. Buckle, in his "History of Civilization in England," corroborates much that Draper teaches, and accords to literature and knowledge prominent places in the causes of civilization. The purer the literature of a country, and the more unmixed it is with myths, superstition, legends, fallacies and absurdities, the more rapid is the advance in civilization. These are the characteristics in the Bible which have retarded civilization and for centuries kept a mistaken theology in the front, when, of course, a rational mentality was forced into the back-ground. It is doubtless true, the Bible has retarded civilization on the earth, and had it had no existence, mankind to-day would be farther progressed in intelligence, happiness, civilization and truth than they now are.

Believing all this to be indisputable, we have no apprehensions of any bad effects that will arise from the Bible being substituted in the world by rational truth, knowledge, science, benevolence, morality and purity vastly superior to that which it contains.

#### GOD AND THE UNIVERSE.

2. We have also to answer this interrogatory in the negative. The subject is beyond the reach of man's vision, and probably we will never fully know the character of the moving, controlling forces of the Universe. We can only come to such conclusions as our best reason points out. We believe strongly in the Universe, in its infinity, its immensity and its eternity; but we do not believe it had an inventor,

author or creator. It contains and comprises all the material, all the forces and powers that exist, and outside of it there is nothing. It is itself the cause of all results and all existences. As we find it is utterly impossible to create one atom of matter from nothing, or to reduce one atom to a state of non-existence, we can have a fair idea of the eternity of the entire Universe, and the absurdity of the supposition that it was a few thousand years ago, by a power outside of itself made from nothing.

The earth—the solar system—the entire Universe may once have been in a nebular state—a gaseous condition—so rare and attenuated that our atmosphere may be regarded as solid compared with it; so rare indeed that several cubic miles would hardly contain a single grain of solid matter. We say, the Universe may have evolved from this condition by gradual condensations and aggregations into systems and suns and worlds, and thus have existed myriads of ages to again resolve into a nebular condition. The Universe, we assert, may have repeated this process millions of times, but it never had a beginning; it never was made. There never was a time when it did not exist, nor will there ever be a time when it will cease to exist. It has no supporter and needs none. It is permeated by all the forces that have an existence, and these are a part of it. The Universe is composed of matter and all the powers that pertain to it. Tyndall had this fact in view when he said, he “found in matter all the forms and potency of life;” and a more rational observation was never made.

The idea of the infinity and eternity of the Universe is hard for some minds to comprehend. They think anything so vast and boundless as the Universe

must necessarily have required a creator. But ask them whence came this creator, which must needs be superior to the Universe created, and they will answer you at once, "oh, he always was, he never was made." They seem not to realize the logical conclusion, that if the Universe, being so extensive, required a creator, that this superior creator himself still more required a creator. In this way we may go on imagining creators of creators until bewildered and lost.

It is easy for a common capacity to understand that *space* or *expanse* is necessarily infinite, eternal, limitless, without beginning or end. No one will argue for a moment, that a given amount of space was ever *made*, or that there was ever a time when it was not. It requires then but another step to realize that it is the same with all space and with all the matter contained in it, and that it is necessarily infinite and eternal.

We assume not to say what God is, or whether there is a God; but of this we feel fully assured, that he is totally unlike the being theology has pictured to us. The Deity that *is*, is *in* the Universe and part of it. He exists just as much in the most distant sun the mind can imagine in the farthest remove of space, whose light traveling at a velocity of 200,000 miles a second requires trillions of ages to reach our globe—as in this solar system, as on this globe or in this special portion of it. Hence he cannot be a person, he cannot be a being, he cannot be an individual, he cannot be a local intelligence, he can hardly be a general intelligence. It is possible for no man to say just what he is. But the fable that he once made man from clay; woman from a rib bone; that an apple

cursed the whole world and peoples hell for millions of years; that God was born of a young girl; that his creatures put him to death to appease his own anger, or to satisfy his own sense of justice; that he has his eye constantly upon the 1,500,000,000 of individuals that exist on this globe; that he has the hairs of their heads all numbered as well as the quintillions of beings who preceded them, and that this is the Deity who reigns in, rules and controls countless millions of other worlds, is an idea too preposterous to claim the credence of a sensible person for a moment.

It is vastly easier, it strikes us, to conceive of the *eternality* of a self-existent Universe filling the great *limitless expanse* which ever was and ever will be, than to believe in a local, personal God in the form of a man, with his passions and foibles, whom no one has ever seen or known; who less than six thousand years ago, made from nothing all that exists; who found it necessary to employ a few score of ignorant, unreliable persons, living at different times and in different localities to write a book for him, giving an account of himself and declaring his will to his creatures, and which book has required a few scores of other persons to translate, hundreds of thousands of ignorant priests to interpret, explain and expound to the more ignorant multitudes, but in explaining which they have never agreed, some asserting with immense authority "the meaning is *this way*," and others with equal positiveness declaring it is "*that way*;" but each affirming that unless we take their particular version, and acknowledge them as the mouth-pieces and agents of God we are doomed to endless torture.

We are conscious that the Universe exists: we can see it, feel it and *know* it. We are in it, and are parts of

it ; we can understand it is eternal and indestructible. We can comprehend that all parts of it are equally divine ; but of a creator of this Universe we know nothing, except what priests and Bible writers tell us, and they know not a particle more about it all than we do.

We acknowledge with profound reverence the great source of life, motion, intelligence and individual existences. These arise from light, heat, magnetism, attraction, chemical affinity and cognate forces yet imperfectly understood, but which are inherent in the Universe and cannot be separated from it.

#### WHERE SHALL WE LOOK FOR INTELLIGENCE ?

3. Our friend's third question is, "If there is no God but Nature, in what part of the material creation shall we look for intelligence?" We answer, in any part where we can find organizations and conditions that produce intelligence. We know of no intelligence that is not the result of organization any more than we know of sight without the optic nerves and organs of vision, or of hearing without the tympanum and organs of the ear, or of muscular strength without the muscles and connecting apparatus to produce it. Intellect, thought, or mind, is not a promiscuous substance floating through space ; it is not a primitive element, a separate entity, independent of the forces and materials of the Universe, but is, as we said, the result of organization—an outgrowth of matter—a motion, so to speak, of an organ and its connected nervous system.

We find intellect existing in all grades and degrees, from the lowest to the highest form, and in all varieties as regards quality and quantity, but nowhere without a suitable organization to give it existence.

In the vegetable kingdom we perceive the lowest indications of intellect, though that there is not a measure of it in simple substances when brought into contact, as in the cases of acids and alkalies, metals and oxygen, hydrogen and oxygen, and an infinite number of similar chemical combinations, we will not pretend to say. That there is intelligence in the vegetable kingdom cannot be doubted. It is indicated in the general reaching towards light, as with the potato sprout in a dark cellar in the spring of the year. If a little sunlight steal through a hole or crevice how the delicate shoot reaches towards it! How constantly many flowers keep their faces towards the sun. Who has not witnessed the tendrils of a vine reaching for a limb or cord, or something to cling to and support the growing plant? If there is a support within reach it will find it. This appears to be a low order of intelligence, but commensurate with the conditions calling it forth.

In the animal kingdom we find varying degrees of intelligence, but always in keeping with organs and conditions. An oyster has some intelligence, a fly more, an ant more, a honey-bee more, a hog still more, a dog still more, a horse still more, an elephant more still, and man more than all. He is truly said to be an epitome of all animal existences below him, and the highest expression of divinity in the Universe. In these and numerous other gradations of intellect, or mind, the difference arises from the varied organizations, from the quantity and quality of brain and the character of the nervous system, a part of the connecting apparatus for producing and conveying thought and sensation.

In man great diversity of intellect exists. If each

individuality is a spark from the great central intellect it would hardly be so ; but when we realize the interminable differences in organizations, conditions, quality and quantity of brain, together with the ever-varying character of nervous systems, the reason for the great variety of intellects can be partially understood.

The production of intellect depends on several conditions. In the first place a healthy body is most essential. A good brain, a good nervous system, a good stomach, a good digestive apparatus, circulation of good blood are all indispensable in the production of mind. Proper food, pure air and pure water are of the highest importance in this intricate process, and without them mind cannot exist. As the fuel and water are to the engine ; as hay and oats are to the muscular strength of the horse, so is meat, bread and potatoes to the intellect of man. The combustion of the fuel converts the water into steam, whose confined force acting upon the piston causes the engine to move rapidly, and convey with it hundreds of tons in weight. The digestion of the hay and oats imparts to the horse muscular strength sufficient to move bodies ten times his own weight and what also of intellect he possesses. So the meat, bread and potatoes which man eats and assimilates impart to him the powers and forces he possesses, including the intellect or mind. Deprive the engine of fuel, and it must stop ; deny the horse his hay and oats and he cannot haul heavy loads, he must stop ; deprive man of his necessary food and he soon becomes exhausted. Starve him and he has no muscular strength and equally no mind ; before the spark of life flickers out his mind is gone, he is an idiot or a maniac ; he has

no intellect. It is well known the labors of the mind are as exhaustive as physical labor, and equally necessitate material food and repose.

Thus we see food produces mind in the same way it produces muscular strength, and that one is the product of matter and organization as really as the other, and that we must look for the best intellect where we find the best organizations and the best conditions.

4. *Do you think it more reasonable and truthful to suppose that the inferior races of men are evidence of the result of degeneracy, rather than of natural development from a still inferior race?*

We do not. The law of progression and development we regard as the order of the Universe rather than retrogression and degeneracy. It is far from complimentary to an infinite, all-wise Creator to believe his works deteriorate and go backward to ignominy and decay. It is the same with the Universe; its law is progress, onward, forward, not retrogression, backwardness and deterioration. True, conditions have very much to do with the development of the human race. It is well known a particular family, tribe or nation may go backward instead of forward; they may sink in the scale of humanity instead of rising in it, but this is always dependent upon governing causes, the effects of which cannot be ignored. It is not improbable, even, that nations and races like individuals, may have their eras, their *life-time*, beginning in infancy, progressing through youth to maturity and old age, but it is evidently a law of the Universe that in the aggregate, the human race gradually progresses in intelligence, morality and in the enjoyment of happiness. Ignorance is the great obstacle to the more rapid advance, and where this is fully re-

moved, and we learn to live naturally, rationally and sensibly in all things, according to the immutable laws which govern our existence, we may expect mankind will occupy a much more elevated position than now; be more healthful in body and mind, less troubled with diseases and afflictions, live to a greater age, be more physically strong, more intellectual, more virtuous and consequently more happy.

5. *How can an inferior animal produce its superior on strictly natural principles?*

It can be done in no other way than upon natural principles; but that it *is* done it is hardly necessary to affirm. We have only to look at the improvements that have been made in the rearing of horses, cattle, sheep and swine to be fully convinced of this. The difference between the zebra and the wild horses of Tartary and South America, and the blooded horses which are the pride of Europe and the United States is very great. The same is true of cattle, sheep and hogs. Our Devonshire, Durham and Alderney cattle, reared under favorable conditions are largely in advance of the wild cattle of the forests and plains. Our Merino and other choice breeds of sheep are a great improvement upon the coarse wild sheep of olden times, the same as our Berkshire, China and Poland hogs are a great advance from the wild hogs from which they descended. The same law of development and improvement that rules in the animal kingdom prevails in the vegetable kingdom. It is well known the numerous and magnificent varieties of apples we now have were produced from the sour crab apple, as all our luscious pears, peaches, and plums were produced by the appliances of culture, art and development, from the bitter, *puckery* wild

pear, the small, sour, wild peach, and the inferior wild plum. In a similar manner the hundreds of beautiful varieties of roses which florists now present us are the product of the wild rose, as the multitudinous varieties of beautiful asters, balsams, cockscombs, dahlias, gladioluses, pansies, petunias, pinks, tulips, verbenas, and other lovely flowers, are the products of the simple wild flowers from which they are the direct descendants.

All these improvements and developments are the result of natural laws, which men have learned and applied.

6. *If the laws of Nature are fixed, who can turn them aside?*

No one can change that which is unchangeable, nor turn aside that which is immovable. The laws of Nature can not be rendered inoperative nor nugatory, but they are unlimited in number, and are applicable to all conceivable conditions and circumstances. It is the proper study of mankind to become acquainted with them to the fullest extent, and to learn to apply them to all the affairs and necessities of life, and not to try to subvert them, oppose them, or live in opposition to them.

7. *If plants grew into animals, and animals into human beings, in the long ago, why is it not so now?*

We cannot say it is not so. These operations take place very slowly, and almost imperceptibly, and it is not at all unlikely some of them are taking place at the present time. The same causes under the same conditions will always produce the same results. This may be regarded as an axiom as unfailing as "twice two are four."

It is, perhaps, not easy to comprehend how one

form of existence evolves into another, and how animal life may proceed from vegetable life, but it is still more difficult to understand how otherwise so many forms of existence came to be. We have come to understand the Universe contains all the forces and powers necessary to produce every result that has ever been accomplished. In the primitive condition of our planet, it was doubtless wholly unfitted for either vegetable or animal life. As it gradually condensed from a nebular condition, it required immense eras for the soil to be converted by means of oxygen and other influences from the primitive rocks into a condition suitable for the production of vegetation, including grasses, herbs and trees. It is reasonable to suppose the first germs of vegetable life were simple and crude, and that the evolution of the thousands of succeeding varieties were a slow and natural outgrowth of the original; and without doubt these evolutions in the vegetable kingdom still continue as new varieties of plants are constantly being discovered. We have shown how man has produced new varieties of animals, fruits and flowers by making use of natural laws, and it is quite as probable nature, by the same laws, produces similar results.

When after the lapse of countless ages, the earth became adapted to the existence of animal life, all the various varieties did not come into existence at once. The simple *animalculæ* and *radiata* were doubtless the first which nature produced, and these after an epoch—the length of which we are unable to judge—came the *mollusca*—shell fish, then *articulata*—jointed insects and animals, next *vertebrata*, animals with internal skeleton, and divided into reptiles, fishes, birds, and mammals.

While the external forms of all these animals are so different, it is no less true that the whole, after all, are mere variations of a fundamental germ or principle which can be traced as a basis through the whole, the variations being merely modifications to suit each particular variety that exists. Starting from the primitive germ, which we have seen, is the representative of a particular order of full-grown animals, we find all others to be merely advances from that type, with the extension of endowments and modifications of forms required in each particular case; each form, also, retaining a strong affinity to that which precedes it, and tending to impress its own features on that which succeeds.

This unity of structure, as it is called, becomes the more remarkable when it is remembered that the organs, which possessing a resemblance, are often put to different uses; for example, the ribs, become in the serpent, organs of locomotion, and the snout is extended in the elephant into a prehensile instrument. It is equally remarkable that analogous purposes are served in different animals by organs essentially different. Thus, the mammalia breathe by lungs; the fishes by gills. These are not modifications of one organ, but distinct organs. In mamifers, the gills exist and act at an early stage of the foetal state, but afterward go back and appear no more; while the lungs are developed. In fishes, again, the gills only are fully developed, while the lung structure either makes no advance at all, or only appears in the rudimentary form of an air-bladder. In many instances a particular structure is found advanced to a certain point in a particular set of animals, (for instance, feet in the serpent tribe), although not there required in

any degree ; but the peculiarity being carried a little farther forward, is perhaps useful in the next set of animals in the scale. These are called rudimentary organs and are most conspicuous in animals which form links between the various classes.

We cannot take the space here to enumerate the many instances of similarity of organs in the different varieties of animals ; but in illustration will merely state, that as various as may be the lengths of the upper part of the vertebrated column (back bone) in the *mammalia*, it always consists of the same parts and the same number of bones. Thus, the giraffe has in its tall neck the same number of bones as the pig, which scarcely seems to have a neck at all. Man unlike most of the *mammalia* has no tail, but the necessary bones for a caudal appendage exist in an undeveloped state in the *os coccygis* of the human species. The limbs of the vertebrate animals are in like manner on one plan, however various they may appear. In the hind leg of a horse, for example, the angle called the hock is the same part which in man forms the heel ; and the horse and nearly all other quadrupeds walk upon what corresponds to the toes of the human race. As these parts are, in many quadrupeds shrunken or compressed into a hoof, so the tail which would otherwise attach to the human subject is shrunken up into a bony mass at the lower extremity of the back. The bat, on the other hand, has these parts largely developed. The membrane, commonly called the wing, is framed chiefly upon bones answering precisely to those of the human hand. In the paddles of the whale, and other animals of its order, are found the same bones as in the more highly developed extremities of the land animals, and even the

serpent tribes which present no external appearance of such extremities, possess them in reality, though in an undeveloped or rudimental state.

If it is difficult to comprehend how so many forms of life as now exist upon this planet should have evolved from one simple germ or a few simple germs, it is certainly more difficult to comprehend that so many separate creations should have been necessary. According to Humboldt and Spencer, there are scattered over our globe at the present time some 320,000 species of vegetable life, and 2,000,000 species of animal life, and if to these are added the numbers of animal and vegetable species which have existed, but have now become extinct the total number would not fall short of ten millions of species. Which is the most probable that these ten millions of species of organized life are evolutions and modifications of an original germ or germs, or that they were all separate and distinct creations? We decidedly yield our assent to the former proposition.

If it is not easy to understand that all the forms of animal life should have arisen from a single germ, or if it is not clear how the animal kingdom could have evolved from the vegetable, it certainly is not difficult to understand that in the Universe exist, perpetually, the powers and forces necessary to produce all that now is or ever has existed. As no effect was ever produced without a natural cause sufficient to produce it, so these natural causes, operating under all conceivable conditions, necessarily produce an endless variety of results. In the great Universe is inherent all the powers and potency requisite to call into existence all that is or ever was.

If it cannot be fully comprehended how vegetables

can evolve into animals, it can at least be understood that the two kingdoms approach each other so closely as scarcely to be separated. There is animal life so closely bordering upon the vegetable that at first it would appear to be the latter. The *hydroosa* and the sponge family are samples of this class. On the other hand, there are vegetables possessing the characteristics of animals to a wonderful extent; and as illustrations we have but to mention the plants recently discovered both by Professor Darwin in England, and Mary Treat in this country, which not only catch animals, but digest them and appropriate them to their sustenance and growth. It is little more wonderful that one kingdom should evolve into the other, than that each should approach the other so closely and partake of the special province of the other to such a remarkable extent.

In connection with this subject, we will call attention to the fact that nature seems to evolve or adapt different forms of life to the varying circumstances in which it is placed. Thus certain kinds of plants growing in, and located where rain seldom falls, and requiring a store of moisture for their nourishment, are found to be provided with a cup-like vessel surrounding the stalk to retain water after a shower. This *cup* or *pitcher*, as it is sometimes called, is not a new organ, but simply an evolution or modification of a leaf of the plant. So fish, having eyes and good sight, if kept and propagated in the dark, although they retain their eyes, they become entirely useless, and the fish are "stone blind." If, however, they are brought into the light, by its magic influence their sight is gradually restored until they see again as well as ever. Indeed, we are hardly able to estimate the

subtle and mysterious influence this wonderful element—*light*—exercises in the production of organs of vision. It seems to have the power to call forth organs of sight when needed, while animals who live perpetually in the dark have no eyes and no sight.

8. *Do you believe in the infinite progression and development of good and evil?*

According to our comprehension of this question, we answer, Yes. As we believe in the infinite progression and development of all material substances, we necessarily must believe in the progression of good and evil. Here it becomes necessary for us to define what we understand by "good and evil." They are simply relative terms. Every thing that exists is susceptible of becoming good or evil, according to the use that is made of it. There is nothing so good but if improperly used it may become an evil, and there is in existence nothing so bad but what is positive good if properly and legitimately used. Thus, fire, which in warming us in cold weather, and in cooking our food, is so great a good, when it is out of its proper place and burns our dwellings and destroys towns and cities, it is an evil of immense magnitude. So, water, which in floods, torrents, and devastating streams is a great evil, in the imperceptible dew, in the gentle rain, in sparkling springs, in murmuring rills, flowing rivers, and the great ocean, over which proudly float ships and steamers—in the multitudinous ways in which it refreshes thirst and sustains life, it is an indispensable good. So it is with food, alcohol, clothing, exercise, pleasure, the impulses, the passions, and every substance and every quality in existence—properly and wisely used they are all good, but when improperly used they become evil.

We believe in no personal good nor personal evil constantly warring with each other—no personal God, no personal Devil. These myths are the outgrowth of ignorance, and are deservedly passing away as the light of truth shines upon the world, together with the belief in witches, gnomes, fairies, genii, hobgoblins and demons.

9. *Will the present ungodly state of society eventually result in in the reformation and happiness of the human race independent of Divine agency?*

The word *divine* in this question is somewhat indefinite. If it means the efforts of a personal deity we answer *yes*; if it means *all* that exists, *no*. Our belief is that all that exists is, in its nature *good*, and that everything belongs to the divine system of the Universe. We believe the moral and social conditions of the world will be greatly improved, until the human race is vastly healthier, better, and happier than now. The world *has* greatly improved within the period covered by history, but the advance made is slight compared with what we hopefully trust the future has in store for us. The race has inherently within its nature the elements of unlimited progress, and as it succeeds in dispelling the ignorance and superstition which pernicious creeds and dogmas for thousands of years have fastened upon it, it will rise permanently in worth, usefulness and happiness.

This advance may be slow; the effects of ignorance and defective education in the world are most serious and the tendency to selfishness and the indulgence of passion is strong in man; but still we have great hopes of him. He may still be considered in his infancy. *Forever* is a long time; and when he gets all the knowledge of a scientific propagation of species,

a sensible, healthful rearing of the young, the best social system, with all the numerous etceteras of life he is capable of acquiring, we trust he will be vastly better and happier than now.

What our friend calls the "*ungodly* state of society" we apprehend is the result of disorder and the want of due appreciation of Nature's laws and requirements. It has no connection with any invisible personality, good or bad.

As the laws of health and the science of life become better understood and applied, disease will be greatly banished from the earth. As intelligence and science become thoroughly disseminated, ignorance, vice and crime will correspondingly lessen. As the human race learn that the highest morality consists in doing good to their fellow beings, and that this course produces the most perfect happiness, so will good deeds and kind actions abound, and what is called sin and wickedness will become comparatively unfashionable and unknown.

10. *Does it not require more faith to be a skeptic than to be a Christian?*

Decidedly not. A skeptic is one who has no faith, but doubts everything. A Christian is one who believes whatever his priest or creed demands of him, regardless of logic, sense or reason. A skeptic takes nothing upon trust—nothing because somebody, who knows no more than he does, commands him to do so. A skeptic and a Rationalist are not necessarily the same. A skeptic is simply a doubter, while a Rationalist is one who embraces the truths of the Universe, the teachings of science and reason so far as he understands them. He is only skeptical upon such subjects of which he is ignorant and does not

accept as truth that which lacks the confirmation of experience and demonstration.

11. *Is it easier to believe in nature than in God?*

We answer, *yes*, if reason is followed and myths and superstitions are discarded; though were we to judge by the numbers of the human race who believe in some kind of a God, we might think to the contrary. In the last five thousand years not less than fifty thousand gods have been manufactured by men, and these have been believed in by countless millions of our race. Where ignorance has most prevailed, there has the belief in a god or gods most abounded. Many volumes would be necessary to recount the great diversity of characteristics and monstrosities these ignorant human beings have ascribed to their gods. The more ignorant and degraded they were, the more crude and depraved their gods, The more warlike and blood-thirsty the nations who have made these gods, the more fond their gods were of bloodshed and carnage, and they have even been called "the god of battles." Bloodshed, slaughter and destruction of life seemed their highest pleasure. The Jews and their God, Jehovah, is a case in point. The more peaceful and inoffensive the nation, the more quiet and undemonstrative their god, and their highest conception of happiness is *rest*. The Hindoos and their God, Brahm, illustrate this phase; they rarely engaged in war, and their god never urged them to battle and slaughter. The European nations, as well as our own, in suit, unfortunately adopted a warlike fighting god, with a religion to match, and the consequence has been these nations have indulged in the most devastating and bloody wars the world has ever known. More blood has been shed and more lives

have been taken in the name of the God Jehovah and the religions that have grown out of a belief in him, than all the thousands of other gods the world has possessed.

As easy as it has been for the ignorant masses to believe in the numerous gods which wily and interested priests have foisted upon them, millions of them never stopping to doubt, to investigate or even to make an enquiry, have blindly and zealously taken the gods thus given them, and have been ready to kill or be killed in their defense ; as easy, we say, as it has been for ignorant nations to believe in these gods, to rational, sensible, well informed people, it would to us, seem vastly easier to believe in nature than in any God. Gods are imaginary, mythical personages which ignorant men have invented and devised, possessing as we have seen, different and antagonistic qualities and dispositions, some made of wood, some of stone, some of metal, and some totally invisible, and of which no man, absolutely, knows anything; while nature is the great Universe, containing all the suns, all the worlds, all matter, all life, all existences with all the forces and powers that are. While no reasonable person wishes a god of wood, stone or brass, while the invisible he cannot see nor comprehend, the boundless Universe is always before us, a reality, a power, a totality that for a moment cannot be doubted. To us, then, it seems vastly easier to believe in Nature than in any god.

12. *Do you know everything that you believe?*

We see no special point or pertinancy to this question. All men *know* certain things of which they have positive proof, and these they also believe. They likewise believe certain other things, which to them

seem probable and reasonable, but which they cannot be said to absolutely know. We are no exception to the rule. Probably all men are liable to think they *know* what they really only *believe*. In this tendency we also doubtless participate. The best any of us can do is to exercise the best reason and judgment we possess, to examine and investigate whatever is presented us for our acceptance, and to believe nothing that is not founded in reason, truth, and upon the immutable laws of the Universe. The great error mankind have made, is to *believe* too much without proof, to accept the most absurd claims and the most unreasonable propositions upon the simple assertion of those who really knew no more of the matters involved than themselves. This habit, we trust is passing away.

13. *Please give us the name and articles of your faith.*

The name of our belief is known as *Rationalism or Liberalism*. We have never tabulated the articles of our faith, but have not the slightest objection to stating what they are. We claim to believe what appears to us as *truth*, and hold ourselves in readiness to accept whatever new truth is presented to our consciousness and comprehension. We must be our own judge as to what truth *is*, and feel ourselves under no obligation to blindly accept what somebody else may claim to be truth, no matter in what book it may be printed or what class of priests may demand it.

In addition to the points of faith already indicated, we name the following :

1. We believe the true God is the God of the Universe, and exists alike in all that is. Nothing is above him, nothing is below him, nothing is outside of him, all are parts of the great divine system which embraces all substances and all qualities. This God is just and

impartial ; he reveals himself to all alike, and speaks to all alike. He does not whisper privately his will to some obscure individual and commission him to proclaim the same to the world, and demand that it accept it without doubt or question.

2. We believe the highest duty of man and the purest morality consists in our good offices and kind acts to our fellow beings. God neither demands our oblations nor worship, nor does he need them. He is so far above us our actions can neither be any aid or injury to him. Humanity is the highest expression of deity of which we have any knowledge ; to it are due all our service, all our devotion, all our worship. In following this course, the world will be made more intelligent, more moral and more happy than by all the creeds, all the religions and all the gods that have had an imagined existence.

3. We believe good deeds actuated by benevolent motives produce happiness, and that our lives should be spent in cultivating the good and shunning that which is bad and hurtful. That every individual must be his own *Savior*, and can derive no real benefit from an unseen, imaginary personage.

4. It is the duty of all to endeavor to learn and understand the laws of our being, and to be controlled by the immutable laws of the Universe, looking in that direction, in all cases, for guidance and information.

Without detaining our readers with a more detailed statement of what we believe, we will name some things we do not believe.

1. We do not believe the Bible account of the creation of the Universe is true.

2. We do not believe God ever delighted in, or incited wars, carnage and bloodshed.

3. We do not believe God ever created a Devil and made a hell in which to punish and torture his creatures to the latest hours of eternity.

4. We do not believe he ever established the great evils, priestcraft and kingcraft in the world to oppress and curse the human race for thousands of years.

5. We do not believe God ever co-habited with a young Jewish maiden and thereby begot a son half god and half man. This idea appears so entirely a borrowed one from prior heathen mythology we give it no credence at all. If there was such a person as Jesus Christ, he had a natural father, the same as every other being who came into the world, and was no more God than any other good man.

6. We do not believe any human being is to be eternally damned for not believing that which is impossible for him to believe, and that it is every man's undoubted right to believe and accept that which to him seems just, right and true.

Having now answered our friend's questions; having told him some things we do believe and some things we do not believe, we wish to ask him a few questions, and hope he will reply to them with the same fairness we have endeavored to exercise.

1. If it is necessary the Universe should have been created, is it not just as necessary its author should have been created?

2. Whence came the Jewish and Christian God, and how long has he existed?

3. How could God make the boundless Universe from nothing?

4. Is it likely a good God would make millions of

creatures, and make also a wily Devil to decoy ninety-nine hundredths of them to eternal destruction ?

5. Why did God make the Devil ?

6. If he did not make evil, where did it come from ?

7. What possible good can it do to punish forever countless millions of weak and unfortunate beings ? Can keeping them in torture perpetually, really add to the glory of God ?

8. If God is unchangeable, and always the same, how could he repent on one day of what he had done on another day ?

9. Would it be unjust or unkind in God to rule that all men should be happy in whatever state of existence they may occupy, and if not would it not be unkind in him not to do it ?

10. By what principle of justice can cruelty inflicted upon an innocent person be counted as justification to the guilty ?

11. Is it possible for father and son to be of the same age, or for the latter to beget the former ?

12. If God raised up the priesthood to lead and guide the world, why did he not endow them with more self-denial and virtue than they seem to possess ?

13. Is God so influenced by blood, whether of bullocks, rams, he-goats, or his only begotten son, as to forgive the sins of the blackest criminals, while towards countless millions of other unfortunate beings his displeasure continues forever ?

We have propounded the same number of questions our friend asked us. If he will be kind enough to reply to them we will be glad to ask him a few more. Shall we hear from him ?

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D. M. BENNETT,

EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR,

335 Broadway, N. Y.

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# Alessandro di Cagliostro:

## IMPOSTOR OR MARTYR?

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A PAPER READ BEFORE THE NEW YORK LIBERAL  
CLUB, FRIDAY, MAY 28, 1875, BY

CHARLES SOTHERAN,

AUTHOR OF

AN ESSAY ON "AMERICAN GENEALOGY," AND "GENEALOGI-  
CAL MEMORANDA RELATING TO THE FAMILY OF SOTH-  
ERON AND TO THE SEPTS OF MAC MANUS." CO-  
EDITOR OF "THE AMERICAN BIBLIOPOLIST," AND  
EDITOR OF "THE MANCHESTER DIOCESAN  
CHURCH CALENDAR." 1873 AND 1874. 2 VOLS.  
MEMBER OF THE HARLEIAN SOCIETY,  
32 . . MEMPHIS, 94 . . MIZRAIM, SOCI-  
ETATIS ROSÆ CRUCIS, K. R. ✠,  
K. KADOSH, M. M. 104 AND  
1052 ENG., ETC., ETC.

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Reprinted, with a few additions, from the considerably  
abridged report published in "The Truth Seeker."

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NEW YORK:  
D. M. BENNETT: 335 BROADWAY,  
1875.

## PROEM.

Having received numerous applications for copies of the erudite lecture on Count di Cagliostro, delivered by Mr. Charles Sotheran, I have consented to reprint, with a few additions, the report published in *THE TRUTH SEEKER*. In justice to the lecturer, I should state that my abridgment in that periodical, and even the present pamphlet, gives but a general idea of the actual merits of the paper, which took nearly two hours in delivery, was crowded with thesis and anti-thesis, with considerable information relating to the developments of Masonry, Spiritualism and Rosicrucianism, and with extracts from numerous contemporary writers and historical documents, and which, owing to space, I was, and am even now, obliged, much loath, to greatly condense and in certain instances to leave out altogether.

As Mr. Sotheran has only been resident in America a few months, and therefore may be unknown to many of my readers, I reproduce a leading article from the *Spiritual Scientist* of June 10th, 1875, which refers not only to the essayist's capabilities as a literary man, but also to the fact that the Spiritualists have accepted Cagliostro as a former martyr to their cause :

" We welcome to our columns a new and most acceptable writer—Mr. Charles Sotheran, an English author of repute, and now the editor of the *American Bibliopolist*. Mr. Sotheran is a gentleman of extensive reading and ripe culture, who is well known abroad as the author of several works upon the genealogies and antiquities of the English counties. He has also paid great attention to the literature of the occult sciences, and the article from his pen which appears in this week's *Scientist*, is a brief summary of a most valuable historical paper which he read before the New York Liberal Club, the week before last.

" The story of Cagliostro's life, as now given, affords us a glimpse at a personage whose deeds and learning were the wonder of his contemporaries—a man of pure life, active benevolence, and, especially, of the strangest psychological powers. He could not only read the lives of those with whom he came in contact, but prophesy their

future, heal their diseases, no matter how desperate they might seem, and call up at his pleasure the shades of whomsoever in the spirit-world any person desired to see.

"He was a philosopher of the highest rank, a friend of human progress, and a most determined enemy of the Papal establishment. It is not surprising that, having once put himself within the jurisdiction of such a merciless government as the latter, it should adopt the flimsiest pretext to arrest and condemn him to punishment; nor even that it should seek to blacken his memory by circulating falsehoods about him, which should make his name synonymous with charlatanism and dishonesty.

"Thanks to the labors of Mr. Sotheran, among the archives of the French government, the real character of this prodigy of the last century is now, apparently, displayed for our wonder and instruction."

Mr. Sotheran ranks very high as an historical critic. In evidence of this I should mention that, in addition to his published works, numerous articles from his trenchant pen have appeared in the pages of "The Antiquary," "Notes and Queries," Howard's "Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica," and other English magazines. He was also one of the principal contributors to the important historical work compiled by Mr. Joseph Foster, "Pedigrees of the Leading County Families of England and Wales," and traces of his handiwork are to be found in Cansick's "Collection of Curious and Interesting Epitaphs," Sheardown's "History of the Yorkshire Yeomanry Cavalry," and Bailey's "Life of Thomas Fuller," to which works, and others, he has given valuable assistance. As a poet he has also made some mark.

In conclusion, I hope my readers will be deeply interested in Mr. Sotheran's present valuable contribution to Biography, and I further wish that he will have that success he so justly merits in this country, his new and adopted home.

D. M. BENNETT

335 Broadway, New York.

June. 1875.

# ALESSANDRO DI CAGLIOSTRO: *IMPOSTOR OR MARTYR?*

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“To doubt and to be astonished is to recognize our ignorance. Hence it is, that the lover of wisdom, is in a certain sort, a lover of mythi; for the subject of mythi is the astonishing and marvellous.”—*Sir William Hamilton.*

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—  
The pages of history when perused by the light of searching and impartial investigation very frequently narrate an entirely different account to that popularly taught. Take for example the History of England: until late years Richard the Third was accredited in addition to the crime of murder with having been a man of most repulsive aspect—in body crook-backed, palsied, of horrid visage—a satyr. Queen Mary the First has been likewise, until recently, considered the worst and most bloodthirsty monarch who ever sat on the English throne; while her half sister, Queen Elizabeth, the most exemplary, and during whose reign little blood was spilt on behalf of religion. What are the facts? “Crookbacked Richard” was no hunchback, but as Walpole in his “*Historic Doubts*,” and Jesse in his “*Life of Richard the Third*,” both quoting

the old Countess of Desmond, and other authorities show was really a man of fair, stately and gentle presence, and very far from the monster painted by the glowing pen of Shakespeare, who, in acting the courtier for dynastic reasons, knowingly altered the circumstances that the enemy of the grandfather of his royal mistress, should be described in the most hideous terms to assist in excusing Henry Tudor in his usurpation—as if mere personal appearance must of necessity indicate crime. Similar reasons can be found for giving the title of “bloody” to Queen Mary, a woman of naturally kind and gentle character, who personally was not responsible for the persecutions of Protestants during her reign, and many of which, so styled, were founded on the political treason of the victims ; but it is far different with Elizabeth, “Good Queen Bess,” during whose tenure of the throne more persons were tortured, disembowelled and executed for the sake of religion than in any other reign. Those who doubt these statements should carefully study the works of Froude, Strickland, Lingard, Cobbett and other later historians, when they will readily comprehend the bloody legacy left to the British nation and continued by her successors, until the “black laws” were repealed in the reign of George the Fourth—while all the time Protestant parsons and historians have been zealously lying and concealing the truth in the interests of theology, and howling down their fellow-Christians, the Catholics. As in England, so in Europe, so the world over. No wonder, therefore, that in disgust, the late Charles Kingsley threw up his University Professorship of History and gave as his reason that “history was seven-eighths falsehood, with a residuum of garbled truth.”

As with many other historical characters, so with the subject of this evening's lecture, Cagliostro, the philanthropist, the republican, the man of science, the philosopher and whose misunderstood career was sealed with martyrdom by the thrice accursed Inquisition of Rome. To future generations when the Vatican archives are opened to public scrutiny, must the entire clearing of his character be left, and then, perhaps, gibes and lies started by false priests, jealous physicians and revengeful aristocrats will be heard no more re-echoed by ignorant rabble and lazy compilers taking their material second-hand without going to the foundation for information.

I speak thus confidently, having made the life of this man a study for some time back. During a residence in Paris where the most eventful portions of Cagliostro's life occurred, through the friendship of an auditor of State to the the late Emperor Napoleon, a son of Senator Amedee Thierry and nephew of Augustin Thierry, the historian of the Norman conquest, I had access to many manuscripts and historical documents not hitherto made public. I have also through my connection with various European secret societies of which Cagliostro was a member obtained other information.

One of the greatest difficulties to the biographer of Count Alessandro di Cagliostro are the absurd and differing statements on the score of his birth. By a French Royalist newspaper, the *Courier de l'Europe* it was asserted he was the son of a coachman at Naples named Cicho, in the employ of Signor Christuplu, and that before commencing his career he was successively hair-dresser, valet-de-chambre and mountebank. A different account makes him out the

heir of a former monarch of Trebizond, who was dethroned and massacred by his subjects. Another report states, his father was one Balsamo, a man of humble position, a resident of Palermo in Sicily, where his son Joseph, the *soi disant* Cagliostro was born in 1743, that he was educated in a monastery till his fifteenth year when he became a chevalier d'industrie ; that after having several times been imprisoned at his stated place of nativity, his villainies culminated in the robbery under the most ridiculous circumstances of one Marano, a silversmith, on account of which he was obliged to leave Palermo forever. This rigmarole proceeded from the familiars of the Inquisition, and was only too greedily taken hold of by the before-named paper, which, after an attempt at blackmail, had previously set agog the former story, and in almost the same breath had given him credit for being a Sicilian and Neapolitan, as I have shown and elsewhere a Calabrian. In consequence of these untruthful statements, the birth and birth-place of Cagliostro have been shrouded in great obscurity. Of one thing, there can be little doubt ; he was brought up in Asia, and there is every reason, from established facts, to believe he was born in 1748, and was the offspring of Emanuel de Rohan, Sixty-eighth Grand Master of Malta, by a lady of Turkish extraction, who was captured by a Maltese galley.

The early years of the Count were passed under the name of Acharat, at the historical city of Medina in Arabia, and were spent in the palace of the Mufti Salahayn, chief of the Mahometans, under the care of his tutor, and second father, Althotas, an erudite Greek, learned in all Oriental lore and science, but especially in the hidden Eastern mysteries of Theurgic

Magic (magnetism and clairvoyance), Medicine and Chemistry (alchemy), who poured into the attentive ear of his willing pupil his stores of learning and knowledge of the Asiatic tongues. The semi-parental care of his tutor did not stop there, anxious to have his pupil well versed in metaphysics, he had him initiated into the doctrines of the Eastern Illuminati and other philosophical fraternities, spread all over Oriental countries, and which as Jarchas the Brachman in early times tells Apollonius of Tyana—"have always been famed for Magic and Secret Societies."

While a resident of Medina, he attended the exoteric services of the Mahometan faith, it being the aim of his instructor to instil into his mind the respect due to the form of worship and laws of every country in which he might happen to be resident ; "and yet," says Cagliostro, in the *Memorials* of his life, published in 1786, "the true religion was imprinted on our hearts," a religion before whose shrines the Hindoo, Parsee, Jew, Trinitarian or Unitarian Christian, Mahometan or the member of any faith might worship without prejudice to their separate beliefs, and which inculcated the immortality of the soul and endless happiness to the good brother.

Upon the completion of his studies, and feeling desirous of seeing various parts of the world, he set out, accompanied by his tutor, to visit those places hallowed by the shades of the great departed and the ruins of those opulent cities, the only remnants left to ponder on of those mighty empires which in ancient days swayed the earth. At Mecca he remained three years, where he was introduced to the Scheriff or Sovereign, and between them a close friendship was perfected.

Up to the year 1766, Cagliostro visited all that remained of the principal ancient cities of Asia and Africa : Palmyra the melancholy and memorable ; Thebes, now Luxor, with its hundred palaces ; the ruins of Babylon ; Nineveh—whence Layard has since summoned her kings and people, after 3,000 years to give their testimony ; Baalbec and her temples ; Perseopolis the magnificent ; Tyre and Sidon, famed for their fabrics ; Memphis, where the white-robed priests taught a faith *not yet extinct*, and those other ruins where the philosopher can contemplate on the mutability and decay of tyrannies, religious and political, till the mind, bursting its tension, can rove fancy free amid the treasures of the past.

In Egypt he was permitted entrance to temples and palaces into which ordinary travelers had not then been allowed, and here he was initiated into that mysterious rite of which he afterwards was one of the principal disseminators in Europe. It may, perhaps, be well to state that the religion and mysteries of the ancient Egyptians have been greatly misinterpreted, owing to early Christian falsifications and the *pretended* excesses of those Greek followers who introduced the worship of Isis into Rome, and where the secret and philosophical teachings, like those of Ceres, Mithras and Eleusis were but known to the few ; their esoteric faith handed down to these times, like most of the early Monotheistic religions revel in lofty aspirations and their holy writings, equally with the Vedas, Zendavesta, Talmud and other sacred books breathe a spirit of the purest aspiration to the Preserver of all, whether worshiped as Osiris, the Egyptian Saviour, Creator or male generative Phallic principle, and elsewhere as the Sun or Baal, Ceres, Adonai, etc. To this

glorious Being, figuratively clothed in human shape, when life was over they departed on that mysterious voyage, "to that bourne from whence no traveller returns," and in him they hoped for final justification; to attain to a sufficient knowledge of him was the ultimate end of all their mysteries, and a nearly abject purification, if anything can be abject performed in reference to the Most High, was obligated upon all seekers of the one great God, Kneph, Intelligence or efficient cause of the Universe. It is not to be wondered then, that with every Egyptian, even the most miserable, was buried a fragment of the Book of the Dead, or holy writings which were composed during the earliest ages of Egyptian history thousands of years ago. Those whose means allowed it, had it sculptured on their Sarcophagi before their departure, as it was termed, "into Amenti."

Upon the termination of his Asiatic and African travels, Cagliostro and his tutor, in 1766, repaired to the Isle of Malta, where the Knights of Malta then held supreme sway, until their dispersion with their sixty-ninth Grand Master, Ferdinand de Hompesch who handed his rights over to the Emperor Paul of Russia in 1798. The Templars, Knights of St John and other military and Gnostic fraternities had like the ancient religious associations and later fraternities of Illuminati the same peculiar system of ethics known but to duly sworn brethren. The first named, the Knights Templar, through their Grand Master Jacques de Molay, having refused certain concessions desired by the infamous Pope Clement the Fifth, who aided by Philip of France suborned witnesses, brought forward the most unfounded and damnable accusations respecting the Templar mysteries, where-

upon the Pope dissolved the Order and burnt their venerable Grand Master at the stake, the property of the Order in France being confiscated by the king. Notwithstanding, the members scattered, united with the Masonic and Rosicrucian brotherhoods with which legitimate branches of the Knights of Malta, Rhodes, and St. John of Jerusalem also amalgamated and have continued in unison till the present time, their ritual being incorporated in the higher degrees of Free Masonry, and thus perpetuated a direct succession with the ancient mysteries. I have thus gone out of my way to describe this, as much of the mystery of Cagliostro's life would otherwise be enveloped in obscurity.

Immediately on reaching Malta by way of Rhodes, Cagliostro and his tutor were hospitably furnished with rooms in the palace of Pinto da Fonesca the then Grand Master and a famous Illuminati, and who treated Cagliostro with the greatest distinction and after a further acquaintance ennobled him with the title of Count, on receiving which, he assumed as usual in those cases the territorial affix "Di Cagliostro" in a similar way that plain Monsieur Arouet became M. Arouet de Voltaire on taking possession of his paternal estate of Voltaire, by which name he was afterwards only known.

Da Fonesca being aware of the extraction of the Count always treated him with the greatest friendliness and together they essayed in the laboratory some of those astonishing alchemical experiments which were afterwards magnified to an incredible extent by the ignorant who are ever ready to affirm a supernatural origin to what passes their vulgar comprehension. Here Cagliostro had the misfortune to lose his tutor

and early friend. They had been so long and so warmly associated together that the loss was most keenly felt by the Count. Together had they prosecuted their studies and together brought out valuable discoveries in chemistry, one of which was an ingredient for improving the manufacture of flax, imparting to goods of that material a gloss and softness almost equal to silk, and by which they netted considerable profit in Alexandria and other towns they had visited. It was the venerable Althotas whose character is portrayed in such glowing colors by the late head of the Rosicrucian Order in England, Lord Lytton in that remarkable mystical work, *Zanoni*, under which pseudonym Cagliostro will be readily recognized. But it is not on fiction, but facts, that history must be written, and although Bulwer Lytton's "*Zanoni*," Schiller's "*Gersesker*," Goethe's "*Gross Kophta*," and some of Dumas' novels have presented the almost kaleidoscopic acts and history of Cagliostro with remarkable force, one must throw them aside as worthless, notwithstanding their extraordinary conceptions.

After the death of Althotas, the Count felt dispirited, and soon left Malta, and with the Chevalier d'Aquinio visited the islands of the Archipelago, and then crossing the Mediterranean to Naples, whence he alone proceeded to the city of Rome. His letters from Fonsesca brought him into immediate acquaintance with leading citizens and dignitaries of the Church, among whom were several cardinals, one or two of whom afterwards became popes. The great cures of diseases performed here and his beneficence gave him a wide fame.

It was at Rome in 1770, in the twenty-second year of his age, he became acquainted with the lovely

Seraphina Feliciana, daughter of one of the first Italian families, and one of the most beautiful and brilliant maidens of Rome, and who became his wife. Through changing fortunes, in evil and in good report she remained a true and faithful wife. His confidence in her was unbounded, and he shared with her his secrets in Alchemy and other Scientific Departments, and had her initiated into the adopted Rite of Masonry, the members of which consist of and are governed over by females.

By invitation soon after their marriage the Count and Countess visited the celebrated Count de St. Germain, the friend of Louis the Fifteenth and his Prime Minister the Duc de Choiseul, who both had faith in him. St. Germain was one of the most celebrated men of his age, and a distinguished visitor at the Court of France, a Rosicrucian, and a man who, like Cagliostro, was deep in the Secrets of the Illuminati, a power whose wondrous ramifications extended, and still extends. vein-like throughout the whole civilized world. St. Germain, at the time of the visit of the Cagliostros, was residing at Sleswig in the palace of the Prince of Hesse Cassel, whom he had known formerly in Germany, and who forced him to leave France and remain at his Court, where in 1784 he died, under the roof of his friend the Prince. St. Germain and the Prince of Hesse Cassel received Cagliostro in the most magnificent manner in the palace of the latter, and during a short residence, St. Germain having tested him thoroughly in those branches of the mystical orders to which they both belonged, had him initiated into the mysteries of the European Order of Illuminism at a secret temple some short distance out of Frankfort-on-the-Maine.

He was there introduced to Swedenborg, the Swedish philosopher and the representative of that nation, Lord Fairfax of America, Lavater of France and of the followers of Jean Jacques Rousseau, a brother, and other distinguished personages. He was instructed by these assembled delegates to assist in operating against the oppressive political tyrannies in Europe, and that funds for the prosecution of the work, (of which the order had large sums) were deposited in the banks of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Basle, Lyons, London, Venice, Philadelphia, &c. It was agreed by the secret leaders that the first blows should be struck in America, where the way had been prepared by the suicidal folly of George the Third and his followers, and in France where the mass of the people were in a state of semi-serfdom, ground down under the most fearful tyranny, and where the infamous Louis Quinze surrounded by his mistresses, his "Parc-des-cerfs," and ministerial advisers, was demoralizing the people still further, allowing neither freedom in Religion nor political rights, and making *la Belle France*, the fairest garden in Europe, a charnel house, a worse than Asiatic Despotism, to minister to the vices and follies of this Louis, falsely called *le Bien Aime*, the most execrable specimen of humanity, next to George the Fourth or Henry the Eighth, who ever disgraced a throne.

To Washington and Franklin, well-known brothers in Masonry was the secret task of organization confided by their friend Fairfax and to Cagliostro were the destinies of France confided, where the fall of French Monarchy was being hastened by internal reasons, and the writings of the Encyclopædists, Voltaire and others. It was this which caused the Count's visit to

Strasburg, in 1780, and the funds of the society placed at his disposal was the reason of the lavish expenditure suggested to other sources. The device Cagliostro assumed in this undertaking was "L. P. D.," signifying "*Lilia Pedibus Destruæ*," "trample the lilies under foot." How well Washington and Franklin succeeded need not be mentioned, and the history of France shows how Cagliostro's task was performed—whether the Reign of Terror was preferable to the reign of Louis Capet and Marie Antoinette, the successor of Brunehaut and Fredegonde it is immaterial to discuss, both were attributable to the same source the ignorance of the people, and if France was deluged with an ocean of blood, what else could have been expected? It was the reaction—the lion turning on its betrayers and from which the French rescued from fourteen centuries of feudalism and religious despotism arose baptized, aye, St. Bartholomew like, in human blood, a nobler and freer people.

What happened in France in the Eighteenth century has occurred again to-day—the Carbonari or Illuminati fiat went forth and the petty Italian tyrannies are destroyed. Italy is free! Rome is liberated! and the renegade Pio Nono the perjured Masonic brother in answer to his futile excommunications, has his compliments returned with an expulsion from his Lodge and the Masonic body signed by Victor Emmanuel, Grand Master of the Orient in Italy, and countersigned by Guiseppe-Garibaldi, ex-Grand Master of the same.

Not only was Count Cagliostro admitted through the means of St. Germain to a brotherhood among the Illuminati, but became also a participator in the Rosicrucian mysteries. To give a full explanation of

Rosicrucianism in a paper of this character where brevity is necessary is impossible, nor even if I had the desire, dare I, a humble *Zelator* of the order, do so, but to those who, open-mouthed with ample digestion, might swallow all that may be set before them, I would say that the Fraternity uses as a rule parabolical and mystical language purposely to mislead, that having had its rise in pre-reformation times, and being hostile to the Roman Church it was obliged to use considerable caution in speaking on metaphysical subjects. Judged by this rule, the "Elixir of Life" might express the "immortality of the soul," the "Philosopher's Stone," may be as Thomas Vaughan, in his "Lumen Lumine," says, "the representative of the great world," and all that is good, pure and noble therein, and so on *ad infinitum*. Gabriel Rossetti, in his "Disquisitions on the anti-Papal Spirit which produced the Reformation," shows that the art of speaking and writing in a language which bears a double interpretation, is of very great antiquity, that it was in practice among the priests of Egypt, brought from thence by the Manichees, whence it passed to the Templars and Albigenses, spread over Europe and brought about the Reformation. One of the explanations of the brothers of the Rosie Cross and their secrets having been recently published, "The Rosicrucians," by Hargrove Jennings, I will refer to, particularly as a certain substratum of truth lies beneath the crust. [The lecturer here read passages from that work.] Such are the conclusions and *resume* of the labors of the author of the most noted work on the subject in this century. The symbol of the Rosicrucians is the Rosie Cross, "Rosy," as being in color like unto the emblem of discretion or secrecy, *i. e.*

“sub-rosa” and Rosy again because even a bloody death shall not force the truth. The cross because— “The sign or symbol of the cross is a natural one. The ancient Romans had signs, flags and crosses gilded and beautified. When a man in the hour of overwhelming distress, prays his father to have mercy upon him, he extends his arms heavenwards and makes precisely the same figure. In Egypt the the illiterate gratitude of a superstitious people, while they adored the river on whose inundations their provinces depended, could not fail of attaching notions of sanctity and holiness to the crosses which were erected on the bank of the Nile. It was held in the earliest ages among the Egyptians, Arabians and Indians as the signification of the life to come—of eternal life.”

Leaving the Count de St. Germain, from whom they parted with the most grateful feelings, the Count and Countess di Cagliostro in their own equipage and with a large retinue of servants, travelled through Germany, then principally under the sway of the good and tolerant Frederick the Great, a Mason, philosopher and the friend of Voltaire. In Germany he appears to have been equally celebrated as at Rome, succouring the poor, discoursing with the rich and founding lodges of Egyptian Masonry. His stay here employed in future years the pens of Schiller and Goethe, who both composed works in which he is delineated in wonderful coloring. He also visited Spain and Portugal, and a list of the nobility with whom he became acquainted there will be found in his autobiography.

Possessed of an European reputation, in 1776 he visited England, bringing with him much wealth in

plate, Jewels and specie. In London he applied himself arduously to his favorite study of chemistry and in acquiring a knowledge of the English language. He had trouble in London with a *soi-disant* Lord Scot, one Vitellini and their accomplices who became incensed because he would not reveal to them the art of foretelling the drawing of lucky numbers and how to transmute base metals into gold. They forced an entrance into his apartments and stole his private manuscripts and considerable wealth. They were brought before a justice, but by perjury escaped. In revenge they brought false charges against Cagliostro and subjected him to heavy expense. About the same time the editor of a leading French paper, because he could not succeed in obtaining money by blackmail from the Count, put in circulation base calumnies concerning him, all of which, however, were proved to be untrue. Among others was one that he was constrained to throw off the uniform of a Spanish colonel at the Court of St. Petersburg and been obliged to leave Russia, which was too clearly proved false by the evidence of Baron de Corberon, charge d' affaires of France at St. Petersburg and Minister Plenipotentiary. The editor of this paper also doubted the Count's philanthropy and disinterestedness, to which answer was made to others in later times by Cagliostro:

“Let them declare whether I have ever been guilty of an action disgraceful to a man of honor; let them say whether I have at any time sued for a favor or courted the protection of those sovereigns who were desirous of seeing me; let them declare whether I have at any time, or in any place done more than cure the sick gratis and assist the indigent.”

Despite these annoyances, during his stay in England, he had been treated in the warmest manner by those members of the aristocracy to whom he had been introduced, was cordially received by the followers of Swedenborg and the poverty-stricken wretches on whom his benevolent eye rested.

After leaving England he travelled on the continent, stopping for some time at Courland where he made many acquaintances, delivered lectures and established lodges of masonry. He afterwards visited St. Petersburg and had interviews with the celebrated Empress Catherine. Having a difficulty with her Scotch physician who was jealous of him and who took occasion to poison the mind of the Empress against the Count, he did not remain long in St. Petersburg, thence he went to Warsaw where his beneficent efforts and learning were highly appreciated by all, but particularly by the upper classes.

In furtherance of the Illumination policy, he started for France, and reached Strasburg on Sept. 13th, 1780; shortly after his arrival a reunion of the French Illuminati was held, at which were present the Duc d'Orleans, Grand Master of Masons in France, Mirabeau, Lafayette, the Abbe Perigord, afterwards better known as Prince Talleyrand, Cagliostro, Sieyes, Pethion Duval, of the Lodge of *Amis Reunis* at Paris and other noted members to determine the future management of the body and overthrow of the French monarchy; resolutions were duly agreed on, and Cagliostro was located in consequence at Strasburg. The whole tenor of his life here, and where the fame of himself and wife had preceded them, appears to have been devoted to philanthropy and one continued scene of benevolence. A magnificent hotel having been taken,

at which the principal residents of the town were invited to an open table, to supply which pecuniary means were apparently without end, and other receptions held by them were on the same basis. The Count, aided by his wife, assisted the indigent with one continued flow of money, and to the prisoners for debt they gave freedom ; to the necessitous sick—particularly invalid soldiers—did they wait on them at their humble homes, affording physical relief without fee or reward, sternly rebuking rich and poor alike who dared to offer money for their services, the astonishing cures performed and the temporary hospitals used were all of such a character that the regular practitioners found “Othello’s occupation gone,” and the city of Strasburg in consequence was very soon filled with strangers who came from curiosity to see Cagliostro or find remedies for their ailments. The dwellings of the richest citizens of Strasburg were thrown open to him, and “without seeking the great, but rather seemed to avoid them, he constantly found himself in their company. Among this class he had many proselytes, and who practically worshipped him as a being something more than human.” In the list of his friends at this time in this city will be found the names of Marshal del Contades, Marquis de la Salle, Barons Fraxilande, Del’ Or, Vorminster, Diederrick, likewise the Princess Christiana. His knowledge of alchemy brought him numerous acquaintances, his intimacy with the principles of Mesmer then becoming gradually known in Europe, and which had been practiced in the East for centuries, with that of Natural Magic, Spiritualism and Magnetism, and his allegorical language taken literally by the ignorant unlettered greatly added to the wonderment. In his

Memorial, afterwards published, he says of his conduct in Strasburg :

“I appeal to the principal men ; to the magistrates ; to the public at large ; let them declare whether in all my transactions a single deed of mine could be reprobated as contrary to the laws, to morality or to religion. If, since my arrival in France, I have offended any one, let the injured speak and rise up in judgment against me.”

The learned Prof. Meiners, of Gottingen, came across Cagliostro during his stay in Strasburg, from his “*Bricfe uber die Schiwez.*” I learn that according to this erudite savant.

“For his own labor he (Cagliostro) takes neither payment nor present ; when presents are made him of such a sort as cannot without offence be refused, he forthwith returns some counter-present of equal or still higher value. Nay, he not only takes nothing from his patients, but frequently admits them months long to his house and his table, and *will not consent to the smallest recompense.* With all this disinterestedness (conspicuous enough, as you suppose), he lives in an expensive way, so that, according to the very lowest estimate, he must require at least 20,000 livres a year. The darkness which Cagliostro has on purpose spread over the sources of his income and outlay contributes even more than his munificence and *miraculous cures* to the notion that he is a divine, extraordinary man, who has watched nature in her deepest operations, and among other secrets stolen that of gold-making from her. . . . With a mixture of sorrow and indignation over our age, I have to record that this man *has found acceptance*, not only among the great, who from old have been easily bewitched

by such, *but also with many of the learned, and even physicians and naturalists.*"

The Count de Beugnot, in his "Memoires," hands us down a description of Cagliostro. It appears that this French nobleman did not primarily have much belief in his remarkable cures and learning, and yet he says: "The man impressed me in spite of myself;" further, that—"the subjects of his discourse were the heavens, the stars, the grand Arcanum, Memphis, transcendental chemistry, giants and the extinct monsters of the animal kingdom."

After giving an account of the various engraved portraits of Cagliostro, the lecturer exhibited one or two, among which was one, by the celebrated Bartolozzi of the Count, entitled, "The Contemplating Philosopher," beneath which were the following lines :

"Behold this wondrous man, whose talents sublime  
His skill each day doth eager death disarm,  
His noble soul, sordid int'rest doth decline,  
Humanity alone his breast doth warm."

At this period Louis Rene Edouard de Rohan, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, Prince of Hildesheim, Landgrave of Alsace, Grand Almoner of France, Master of the Sorbonne, member of the French Academy and a near relative of Cagliostro's father, Emmanuel de Rohan, was Bishop and Prince of Strasburg. At the time of Cagliostro's stay in Strasburg, the Cardinal was resident at his Episcopal palace of Saverne, and hearing of the extraordinary cures effected by the Count, experienced a great desire to have an interview with "so remarkable a personage," but he found much difficulty in being admitted, for Cagliostro, learning his wish, said: "If Monseigneur, the Cardinal, is sick, let him come to me, and I

will cure him. If he is well, he has no business with me nor I with him." This, far from offending, only whetted the appetite of De Rohan more, who finally used interest and assuming to have an asthma, gained his desire. The effect produced at this meeting is described by the Cardinal's Vicar-General, M. l' Abbe Georgel who, in his "Memoires," observes :

"The Cardinal fancied he saw impressed on the countenance of this mysterious and taciturn individual a dignity so imposing that he felt himself penetrated with an almost religious awe, and the very first words he uttered were inspired by reverence. The interview, which was but brief, excited more strongly than ever in the mind of the Cardinal the desire of a more intimate acquaintance."

Before long the Count, although not desiring it, obtained Prince De Rohan's confidence to such an extent that he was guided entirely by him and insisted on Cagliostro making the palace of Saverne his home, which he occupied for the two following years. It was while here the friends amused themselves with alchemical experiments in a laboratory which had been specially prepared in a secluded portion of the building. During the Cardinal's absences, the Count was assisted by his Excellency's, Equerry and confidant, the Baron de Planta.

The extraordinary, and easily to be explained fascination the Count acquired over the Cardinal de Rohan, are exhibited in several episodes narrated in the writings of the Baroness d' Oberkirche, from which the lecturer freely quoted. Learning the dangerous illness of his relative, the Prince de Soubise, the Cardinal de Rohan persuaded Cagliostro to accompany him to Paris for the cure of the latter, but who, on their ar-

rival, was declared out of danger. Before leaving the French capital, where he remained over a fortnight, he made some remarkable cures, in regard to which he afterwards observed :

“I appeal to those who had occasion to apply to me ; if there is found a single person who can, with truth, say I was ever prevailed upon to accept of any gratuity, either in money or presents, I consent to be deemed unworthy of confidence.”

He was called about this time to attend D' Aquinio, then lying very sick at Naples, whither he hastened, but where he arrived only in time to receive the last farewell of his expiring breath. He next repaired to Bordeaux, France, in November, 1783, where he caused as great a sensation as in Strasburg by the extraordinary services he performed. The rich were amazed at his charity and benevolence, and the poor and suffering made happy by the wonderful cures he performed. These, together with the number of aspirants desirous for admission to a knowledge of the Masonic system, and the learned anxious to hear his enunciations, were so large that the jurats of the city granted a military guard to be placed outside his house night and day. It is stated that, “all day long the street opposite his magnificent hotel was crowded by the populace ; the halt and the blind, women with sick babes in their arms, and persons suffering under every species of human infirmity, flocked to this wonderful doctor. The rich were struck with admiration of his charity and benevolence, and impressed with a full conviction of his marvellous powers.”

The salons of his wife were filled with the wealthy to whom she “gave the most magnificent parties in Bordeaux.” In less than eleven months Jesuitism and

intrigue were directed against him, and in answer to his calumniators he afterwards replied :

“It was at this city that I had the honor of being introduced to the Marshal de Mouchi, the Count de Fumel, Viscount du Hamel and other persons of credit, who will, if required, bear testimony to the manner in which I conducted myself during my stay in Bordeaux.”

He found both in Strasburg and Bordeaux that the regular practitioners of those places, jealous of his great popularity and the favor accorded him by the Cardinal Prince of Strasburg, had spread among the superstitious populace many absurd libels. One was that he was “Antichrist;” another “the Wandering Jew,” and others equally false, and which in their internal stupidity destroyed themselves. To an audience like this before me I am not going to argue for or against these *terrible* imputations, thinking it would be futile to demolish an Antichrist for the satisfaction of a body of thinkers not recognizing the theory of the divinity of Jesus Christ; also that of the Wandering Jew, who has of late been relegated to the domains of Fiction, where I trust another *gentleman* who does not trouble us with his presence in these days will also be consigned ere long by believers; I mean his Satanic Majesty, who, if he exist, seems only in these parts apparently to have his good friends and admirers, the “ministers of the gospel,” under his especial charge, for I need not remind you that both in Brooklyn and New Jersey they have “the Devil to pay.” Those amiable animals, roaring and wandering lions, we ordinarily confine in Central Parks. with their friends the serpents, who now-a-days have most curiously lost the power of speech.

The Jesuit fathers are usually attributed with the sinister *mot*: "Do evil, that good may come." In the case of these Doctors it undoubtedly seems to have had that effect, for if it had not been for their meddlesome interference and attempts to damage Cagliostro, we should not have had three letters preserved to us, in which we find the King of France himself and his Government coming forward to set the seal of veracity upon the acts of the subject of this paper. 1. Count de Vergennes, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from Versailles, 13th March, 1783, to Monsieur Gerrard, Præter of Strasburg; 2. The Marquis de Miromenil on the day following to the same; and 3, the Marquis de Segur, by command of his master Louis XVI., to the Marquis de la Salle, commander at Strasburg. [The essayist here gave a translation of these three letters.]

Verily, a curious impostor! It had been his intention, through this opposition, to leave Strasburg forever, as the Illumine policy was gradually nearing accomplishment, but these ministerial letters made him relinquish the design for a time. *A propos* of these warm recommendations later on Cagliostro wrote:

"It was on the faith of those letters, which methought so fully demonstrated the monarch's disposition towards me, that I fondly considered France as the last stage of my travels, how could I then imagine that two years after it would be my fate to claim—but alas! to claim in vain for myself and my unfortunate wife, those sacred rights of humanity so solemnly acknowledged, so nobly expressed in his Majesty's name!"

Departing from Bordeaux, Cagliostro in October, 1784, arrived at Lyons, where, resting about three

months, he again made his way to the French capital. The domicile where he resided, the Hotel de Savigny in the Rue Saint Claude I saw some years ago. Louis Blanc, in his "Histoire de la Revolution Francaise," observes :

"The house which he (Cagliostro) occupied, and which was afterwards the residence of Barras, was one of the most elegant of the quarter. In the *salon* decorated with an Oriental luxury, and bathed in a kind of semi-daylight. . . . There one saw the bust of Hippocrates, and in a black frame, inscribed in letters of gold, a literal translation of Pope's Universal Prayer."

Here, through the kindness of his friend, Cardinal de Rohan, he was at once introduced into the most distinguished society, even holding frequent interviews with the King and Queen. It is hardly possible to take up any volume relating to this period in the History of France, but we find numerous characteristic anecdotes of Cagliostro, one of the most remarkable, and which has been worked up by the Elder Dumas in one of his valuable historic works, I briefly narrate, as although embodied in Fiction, it is corroborated by the most satisfactory evidence. On a certain occasion, when dining with many prominent characters, among whom were Richelieu, the King of Sweden, Count de Launay, the Countess Dubarry, Marquis de Condorcet, M. de La Perouse the navigator, Marquis de Fauvras and others, he is said to have foretold the destiny of all present, and given a clear account of the taking of the Bastille and the execution of Louis XVI. Not stopping to say how he was able to do this, I will only affirm this was written before the events occurred, and

is, in this respect, unlike some of the Biblical prophecies which were not written until after the events had transpired. Prince Talleyrand was also in the habit of narrating equally extraordinary incidents which he knew of in connection with Cagliostro. Similar noteworthy accounts may be learnt in the letters of Mirabeau, dated 1786, in which he also names Lavater, another disciple of Cagliostro.

The celebrated "Affair of the Diamond Necklace" took place about this time ; it is impossible in a paper of this character to enter into this fully and as particularly, others better informed than myself have thoroughly probed it to the core, I will, therefore, only give the principal facts connected with Cagliostro's place therein.

Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, a woman of bizarre character, and of whom it has been stated incest was not the least of her crimes, acknowledged as her particular friend the Countess Valois de la Motte, a lineal descendant of King Henry the Second of France. This female, a confidante also of the Cardinal de Rohan, acted as intermediary in an intrigue between him and the Queen, and by means of the position she thus occupied, had managed to get into her possession a diamond necklace worth about \$400,000. This necklace had been offered to the Queen in the presence of Madame de la Motte by the eminent French jewellers Bohmer and Bassange, who afterwards finding themselves unable to obtain either their money or have their property returned, laid the whole matter before the French law courts, when it was discovered that this scion of royalty, the Countess de la Motte, had appropriated it to her own use, and that her hus-

band, formerly a private of Gendarmerie, had decamped with it to England.

Unfortunately for Cagliostro, owing to his friendship with De Rohan, he had visited the house of the Countess de la Motte, "where he was received with an amount of respect verging on reverence," and had, by desire of the Cardinal, essayed in her presence some experiments in Mesmerism and Spiritualism, but before doing so had said :

"It is true, madame, that being a physician, I am an adept in the science of nature, nor am I without some knowledge of the properties contained in animal magnetism." etc., etc.

For their *supposed* complicity in this regal robbery, at which it is certain Marie Antoinette connived, the Cardinal Prince de Rohan, Count and Countess di Cagliostro, Madame de la Motte and others were arrested on the 23rd of August, 1785, and consigned to the Bastille. The residence of the Cagliostros was pilaged by Commissary Chenon and others making the arrests. Among the goods thus stolen and never recovered may be mentioned :

"The considerable sum of 100,000 francs, a green pocket-book containing forty-seven bank notes of 1,000 francs each, besides which gold and silver coin double louis, sequins and Spanish quadruples, plate, jewels, diamonds, etc."

A fine specimen of French administrative Tweedism !

On the first examination, Cagliostro stated his former history ; that he was a professor of medicine and an occultist of noble birth, and related his experiences as a traveller in Asia, Africa and Europe. He strongly denied any knowledge whatever of the Necklace. He

further spoke of his intimate acquaintance with the Cardinal Prince de Rohan, and that since his second visit to Paris, he had as a rule seen him three or four times a week, and that the Cardinal and his friends had also occasionally dined with him at his residence in the Rue Saint Claude. He endeavored likewise to "overthrow the cold calculations of political animosity and dissolve those dreams of private vengeance of which the Prince de Rohan was the object."

It appears that the Count was not aware of the arrest of his wife, for in the autograph report of the Marquis de Launay in the collection of M. Feuillet de Couches it is there stated :

"Cagliostro, it may be observed, was greatly excited on hearing of the arrest of his wife, and on afterwards learning that she was ill, became frantic. He pretended to believe that she was dead, or at her last extremity, and threatened to kill himself if he was not permitted to see her, or she were not set at liberty."

After six months' imprisonment in the Bastille, during the whole of which time France was convulsed with differences of opinion as to the guilt or innocence of the parties accused, the trial was commenced. At his examination, Cagliostro appeared before the Parliament of Paris "dressed in a green velvet coat, embroidered over with green lace, his hair plaited from the top of his head, fell in small curls over his shoulders, which gave him a singular appearance." "Who are you? whence do you come?" was asked of him. "I am a noble traveller," he replied. At these words the countenances of the judges brightened up, and observing that they seemed well disposed towards him, Cagliostro entered boldly upon his de-

fence, a defence acknowledged a singularly able one, and in which he cleared himself and aided justice by a statement which gained great credit.

In accordance with French law he was confronted with the Countess de la Motte, she styled him—"one of those extravagant members of the Rosy Cross who profess to raise the dead and make them converse with the living, masters of all the sciences, skilled in the transformation of baser metals into gold, beneficent spirits who attend the poor for nothing and give immortality to the rich."

She went on further: "A sumptuous hotel elegant furniture, a well supplied table, servants in all sorts of liveries, and the court of his hotel always noisy with carriages, announcing in the midst of an intelligent nation visionaries of every rank. In a word, Cagliostro, without inheriting anything, without purchasing anything, without selling anything, without acquiring anything is possessed of all. Such is this man."

She also called him a low alchemist, a false prophet and a profaner of the true religion, to which remarks the Count simply replied :

"Not always a false prophet, for had the Prince de Rohan taken my advice he would have seen through the artifices of the Countess, and neither of us been where we are. To her numerous calumnies I will content myself with making a laconic reply, the same that was made by Pascal under parallel circumstances, a reply which politeness forbids me to make in the vulgar tongue, but which Madame's Counsel will translate for her, *Mentiris Impudentissime.*"

The Prince de Rohan made an equally able answer to the charges urged, and referred to Cagliostro as

“ that great, that extraordinary man,” and it may be added that one of the accused an accomplice of the De la Mottes, one Villetté, “ expressed his firm belief that Cagliostro was entirely innocent of any complicity in the affair.”

The result of the trial was that Madame de la Motte, the descendant of the royal Capets and the worthy bosom friend of the Queen of France, was proven to be guilty and sentenced to have her head shaved, to be publicly whipped, branded between the shoulders with a hot iron and imprisoned for life. The Cardinal de Rohan and the Count and Countess Cagliostro were declared innocent of even the slightest *scintilla* of guilt and acquitted, the *arret du Parlement*, the technical finding orders:—

“ Discharges Alexandre de Cagliostro and Louis Rene Edouard de Rohan from the complaint and accusation brought against them at the request of the *Procureur-General* of the King.

“ Orders that the Memorials printed for Jeanne de Saint Remi de Valois de la Motte shall be and shall continue to be suppressed, as containing *false statements injurious and calumnious* alike against the said Cardinal de Rohan and the said De Cagliostro.

“ Upon the remainder of the request of the said De Cagliostro, alike against Commissary Chenon and De Launay, Governor of the Bastile, puts it out of court, without prejudice to his appeal when and how he may be advised ; upon the rest of his demands, requests and conclusions of the parties puts these out of court.

“ Gives permission to said Cardinal de Rohan and the said De Cagliostro to cause the present judgment to be printed and posted up wheresoever it may seem good to them.”

The verdict was received by the people of Paris with loud acclamations of joy. The Count, together with the Cardinal, clothed in the royal purple, were taken in triumph through the streets back to the Bastille, the good Parisians rushing forward kissed the hands and garments of both, and—"ran beside the carriage which conveyed them, shouting their congratulations." At this remarkable public greeting contemporary accounts remark no less than ten thousand persons were assembled in the courts and passages of the Palais de Justice and the neighbourhood. A crowd gathered from all quarters of Paris, and representing in its ranks men of letters, financiers, abbes, avocats, police agents, soldiers, ouvriers and others.

Although exonerated from all charges, yet Cagliostro was not as fortunate as De Rohan in his release, for having made charges of robbery against the agents of the Governor of the Bastille, he was detained a week or two longer.

After nine months' captivity, the count found himself again free, and his feelings were vividly expressed in the accompanying observation :

"Were I left to choose between an ignominious death and six months in the Bastille, I would, without hesitation, say, lead me to the scaffold."

The ovation attending his discharge was participated by thousands, and his return to his home was more like the triumphant march of a Roman Emperor than the release of one charged with crime. In describing the event, he says : "My doors were forced open—the yard, the staircase, apartments—every place was full, and I was carried into the very arms of my wife."

Notwithstanding the groundless charges brought

against Cagliostro had utterly broken down, and public manifestations had been extended to him, yet the agents of the police, fearing for good order in Paris, and perhaps alarmed at the charges made against some of their own body, did not relish his presence in the city, particularly as his connection with the Secret Societies had been discovered. At all events, within twelve hours from the time of his release from the Bastile, an official appeared before him, and, in the name of the King, ordered him to leave Paris within twenty-four hours and the kingdom within three weeks, and forbade his return. On the 3d of June he left Paris. Crowds of his friends met him on the road, and expressed their great grief at his departure, unmistakably indicating that they regarded the Count's private misfortunes to be really a public calamity.

On leaving Paris, he temporarily took up his quarters at the Parisian suburb of Passy; on the 16th of the same month he embarked from Boulogne for England, and describing the manner of his leaving France, he writes :

“The shores that I quitted were lined by a crowd of citizens of all classes, who blessed and thanked me for the good I had done their brethren, addressing to me the most touching farewells. The winds carried me away from them, but I saw them again on their knees, with their hands raised towards heaven, and it was my turn to bless them, and to cry out and repeat as though they could hear me, “Adieu, Frenchmen ! adieu my children ! adieu my country !”

Immediately on reaching England he took up his quarters in London, and speedily gathered around him a coterie of influential friends : his acquirements

as a physician and general benevolence were again made manifest.

While in London he published a letter reflecting on the state of French law, the French Ministers of State, and the Queen of France, to whom he attributed many of the sufferings he had undergone. On the 20th of August, 1786, an attempt was made by the Secretary of the French Embassy in London to entrap him back to France. He was informed that the Ambassador had received instructions to acquaint the Count he might return to France at pleasure, and desired him to call at the Embassy. It appears that at this interview his personal friends, the Count Bergeret de Frouville and Lord George Gordon, happened to be present on a visit, and, as treachery was feared, insisted upon accompanying him the next day to the Embassy, which they did to the great astonishment of M. de Barthelemy, who then had charge of French interests in Great Britain. The Ambassador blankly refused to discuss matters in the presence of strangers, and as Lord George Gordon was extremely insulted by this conduct to a man of his rank, he published in *The Gazette* a very powerfully worded letter, in which he stigmatized Marie Antoinette with complicity in the theft of the Diamond necklace and also with improper criminality with the Cardinal de Rohan. For this warm espousal of the Count's cause, Lord George Gordon was prosecuted by desire of the French Government, was found guilty of libel, and suffered a heavy fine and long imprisonment in Newgate. During the remainder of Cagliostro's stay in London, nothing further of special importance occurred. He continued his systematized benevolent efforts in dispensing gratuitously his medical services and other charities by

which he earned the gratitude of large numbers of the British people.

I have now traced the life of Cagliostro to 1787. His public career of usefulness was rapidly drawing to a close. His hatred of religious and political tyranny had made him a marked character—the meshes of the secret societies were gradually ravelling. Europe from end to end was convulsed in throes of impending internal agony, and in France the days of monarchy were almost closing, for the down trodden and starving people had lifted up its head and asserted its rights—the conflict between royalty and ~~the~~ *sovereign* people had begun. The harvest was ripe and the sickle ready for the work! Despotism became alarmed at even shadows, Cagliostro flying, petrel like where the storm of revolution was about to break appeared an object of terror to European governments. He visits Roveredo, and the Kaiser Joseph banishes him Austria. He journies to Turin and the king of Sardinia is afraid of his presence. He passes through Germany, Switzerland and Savoy with like results—all fear him. In May 1789, boldly planting himself in the very patrimony of St. Peter he defies the papal chair and the hierarch or pantarch of religious and political despotism, as did in later days the intrepid Mazzini. His martyrdom—his crucifixion was about to commence! With the certainty of death before his eyes, not fearing, but looking *Mors Pallida* straight in the face, he has the temerity to hold masonic meetings. The infallible “representative of omnipotence,” poor good old man is sadly frightened. The revolutionary party in France are using its claws. Omniscience has been caught napping, and Cagliostro denounced as chief of a society of Illuminati. On

the 29th of December the Papal government discover him founding a lodge of Egyptian Freemasonry; he is arrested and thrown by the holy Inquisition into the castle of St. Angelo. For eighteen long weary months he and his beautiful wife are incarcerated there. The Inquisition clamors *Ad Leones!* and his Infallible Holiness, the Ambassador of the Prince of Peace, who sent not peace but a sword, the successor of Alexander Borgia and Pope Joan, in his justice, in his mercy, in his charity, condemns an innocent man to death! For what? For the crime of being, sad to say, a sorcerer, worse—a heretic, and wickedness of all—a Freemason. Yes, the apostle of freemasonry is condemned to die, and his wife, for the crime of being a wife, to a life of religious seclusion in the convent of St. Apolline, where ere long she is hounded to death by the pious patterers of *Ave Marias* and *Pater Nosters*. But theology has forgotten her prayers, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”—it is wrong to take life—“Thou shalt do no murder,” so terrible irony, Cagliostro’s sentence is commuted to imprisonment for life. The torture, the rack, are brought into requisition, for has not the criminal appealed to the French Constituent Assembly? but all in vain. Starvation and manacling must be called into play, and one eventful morning in 1795 his murderers find in a dark and loathsome cell in his Holiness’ castle of St. Leon, in the Duchy of Urbino the stiff and stark body of Alessandro di Cagliostro—another martyr to Christianity.

I have endeavored in this humble essay to narrate the principal facts in the life of Cagliostro; my task has not been done as I altogether would wish, for if I

had used all the materials I have at my command, I could easily fill a large volume. Having taken a different view from the ordinarily accepted biographies I expect and court a considerable share of criticism: whatever may be urged to the contrary, I trust it will not be founded on the works of second-hand compilers. As to the various contemporary biographies, even Thomas Carlyle who wrote a rather hostile one over thirty years ago for *Fraser's Magazine*, after throwing aside as worthless the five or six at his disposal, he observes in regard to the one which he accepts as most reliable, that officially published by the Inquisition to do penance for practicing "Killing, no Murder:" "It is on this *Vie de Joseph Balsamo connu sous le nom de comte Cagliostro* that our main dependence must be placed. Of which work, meanwhile, whether it is wholly or half genuine the reader may judge by one fact, that it comes to us through the medium of the Roman Inquisition, and the proofs to substantiate it (?) lie in the holy office there. Alas, this reporting familiar of the Inquisition was probably something of a liar!"

I should remark that the Balsamo theory on which much of the opposition is based, is in my view untenable. It had its rise in the mendacity of a Jesuitical writer whose aim was to extenuate the Church. In the name of goodness if Cagliostro had been guilty of the various crimes and not least the robbery imputed to him at Palermo, why was he not handed over to the Sicilian civil authorities who would probably have meted out a just reward on proof of his rascality? It is an utterly unreliable theory, and simply on a par with the other impostures of Christianity. To add the theory of the Divinity of Jesus Christ a forged

passage is interpolated into the writings of Josephus. To prove a supposed early belief in certain untenable doctrines "the Infallibility of the Pontiff," the "Immaculate Conception," and I could go on *ad infinitum* decretals, catacomb inscriptions and the like are manufactured.

Cagliostro is charged with Charlatanism, quackery, imposture and the use of jargon. Are these charges proven? What was alchemy? The mother of chemistry, or the chemical science of medieval and later ages? Nobody can dispute that if it had not been for their scientific, or if you will, alchemical studies, that searching for the "philosophers' stone," Roger Bacon discovered gun powder, and Van Helmont the properties of gas. Nor is this all we owe, alchemy conserved for the scientists of to-day all the bases of knowledge possessed for the pursuit of further discoveries and inventions. Alchemy still exists in the East, and when frequently brought in contact with modern science the exponents of the latter are powerless to explain, results easily practicable to oriental chemists.

How are you certain that the "transmutation of metals" and the Rosicrucian search for the *Elixir Vitæ* are myths? But a few days ago I read that a European chemist had discovered the secret of the manufacture of diamonds, yet this appears by witnesses to have been known to Cagliostro. Science to-day is only in her swaddling clothes—it is true a *rather* big baby, and who can tell that she will not have to alter her front on main principles as Lyell and Murchison had to do that of geology? The jargon of the Rosicrucians and alchemists is perfectly explicable to their disciples of to-day. I have no

doubt that if you were to bring together a modern Greek and an Irishman from the wilds of Connemara, both would fancy the other was talking jargon, and yet Celtic and Greek we know are nothing of the kind. Is not the astronomy of to-day based on the astrology of the past? Is astrology too, all untrue? It would seem not; for a short time back in the action brought by Lieut. Morrison, R. N. "Zadkiel," against Admiral Sir Edward Belcher, numbers of English noblemen, scientists and men of letters came forward, and in the broad daylight of the Nineteenth Century swore in open court to an unswerving belief in astrology.

Are the Spiritualists, Magnetists and Mesmerists too, all charlatans, impostors and quacks? If I had the temerity to make such a statement in this Club, you would, I doubt not, hear men of science throwing back the assertion in my teeth with as great fervency as Cagliostro himself would have done. How is it your Dialectical societies and Colonel Olcotts are confounded and obliged to confess an utter incapacity to solve the problems by aid of the knowledge they have of the wondrous ramifications of nature and science?

Next Wednesday\* we shall have a phalanx of some 20,000 citizens all actuated with the divine instincts of brotherly love, relief and truth, marching in solemn procession through the streets of this city, avowedly to open a structure for their use, but actually to testify their conviction in the rights and equality of man, the immortality of the soul and a belief in the Deity. Clad in Mephistophelian livery, blood red, so em-

\* June the second, 1875.

blematic of his faith, I doubt not a certain high personage gazing perchance from a lofty *eminence* and actuated with Torquemada sentiment would joyfully sacrifice each of those masonic brothers as his predecessors did Cagliostro. Aye, and if he did not fear reprisals perhaps give the order to his Irish myrmidons to re-enact a second St. Bartholomew in the streets and avenues of New York city. The tiger's claws are clipped now, as Pernambuco testifies, and so masonic imposters, pah! are only excommunicated and treated to curses which come duly home like chickens to roost.

The philanthropy of Cagliostro should entitle him to a pedestal beside John Howard or Wilberforce; this man whose benevolence filled hospitals of his own creation, where his great medical knowledge was given without stint to those who needed it, and who, when cured, were sent away not empty handed. His acquaintance with geology and the learned and abstruse sciences should place him in the ranks of the Eighteenth Century pioneers of Nineteenth Century discoveries, notwithstanding the fact that his disciples in their unhesitating reverence, yet ignorance attributed miraculous cures and effects, to-day quite explicable, but then exaggerated to lengths as absurd as the miracles we read of in Buddhist and Christian hagiologies. The assistance he gave to free-thought and his aid towards political regeneration, his hatred of the two co-eval evil principles, kingcraft and priestcraft, testified in the dissemination of the principles of "Liberte Egalite Fraternite," should receive our gratitude equally with those other patriots to whom the people of America and Europe owe the blessings enjoyed to-day.

If we have as his inventive calumniators a blackmailing editor and a Jesuit biographer, have we not on his record with others in his favor the names of Lavater, Cardinal de Rohan, Mirabeau, Lord George Gordon, Talleyrand, Lord Lytton, Swedenborg, La Fayette, the jurats of Bordeaux, the masonic brotherhood, and last but not least, Louis XVI, the government of France and the Parliament of Paris ?

The life and death of Cagliostro is but another example of the long continued fight—a fight almost as old as the hills—the battle of the Church *contra* free-thought—theology *versus* science. It was the spirit of sacerdotalism which forced Socrates to take the fatal hemlock and which offered him up as a victim for endeavoring to teach a purer and nobler morality than evolved by Greek priests. It was that spirit which actuated the Jewish Priests to crucify Jesus Christ, I refer to the Christ of history, the disciple of Philo, the Essenes and Platonists, not the Christ of theology. Was it not this spirit which made Shelley cry out in his agony, and, be it said, to his regret in after years ?

“ There is no God !

Nature confirms the faith his death groan sealed,  
 Let heaven and earth, let man's revolving race,  
 His ceaseless generations tell their tale ;  
 Let every part depending on the chain  
 That links it to the whole, point to the hand  
 That grasps its term ! Let every seed that falls  
 In silent eloquence unfold its store  
 Of arguments. Infinity within,  
 Infinity without, belie creation ;  
 The exterminable spirit it contains  
 Is nature's only God ; but human pride  
 Is skilful to invent most serious names  
 To hide its ignorance.

The name of God

Has fenced about all crime with holiness ;  
 Himself the creature of his worshippers ;  
 Whose names and attributes and passions change—  
 Seeva, Budha, Foh, Jehovah, God or Lord."

And is it not this spirit which unable either to crush or answer Paine, Voltaire, Rousseau and the Encyclopædists make the priests of Christianity, Sunday after Sunday with closed platform attack with scurrilous abuse the dead lions and charge their antagonists with leading immoral lives, having fearful deaths, and, forsooth, with Atheism the very authors in whose writings are to be found the most beautiful and admirable arguments in favor of the existence of God which the brain of genius ever conceived ?

For ourselves, this spirit would, had it the power, close our Science Congresses and our Liberal Clubs ; force on bended knees our geologists, chemists and scientists, as the theologians did of old Galileo ; burn or murder our Huxleys, Tyndalls, and Darwins ; as they did Giordano Bruno—

"The dark-robed priests were met around the pile ;  
 The multitude was gazing silently ;  
 And, as the culprit passed with dauntless mien,  
 Tempered disdain, in his unaltering eye.  
 Mixed with a quiet smile, shone calmly forth :  
 The thirsty fire crept round his manly limbs ;  
 His resolute eyes were scorched to blindness soon ;  
 His death prayer rent my heart ! The insensate mob  
 Uttered a cry of triumph, and I wept."

But the avengers are nigh, Strauss and Colenso, Renan and Seeley, "Iconoclast" Bradlaugh the republican and his Grace of Somerset the aristocrat, and from repeated blows Christianity, staggering and reeling like a drunken man is about "going"—"going to go,"—and shortly—"gone" to find a place only in the mythological dictionaries of the future.

In conclusion, can I not analogise the eloquent remarks of the patriot Mazzini on Rousseau and Byron to Cagliostro—"Such is the life of Genius. Envy and persecution but on one side of the tomb, it matters little which, assured triumph. You may burn the works of Rousseau in the public market place, the Spirit of Rousseau will survive ; it will appear to you years afterward in the French Constitution. You may misinterpret the spirit, and blacken at your leisure the memory of Byron—you may exile his statue from Westminster Abbey, but the people who recognize in him the victim of one epoch and the prophet of another, will read and adopt him as their own in spite of you, and posterity will end by placing his prescribed statue above the tomb where will lie forever interred the principle of aristocracy."

To your acumen and to your spirit of "fair play," members of the Liberal Club do I look for a verdict.

Am I mistaken in confidently believing that in your inmost heart of hearts, you respond "*Cagliostro was a martyr and no impostor*" ?

*"Finis Coronat Opus."*

The paper, which took nearly two hours in reading, was one of the most learned and eloquent the members of the club have ever had the pleasure of listening to. The lecturer was warmly applauded during its progress, and at the conclusion he received long and continued applause.

A discussion took place. After thanking MR. SOTHERAN for his remarkable lecture, the chairman, MR. ORMSBY, said that there was one thing he was still in doubt of, and that was the reason of the extraordinary wealth of Cagliostro.

MR. HENRY EVANS followed with a remark of a similar nature, and that he doubted Cagliostro's hatred of aristocracy, for he appeared to have as his friends only noblemen and the like. The same speaker greatly ridiculed many of the practices of Masonry, although eulogistic of the theory; he also complimented MR. SOTHERAN very highly on his paper.

A CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN then took the platform. He objected to the lecturer's assertion about Biblical prophecies; he discoursed freely of Daniel, who, he said, saw in one of his dreams a beast cut up in four quarters, all of which marched about after separation, and he also stated the book of Daniel was translated into Greek, and was well known, previous to the fulfilment of this prophecy.

MR. STEPHEN PEARL ANDREWS followed with one of his usual eloquent addresses. After congratulating the Club on hearing so erudite a lecture, and complimenting MR. SOTHERAN on its delivery, he said that he thanked the lecturer for his charity, his very broad charity, especially in the matter of Spiritualism. If five years ago, in that club, he had dared to make some of the statements the lecturer had, he would have been hissed down. He was sorry, however, that the lecturer was antagonistic to Christianity, and said that credit should be given to that religion for the *good* it had done.

DR. ATKINSON avowed himself a Mason, and defended Masonry from the attack of MR. EVANS in a forcible speech. He spoke very strongly against the Pope, who, he said, having broken his obligation to the Masonic craft, deserved all the punishment he had stated on his oath he was merited to receive in the event of breaking the same.

In closing the discussion, the lecturer, MR. SOTHERAN, expressed the gratitude he felt for the warm encomiums passed upon his efforts by the various speakers, and observed that if there was one thing more than another he admired in the Liberal Club, it was its open platform, so unlike the pulpits of the various denominations, and which gave an opportunity for the ventilation of antagonistic opinions; one great excellence in connection with this was, that no false statement could be made, or inferred, and pass unheeded. He stated that he did not come forward as the apologist of Cagliostro; it had been his wish simply to narrate facts, and their unavoidable conclusions. Touching the question of the wealth of Cagliostro, he had distinctly stated that the great secret of his incomprehensible expenditure was, that the funds of the secret societies were placed at his disposal. It should also not be forgotten that he was a member, on his father's side, of one of the wealthiest houses in Europe. As to his friendship with the nobility being incompatible with his republicanism, he would remark that the great Revolutionary characters, Mirabeau, Talleyrand, Lafayette, D'Orleans, and, in this century, Shelley, Byron, Lord John Russell, Swinburne, and many of the other leading reformers, were men of aristocratic birth.

MR. SOTHERAN coincided with DR. ATKINSON in the matter of Masonry, and acknowledged himself to be a high grade member of the Masonic Brotherhood and of the Fraternity of the Rosie Cross. He observed that the lower degrees of Masonry could in the United States and Great Britain be rid of their secret character, for the principles of the craft were in those countries now a portion of the constitution, but it was

different in Europe, Asia and South America where theological superstition and political tyranny were as rampant as ever. As to Spiritualism, he considered that if the recent developments narrated by Col. Olcott and Prof. Crookes could be substantiated, it would be one of the greatest blessings of the human race, would effectually rid us of Atheism and its attendant gloominess, and would satisfactorily dispose of Materialistic objections to the immortality of the soul. On the topic of prophecy the lecturer recommended his Christian friend to apply to a fellow-believer in the Old Testament—some pious Rabbi, who would, doubtless, be able to explain the Jewish prophecies to his comprehension : as to his wonderful beast, he thought that if such a miraculous animal could be obtained by his friend it would be a great attraction at Barnum's hippodrome, and might be put beside the lion's den. The gentleman's assertion about the four quarters of the beast smacked somewhat of the slaughter-house, and the idea seemed to be there was something bestial about Christianity. MR. SOTHERAN said he had never heard of the Daniel manuscript referred to—it was probably burnt in the Library of Alexandria, which that pious adulterer and murderer, the Emperor Theodosius, in his Christian fanaticism, ordered to be destroyed. He reaffirmed his statement that the pretended Biblical prophecies in many instances were probably written after the occurrences took place ; he said, further, that some had reference to persons then living, and quoted Isaiah and Jeremiah to show that the context of many passages supposed to refer to Christ proved they did nothing of the kind, and also that many of these prophecies were never realized, although long

overdue, in support of which he quoted Christ's statement that he would come to judge the world in the time of those he was speaking to, and which, as it had never taken place in their generation, *probably* never would.

In answer to MR. ANDREWS' criticism the lecturer stated that his belief, so far as Christ was concerned, was, if anything, Unitarian; as to the good Christianity had done, he could not but acknowledge that even to-day Christianity was an accessory to civilization. For instance: take a Central African village in its primitive state, with its fetish worship, its debasing and disgusting ceremonies, its bloodshed and barbarism, with its inhabitants nearer the ape rather than the Caucasian—take that village, say, one hundred years after the Christian or Mohammedan missionary had been there, on the gold coast on the west or the Zanzibar coast on the east, and we find all this fearful debasement has disappeared and civilization in its place. It is thus these theologies do good, not through their religious teachings at all, but through the civilization coming down from Egyptian, Greek and Roman times possessed by the superior Europeans or Asiatics, and which in its developments and progress was, if anything, antagonistic to those beliefs. But if we acknowledge the good, what of the evil? The early persecution of the Heathen, the Arian bloodshed, the sanguinary Crusades, the massacres of Huguenots, Waldenses and Albigenses, the Protestant persecution of Catholics, and the religious wars—all evolved out of Christianity, which, after all, is but a resuscitation of the old faiths, of the Socratic and Egyptian doctrine of the immortality of the soul, the Confucian, "Do unto others as you

would be done by," etc. Christ himself, that man of blameless and spotless life, has been misrepresented by men calling themselves his priests, distorted for their pecuniary gain into a god, instead of being placed, as he merited, into a position with Confucius, Buddha, Zoroaster, Socrates, Plato, Mahomet, and the other religious reformers.