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THE BIBLE,

ITS OWN REFUTATION.

BY

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P R E F A C E .

While writing this book, I imagined some christian at my side whom I addressed in the second person whenever it suited my convenience.

For the purpose of avoiding tedious explanations or the use of words implying condition, I have, in many instances, treated of facts as being established, intending to be understood as merely asserting that they were alleged by the writers, whose books were under review. For the same reason I have called certain books of the Bible after the names of their reputed authors, notwithstanding my previous denial of their genuineness.

My anxiety, that the Chapter on the Prophecies should be understood, induces me to request the reader, on his *first* perusal, to examine those verses only, of the chapters which have been first quoted entire, to which his attention is particularly invited. Had I quoted but these verses, I should have been accused of garbling. It is well known with what reluctance we lay down one book to take up another, to which reference is made. Not one in a hundred of our citizens has ever read those books that are called prophetical, with a view of understanding them. I am more than anxious that they should be read, and their true character understood. Influenced by these considerations, I have made copious extracts from some of them.

Let me also request the reader to become familiar with the characters and histories of those individuals whose names are found in this chapter, for he never will be able to understand and appreciate the argument, unless the character and history of each be intimately associated with the name. I ask nothing of the reader which I have not given him the means of acquiring. The propriety of this request was evinced to me a few days since.— In a conversation with a gentlemen, who has, and deservedly, a distinguished reputation for talents and learning, he confessed to me that he did not

know the distinction between an Israelite and a Jew. He consequently knew nothing of the history of the Israelites, as given in the books of Kings and Chronicles. Had I told him that Rehoboam and Jereboam, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah were prophets, he would have believed me. Common sense teaches us that these gentlemen cannot understand an argument in which these names occur frequently, unless he comply with the above request.

All the apologies I have to offer will be found in the body of the work. Not a single position has been taken, the correctness of which I am not fully convinced of. Any errors whether of fact or argument will be cheerfully acknowledged and rectified, if shown to me, should the work ever reach a second edition.

The important positions—those which are decisive of the main question—I am fully persuaded, will stand the “test of scrutiny of talents and of time.”

THE BIBLE,

ITS OWN REFUTATION.

CHAPTER I.

It is difficult for one who never wrote a book, to begin it. The object of this will be to shew that the facts, on which the Jewish and Christian religions are founded, never transpired—in other words, are false. A greater man than Mr. Jefferson, has spoken of *false* facts. A fact, I agree, is something done, and an allegation that something has been done which never was done, is a false allegation. Such false allegation, Lord Mansfield, and Mr. Jefferson have called a false fact—an expression sufficiently intelligible, though not strictly logical, and which, when I use it, must be understood as such false allegation.

A distinguished divine has truly said, that the questions between the christians and infidels are purely questions of fact, and are to be tried like all other questions of fact; namely, by human testimony—that mathematical certainty is not to be expected, and ought not to be required of the christians—that probabilities only can be arrived at from the investigations of these questions, and are all that can properly be required of those who hold the affirmative. For example: The writer of the book of Exodus alleges that the angel of God, or God himself, the creator of the universe, appeared to an Israelite by the name of Moses, in the land of Midian, and talked to him as one man talks to another. Now, here are two allegations; the first, that the angel of God or God himself (it is difficult to determine from the text how this was) shewed himself to Moses, and the other, that he talked to him. The christian says that he cannot prove the truth of these allegations as conclusively as he could that of some mathematical proposition, and that he ought not to be required to do it; but admits that it is incumbent on him to shew that the probability is, that these allegations are true. The christian, admitting this much, must admit that the in-

fidel is bound to shew nothing more than the *improbability* of these allegations. Therefore, in all issues between them, the inquiry must be; on which side the probability lies, as thus: Is it more probable that the angel of God appeared and talked to Moses, than that the author has written falsely? The christian contends that it is more probable that the angel appeared and talked—the infidel, that the author has recorded a falsehood.

Such questions and such only, I propose to discuss in the following pages. All questions respecting the existence and attributes of God, and his mode of existence; I shall leave for those to discuss, who seemingly take a delight in discussing questions, the terms of which they do not understand.

I am well aware that a great majority of christians are under the impression, that to admit the existence of a God, is to admit the truth of those allegations respecting him, found in the volume called the Bible; and that to prove his existence, is to establish the truth of those allegations. It must be evident to men of well trained minds that the question whether there be a God, is wholly different from the question of fact, whether he told Moses or any other individual to exterminate the Canaanites and leave nothing alive that breathed—wholly distinct from the question of fact, whether God polished two marble slabs and engraved thereon the decalogue, or whether he made clothes of the skins of beasts and put them on the first pair, &c. &c. I wish my readers distinctly to understand what we admit and what we deny, and what we neither admit nor deny. It may or may not be true—it is a matter of perfect indifference with us—we neither admit nor deny, that a man by the name of Moses may have led a people called Israelites out of Egypt; but we deny all personal interference of God in this Exodus. It may or may not be true that the Hebrew women borrowed jewels and fine raiment of the Egyptian ladies with a determination never to return them; but to put them on their own sons and daughters, and thus “to spoil the Egyptians;” but we deny that God ever sanctioned such conduct, or hinted to Moses to suggest to his countrywomen to do the like. It may or may not be true, that Moses sent his army against the Midianites, but we deny, that God ever said to Moses: “*avenge* the children of the Israelites upon the Midianites,” or gave directions respecting the division of the prey. It may or may not be true, that Joshua conquered the cities of Canaan, and put to death all the inhabitants thereof, except a harlot of Jericho and her family: but we do not believe that God ever told him to murder the one or to spare the other. It may or may not be true, that Samuel told Saul it was God’s will that he should go against the Amalekites and slay old and young, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass; but we deny that God ever told Samuel any

such thing; we also deny that Samuel was obeying the commands of God when "he hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord, in Gilgal."

It may or may not be true, that David seduced the wife of Uriah, and caused him to be put to death; but we deny that the Lord ever *told* Nathan, or any one else, that he was displeased with David's conduct; or that he ever told David that he would punish him by causing his wives to commit open adultery with his neighbors, or by causing the death of the innocent child begotten in adulterous sheets; we also deny that God ever sanctioned this marriage, with Bathsheba, and particularly blessed it, as he is said to have done, by making Solomon, its issue, his father's successor. In fine, we admit that Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, and a host of others may have been treacherous villains, cruel and bloody-minded butchers; but we deny that they were *saints*—a *bloody saint* being, in our estimation, an absurdity in terms. We deny that God ever enjoined upon any man—any moral agent—the commission of acts positively *mala in se*, evil in themselves.

Most, if not all of the advocates of christianity, in their attempts to establish its truth, commence by proving there is a God—then they infer his attributes, and then they assert and endeavor to shew, from what they are pleased to call a chain of logical reasoning, founded on these attributes of a God, who, they also tell you, is inscrutable, and whose ways are past finding out, that he ought to have communicated his will to mankind in words. What effrontery! What presumption! To mount the throne of heaven and dictate to its King what he ought, and what he ought not to do. Having thus settled, satisfactorily to themselves, what God ought to do, they conclude he has done it. Is this logic? Can well educated men, who reason in this manner, be honest? They should be very careful how they assert what God ought, or ought not to do; for they admit they cannot prove to a mathematical certainty, that God ever has spoken in words to man. From their own admissions then, it is possible he never has; and if it should turn out that he never has, then, also, from their own shewing, he has not done that which he ought to have done. The only safe, because the only correct, mode of argument is this: after having satisfactorily proved, from human testimony, (supposing it possible,) that God has spoken in words to man, to infer that he ought to have done so, on the principle that he does nothing which he ought not to do; that is, infer the obligation God was under to reveal his will to mankind in words, from the *fact*—not the fact from the *obligation*. The christians in this, as in most of their arguments, begin at the wrong end.

Again, it is syllogistically argued that the notion of a God is in the world—that such notion would never have entered it but through reve-

lation—that the Bible gives an account of such revelation, therefore the Bible is true. All very pretty—give me the *pou sto* and I can move the world. We are also told, that the moment this idea is suggested to an individual, (and not till then,) all nature is heard crying aloud in proof of its truth. Strange indeed, that man should have remained so deaf to these cries of nature, until the lucky moment of this suggestion. Strange, that the proposition itself, about which, and in proof of which, all nature is so loudly and constantly screaming in our ears, cannot and will not enter the mind of man, until the God of nature shall verbally communicate it to him. Strange, that the proofs of a proposition should at all times, and in all places be staring us in the face, and the proposition itself remain always behind the curtain.

The christian doctors also admit, that when once this notion of a God gets into the world, it cannot get out; and, as it has been in the world as far back as they pretend to trace the history of man, they infer that it must have been communicated by God himself to the first man: And, as the Bible expressly declares that God did reveal himself to the first man, they also infer that the Bible is true. They admit, in truth they contend, (contrary to the truth as I shall endeavor to show by-and-bye,) that Moses wrote the first five books of the volume called the Bible. They are obliged to admit that we have not a scrip of a pen from any man who lived before Moses, detailing interviews with God. They allege that to Adam, the first man, Seth, Noah, Terah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others, Adam's descendants, God made special communications in words; and confess that all they know concerning these progenitors of Moses, and the communications of God to them, they learn from him. If any man of you, my christian readers—I hope some christians will read my book—should be asked the question: “from whom did you learn this history of God's doings in regard to these individuals:” The answer must be “from Moses,” for so your book declares; and if asked how Moses knew all this, no answer could be given, for Moses does not tell us. He does not tell us that God ever mentioned to him the name of any one of the patriarchs. It follows therefore—for I need not formally re-state the premises—that the idea of a God was in the world, according to the books attributed to Moses, from the creation of the first man down to his own time, and that he as fully believed in the existence of God, before his alleged interview with him, in the land of Midian, as after; and therefore, that it was not necessary for God to appear and talk to Moses in order that the notion of his existence might get into or remain in the world. If the idea of a God had never been in the world before this alleged interview, and Moses had been the first man, who had suggested such an idea, and alleged that it was com-

communicated to him by God himself, who appeared and talked to him face to face; then, and in that case, it might with propriety be said, that this idea would never have entered the mind of man but by revelation. The advocates of Moses might say: "his allegation, that God appeared to him must be true, for the world had stood then, about three thousand years, and this idea had never been in it till then; hence we may reasonably infer that it never would have entered it but by revelation; and that there is such a being all nature cries aloud, although man never before understood her voice; and as God saw fit to select Moses from out the whole race of men then existing, as the proper person to whom to communicate his existence and his will, that he might communicate them to his fellow men, he must and ought to be believed. This very selection must and ought to operate as a sufficient voucher for the truth of *all* he may have written. God would not have chosen a vain babler to announce him to his intelligent creatures." But this argument they cannot use, for the reason already given; namely, that Moses, the reputed author of the first five books of the Bible, was not the first man, from his own shewing, who had declared the existence of a God. As well might any man at the present day, who would assert that God appeared to him in a bush and made certain communications, claim credence of the people in his assertions, as Moses could in his; for our supposed cotemporary could say, 'the idea of a God is in the world—it never would have entered it but by revelation—my book speaks of such a revelation, therefore it is true.' Moses could say no more, nor can his advocates for him. He therefore is to be viewed in the same light that we would view any other individual at the present day, who might make similar assertions of interviews with God; and his testimony with regard to these interviews is to be weighed in the same scale that we would weigh a cotemporary's who would write a similar book; for he communicated nothing respecting God, which, of itself, would prove that it came direct from his mouth. I shall notice, in another place, his allegations of what he did, and of what God did for him.

Moses was perfectly safe in declaring that God had appeared and talked to the first man and his successors; for, according to the argument of the christians, he was only asserting a legitimate conclusion from undoubted premises. It is not unfrequent with them, to claim inspiration for the authors of the Bible, merely because they have declared some universally admitted truths, such as the selfishness and rapacity of man. I might as well claim inspiration for asserting that the diamond is hard, and grass green.

Before closing this chapter, we will, to use the language of a distinguished disputant, post our books, and see what we have proved. First,

that the christian religion consists in the belief of facts. No man can, with propriety, be called a christian, who does not believe all the facts in the Apostles' creed, and hundreds of others. Faith is the very essence of christianity. Faith in what? we answer, "faith in the allegations of facts contained in the Bible;" and not an assent (which is sometimes, though improperly, called faith) to the truth, propriety, or fitness of any moral code whatever. The adoption of the golden rule, as the standard, by which our actions are to be governed, and a perfect compliance with it, in its true spirit, are not religion. "Do not that which thou hatest, to another," which is Tobit's version of the golden rule, and less liable to perversion than Christ's, is a principle or truth as independent of Tobit, or Christ, or Confucius, or any vicegerent of God, or of Deity himself, as the proposition, that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones.

Take away the alleged facts that Christ was begotten by the Holy Ghost—that he raised the dead, and rose himself from the dead, and you take away the foundation of christianity—there would be nothing left of it: But expunge the golden rule and every other precept, said to have been delivered by him for the government of man in his various relations, and the christian religion would still exist. No religionist will, or can, with propriety, contend that to love mercy, walk humbly, or deal justly, is religion—he will laugh, and we are aware that they all do laugh at the notion of *getting to Heaven* by leading a moral life: Hence, to ascertain whether the christian religion be founded in truth or not, it is necessary to read only the historical books of the Bible. These are the first five books, called the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, of the Old Testament, and the four gospels and the Acts of the Apostles in the New. As our religion is founded upon facts, and as a prophecy cannot prove, or have the least tendency whatever to substantiate a fact, it is not necessary to read the Prophets either greater or less. If there be sufficient testimony to establish any of the wonderful facts of the Bible, then we may conclude that he who foretold them, was inspired.

Secondly: Moses, and the other persons mentioned in the Bible as having communed and held conversations with God, have no greater claims to our credence than any man of the present day who might publish similar statements. On this part of the subject I shall have much more to say hereafter.

CHAPTER II.

I am aware that many skeptics and all christians are ready to ask: Why endeavor to overthrow a religion that has done, and is still doing so much good in the world—a religion that has a direct tendency to ameliorate the condition of man—to make him more mild and humane than any other religion, by operating as a restraint upon his otherwise ungovernable passions—a religion that has placed the tender sex in that scale of being designed by their creator? I need only answer, that all this is mere assertion. It is impossible for us to know what would have been, at this day, the condition of men and women, in those regions of the world called christendom, had the christian religion never obtained. I am satisfied, that it is not true, and that is sufficient for me. It will be readily admitted however, for the sake of argument; that it has been, and still is, either for great good, or for great evil. Believing it false, I cannot persuade myself that it can be for good. I cannot admit that a religion founded on false facts, ought to receive my support. I cannot but believe it to be my duty, and the duty of every other infidel, to exert all his powers for its prostration. Once adopt the principle that a false religion can be, and actually is productive of good, and truth will cease to be respected—will be put on the same level with falsehood; and the only enquiry will be, what truths are dangerous, and what falsehoods harmless—what truths are productive of evil, and what falsehoods of good. Can he be a lover of truth who will hold language like the following: “We know this religion is false—founded on silly fables, yet it is good policy to keep it up, and do all in our power for its further diffusion?” What! Is truth professedly to yield to a fancied policy? Can that *christian* be a lover of truth, who can say, as is almost daily said, “If religion be a delusion, it is a delightful one, and he is an enemy of his species—a wicked wretch—who will endeavor to overthrow it?” What! contend that it is wicked to detect and oppose falsehood? Can truth be mighty—will it ever prevail, while such doctrines are preached by those who have the formation of public opinion? The old saw, that truth is mighty and will prevail, is quoted by none more frequently than by those preachers who are making every possible effort to render it, as it ever has been, like many others of the same stamp and celebrity, as great a falsehood as ever was uttered. It never has prevailed—does not now, and never will, while such doctrines shall be preached and listened to with approbation.

The preachers of christianity may not be aware of it, but their

exhortations, and they are frequent—almost daily in all their preaching houses—I say, their *exhortations* to their congregations to *believe*, are so many requests to play the hypocrite. The only method to produce faith, is to adduce testimony. What a ridiculous figure a lawyer would make—he would be stopped and reprimanded by the judge—who would endeavor to *persuade* jurors to find the facts for his client, for which he had adduced none, or insufficient testimony; or if sufficient, without adverting to it, or founding an argument upon it in order to convince them they ought thus to find, promising them, not money or lands, but ease of conscience. It is consistent for them to exhort those who believe the facts of the Bible to comply with its requisitions; but to persuade a man to believe, and to believe *now*, telling him it is the safer course, is nothing more nor less than to persuade him it is safer to profess a belief which he has not, and cannot have; in short, to confess to a falsehood; for the exhortation supposes him a disbeliever, and no additional testimony in the case supposed—and such cases occur daily—is furnished. Truth will never prevail while such exhortations are countenanced.

A genuine lover of truth will take up the Bible, and examine and scrutinize it as he would any other book—will presume nothing without some proof—will not presume that Moses, or Matthew, or Luke, or Paul was inspired, and therefore conclude, that whatever they have written must be true; he will not take for granted, that which would render scrutiny unnecessary and useless. Can he be a lover of truth, who will tell you that the c x p's, beginning with: "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy foot-stool," was written by David, and that the Lord that was to sit on the other Lord's right hand was Jesus, because Matthew has told us that Jesus said so; reasoning thus: "Jesus must have said so, because Matthew says he did, and Matthew was inspired; and the song must be David's, and mean what Jesus says it did, because Jesus was the Son of God, and even God himself." I say, can he be a lover of truth who will reason thus—when if he will presume nothing and will give his reasoning faculties fair play, he will be convinced beyond the possibility of a doubt, that this psalm is nothing more nor less than an adulatory address to David, written by some one of his wives or courtiers, and that the Lord, whose enemies were to be made his foot-stool, was no other than David himself? Can they have been lovers of truth, who have made the term, free thinker, odious, and the term infidel, synonymous with scoundrel? Can he be a lover of truth, who has liberty to promulge his dogmas daily, and who as frequently abuses that liberty, by speaking in terms of derision and contempt of infidels, and of their boldness, knowing full well that not one in fifty dares to speak his real

sentiments, or read any work in opposition to the scriptures, unless in some secret corner? The christians, if they were lovers of truth, and conscious of having a religion founded upon it, would court all the opposition that could be made to it, that they might put it down by the only weapon with which it can be put down, or ought to be met; namely, sound logical argument; would invite the cowardly skeptics to come out from their lurking places and exhibit their books, and state their objections fully, in order to their complete refutation, and would not resort to the fire and faggot, as in times past, nor to proscription and denunciation, as at the present day. Thanks to the infidel sages of our revolution—they are here confined to the latter.

Truth will never prevail in this, or any other country, so long as the pecuniary interest and good standing of the citizen shall depend upon his belief of certain facts. Christians have had, and still have, even in this, our comparatively free country, the formation and control of public opinion, which emphatically says to every individual, profess a faith in the christian facts if you have it not. Christianity therefore has not advanced the cause of truth—but has been, and still is, her deadliest enemy.

But I have agreed to put, what I deem falsehood, on the same footing with truth, and discuss the question of fact, "What has religion done for mankind?" The first difficulty that presents itself in this discussion is, to ascertain what christianity is. The Protestants will tell you that she left the world in the fourth century, and did not reappear till the sixteenth. They therefore can claim no laurels for her during this period, which has been very properly called the dark age. If asked, what plunged the people of the Roman empire, which, at the former period, embraced the whole civilized world, from a state of refinement and civilization never before equalled, and not yet surpassed, into one of the grossest ignorance and superstition, the Protestant will answer, "the abuse and corruption of the christian religion."

To remove this difficulty, I will define the christian religion to be a belief in all the statements or allegations made by the authors of the Bible, and a compliance with all the definite or positive institutions enjoined by Christ, and those called his apostles, with the full persuasion that such faith and such compliance will secure to its possessor and practiser respectively, endless happiness in another world; and that the want of such faith and such compliance will not only exclude the infidel and recusant from this other world, called Heaven, but plunge them, after death, into a pit of eternal woe, called hell.

This definition includes all that is peculiar to the christian religion, and

excludes all that is peculiar to any other. Its propriety shall be made manifest in the sequel.

If we charge to christianity the rivers of blood that have been shed in what are termed religious wars of past days, and the heart burnings and bitter feelings engendered by religious controversies of the present day, some christians will exclaim "unfairness, disingenuousness, innocent cause—abuse no argument against use, &c. &c." It must be borne in mind, that we are at this moment discussing a question of fact. If it be admitted that religion has been the *innocent* cause of these evils, the whole point is conceded to us. But others deny that it has been even the innocent cause, and confidently exclaim, "What! a religion that enjoins meekness, mildness, forbearance, and brotherly love, cause strife, and hatred, and murderous wars?" No, no; all these evils must be attributed to the bad passions of man, which our holy religion cannot restrain. The fallacy of this argument consists in the false and heretical definition of religion, which is never given but to answer this particular purpose. We never hear them say, as they should, and as I will say for them: "What! a religion, all faith in certain facts, and compliance with certain definite and childish ceremonies, on pain of hell's torment, generate wars?" We answer yes, it always has, and always will, while man shall remain the being that he is. This disposition, in a devotee, to oppress, and persecute, and shed blood, springs not from the worst, but, as paradoxical as it may seem, from what are called the best feelings of human nature; feelings which prompt us to labor and strive for another's safety and happiness. To exemplify: If you see a blind man about to step off a dangerous precipice, is it a good or a bad feeling that prompts you to warn him of his danger—if he persevere in the same course in spite of your warning, is it your good or bad feelings that prompt you to lay hold of him, and by force pull him away? If a votary really believes the facts, and complies with the requisitions of the Bible, fully persuaded that by such faith and compliance he will gain Heaven, and that without both he will be consigned to endless misery, his good feelings, not his bad, will prompt him in the first place to persuade others to believe and do like him; and if they continue to persevere in their unbelief and recusancy, is it his good or his bad feelings that will prompt him to *compel* them? The notion of *compelling* a man to believe, appears absurd, I admit, and is so in truth. But there is no more absurdity in endeavoring to force faith by means of the torture, than in exhorting to faith by promising Heaven; for, whatever we can with propriety be exhorted, we can be compelled to do—from all which is drawn an unanswerable argument against the notion of faith being voluntary; if it be voluntary, we can with propriety be both forced and exhorted to believe;

and the best, because the most certain and effectual arguments would be the rack, pincers, and hot gridirons. Our Protestants have long since acknowledged the absurdity of resorting to such means to produce faith, but have not abandoned exhortation, which is equally absurd and ridiculous. I acknowledge that we can with propriety be both forced and exhorted to listen to and read both testimony and argument, and to inquire for the former, and to canvass and rigidly scrutinize both; but our conclusions are involuntary, irresistible and independent of racks, exhortations or promises.

But to proceed with the main argument: If our supposed votary should see an individual of great talents and eloquence, using both to convince his (the votary's) friends and kinsmen that these facts are false, and actually succeeding in his efforts, would it be his good feelings or his bad, that would induce him to stop the mouth, aye, and the breath of the vile infidel; vile only in his estimation? On one side he sees the life of an individual, and, in his opinion, a very mischievous one—on the other, the everlasting salvation of thousands of precious and immortal souls. Will any one, possessed of the common good feelings of human nature, hesitate what course to pursue? Your votary does not, and never has hesitated when he has not been restrained by the strong arm of the civil law. He conscientiously bends the golden rule to suit his purpose—determines that if he were leading thousands to hell, he would be willing the orthodox should put him out of the way, and so off goes the infidel's head. Thus, upon the well known principles of human nature, we account for religious wars and persecutions.

We will now descend to particulars. When Christ was said to have been born, the Roman empire was in the zenith of its power, splendor, and glory, and embraced the whole of the then civilized world; Judea being one of its dependencies. That my readers may form something like a correct notion of the power, wealth, splendor, and extent of this empire, I will refer them to the first chapters of Gibbon.

If we had no direct information on the subject, the structure of their language, with the writings of their poets and orators, would be sufficient to satisfy us that the Romans, at that day, were not behind any people of christendom, in all things that adorn and dignify man. The few poems and orations that have come down to us from those times, are represented and esteemed by your divines as literary treasures, and held up as models of literary taste and excellence in all parts of christendom.

At the period of Christ's birth, this empire began to decline; but do not understand me as hinting that this decline was the effect of Christ's birth, or that there is any connexion or relation between the two. In the language of Shakspeare, the same thing would have happened if his mother's cat

had but kitted. But I do put the question, and put it for the purpose of shewing the infatuation and recklessness of philosophers, christian philosophers, and their total disregard of truth in their attempts to account for moral effects, and their chance medley shots at moral causes as productive of these effects. I say, I put the question: What produced, or to what causes are to be ascribed, the refinement and high state of literature of the Romans at that period. It must be recollected that it was not yet eight hundred years *ab urbe condita*, not eight hundred years between the birth of a Cicero and the twins who sucked the she-wolf. Will you ascribe this wonderful change from savagism to civilization, to the religion of the Romans, to the worship of their Jupiter, and other deified heroes, their Naiads and Dryads? Oh no, you will say the civilization of the Romans progressed in spite of their polytheism. With what show of reason or propriety can you ascribe the present improved state of christendom to the influence of the prevailing religion? A Roman zealot might have said, there is great skill and perfection in the fine and useful arts, a high state of civilization and refinement, much learning and science, and our holy religion handed down from our savage ancestors, all existing at this time at Rome; *therefore*, the latter is the cause of the former. So yo may say, we have poets, orators, scholars, statesmen, warriors, printing presses, gun powder, and rail roads, and a science that scales Heaven—another that plunges to the bowels of the earth, and another that is at this moment fingering the fibres of the brain, and our holy religion handed down to us from Christ and his holy Apostles; *therefore* to the influence of the latter is to be attributed the existence of the former; and there would just as much truth and good logic in one argument as the other. With the same propriety, the Methodist might say there were camp meetings in the neighborhood of New York, or the Presbyterian that John Mason preached in Murray street in 1806; *therefore*, Fulton invented the steam boat. It will not be strictly true to say there is no connexion between religion and the progress of science and civilization. Religion has not forwarded, but retarded the march of science. Religion said, I repeat it, religion said (for its essential ingredient is faith) that the sun and moon revolved around the earth; therefore, Gallileo was ordered, by the religionists who had the power, to break his telescope and burn his papers, and *think* no more in opposition to the dicta of the inspired writers of the Bible. Religion said there were such beings as witches, and that they must be put out of the way; therefore, it was heresy, worthy of death, to deny either, and the good, and great, and learned, and conscientious, and religious Lord Hale, sentenced persons suspected of witchcraft to be burned. Religion says there were ghosts, spiritual bodies, or corporeal spirits, (both

equally absurd and unintelligible,) such as Samuel's, and Christ's, and the many Saints', after the resurrection; but few of our christians are religious enough to believe that there are any now-a-days. Religion says the Earth, Sun, Moon and Stars were called into existence about six thousand years ago; therefore, you must not too rigidly examine the rocks found in the bowels of the earth, for fear you will find some evidences of its having existed ten times as many millions. It is admitted that some of our religious professors are not sufficiently religious to be deterred from such examination. Religion says there is something in or about man, no body can tell what, called the soul, that thinks for him;—therefore, you must not analyze the brain, which religion has set down as a mere mass of unorganized matter, for fear you may find it to be, not only the seat, but the organ of thought. It is therefore plain, without any further illustration, that religion has not favored the cause, or forwarded the march of science.

We will not quit Rome yet. The empire continued gradually to decline, from the commencement of the present era, till the reign of Constantine, in the fourth century, who took christianity under his protection; in other words, made it the religion of the state. We are willing to admit that, for this period, this religion did not retard or hasten the fall of this great empire. Immediately after this union of church and state under Constantine, the decline of the empire was more rapid. Did religion aid in this acceleration? You answer in the negative, and tell us it was so changed and corrupted, that not a feature of the true religion could be distinguished in the whole system; and you admit that the dark age was the legitimate offspring of this corruption. We cannot let you off with these admissions: There were throughout all this period, the great and essential ingredients, the distinguishing characteristics of the christian religion, viz: faith, and a persuasion that hell's torments would await *him* who had it not. The bigots of those days may have believed too much—had too much faith; but they had *the* faith, and *the* persuasion—the same faith, and the same persuasion, which every christian necessarily must have, and which, as we have shewn above, as necessarily make him a persecutor, and a murderer. We contend, therefore, and offer our arguments in support of our positions, that christianity was directly instrumental in hastening the fall of that great empire, and in shrouding the fairest portion of the globe, for many ages, in mental and moral darkness and gloom.

You cite us to the reformation—shew us Luther and his co-adjutors, and tell us, that at this period your religion began to put forth her moral energies; and that from this period, you date her legitimate and salutary influences. What logic! What infatuation must have got hold of the

minds of men who can reason thus! Your religion was corrupted and defiled, you say, and you purified it, washed out all its stains; or, to drop the figure, brought it back to its original state. And what then? Man became more free! What next? Our religion is, therefore, a positive good. These are your conclusions; but the legitimate conclusion from the premises is, therefore, our religion is not so corrupt and bad, or so great a curse as it was.

You find an individual chained to a block—his neck galled by the rough and unpolished ring that is fastened around it—you file it smooth. Do you think he would exclaim, “Oh, what a delightful necklace! what a positive good!” No; he would say, “it is smoother than it was—smooth as at first.” But he is a slave still. And do you pretend to assert, that man became free at the reformation—that he is free now—mentally free? Call up and ask the ghost of Servetus, and of the thousands that have fallen in religious wars since the days of Luther, and they would deafen you with their united cry of No! No! No! Ask the Catholics of Ireland. But I come home to our own country. Ask the honest, though melancholy infidel, and *he* will answer, behold the victim of the intollérance of man—my customers have left me—former friends pass me coldly in the street—boys, taught and instigated by their parents, point their fingers at me—my kindred have discarded me, and here I am, an outcast and a beggar, because I could not; yes—because I could not believe the facts they did, and had the honesty or imprudence to confess it.

The great, and in truth the only principle established by the reformation was that the Pope should not have the sole right of interpreting the scriptures, and the only direct object effected was to deprive him of some of his temporal power. But neither Luther nor any other reformer ever dreamed of granting the legal right to deny the *facts* of the Bible, and the sectarians of our own country have no notion of conceding to their neighbor the moral right to deny them, from which it is evident, that if they had the power, they would make such denial penal. What has been the consequence growing out of this privilege of reading and interpreting the scriptures for ourselves? Why the major part of the professed christians have come to the conclusion, that many of the allegations of their inspired penmen are false, in other words, have ceased to be christians. They have dared to deny that the earth, sun, moon, and stars were made but six thousand years ago; they have dared to deny the existence of witches and ghosts; they have dared to assert that the sun was never stopped, because it never moved, and finally they have dared to assert that by so doing they have got rid of many weak and puerile superstitions. When they shall dare deny that Christ was begotten by the Holy Ghost, and rose from the dead, and ate honey and

fishes, and immediately ascended up through the air to somewhere called Heaven, which are not more plainly or positively asserted than the others, then they may boast of having cleared all out. That this will be the final result, no one who has watched the progress of events since the era of the reformation can doubt. The effect then, directly growing out of this principle of the reformation, has been to destroy many of the outworks of the christian citadel, the foundations of which will be torn up ere long. The infidel has therefore more cause to rejoice than the christian, in these results of the reformation, both past and in anticipation, and is under more obligations to Luther, its author.

We will now attend to the ladies. It has done much for them, say you; bettered their condition, and all that! Can you point out one single principle in either testament of the Bible, that can possibly have the least tendency to enlarge the privileges, secure the rights, or add to the dignity of woman? On the other hand, whenever she is mentioned, is she not spoken of as the slave of man? It is obedience and subjection every where; obey and be in subjection to your husband, is the language. But the principle which the sex have most cause to execrate, is contained in these words: "And they twain shall become one flesh;" for it is embodied and adopted into our common law. Yes, one flesh. One what? One *woman*? No! but one *man*. She is merged, lost, annihilated in marriage. We learn from the Bible, that polygamy was frequent, and allowed among the Jews; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and Solomon, had as many wives as they wished. I defy you to point out one single passage in the New Testament, that prohibits, or even discountenances it. Paul says that a bishop should have but one wife, and should *rule* her too; thereby indirectly admitting that some had more, which he attempts not to censure. On this point, consult the posthumous works of John Milton. The enlightened Romans and refined Grecians were not polygamysts. We never hear, or read of the *wives* of a Cæsar, or a Brutus, or a Cicero, or a Cato, as we do of an Abraham, an Isaac, a David, and a Solomon. According to the laws and institutions of the Romans *in being*, long before your Jesus was ever heard of, a Roman and his wife were not one *man*. It was not *all* subjection and obedience on the part of the woman among that people; the woman was not the slave of the husband; and those same laws are in force yet in the greater part of christendom; their influence is felt over the whole. In what state in the Union are the rights of women most effectually secured; where she feels conscious that by no possibility can she be made a slave, except for crime; where her property is secured to her and put beyond the control of her husband? I answer in Louisiana, where the Roman law, more ancient than the christian religion, is the law of the land. I wish the ladies to think of these things.

I have already alluded to the bitter feelings and heart burnings existing between the different sects or parties of religionists. These are evils greatly to be deplored, and I will not consent to reason with any one, who will refuse to charge them to the account of religion, or the book on which it is founded. Disputes arise respecting the meaning of certain passages of the Bible; each side of the question has its advocates; thus parties are formed, and bitter feelings engendered, friends estranged, and the ties of kindred severed. Yet all this is not to be charged to the Bible! It is enough for me to answer, that but for the Bible these disputes would not exist. You reply that you would dispute and quarrel about something else. By way of rejoinder, I tell you to go and kill a man and tell the judge before whom you may be arraigned for the act, that you must be excused, for the reason that if you had not killed this man, you would have murdered some other, and see how you will come out.

Though somewhat out of order, I will, in this place, state an argument, founded on the imperfection of human language against the Bible, as containing a revelation from God.

It is admitted by all of you, that you must of necessity conscientiously differ in opinion as to the meaning of words and sentences, spoken by God himself to the writers of your book, and recorded by them for your instruction. This, you say when you are in a charitable mood, and are preaching forbearance with each other's infirmities; and then you talk about Procrustes' bedstead. I care not for your admission. You do differ, and I know you must differ in opinion. But you say we only differ about non-essentials. What! do you admit that God has talked to you about matters of no consequence? If the passage in dispute convey one meaning to A and another to B, one must put an erroneous construction upon it. To him, therefore, it cannot be a revelation. To cut the matter short: if God ever spoke to man, he spoke like a God in an intelligible language; one that would never die, not one word of which would ever change its meaning, which meaning would be definite and understood alike by every one of his creatures. So far from this being the case, you do not know, or pretend to know in what language God spoke to Adam, or any of the Patriarchs, or whether in the Egyptian or Hebrew to Moses, or in Hebrew or Greek to Mary. There is no language, and never was and never can be, to all of whose words, men speaking it, attach the same meaning. God, therefore, has never undertaken to communicate his will to man through the frail and imperfect medium of human language. To say that he has, is to say that he has undertaken what he has not accomplished; for, in the case supposed, his will has not been communicated to both A and B.

The next question I propose to discuss is: Does your religion restrain

man from crime? In this discussion, I shall consider man and religion as I find them in our country; for I know no other; and I wish to bring the subject home to the understandings of my American readers. On those of my countrymen who disbelieve, it can have no operation or influence either way. There is another class, and by far the most numerous, who have, or say they have, *the* faith, and *the* persuasion, but who have never made the public confession. Does religion operate as a restraint upon these? They are told, and they are told truly, I mean that they are told what the book says, that they have no more interest in, or claim to the salvation spoken of, than the infidel; but that damnation will surely be their portion, unless they make the public confession, or, to use one of your technics, be converted. I know that you differ among yourselves, as to what conversion is, but you all agree that before conversion, there is no chance for salvation: and I am now considering the case of the unconverted believer.

The conclusion is, and it is rung in his ears daily, that let him do what he will, say what he will, and pray what he will, it will not alter the case so long as he is unconverted. He may feed the poor, clothe the naked, visit the widow and fatherless, do that which he hates to no one, and pray constantly; still hell yawns to receive him, because he is not converted. Can such preaching (and he is supposed to believe it,) tend to restrain him from crime, or incite him to virtue? To test this matter fairly, let us suppose a familiar case; that of a plain, simple-hearted, common-sense-man attending at some of our preaching houses, where he hears the preacher exhorting in language something like this. "Oh ye sinners, ye dear sinners, why will ye die? Be converted and turn to God, and become reconciled to his beloved son Jesus, and save your immortal souls. Who knows but you may die before that sun shall go down; and if you should die unconverted, you will be landed immediately in hell. Now, now is the time, come forward this instant—not a moment to be lost." Our man does not go forward, but leaves the preacher unconverted and repairs to the court house. He is there called on as a witness, and the Bible is presented to him. He asks what it is for? The Judge surprised at the question, asks him, if he is acquainted with the nature of an oath, and, before receiving an answer, proceeds to give him the following charge. "By putting your hand upon and kissing that book, you call God to witness, that you will tell the truth, and if you testify falsely, you will go to hell." Our man, in turn, puts to the judge the converse of this proposition, in these words: "Then I 'spose if I swear truly, I will go to Heaven, our preachers all say; and one just now told me that I should go to hell anyhow, unless I shall be converted; and I'll believe him before I will you. He don't make the road as easy to

Heaven as you do. If swearing the truth will take me to Heaven, I wonder why some preacher han't told me where to find the text." The judge, if orthodox, must be somewhat stumped: and convinced, and so must you be, that it is a perversion of your religion, a total perversion, that operates, or that you can pretend, can operate to restrain this class from crime. Is it not plain and palpable, that it is a matter of perfect indifference to our witness, whether he speak truth or not, whether he refrains from murder, rape, robbery, adultery, or theft, or not, so far as Heaven and hell are concerned.

I will now take up the case of the last class—those who have made the public confession, or been converted. These attach themselves to some one of the congregations or churches of some sect, and thus each immediately becomes a partisan or sectarian. These sects being numerous in our country, there is, and I admit it freely, an *esprit du corps*, a pride of party, among the members of each, a fear of disgracing their sect, that operates as a check upon them. And I am willing to credit this check to the account of religion. All are persuaded that this conversion has blotted out or expunged all their past sins; and some are further persuaded, that none which they may thereafter commit will be laid to their charge. I submit it to your candor, whether there is any check upon these except the restraints of the law, and the pride of party.

Others of this class are persuaded, that they will commit sin after conversion; but that all their transgressions will be forgiven through sorrow and prayer. What do they mean by sin? They answer that sin is the transgression of any of the laws of Christ. His laws or injunctions found in the New Testament, they tell us, are their moral standard. I deny it. They say so—but it is false. They have made a standard for themselves, or adopted some other standard. All have not the same; but Christ's precepts are the foundation of none; and I will now proceed to show it. Christ said, "If a man smite you on the one cheek, turn to him the other; but you all say, if a man spit at you, or strike you on the cheek, knock him down, so your common law allows—so you practise, and so you tell your children. Christ said, if a man sue you at the law, and take your cloak, give him your coat also; but you say, sue out a writ of error. Christ said, if a man compel you to go with him one mile, go with him two—you say, "bring an action for false imprisonment."

Perhaps I should have excepted the Quakers, for, by all the other sects, it is called Quaker-like, by way of derision, to comply with any of these requisitions. If you have taken such liberties with the positive and definite injunctions of your Lord and Master, how can you expect us to believe you, when you tell us that you have confidence in his threats and

promises, and are restrained by them? Am I not borne out, by what we witness daily, in the assertion, that all your preachings and exhortations are directed to faith?—to some indescribable feelings to be produced by some undefinable agent called the Holy Ghost; and to the performance of some insignificant ceremonies? Is it the object of your preaching to persuade men to that course of conduct calculated to make them better members of society—to inculcate moral instruction? Is the golden rule even repeated yearly in your temples, much less made the subject of a discourse?—ever, in short, taken as a text. Has not the taste of the people become so corrupted, that they cannot relish a lecture on this text? They are so thoroughly imbued with the doctrines of sovereign and free grace, operations of the holy spirit, regeneration, election, free will, the final perseverance of the saints, baptism, &c., that many do not know whether this great golden rule is in the Testament, or in Dilworth's Spelling Book. Let one of your ranters in his prayer allude to it, by calling upon his God to enable his auditors to lead lives of sobriety, honesty and fair dealing, and devotion flags; he will not be encouraged by any "God grants!" and "amens!" from his congregation.

The great mass of you christians would say, that a sermon enforcing such duties, was not *religion*. They have no notion that religion has any thing to do with the affairs of this world, or that any thing they can *do* here will take them to Heaven. What influence then can it have, to make these men love their neighbors as themselves?

I admit there are very few of you, who say that religion is to be *lived*, and not merely *got* and *felt*: still these will knock down, go to law with their brethren, and sue for false imprisonment; and are proud to be high priests in what, to them, should be a Pagan or infidel temple: I mean a court house. They, as well as all the rest of you, teach and are taught to despise the world, and to be perfectly indifferent to the opinions of men, but to esteem the approbation and smiles of their Jesus above all price. As long as they feel assured of these, they are, at least they are taught to be, regardless of the opinions of their fellow men. They represent their Jesus as placable; but man, we know, is inexorable. Let an individual once play the villain and he is ever after looked upon with distrust, and treated with contempt. Is it policy to teach men to be regardless of these frowns? Can such teaching make them better members of society? You destroy the influence that the contempt of society may have upon the citizen to restrain him from crime; and what do you give us in exchange? Why the temporary frowns of a fancied being in a fancied somewhere, whom you represent as the most placable being in the universe—to the initiated or converted. "But," say you, "we require, or rather our book requires re-

pentance, heart felt, genuine repentance, as well as a humble petition at the throne of divine grace, before he will clothe his face with smiles to a transgressor." It will be borne in mind that the individual is to be the sole judge of what is wrong—of what will offend his Jesus—the sole interpreter of his injunctions. We have seen what liberties you have taken with them, retaining some, and rejecting, even laughing, at others. He is also to be the sole judge of the quality and quantity of the repentance, and the length and nature of the prayer necessary to obtain his pardon, and of course, is to determine for himself whether his Saviour has pardoned him. This determination is always found to be in his own favor, as none are never found despairing, but all seem sure of eternal salvation. Is it too much to say, that he who can sin and have a pardon on his own terms, from the only being in the universe who, he believes, can grant it, and whom he is taught to revere, cannot be for this reason a better member of society! Can a statesman—can a philanthropist—can you wish that *all* the individuals of our country should be taught to look even with indifference upon the good or ill opinion of their fellow citizens; should be made to believe that all their sins at some certain period of their lives had been pardoned by something called conversion, and that the crimes thereafter committed had been pardoned by repentance and prayer, and that those hereafter to be committed, could and would be pardoned by the same means; should consider themselves the sole judges of what sin repentance and prayer are, and how much, and of what nature the two latter must be, to expiate for the former; and should feel an utter contempt for the frowns of man, having the assurance that their Jesus is smiling with complacency upon them? I say would you wish that *all* should be thus taught, thus feel, and be thus assured?

You should recollect of what materials society is composed, and what influence similar notions have had upon its members. I allude to the doctrine of the Catholics, to which the preference is certainly to be given; for, according to your teaching, every individual can be his own father confessor, and despatch his sins upon the spot. Do you not feel thoroughly convinced that thousands, if thus taught and thus assured, would be ready to perpetrate any bloody deed, in anticipation of pardon, with as much *sang froid* as an ignorant Catholic would with an indulgence in his pocket?

You reply that as I am a matter-of-fact man, I must admit that something growing out of the Bible, whether it be religion or a perversion of it, actually has an influence upon the ignorant to deter them from crime. I admit that a certain portion of our population have been told, they must not do this and that, and that they can give no other reason, why they should not, (because they have been taught no other,) than that the Bible says so.

I would further admit, that if this class were to be told, that the Bible did not say so, or was false, they would in all probability consider themselves at liberty to run-riot, were it not for a certain fact staring us in the face that rebuts such presumption, and proves conclusively, that a Bible prohibition serves but to stimulate the unconverted believer to its resistance, by the commission of the act prohibited. I allude to what is called profane swearing. These persons are fully persuaded that what is understood by the term, is directly in violation of an unrepealed law of God. No sordid motive can be assigned for its violation—it neither puts money in the purse, or adds to reputation: Still, God and Jesus Christ, Heaven, and hell, are constantly invoked, and are as familiar in their mouths as household words. The laws of the land, if any prohibiting it, are seldom, if ever, enforced, which shews that public opinion is controlled, in this particular, by the profane—so called. The conclusion from all which is, that the mere circumstance of an act being prohibited in the Bible, does not in the least prevent, but rather invites, to its commission. It is for you to explain this, not me. I have this further conclusion to draw: that those persons who are thus shaking their fists, (as they believe they are,) in defiance at God Almighty, must be continually growing more and more corrupt and hardened. You may say that the violators of this law, whom God said he would not hold guiltless, are unbelievers; then they are hypocrites, and on this account becoming continually more unprincipled. In either case the deterioration is to be charged to the Bible.

I have thus shown that christianity, as properly defined, and as taught, can have no tendency to enlighten the minds of men or improve their morals; and that it has not accomplished these desirable objects. You probably deceive yourselves, and are enabled to deceive the crowd, by contrasting the condition of christendom with savagism—the people of the United States with the Camanches, for instance, and attributing the superiority of the former to the influences of christianity. A book worm might, with equal propriety, attribute it to the influence of the Greek and Latin classics. You seem to forget that christianity had not to force its way originally by the mild and gentle means, you so frequently boast of, among a barbarous people, but among a people already civilized, and as enlightened as ourselves. You are defied to point out a single instance, where it has, by its own energies, without the aid of arms, or brute force, reformed, or enlightened a savage people. You may send your missionaries to India, and to all the Isles of the sea, and relate to the natives all the wonderful facts of the Bible, and they may believe them; will that faith make them anatomists, astronomers, chemists, geologists, or artists, or even better moralists? No! the arts and sciences are to be taught them still, before

they can compare with us. Christianity does not embrace either, nor are your missionaries generally qualified to teach them. Infidels could do this favor for the heathen as well as christians.

You also seem to be under the impression, that no other being but Jesus Christ and his apostles, ever taught morality; not being aware that he taught nothing very remarkable, except that degree of forbearance* to which I have already alluded, and which you all condemn and refuse to practice. If he had taught any thing new, he would have coined new words; but he found meekness, brotherly love, mildness, forbearance, charity, peace and peace makers, already in existence; and the golden rule, so true and self-evident, had been better worded by Tobit and Confucius; even the notion of a resurrection was a distinguishing tenet of the Pharisees, and others of the Jews, long before his appearance. (When and how they came by it, I shall endeavor to shew hereafter. It is certain they did not get it from any canonical Jewish writings.) You ascribe too much--too great an influence to all religions, and especially to your own. After proving to your own satisfaction, that it is preferable to the Mahometan, or any other religion, you conclude that it is an institution greatly to be cherished, upon the further positions, that men must necessarily have some religion, and that any sort is better than none; both of which are untenable, as I shall endeavor to shew in the sequel.

*This was taught and practised by the Essenes, long before Christ. An Essene may be called a Jewish Quaker.

CHAPTER III.

Let us suppose that Cicero were to re-appear among us, with faculties as vigorous as when he penned his oration for Milo, and you were to put the Bible into his hands, with a request that he would read it carefully, and give you his opinion as to the veracity of the several authors. He reads a few of the first chapters of Genesis. He then asks who the author is. You tell him his name was Moses. He takes it for granted. He then tells you that this Moses relates some wonderful facts—so wonderful that he cannot believe them; and asks again, how Moses knew them. You tell him that Moses was inspired. He calls upon you for proof of this assertion. You reply that he must presume it. He would then address you somewhat in the following strain: “You requested me to examine this book, as a man of good sense or a logician should do, and why ask me now to take for granted what would render scrutiny, or examination of testimony unnecessary; for if Moses was inspired by a truth telling God, as you wish me to presume, he must necessarily have written the truth.” Under the full conviction that I have proved that nothing can be presumed in favor of Moses that could not be presumed in favor of any other author, I shall proceed to examine the Pentateuch, on the supposition that a man of that name wrote it.

I have already remarked, that from no man who is said to have lived before Moses, and there were many to whom he says God revealed himself, have we a single line? The question here suggests itself: how did Moses *know* what transpired at the creation? for he no where tells us, that in any of their interviews, God ever told him any thing about it. You must *infer* that God told him, or this cosmogony of his was a mere vague tradition. I shall proceed upon the ground that Moses means to be understood as telling us that he derived his information from the mouth of God himself. If God told him so, all he has written is true; but, if I can shew that what he has written is not true, then God never told him so. I now proceed to show that what he has written is not true.

I assert in the first place, that the first allegation in the book, that God made the Heaven is a falsehood. In order to determine this question, we must ascertain what Moses meant by the word *Heaven*—he meant something—he tells us that God made something that he called Heaven; and we want to know what that something was, that we may determine whether God made it or not. Moses does not formally define the word. It could not therefore have been a new term, or used by him in a sense different

from its common acceptation. We must therefore resort to his; and the writings of other authors of the Bible for the purpose of ascertaining what was understood by the word Heaven. If I do not succeed in shewing that Heaven was the studded firmament, then all the previous observations; and after arguments apply to the allegation that God made the firmament. I contend, that by the word firmament, Moses meant a transparent, pliant, solid arch or concave over our heads; and that Heaven was the same arch, with the sun, moon, and stars set in it. It can be compared to a tambord shawl; before it is put into the frame, it is a square of white muslin only, (firmament,) but after figures are worked upon it, it becomes a shawl, (Heaven.) Moses tells us that God called the firmament Heaven; they cannot therefore be two totally distinct things; but one must be a modification of the other—one the muslin, the other the tambour muslin or shawl.

Let us enquire for what purposes, or object Moses says this firmament was made—what office it was to perform. “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the *waters*,” was, according to Moses, one of the fiat of the Almighty. It does not require a knowledge of the Hebrew to discover that the expression, “*in the midst of*,” should be rendered “*between*,” for God immediately goes on to say, “and let it *divide* the *waters* from the *waters*.” Then Moses tells us that “God made the firmament and divided the *waters* which were under the firmament from the *waters* which were above the firmament.” This firmament was something palpable, something solid, as the term imports, which was to serve as a barrier to prevent certain waters which were above it from a confluence with certain other waters which were upon the earth. The same substance, water—a liquid—the combination of hydrogen and oxygen, not in a gaseous or vaporous, but in a liquid state that was upon the earth, and afterwards gathered into seas and lakes, was said by Moses to be *above*, or resting *upon* this firmament. It must therefore have been something solid. This firmament, according to Moses, was perforated, over whose openings there were gates, or windows or trap-doors which were opened and shut, as God chose to give or withhold rain. In vii, 2 Gen. Moses says: “The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the *windows of Heaven* were *opened*;” and what then? “And the *rain* was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.” Again, in viii, 2 Gen. he says: “The fountain of the great deep, and the windows of Heaven were stopped;” and what then? “And the rain from *Heaven* was restrained. Again, to the same point; 1 Kings, 8 35: “When the Heaven is shut up and there is no rain.” 2 Chron. 6, 36 the same, and 7, 13: “If I shut up Heaven, and there be no rain,” Psalm. 78, 23: “Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and *opened* the doors of Heaven, and had rained down manna.” Luke 4, 25:

“Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the Heaven was shut up for three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land.” That is, there was no rain; see James 5, 17. Are not these quotations sufficient to prove the perforation. The scriptures also frequently speak of the Heavens passing away, and the creation of new Heavens, and of the pillars and foundation of Heaven and of their trembling, but the passages which are as decisive as any other of the main position (that Heaven meant an arch,) are the following—Psalm civ, 2: “Who stretchest out the heavens as a curtain.” Isa. LX, 22, to the same effect, also xxxiv, 4: “And the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll.” And Rev. vi, 14: “And the heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together;” that is, heaven was rolled up as we roll a sheet of paper or a piece of sheet iron. What stronger proof can you require that Moses’ firmament, or heaven, was a solid, though transparent and pliant, arch or concave. The sun, moon, and stars were *set in it*, as gems in a coronet—water rested upon it—it had doors or windows, through whose openings the water ran—was spread out—could be rolled up, and was to be destroyed, and a new one made in its place. Ezekiel says, its likeness was as the color of the terrible chrysal stretched forth over their heads; and Josephus, a Jewish author, held in high repute by you all, calls it the *chrysaline*. And lastly, its very name imports solidity.

I am aware that some of you, seeing the force of this argument, object to the common translation, and tell us that the Hebrew word rendered *firmament* can and should be rendered *expanse*, or *expansion*. Let us test the correctness of this translation, by the same rule that polemicists adopt towards each other, viz: substituting the word *expanse* for heaven, or firmament, in the passages quoted. “And God said let there be an *expanse*,” (firmament). That must be a singular system of philosophy, which shall teach that it required a fiat from any being whatever, for the existence of *expanse* or *expansion*. Again: “And God made the *expanse* and divided the waters which were *under* the *expanse* from the waters which were *above* the *expanse*.” Will you be pleased to inform us where those waters must have been which were above *expanse*; for Moses tells us “it was so.” “And the windows of *expanse* were opened and stopped:” “If I shut up *expanse* and there be no rain:” “When the *expanse* is shut up and there is no rain:” “The *expanse* was shut up for three years:” “The *expanse* shall pass away:” “The foundations and pillars of *expanse* were shaken or trembled:” “Who stretchest out *expanse* as a curtain:” “And the *expanse* shall be rolled together as a scroll.” “And the *expanse* departed as a scroll when it is rolled together.” The stretching out and rolling up of *expanse*, its destruction and passing away, and the trembling of its pillars

are all equally ridiculous. We are all very curious to see a *new* expanse. Were it not that men of great reputation for talents and learning really have, or pretend to have, faith in Moses, I should feel ashamed seriously to labor this question. I pronounce the allegation that God made the Heaven, or firmament, a falsehood; for we know that no such thing ever existed. But it is said that Moses was not a philosopher, and that his object was not to teach us a system of physics. His object was surely to teach what he undertook to teach, and the misfortune is that his doctrine, or teaching, whether you call it theology or philosophy, is false. Will you admit that God ever inspired a man to teach a false system of physics? You may reply, as many have, that Moses found the crude system in existence, and universally admitted. Would God enjoin upon him to perpetuate it, by a record that was to go down to the latest generations? But the truth is, Moses was not, properly speaking, acting the part of a philosopher. The astronomer, for instance, treats only of the laws of the motions of the great orbs, which laws he has learned from observation; and the moment he begins to talk about *when* and *how* God (Theos) made them and put them in motion, he is stepping out of his proper field and trespassing upon the theologian. The astronomer says, the planet *is* of such a size, and *moves* in such an orbit. The theologian says, God (Theos) *made* it at a certain period, and ordered it to move in a certain orbit. Moses was therefore playing the part of a theologian as much, when treating of the creation of the earth and firmament, as when speaking of the creation of man, and his fall. We have shewn that the account of the one is false: and shall we then put faith in the other? As we cannot in this latter instance, as in the former, prove a negative, and as this is a question of *fact*, I ask the question, which I shall frequently ask: on which side is the probability? Is it as probable that those wonderful literal facts found in the first chapters of Genesis, actually occurred, as that Moses was romancing? This, as well as all other questions like it, is for the candid, independent reader to decide. The following are a few of those growing out of the writings attributed to Moses, viz: Did God actually appear and talk to Moses, face to face—shew him his hinder parts—engrave on stone—wrestle with Jacob and wither his thigh? Was Moses' hand leprous one moment and sound the next? Did God convert his staff into a serpent? Did he (Moses) afterwards do the same thing? Did the magicians of Egypt also? Did Moses bring many plagues upon Egypt, each of which would have destroyed the whole population? Did God order him, Joshua, and others, to do what would disgrace even an Alaric or a Pizaro? I say, in all such questions of fact, the reader is to decide whether the probability is as great that the things were done and the orders issued, as that the writers spoke falsely.

One of your great arguments in support of these facts, is certain institutions commemorative of some of them, commenced at the time, and continued down uninterruptedly to this day among the Jews.

Admitting, for the nonce, that there is force in the argument, let us ascertain what institutions these are, and of what facts they are said to be commemorative. These institutions are said to be feasts, or holy convocations, or holy days; and of all these Jewish feasts, but two are pretended by Moses to be commemorative of facts, viz: the feast of tabernacles, and the feast of the passover; the first, commemorative of the fact that the Israelites had lived in tents—a very common circumstance, or fact, and perfectly immaterial to me, whether true or not; the other, of the fact that God slew all the first born of the children of Egypt, on the night of the departure of the Israelites from that country, passing by the houses of the Israelites, because their door-posts were stained with blood.

It will be proper, in this place, to give a concise history of the Israelites, from Abraham until Moses. The former is said to be the father of the faithful—the person to whom God promised that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed—a native of Ur of Chaldee; his travels and wanderings can be found in Genesis. He had one son, Isaac, by his wife, in her old age; Isaac had two, Esau and Jacob, the latter of whom by fraud and trick, said to be approved of by God, obtained his father's blessing, that is, the rights and immunities of primogeniture. Jacob, by his wives and mistresses, had twelve sons, after whom the twelve tribes of Israel are named, he having been called Israel after he wrestled with God and prevailed. One of his sons, Joseph, (and the affecting story of Joseph is familiar to you all) was sold as a slave, by some of his brethren, to some merchants travelling to Egypt; they sold him to the King of Egypt. By means of his skill in interpreting dreams, he became one of the King's ministers. Anticipating a famine, he purchased and laid up in the King's store houses large supplies of grain. The famine extending to the land of Canaan, where his father and brethren dwelt, some of them went down to Egypt to purchase a supply of corn. Joseph recognized them, and finally prevailed on the whole family, the old gentleman and all the daughters-in-law, to settle in Egypt. They went down, seventy-five souls in all, and settled on the coast of the Mediterranean, east of the Nile, in that part of Egypt called Goshen. Here they increased in a wonderful manner; for as some say in two hundred and thirty, and some in four hundred, and others in four hundred and thirty years, they had become sufficiently numerous to furnish six hundred thousand fighting men. I allude to the time that Moses is said to have led them out of that country. It appears from Moses' account, that they had been for a long time oppressed by the Kings

of Egypt; and what is very remarkable, one of the decrees of the King was, that all the male children of the Hebrews or Israelites should be strangled at birth; but the midwives, and it appears there were but two to all this people, (it is impossible to read the account with any thing like patience, as this people are sometimes represented as amounting to at least two millions, and again as living in a small village, and each knowing what every other one did,) said they could not kill them all, and thus it would appear that if they escaped the midwives' hands, they were suffered to live. Yet this Moses was hid three months after his birth, and then, for fear he would be put to death if discovered, his mother contrived to place him in a situation where he would either be picked up by the King's daughter, or be drowned. He was taken up by the King's daughter and reared in the court of Pharaoh; and was, as St. Stephen tells us, "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," which consisted then, as now, in magic, or tricks of legerdemain. We are at a loss, then, whether this decree was rigidly executed or not, for we are told both ways. If it was, it is perfectly ridiculous to suppose there could have been six hundred thousand fighting men when Moses appeared among them from the land of Midian; for he was then eighty years old; it is perfectly ridiculous, I say, to suppose that a decree of this nature could have been in existence for eighty years, and enforced, as we are led to believe it was, from the case of Moses himself, and there still have been six hundred thousand fighting men. Decree or no decree, it is incredible, that from seventy-five souls, there could have sprung as many as two millions, in even four hundred years, and especially in that region so subject to plagues. We return to the narration:

When Moses was forty years old, he slew an Egyptian that was maltreating one of his brethren, for which he fled his country, and went and dwelt in the neighboring country of Midian, where, after forty years residence, God (he says) appeared to him, and told him he must go and lead his people out of Egypt. This is the first interview of which it is pretended we have any account from the man himself whom God is alleged to have met. Moses obeys the orders of God. The plagues he is said to have brought on the Egyptians, in order to induce the King of Egypt to let his people leave that country for a few day's journey, in order to sacrifice, you are all familiar with. It will be remarked that Moses never intimates that his intention or wish was to take his final departure from Egypt; but on the contrary, expressly tells Pharaoh, that his only object was to take his people out a few day's journey merely to sacrifice; and this deception he practised at the express direction (he says) of God. And all this ~~fine~~ was resorted to, and these miracles wrought to induce the King of

Egypt, who probably never had even three hundred thousand men at his command, to grant a favor to this Israelite who had six hundred thousand warriors at his back. Moses finally extorts permission from the King that he might go—to sacrifice, mind you. Under the false pretence (that they were going a few days' journey only,) the Israelitish women, at the command of God, communicated to them through his agent, Moses, borrowed the jewels of the Egyptian ladies, intending never to return them. (Just think of this—God enjoining swindling!) But this is not all; God is determined that Moses shall glut his vengeance by murdering all the first born of the children of Egypt on the night previous to the departure of the Hebrews. For this purpose God Almighty tells Moses, that he (God Almighty) is to be the chief—in fact, the only actor in this butchery; and that for fear, he (God Almighty) will make some mistake and murder some Hebrews in the bloody tragedy about to be enacted, the children of the Israelites (after having got their shoes and hats on, and provision in their packs, and them slung, in fine, after being properly prepared and tucked up for a start,) must each kill a goat and besmear his door posts, as a sign to this God Almighty, that in such house a Hebrew lives, and into which he is not to enter, but over or by which he is to pass. This is the passover; and to commemorate this wanton and foul murder—for Moses says all was done as concerted—the feast of the passover was instituted by him, soon after he left Egypt. Now if any body can believe that the finger of God was in this thing, or that he was the actor in this bloody business, or can think it *probable*, he has a mind differently constituted from mine. In the first place, that God Almighty would be the physical agent in a butchery of this extent, is past belief and degrading to God. In the next place, to suppose that God Almighty would not know what house to enter with his Bowie knife, unless directed by the absence of this bloody token, is paying but a sorry compliment to his discernment.

That a tribe or horde of Arabs might have dwelt on the confines of Egypt, and that some few choice spirits among them, imagining themselves aggrieved, or for the mere love of destruction, might have murdered helpless children to some extent, on the eve of their departure, may or may not be true—similar scenes have been acted even in our own times. Moses does not pretend that his people *saw* this murdering. From the very circumstances of the case, the great body of them were neither to see nor do any of it. They were to besmear their door-posts only, and God Almighty was to do the work, and immediately when told it was done, they were to scamper. From Moses' own account, his people were only *told* that the tragedy was played: yet you christians put the strong case of the children of Israel passing the Red sea, and ask with quite a show of

confidence, if any man in New York could persuade the people of that city to keep a festival in commemoration of the waters of the Hudson stopping and parting, so that the people of that city might pass dry-shod over to Jersey, in order to escape some dreadful malady, if such a thing had never happened; and *thus* the ignorant and lazy are made to believe that you have a case precisely analogous to this; but the misfortune with you is, that you have no such case. There is no feast, and never was, in commemoration of the pretended passage of the Red sea, or of the delivery of the law at Sinai. The only pretended miracle of which you can pretend to have a commemorative feast, is that of God Almighty murdering the first born of Egypt. Let the Jew believe it—an enlightened Roman would not, neither will I. Besides, there are in this case the principal ingredients of your great argument wanting, viz: a sensible fact and an uninterrupted continuance of the institution. I know that the murdering of children is, in its nature, a sensible fact. What I mean to aver is, that it was not witnessed or seen by the great body of the Jews, even according to Moses' own account of it. By reading the reign of Josiah, as found in Chronicles and Kings, the reader will learn that the celebration of the passover had been discontinued for centuries before his day. This may be disputed, and much stress laid on the word *such*. (I may allude to this matter hereafter.)

It is legitimate to conclude, as Moses *did* establish a festival, to commemorate one alleged fact of a marvellous nature, viz, the murder of the first born, that he would have instituted feasts also for the commemoration of others; such as the passage of the Red sea, and the thunders of Sinai, if they had occurred.

I know that the people are told by the moderns, that there were feasts to commemorate all the wonders that Moses relates; but they are imposed upon. The only authority we can have, is Moses himself, the institutor of these feasts, and he tells us no such thing; nor does he any where drop a hint, from which a conjecture can be drawn, that he instituted any feast for the commemoration of the passage of the Red sea or the delivery of the law.

We will now return to the first chapters of Genesis, with a view to show that Moses could not have written them, or that the author of them could not have been the author of the other parts of the Pentateuch. The author of these chapters, whoever he was, must have been a polytheist. This is apparent from the translation, as we have it. "Let *us* make man in our image;" but the most decisive expression is, "behold the man is become as *one* of us." You tell us that the doctrine of the trinity is taught here; but you have no more authority for saying that the doctrine of three in one is here taught, than that of fifty in one. The author does

not say how many there were of *us*. You Trinitarians do not say *us* or *them*, and you dare not say *one* of them or *one* of *us*, when speaking of either person of what you call your Godhead, for fear of incurring the charge of polytheism from your opponents, the Unitarians. It is folly to deny that the expression imports plurality. If an individual should hold to me the following language, "we did all we could do to thwart his views and mar his prospects, for fear he would become as rich as *one* of us," I should be very much surprised, and so would you, if that individual should tell me, that he had been talking about his individual self, and intended to include no other. It would certainly be taking an unwarrantable liberty with language. If the expression "one of us," conveys the idea of unity, or does not convey that of plurality, the Bible, which you say is a revelation from God, must be the most unintelligible book in the world—must be any thing but a revelation.

One reason you assign, (though your God no where assigns it, nor the author for him) why all three of the persons in your trinity were required to make man, is, that he was the masterpiece of God's workmanship,—that God the Father *alone* could make the Sun, Moon and Stars; but when he wished to make *man*, he called upon the other *two*. Hence, the expression "let us *make* man," you intimate, if not directly assert, is found but in this place, in the book of Genesis. You certainly must forget that this God of Genesis is represented as going down to Babel to see what the Babelites were doing, and when starting, as saying to the persons of his court, "Let *us* go down and there confound their language." Here was an event, according to your own reasoning, as important as the creation of man, and much more so than the creation of this and all other worlds. The serpent is also made to say, "Ye shall be as Gods," and he is good authority—at least, the author is responsible in this particular for what he puts in the mouth of this *dramatis personæ*. Add to all this, the Hebrew scholars tell us, that the first verse should read, "In the beginning the *Gods* made the heaven and the earth." The writer therefore must have been a polytheist. But the author of Exodus, and the other books of the pentateuch, must have been a monotheist. There are no *we's* and *us's* in reference to God in them, but it is throughout, *I* and *me*. "I am that I am is my name"—"say that *I am* hath sent me unto you." "Thou shalt have no other God before me," "See now that I——, I am he, and there is no other God with me," are expressions decisive of this point. One man could not have been the author of all this. I go further, and state that one man could not have been the author of the first six chapters of Genesis. As has been before plainly shewn by Mr. Paine, the first cosmogony ends with the third verse of the second chapter; and at the fourth verse of the second chapter,

commences another account by another author. In the first account the author uses the word *God*, and in the second it is uniformly *Lord God*,—besides it is not probable, (and probability I need not repeat too often is all we are required to arrive at,) that an author would give an account of the generations of the Heavens and the earth and finish it, by saying that God rested from all the works which he had created and made, and then add, these are the generations of the Heavens and of the earth *when they were* created in the day that the Lord God made the earth and Heavens—that he would, in the first account, say that the *earth*, by the fiat of the Almighty, brought forth grass and herb yielding seed; and in the next page under the new caption, (these are the generations,) tell us that God *made* every plant of the field *before it was in the earth*, and every herb of the field *before* it grew. Is it possible, I say, that an author under the first caption (in the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth) would state that God gave to man and his help meet, *every* tree in which is the fruit of the tree yielding seed for meat (and there is no other tree, and no account of any other sort of tree being made, for the expression, “in which is the fruit of the tree yielding seed,” is not a distinctive expression, but only declarative of that which is common to all trees. I will begin again, after this long parenthesis. I say, is it probable that an author, under the first caption, would assert that God gave to man and his help-meet *every* tree for meet, and, in the following page, under a second caption, say that God gave them all the trees but *one*?

It is beyond dispute that here are two distinct philosophical or thoelological treatises, written by different authors, in opposition to each other. The different names given to God (for names in this matter are material) is of itself sufficient to prove the position. These names in the original, are as unlike as Jehovah and Baal, as Eloi and Adonai. He who contended that Jehovah made all things, was of a different sect, or party, from the one to which he belonged, who contended that Baal made them. So of the followers of Eloi and Adonai,

If there were no discrepancies in these chapters, I ask, is it probable that an author would write two consecutive accounts of the same transactions? You cannot, under all the circumstances, believe that one man wrote both. But we have yet another author. In the fourth chapter, the writer, (we will call him the second) gives us an account of the birth of Cain, Abel and Seth, and a succinct history of the two former. The fifth chapter commences thus: This is the *book* of the generations of Adam; that is, “The following is the book, &c.” The author then proceeds to state: “In the day that God created man in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created he them and blessed them, and called them Adam, in the day when

they were created." This is the third account we have, in the space of three pages, of the creation or generation of Adam. Is it not *probable*, I say, that we have here three authors? Our third author proceeds thus: "And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in *his own likeness after his image*, and called his name Seth." Our second author says he begat Cain and Abel first. No discrepancy here, you will say, because this second account of Adam's progeny does not directly deny the first—because it does not say that Adam did *not* beget Cain and Abel first.—This author, be him whom he may, *may* have been informed that there were two sons before Seth, and *may* have intentionally began at the third son; but what is the *probability*? Your faith should not rest on *possibilities*. The author formally begins the history of Adam and his posterity—tells us he begat Seth, and lived a certain number of years afterwards, and begat other sons and some daughters, and then regularly kills him. He then takes up the history of Seth, in all which he says not a word about Cain and Abel; and yet you will believe that the author intentionally began at the third son, because it is *possible*. Another circumstance that adds strength to my argument, is, that Adam was no older when he is said to have begotten Seth, than many of his descendants were, when they began to get children. But the most convincing argument is derived from the phraseology itself: "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son;" that is, he had got none before. No one but a diplomatist or quibbler, would pretend to say the contrary. "And Seth lived an hundred and five years and begat Enos; and Lamech an hundred and eighty-two years, and begat a son" (Noah.) Do you pretend that Seth begat any son before Enos—or Lamech, before Noah? When the phraseology is the same, should not the construction be the same?

But I have not done with my third author yet. He most assuredly intends to tell us that God was in human shape—his God must have been corporeal. His notion was that God was a very great man. He tells us also, that God created Adam in his *likeness*: and then tells us that Adam begat Seth in his likeness. If Seth was like Adam, which you will admit, then Adam must have been in the likeness of God. If you still insist that the first and fifth chapters were written by the same person, this argument is still stronger, for the phraseology is the same throughout, the words *likeness* and *image* being used in both cases. The first chapter has it: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." The fifth has it: "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." When the phraseology is the same, should not the construction be? (I fear the writing of this book will be a thankless business. Some, I fancy, will throw it down in disgust, and

exclaim: "why will any man of common sense bother his head about such foolish things"—others will refuse to take it up, exclaiming, in their turn: "wonder if this wicked infidel thinks he can reason down the holy things of God.")

It is very probable that this third author finishes the book. The second verse of the fourth chapter (his second) is direct and positive to the point, that his God was a huge man; for he tells us he had sons that cohabited with women—aye, and married them and begat giants. "*Non amplius addam*" on this point.

CHAPTER IV.

The first chapter of Genesis does not seem to be correctly understood either by the infidels or christians. They appear to be under the impression that Moses is to be understood as asserting that the order of creation corresponded with that of his narration. Hence, says the infidel, God did not, according to Moses, make the sun and stars till the fourth day; and then he asks, how could there have been day and night previously—and the christian cannot answer him. In the first verse, Moses lays down the general position that God made the heaven and the earth, the particulars of which creation or generation he is about to give. He then makes another general assertion in the 3d and 4th verses, respecting light and its division, in these words “And God said let there be light and there was light.” “And God saw the light that it was good, and God divided the light from the darkness.” Into what and how many portions he divided the light, we are not told, until we arrive at the 14th verse.—After this general statement, respecting light, he proceeds to speak of the firmament and the division of the waters. The following arrangement would have been more lucid, which the christians may adopt if they please; I am indifferent about it. Commencing at the 3d verse and reading in the following order. “And God said let there be light and there was light;” then the 6 and 7. 4. 5. 14: 15. 16. 17. 18. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. changing the word *lights*, in the 14th, 15th and 16th verses, to *luminaries*. By this arrangement God does not call the firmament, heaven, until he sets the sun, moon, and stars in it. However, as before said, I am perfectly indifferent about it, my object at present being to ascertain what Moses meant by the word *day*. The learned christians and Jews of ancient days understood, and the unlearned, of the present day, yet understand and believe, that the word *day*, in this chapter, meant what we mean by it in common parlance, viz: twenty-four hours, or the time of the apparent revolution of the sun around the earth. But the geological christians of the present day, tell us Moses meant no such thing, and that the proper translation of the Hebrew word instead of *day*, should be *epoch* or *period*; for by their researches, the geologists have ascertained that the earth must have existed ages and ages or epochs upon epochs before Adam is said to have been created.

In order to test the propriety of this translation, let us substitute the expression, *epoch of six thousand years*, for the word *day*, whenever it

occurs in this first chapter of Genesis, sometimes called Moses' cosmogony. Geologists agree, that each epoch may have been, at least, six thousand years.

“And God called the light *an epoch of six thousand years*, and the darkness he called night.”

“And the evening and the morning were the first *epoch of six thousand years*.”

“And God said let there be lights (luminaries) in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the *epoch of six thousand years* from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for *epochs of six thousand years*, and for years.”

“And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the *epoch of six thousand years* and over the night.”

“And God made two great luminaries, the greater to rule over the *epoch of six thousand years*.”

“And God blessed the seventh *epoch of six thousand years*,” &c.

This is enough. Can any man in his senses believe that Moses did not mean by the word “day,” just what we mean by it? And if it be indubitably true, as the christian geologists admit it is, that the earth must have existed, and vegetables and animals upon it, myriads of years before man appeared upon it, what must we think of this chapter of Moses, which represents God not only in the shape of a man, but laboring, moulding clay, wearied, and resting like him. We must pronounce it not only false, but a farago of nonsense and irreverence that would disgrace a Hotentot.

I am aware of your contending that the author did not mean to be understood in Gen. 1, 26, as speaking of the corporeal, but the spiritual man. His words are “And God said let *us* make man in *our* image after *our* likeness.” And he then tells us, that God created man in his own shape. And again, he gives us the particulars how and of what God created man. “And the Lord God formed *man* of the dust of the ground. And he breathed into this peice of organized earth called man, and then, and not till then, this *man* became a living soul; or what you call a spiritual man. By what right, then, do you presume to say that the author did not mean the carnal, corporeal, physical man, when he tells us that God made him after his likeness. If all this cosmogony and homogony is mere allegory—a mere fiction—a creature of the imagination, the whole point is conceded to us. I have nothing further to say about it than to pronounce it a weak and puerile attempt to degrade the Creator of the universe. But your whole system is founded on

the supposition that all is literal—that God actually took up clay in his hands and moulded man as a potter moulds a vessel—that he puffed breath into his nostrils—that he placed him in a literal garden, although from the boundaries given, it must have been as extensive as the Assyrian or Roman empire—that he literally forbade him to eat of a literal fruit growing on a literal tree—that he (man) did literally eat it—and that God literally detected him—had a literal interview with him—and upbraided him—literally walked himself in the garden, and actually made clothes of the skins of beasts and put them on the man and his help meat—that there was a literal serpent that talked as we talk. If these are not actual facts, then the fall of man, of which you talk so much, and which is the foundation of your whole system, is all a fiction.

CHAPTER V.

In this chapter I shall call the reader's attention to the subject of prophecy or prediction. It is alleged, by all of you, that certain devout Jews actually foretold events which transpired hundreds of years after the uttering of the prediction. The position is, that they obtained this knowledge of the future by direct and immediate communications from the Almighty, or, that they spoke, as irresistibly moved by God or his Spirit, not being aware themselves, of the import of what they spoke or wrote.

Let me remark, in the first place, that a prophesy cannot prove a fact, or, with propriety, be quoted to prove it. To illustrate: If I state a wonderful fact, would my quoting a prediction of another individual, that this identical fact would occur, tend in the least to confirm my statement. If, for instance, you should predict, and publish your prediction in all the papers of the day, that some man in the Mississippi valley should, in the course of ten or fifteen years, grow fifty feet high in one night, and continue so for four or five days, and then sink back to his original diminutive dimensions; and if twelve years afterwards, I should publicly declare, through our towns, that I had grown to that gigantic height, and remained so four or five days, and then sunk back; do you think the people would believe me? You will admit they would not, even if backed by four or ten of my neighbors. They would say "It is more probable that you and your backers state falsely, than that you grew fifty feet high in one night." If, then, I should quote your prophesy to confirm my statement, could they not with propriety reply, "You asked our belief in the first instance in *one* miracle, now you demand it in *two*; for your growing to this immense height, in so short a time, and sinking back again in statu quo, we will call *one*, and this man's prediction must be *another*. Did this prediction tend in the least to prove that the fact would happen, and can it then prove or tend to prove, that it has happened? No first prove your fact, if you can, by legitimate testimony—the only testimony by which a fact can be proved—namely, by that of witnesses who saw it or other facts inconsistent with the non-happening of the fact in question. And when you have thus proved your fact, we will believe that he who foretold it is a prophet inspired of God." This is good logic, and the principle established by this argument is, that a prediction cannot prove a fact, but the fact may prove the inspiration of the prophet.

Some of you being aware of the correctness of this reasoning, assert, that *one* Jewish prophesy, uttered more than two thousand years ago, is

verified before our eyes—that the present dispersed state of the Jews is its perpetual fulfilment or proof of its truth. That the Jews are dispersed, I admit to the extent that it is asked, and that their situation is just such as you describe; but I deny that their present dispersion and miserable condition were ever foretold by any Jew called a prophet, or any other person. I go further, and assert, and will prove from the bible itself, that this dispersion and miserable condition, so far from being prophesied of, are in direct contradiction of the whole drift of the writings called prophesies. In this argument, I am willing to proceed on the supposition, that Moses wrote Leviticus and Deutereonomy, and that he actually or truly prophesied. In order that my readers may fully understand and appreciate my argument, they ought to be made acquainted with certain facts in the Jewish history, as given by—nobody knows who—in the books entitled Kings and Chronicles. I will, therefore, take up my succinct history of the Israelites where I left it, and continue it down to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

After leaving Egypt, they (the Israelites) continued under Moses in Arabia for forty years. The major part of my readers may be aware, but I know many christians are not, that Moses told the Israelites that God had renewed to him the promise that he had made to Abraham, viz: that his (Abraham's) progeny should possess the land of Canaan, and that he (Moses) was leading them to that country, which God had promised to enable them to conquer. What a conquest this was to be! nothing that breathed was to be left alive, and this wanton destruction Moses told them, was at the command of God! What notions the author must have had of God? No other cause is pretended to be assigned, but such as the bloody saints, Cortez and Pizarro, gave for the extermination of the innocent and virtuous Aboriginies. They were of a different religion—their God had not the same name—they worshipped by different sacrifices. I will mention here, that the land of Goshen, from which the Israelites departed, was adjacent to the land of Canaan, and that it is not more than twenty days march from the banks of the Nile to Jerusalem. Bonaparte led his army the whole of this route in less time no doubt, (Jaffa formerly Joppa,) where he is said to have murdered his prisoners, being not more than forty miles from Jerusalem. Moses died before his army invaded Canaan; and Joshua became their leader in this bloody enterprize. He fulfilled the pretended commands of God to the letter. The history of this people, from this time to the crowning of Saul, a period of about four hundred years, can be read in the books entitled Joshua, Judges, and part of Samuel. Their government was a theocracy, that is, God himself was said to be their temporal sovereign or king.

Those who administered the affairs of his government, were called judges. This judgship was not hereditary, but he who had the address to make the people believe that he had the ear of the Sovereign, became his vicegerent. The King, that is the Creator of the universe—so the book says—held councils with his ministers, in which the affairs of his Kingdom were as familiarly discussed and canvassed as in those of any other king. And the people were made to believe that these judges did actually see and talk face to face with God Almighty, in that apartment of their tabernacles or temples where he held his court, and into which they were forbidden to enter.

At length they became dissatisfied with their judges, and actually dethroned God Almighty, and elected Saul to be their king. David succeeded Saul, and Solomon, David's son, succeeded him. Rehoboam, his son, succeeded him. Solomon had imposed great burdens on the people, and Rehoboam intimated that he would not lessen them. The consequence of all which was, that ten tribes revolted, and chose Jeroboam their king. After this separation, there were ever two kingdoms of the Israelites, until the captivity of the ten tribes. The two tribes that remained loyal to Rehoboam, were Judah and Benjamin, and were ever after called Jews, from Judah, and their Kingdom the Kingdom of Judah. The capitol of this kingdom was Jerusalem. The other ten tribes retained the name of Israelites, though sometimes they are called Samaritans, from their capitol Samaria. A line divided the two kingdoms; hence frequent and bloody wars arose between them. The ten tribes were taken captive by Palmanezar, King of Assyria, about one hundred years before the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and the consequent captivity of the Jews. This is called the Babylonian captivity, from which the Jews were restored; but the ten tribes never returned, we are told, and are therefore called the lost tribes.

This Nebuchadnezzar, about four hundred years from the time of Saul, laid siege to Jerusalem, while Jehoiakin, sometimes called Jechoniah, was king; and, after a long and desperate defence, the Jews surrendered, and King Jehoiakin, and all the principal men of Judea, including the mechanics, were taken captive to Babylon, the conqueror leaving only the poorest part of the population behind, and placing Zedekiah king over them, whom he compelled to swear allegiance to him. About eleven years after this, in consequence of the defection of Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar sent a strong force against Jerusalem, when it was taken, the walls thrown down, the temple destroyed, and the remainder of the Jews, except a few stragglers, taken captive to Babylon. Seventy years after this, we are told, that the king of Babylon (Cyrus) gave permission to the Jews in his dominions to

return, and rebuild the walls and temple of their capitol. About fifty or sixty thousand returned. I have thus given a succinct, though I hope a plain and intelligible history of the captivity and restoration. A more particular account of the one can be read in Kings and Chronicles; and of the other, in Ezra and Nehemiah. To this captivity and restoration all the Prophets allude, when speaking of a captivity and restoration. Let the following particulars be borne in mind: First, that Daniel and Ezekiel were captives in Babylon, and wrote their books there. The former was taken from Jerusalem when a boy, and became one of Nebuchadnezzar's pets, or pages, under the name of Belteshazzar; or, if an adult when taken, he was no doubt emasculated. Secondly, that Jeremiah was not, like Daniel, taken captive to Babylon, but remained at Jerusalem, under Zedekiah, and wrote, at the latter city, his famous letter to the Jews, that had been taken to Babylon with Jehoiakin. This letter was written, be it particularly noted, *after* Jehoiakin, but *before* Zedekiah was taken, at some period of the eleven years that intervened between the first and second sieges. Thirdly, that a king of Babylon was styled the king of all the nations of the earth. Fourthly, that Ezekiel says that Nebuchadnezzar shall come from the *North* (Sec Ez. 26, 7,) to Tyre, which is further North than Jerusalem.

I am now prepared to introduce the famous chapters of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, which contain the prophecy respecting the great judgments that were to befall the Israelites, the sieges they were to undergo, and the captivity they were to endure. I quote them entire, that my opponents may not accuse me of unfairness. The prophecy is in the alternative. If the Israelites should remain a distinct and peculiar people, differing from, and therefore hating every other, they would, as a matter of course, continue a united, and therefore, a strong and powerful nation; if not, they would fall a prey to some conqueror.

1. And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken dilligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth.

2. And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.

3. Blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the city, and blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the field.

4. Blessed *shall be* the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

5. Blessed *shall be* thy basket and thy store.

6. Blessed *shall thou be* when thou comest in, and blessed *shalt thou be* when thou goest out.

7. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.

8. The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy store-houses, and in all that thou settest thy hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

9. The Lord shall establish thee a holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways.

10. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee.

11. And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee.

12. The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thy hand; and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

13. And the Lord shalt make thee the head and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe to do *them*:

14. And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, *to the right hand or to the left*, to go after other gods to serve them.

15. ¶ But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.

16. Cursed *shalt thou be* in the city, and cursed *shalt thou be* in the field.

17. Cursed *shall be* thy basket and thy store.

18. Cursed *shall be* the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

19. Cursed *shalt thou be* when thou comest in, and cursed *shalt thou be* when thou goest out.

20. The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thy hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me.

21. The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.

22. The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish.

23. And thy heaven that *is* over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that *is* under thee *shall be* iron.

24. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust; from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

25. The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them; and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

26. And thy carcase shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray *them* away.

27. The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed.

28. The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart.

29. And thou shalt grope at noon-day, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways; and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save *thee*.

30. Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her; thou shalt build a house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof.

31. Thine ox *shall be* slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof; thine ass *shall be* violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee; thy sheep *shall be* given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue them.

32. Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long; and there shall be no might in thy hand.

33. The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed always:

34. So that thou shalt be mad, for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

35. The Lord shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head.

36. The Lord shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone.

37. And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.

38. Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in: for the locust shall consume it.

39. Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them; but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them.

40. Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit.

41. Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them: for they shall go into captivity.

42. All thy trees, and fruit of thy land, shall the locust consume.

43. The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high, and thou shalt come down very low.

44. He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him; he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.

45. Moreover, all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee.

46. And they shall be upon thee for a sign, and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever.

47. Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things:

48. Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things; and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.

49. The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;

50. A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young:

51. And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee.

52. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land; and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee.

53. And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee:

54. So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave:

55. So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat, because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates.

56. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter.

57. And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear; for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.

58. If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law, that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, **THE LORD THY GOD**:

59. Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.

60. Moreover, he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee:

61. Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

62. And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldst not obey the voice of the Lord thy God.

63. And it shall come to pass, that, as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.

64. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone.

65. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart; and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:

66. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life:

67. In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thy heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

68. And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee. Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bond-men and bond-women, and no man shall buy you.

LEVITICUS.—CHAPTER XXVI.

1. Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it; for I am the Lord your God.

2. Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary; I am the Lord.

3. ¶ If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them:

4. Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.

5. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time; and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.

6. And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.

7. And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword.

8. And five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.

9. For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you.

10. And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new.

11. And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you.

12. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

13. I am the Lord your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bond-men; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright.

14. ¶ But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments;

15. And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant:

16. I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart; and ye shall sow your seed in vain; for your enemies shall eat it.

17. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies; they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.

18. And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.

19. And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass.

20. And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits.

21. And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me, I will bring seven times more plagues upon you, according to your sins.

22. I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high-ways shall be desolate.

23. And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me;

24. Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.

25. And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you: and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.

26. And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.

27. And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;

28. Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.

29. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.

30. And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.

31. And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours.

32. And I will bring the land into desolation, and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it.

33. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.

34. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land: even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths.

35. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it.

36. And upon them that are left alive of you, I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth.

37. And they shall fall one upon another, as it were before a sword, when none pursueth; and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies.

38. And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up.

39. And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity, in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them.

40. ¶ If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me;

41. And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity;

42. Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land.

43. The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them; and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity; because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes.

44. And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God.

45. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the Lord.

46. These are the statutes, and judgments, and laws, which the Lord made between him and the children of Israel in Mount Sinai, by the hand of Moses.

It appears that the Israelites were, on a certain contingency, to be besieged somewhere, (no place is mentioned,) and were to be led captive by some conqueror. The contingency happened, you say. The question arises, when this prophecy was fulfilled. You say, at the siege of Jerusalem, by the Romans under Titus and Vespasian, about 70 years after Christ. I say, it was fulfilled when Jerusalem was taken and destroyed, and the Jews led into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. Your champions and bishops may talk about Titus and Vespasian; but Daniel, who is better authority than the whole of them, when alluding to the Babylonian captivity, uses these words: "As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil has come upon us." I will here quote the 9th chapter of Daniel entire, and subjoin some remarks.

1. In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasueras, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans:

2. In the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

3. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes.

4 And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

5. We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wick-

edly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments;

6. Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

7. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, or that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass they have trespassed against thee.

8. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.

9. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him:

10. Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

11. Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.

12. And he hath confirmed his words which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.

13. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us; yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand the truth.

14. Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

15. And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

16. O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

17. Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.

18. O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold

our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies.

19. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

20. And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God:

21. Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening devotion.

22. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

23. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved. therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

24. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to annoint the Most Holy.

25. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

26. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

27. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

11th Verse. This is directly to the point, and so are the following verses, that the *curse*, viz: the then captivity of the Israelites, was in fulfilment of the oath written in Leviticus and Deuteronomy; and I now add, that if there be any other prophecy respecting a captivity, it alludes to this.

16th Verse. In this verse, Daniel tells us that the Jews were *then* a *reproach*, as Moses said they should be; but you and our modern doctors would

make the people believe that the present degraded condition of the Jews is the fulfilment, and the only fulfilment, of the prediction of Moses. I shall have more to say on this point hereafter.

The reader is now prepared for the famous letter of Jeremiah, which shall also be given entire. It is found in his 29th chapter, which is as follows:

1. Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon.

2. (After that Jeconiah the king, and the queen, and the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the carpenters, and the smiths, were departed from Jerusalem;)

3. By the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, (whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent unto Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,) saying,

4. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon;

5. Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them;

6. Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished.

7. And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.

8. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed.

9. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the Lord.

10. For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

11. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

12. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

13. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

14. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord, and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

15. Because ye have said, The Lord hath raised us up prophets in Babylon.

16. Know that thus saith the Lord of the king that sitteth upon the throne of David, and of all the people that dwelleth in this city, and of your brethren that are not gone forth with you into captivity;

17. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.

18. And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and a hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them:

19. Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the Lord, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the Lord.

20. Hear ye therefore the word of the Lord, all ye of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon;

21. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, of Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and of Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, which prophesy a lie unto you in my name, Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall slay them before your eyes;

22. And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which are in Babylon, saying, The Lord make thee like Zedekiah, and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire;

23. Because they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them; even I know, and am a witness, saith the Lord.

24. Thus shalt thou also speak to Shemaiah the Nehelamite, saying,

25. Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, Because thou hast sent letters in thy name unto all the people that are at Jerusalem, and to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, and to all the priests, saying,

26. The Lord hath made thee priest in the stead of Jehoiada the priest, that ye should be officers in the house of the Lord, for every man that is mad, and maketh himself a prophet, that thou shouldest put him in prison, and in the stocks:

27. Now therefore why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a prophet to you?

28. For therefore he sent unto us in Babylon, saying, This captivity is long: build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them.

29. And Zephaniah the priest read this letter in the ears of Jeremiah the prophet.

30. Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying,

31. Send to all them of the captivity, saying, Thus saith the Lord concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite, Because that Shemaiah hath prophesied unto you, and I sent him not, and he caused you to trust in a lie;

32. Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed: he shall not have a man to dwell among this people; neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people, saith the Lord; because he hath taught rebellion against the Lord.

It appears from these first four introductory verses, that he wrote to the Jews, who, with their king Jechoniah, or Jehoiakin, had been taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, and that the letter was sent by Elasah, who was despatched to Babylon on some business by Zedekiah, the king of those Jews who had been left behind at *Jerusalem*.

4th Verse. It will be observed that the Prophets all wrote in the name of the Lord.

10th Verse. He here prophesies the return of the Jews to *this* place, to wit: *Jerusalem*, where he was when he wrote the letter.

14th Verse. I wish particular attention paid to this verse, for in it the writer speaks of the Jews, already in Babylon, as being scattered *among all nations*. Such phraseology is frequently applied to the Jews when in this captivity; for the reason, that the empire of Babylon was so extensive as to be said to embrace all nations. It is immaterial, though, what induced to this phraseology. It is sufficient for us that the Prophets used it as applicable to the Jews in their captivity. In the following verse, (15) the Prophet begins to speak of those Jews who had *not* gone forth into captivity, but who were then with him in *Jerusalem*; and in the seventeenth (17) he says: "Behold, I will send upon *them* the sword," &c. Upon whom? Certainly upon those Jews that were left behind at *Jerusalem*. "And will make them vile like figs that cannot be eaten, they are so evil." And, in the 18th verse, he says God will deliver *them*, to wit: the Jews left behind at *Jerusalem*, to be removed to *all the kingdoms* of the earth, to be a "curse and an astonishment and a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations whither I have driven them." On these two verses, in particular, *your doctors* rely for proof that Jeremiah actually predicted the pre-

ment dispersed state and degraded condition of the Jews. I will remark, in the first place, that this prophecy had allusion but to a *part* of the Jews; and these doctors must prove, that all the Jews of the present day descended from this part, viz: those who were left behind at Jerusalem, under Zedekiah, before they can apply it to these modern Jews.

Secondly. Any man of good common sense and observation, who had the least pretensions to political sagacity, could have foretold, under the circumstances, the fate that awaited these very Jews of whom Jeremiah was speaking. Their previous king, Jehoiakin, or Jechoniah, had been taken captive, with all the officers of his court, and the best part of the population, in consequence of his refusal to bear true allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah, the then king, had been made to *swear* to be true and loyal to the Babylonian monarch; but, in spite of all the warnings of Jeremiah, (who appears to have been in the interests of Nebuchadnezzar,) he also was violating his solemn pledges, by refusing to acknowledge fealty to him. It was under these circumstances that Jeremiah wrote this letter. And can you say that he was inspired, because he wrote, or predicted, what you could, and no doubt would have done, under the same circumstances. Still you wish to make us believe that this prediction is yet to be fulfilled.

Thirdly. It will be remarked, that he predicts no greater judgments to these remaining Jews than had befallen those to whom he wrote; for he speaks in this same letter of them as being *already scattered among all the nations*, and of those who were yet with him at Jerusalem, as being about to be scattered or removed to all the *kingdoms of the earth*. There is no pretence that those Jews, whose captivity he was here predicting, were more widely scattered, or more cruelly treated when taken, than those who were already in Babylon. In fine, the circumstance that there were two sieges, is never alluded to by any of the after prophets, when speaking of this captivity. They uniformly speak of it as *one* captivity, notwithstanding a portion of the Jews were led off a few years before the other. But you lay great stress upon the words a *curse* and *hissing*, an *astonishment* and a *reproach*, and tell the people (who are deterred from reading the book because of its bulk,) that the Jews are, at this day, all these, and *therefore* this prophecy, and all others of a similar phraseology, must apply to the modern Jews. I have already proved from Daniel, that all the judgments denounced by Moses were brought upon the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar, and that they, while in captivity in Babylon, were “a *reproach* to all that were about them.” From this letter of Jeremiah I prove that they were *then* said to be removed to, or dispersed among, “all the *nations*.” I intend to be distinctly understood, at the hazard of being thought tedious.

Your argument is this: "Moses and other prophets predicted that the Jews would be led captive and scattered among all nations, and become a hissing and a reproach and a curse. They are, at this day, and have been since the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, scattered over the world, and are, and have been, a *reproach*, a *hissing*, and a *curse*; therefore the prophets had reference to that siege, and their consequent dispersion and degradation." I reply, that Moses (for I agreed to admit, for the present, that he was a true prophet, and wrote Leviticus and Deuteronomy,) prophesied as you say, and that this prophecy was fulfilled by the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and the consequent captivity and dispersion of the Jews among all nations, when and where they were a curse, a hissing, and a reproach. I have established the truth of my assertion, except as to the words *hissing*, an *astonishment*, and *curse*. The word *reproach*, I have proved from Daniel. Now, if I can't prove the others, as I have *reproach*—I suppose I must yield the argument. To be serious, and put this whole matter to rest, I will quote some passages from Jeremiah. The prophecy in the 25th chapter is prefaced with these words: "The word that came to Jeremiah concerning *all* the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, that was in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon." Then, after giving an account of the warnings that God had given to Judah, through the prophets, and of his desolation, he tells us, in the 8th verse, that the Lord of hosts had told him what follows in the 9th verse, which is in these words: "Behold, I will take all the families of the *north*, and Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, MY SERVANT, and will bring them against this land and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all those nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an *astonishment* and a hissing, and perpetual desolation." And, in the 11th verse, it is continued: "And this whole land shall be a desolation and an *astonishment*."

There can be no doubt of what captivity he was speaking in this chapter. It was of the Babylonian captivity, brought upon the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar. And he plainly tells us that they should, in *this* captivity, be an *astonishment* and a hissing. It will be remarked, that he says the people who were to come against Judah would be sent, or would come from the *North*; that he calls Nebuchadnezzar God's *servant*; and thirdly, that in this chapter he was prophesying against, or concerning, *all* Judah. But I have not proved the word *curse* yet. The reader will go back with me to the next preceding chapter, where we will find it. In this chapter Jeremiah prophesies against those Jews that were left behind at Jerusalem, after the capture of Jehoiakin. The preface (1st verse) to this prophecy is in these words: "The Lord shewed me, and behold, two baskets

of figs were set before the temple of the Lord, *after* that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had carried away captive Jeconiah (called Jehoiakin in Chronicles and Kings,) the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters and smiths from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon." Then, after comparing the Jews already carried into captivity to a basket of good figs, and those that remained behind with him, under Zedekiah, to a basket of vile figs, he makes the Lord to say: "So will I give Zedekiah, the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land; and I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, for their hurt, to be a reproach, a proverb, a taunt, and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them." Now I have proved all the words, beside proverb, taunt, and desolation. There can be no mistake here either, as to what captivity the writer was alluding, as he tells us, expressly, it was the captivity of that part of the Jews that were left behind, after the captivity of Jehoiakin*—the same portion of which he speaks in his letter already quoted. What was, or rather what has been attempted to be made vague and uncertain in the letter, is made certain by this chapter—the one explains the other. I am disposed to be charitable, but I cannot bring myself to believe *him* honest, who, being familiar with this book of Jeremiah, will publicly declare, and write, and publish, that the prophet in the letter (17th verse) had allusion to any other captivity than the Babylonian. Your champions select the vague and indefinite passages of the prophets, and apply them to suit their purposes, notwithstanding they must be aware that these same passages are explained and rendered certain by other definite passages, and have an application wholly different from the one they insist upon. I will give another instance of their disingenuousness. Your doctors tell us the prophet must have alluded to the Romans, when he speaks of a people coming from the *North* to oppress and destroy Judah; and they quote such indefinite passages as these: "For I will call the families of the kingdoms of the earth from the *North*," &c. 1, 15 Jer. "Thus saith the Lord, behold a people cometh from the North country," &c. (See vi. 22, 23, 24, Jer.) "Behold, the noise of the bruit is come, and a great commotion out of the *north* country, to make the cities of Judah desolate, and a den of dragons." x. 22 Jer. Yes, from such passages your doctors infer, or rather aver, that the Romans were certainly meant, when they must know, that these passages are made certain and definite by other passages, such as the following: "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, 'the Lord liveth which

* Jehoiakin's father was Jehoiakim, their names differing in one letter only.

brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' but that the Lord liveth which brought up and led the seed of the house of Israel out of the *north* country, and from all countries whither I have driven them, and they shall dwell in their own land." That is, "the Jewish people have heretofore spoken of me as the Lord that brought them out of Egypt; but hereafter, when I shall have restored them from the Babylonian captivity, they shall speak of me as the Lord that brought them from the *North* country, whither I had driven them." And again: "For thus saith the Lord God, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the *north*, with horses," &c. Ez. xxvi. 7, and Jer. xxv. 8, which I have already quoted. In some of these passages it is *expressly* stated, that *Nebuchadnezzar* was the king from the *North*; and from the others it is plainly to be inferred, that the Babylonians were the people that were to come from the *North*. The propriety of speaking of Nebuchadnezzar as a king from the North, I shall not attempt to defend; for Babylon is nearly an east course from Jerusalem; but the same objection lies as to Rome, as that is nearly a west course.

I shall not fear the charge of repetition. I have then proved, that the judgments, sieges, and captivity spoken of by Moses and Jeremiah, were all brought upon the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar; that the sieges were his sieges, and the captivity, that which he led them into. It is not denied that the Jews were restored from this captivity. It now remains for me to prove, from the prophecies, that after their restoration they were never more to be dispersed or *taken captive*, and the temple never more to be destroyed, and Jerusalem never again to be captured. The first chapters I shall call your attention to, for proof of this position, are the 30 and 31st of Jeremiah.

CHAP. XXX.

1. The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying,
2. Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book.
3. For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord; and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.
4. And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel, and concerning Judah.
5. For thus saith the Lord, We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.
6. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness?

7. Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

8. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him:

9. But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

10. Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of the captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid.

11. For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

12. For thus saith the Lord, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous.

13. There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines.

14. All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not: for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; because thy sins were increased.

15. Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity: because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee.

16. Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey.

17. For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord; because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.

18. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling-places; and the city shall be builded on her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof:

19. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving, and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small.

20. Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them.

21. And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me; for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord.

22. And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

23. Behold, the whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked.

24. The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it.

CHAP. XXXI.

1. At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.

2. Thus saith the Lord, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest.

3. The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.

4. Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt be again adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry.

5. Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things.

6. For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God.

7. For thus saith the Lord, Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.

8. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither.

9. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first born.

10. Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.

11. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he.

12. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock, and of the herd; and their soul shall be as a watered-garden: and they shall not sorrow any more at all.

13. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow.

14. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord.

15. Thus saith the Lord, A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.

16. Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.

17. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border.

18. I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God.

19. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.

20. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.

21. Set thee up way-marks, make thee high heaps: set thy heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities.

22. How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man.

23. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah, and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity, The Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness.

24. And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they that go forth with flocks.

25. For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.

26. Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me.

27. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel, and the house of Judah, with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast.

28. And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord.

29. In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge.

30. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.

31. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah;

32. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in that day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; (which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord;)

33. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

34. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

35. Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar: The Lord of hosts is his name.

36. If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

37. Thus saith the Lord, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord.

38. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord, from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner.

39. And the measuring-line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath.

40. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse-gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the Lord; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever.

In order to understand Jeremiah's writings, or rather the book called Jeremiah, we should particularly notice the preface, or introduction, which he, or some editor for him, has written to each prophecy. These two chapters comprise one prophecy, or all that God communicated to him at one time. The introduction is: "The word came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book; for lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people *Israel* and *Judah*, saith the Lord; and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." It appears that a restoration of the Israelites and Jews is to be the subject of this communication. Restoration from what? Why, from the Babylonian captivity, which captivity and restoration are the burthen of all the songs of all the prophets; and this prophet had made them the burden of his songs, in express and explicit terms, for several previous chapters—the one immediately preceding being his famous letter. In the fourth verse of the 30th chapter, the editor informs us, that the prophet is about to give us the very "words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah;" that is, concerning the restoration of which the Lord had spoken in the third verse. In the 8th verse of this chapter the Lord says: "It shall come to pass in that day, that I will break his yoke from off thy (his) neck, and will burst thy (his) bonds, and strangers *shall no more* serve themselves of him." Whose neck, whose yoke, and whose bonds? Why, Jacob's. Whom does he mean by Jacob? Why, all the Israelites and Jews who were then in captivity. After their restoration, strangers were *no more* to serve themselves of them. But strangers *have* served themselves of them, especially of the latter; therefore, the present dispersed and degraded state of the Jews, is in direct negation of this prophecy: "But they (that is, Judah and Israel,) shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them;" that is, one of the royal line of David should reign, as some such one had done, from his day, over the Jews, until their captivity. Now, as the Israelites, the ten tribes, have never been restored, and are yet called the lost tribes, this prophecy has failed in another particular; for the prophet (I call him by this name for the sake of brevity) tells us, they shall return from their captivity with the Jews; but these returned without them. This king that was to rule over them, on their restoration, has never appeared, unless it be contended that Zerubabel, whose descent you trace from David, be he.

"Therefore, fear thou not O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed O Israel! for lo, I will save thee and thy seed (that is, all the Israelites and Jews,) from the land of their captivity (that is, from

Babylon) and Jacob (that is all the Israelites and Jews) shall return, and shall *be in rest*, and be *quiet*, and *none* shall make him afraid." The Jews *only* returned—they have never, for a single moment since their return, been in rest or in quiet. The Romans made them afraid, when they finally destroyed their city and temple; and they have been in fear of every other people ever since. Therefore the conquest of Jerusalem by Titus, and the subsequent dispersion of the Jews, are in direct negation of this prophecy.

It will be borne in mind, that all these writers called prophets, were Jews: we have not a line from any Israelite, that is from any one of the ten tribes. These writers were desirous that there should be a re-union, but that the Jews should have the supremacy—that one of their tribe should reign, and that Jerusalem should be the capital of the Kingdom, as in the days of David and Solomon; therefore the prophet, continuing to speak in the same strain, as in the verses commented on, closes this communication of God to him in these words:

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the city (that is, Jerusalem) shall be built to the Lord, from the tower of Hannaneel, unto the gate of the corner, and the measuring line shall yet go forth, over against it, upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes and all the fields, unto the brook of Kidron, and unto the corner of the horse-gate, toward the east, shall be holy unto the Lord. **IT SHALL NOT BE PLUCKED UP NOR THROWN DOWN ANY MORE, FOR EVER.**" This city, or if you insist on grammatical nicety in this instance, your holy part of it, was *plucked up and thrown down* after it was rebuilt; therefore, the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus was in negation of this prophesy.

Now what must we think of your teachers and expositors, who, after reading the preface to this prophecy, from which we learn that the restoration of both Jews and Israelites, from their then captivity, was the subject and the only subject, about which God is said to have spoken to the prophet, can write and publish to the world, that Jeremiah, in these chapters, was talking about Jesus Christ and his church? Who, after reading the closing sentences of this communication, in which God is said to have spoken of the rebuilding of Jerusalem so minutely, as to have introduced the brook Kedron and the horse-gate, can say, that some future state of some church was prefigured?

Again. In the 32d chapter Jeremiah, from the 36th verse to the close of it, we have another prophecy, in proof of my main position. Before I introduce it, I will take occasion to request the reader to peruse every chapter from which I may make an extract—in short, I wish him to read

all Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and Daniel, and the chapters in the Pentateuch, that speak either of a captivity or restoration of the Israelites; also the last chapters of Kings and Chronicles, and the first of Nehemiah and Ezra. I will further remark, that Jeremiah's prophecies, or rather, the communications said to have been made to him, are not arranged in this book, according to the order of the times at which they were made. For example, the communication contained in the 25th chapter, was made to him *before* the captivity of Jehoiakin, and the one contained in the previous 24th chapter, (for these two chapters—see the close of this) was made *after* this king's captivity, and before Zedekiah's. So also the one in the chapter under consideration, (32) was made in the interval between Jehoiakin's and Zedekiah's captivity, and the one contained in the 30th and 31st chapters, was made *after* the captivity of the latter; from all which, it is evident that Jeremiah did not make or compile this book—that he did not write the prefaces to the several pretended communications, but that some editor did—the same editor, no doubt, that compiled all the books of the old testament—the same editor that could say in the book of kings, that what is not found in it, will be found in the book of Chronicles, and in the latter, that what is not found in it, will be found in the former. I will further observe, that Jeremiah appears to have been a partisan of Nebuchadnezzar. He prophesied against Judah, before the first siege in favor of the Babylonian—calls this monarch a servant of God, and those of his countrymen who had submitted to his yoke with Jehoiakin, a basket of good figs—and those who had not gone forth into captivity, a basket of vile figs.

Zedekiah had put him in a prison, from which, his editor says, he published the prophecy contained in the chapter under consideration. The preface, to which, is in these words, "The word that came to Jeremiah, from the Lord, in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem; and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house. For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it," &c. I have quoted this, merely to show the *date* of the communication; for the editor, afterwards in the 26th verse, says, "Then (to wit while Jeremiah was in prison) came the word of the Lord to Jeremiah, saying." Then follows the communication, in which the Lord, after reciting the many sins of the Jews, and speaking of their future delivery into the hand of the king of Babylon, as a punishment for them, concludes in these words: "Behold

I will gather them *out of all the countries* whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell *safely*. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.—Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land *with stability* with my whole heart, and with my whole soul.—For thus saith the Lord. Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them. And fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, *It is desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans. Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south; for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the Lord.*”

The Jews after the restoration did *not dwell safely*—God did *not* make an *everlasting* covenant, that he would not turn away from them to do them good—he did *not* establish them with *stability* in Judah; therefore the conquest of Judea by Pompey and others, and the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and the subsequent dispersion and degradation of the Jews, are in direct negation of this prophesy.

I will now go to Ezekiel, after observing for the third time, that this captivity and restoration, are the favorite, and almost the only topics of this writer, as well as of Jeremiah. I have never examined with a view to ascertain, but have no doubt that Jeremiah's allusions to them, are more in number than his chapters. I must also remind the reader that Ezekiel began to write as he informs us, in the first three verses of his book, in the fifth year of the captivity of himself and Jehoiakin; and it appears that his first thirty-three chapters and part of the 34th, were written before Zedekiah was taken. Therefore, when in these chapters he speaks of Jerusalem, we should recollect that he speaks of her with reference to her then weak and mutilated condition; or when he speaks of a future captivity of the Jews, that he alludes to those Jews only that were in Jerusalem under Zedekiah, for he himself was already a captive in Babylon when he was writing. This prophet also was a warm partisan of Nebuchadnezzar, as appear from many parts of his book, and particularly from the 17th chapter; in the 15th verse of which, he calls Zede-

lish a rebel against Nebuchadnezzar, and censures him for seeking an alliance with the Egyptians against the Babylonians

From the 15th verse to the 22d of this chapter, all is intelligible; and because the last three verses are wholly incomprehensible, your doctors, as usual, have laid hold of them as applying to Christ. In the 22d verse, God is made to say: "I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it. I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain, and eminent. In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it, and it shall bring forth boughs and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar; and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell." Now, for what purpose is the highest branch of the *high* cedar to be taken, and a tender twig to be cropped off from it, and this tender twig to be planted, and to bring forth boughs and fruit, and be a goodly cedar? Why that "all the trees of the field shall know that I, the Lord, have brought *down* the *high* tree, have *exalted* the *low*, have dried up the *green* tree," &c. (Do read all this chapter.) This dry and green branch—this twig that is to be exalted, and brought low at the same time, your doctors say pre-figures Christ. The prophet may have referred to Gedeliah, who succeeded Zedekiah as governor, under Nebuchadnezzar, over the few Jews that were left after the second siege. If he did, his prediction was not verified, as Gedeliah did not flourish like a tall bay or cedar tree, but was soon cut down. It is certainly more rational to suppose, that the prophet should have had reference to him, after speaking particularly and plainly of the future disgrace and discomfiture of his immediate predecessor, than that he should abruptly break off and talk about Christ in three short verses. But these verses are obscure and highly figurative—probably not correctly translated; therefore, they will answer very well for a prophecy respecting Christ. All the verses of these prophets, that your doctors say allude to Christ, are of the same character. But to return to the main argument.

In his 36th chapter, Ezekiel prophesies as Jeremiah did, that the children of Israel, that is, the ten tribes, as well as the Jews, should be restored, and compose one nation "in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all, and (so it reads) they shall no more be two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all." This is all very plain—no figure here. The Jews—the writer being one—and the Israelites, were in captivity. He hopes, therefore believes, therefore says, that they will all be restored, and form one kingdom, strong and powerful, under a prince of the tribe of which he was, and of the royal line of David: for he goes on to say, "And David, my servant, shall be king over them." (David is used by this prophet, and others,

as a title to a monarch of Judah, as Pharaoh and Cæsar were to the monarch of Egypt, and the heir apparent to the Roman empire.) “And they all shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them; and they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, (that is in the land of Canaan) wherein your fathers have dwelt, and they shall dwell therein, even they and their children, and their *children’s children*, FOREVER: and my servant David shall be their prince forever.”

No figure yet—all plain, literal, and intelligible. These captive Jews and Israeltes were to be brought back to the land in which they and their forefathers had lived, and were to exist as a kingdom—a literal, temporal, terrestrial kingdom, *forever*. They have not dwelt therein, but have been driven from thence and their kingdom, (though it cannot be properly said *they* ever set up one after the restoration,) overthrown by Titus. Therefore, the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and the subsequent dispersion and degradation of the Jews, are in direct contradiction of this prophesy. In his 33d chapter, Ezekiel, after charging the captivity to the wickedness of the rulers of the Jews, and after predicting a happy restoration, adds, in the 28th verse: “And they, to wit: all the Jews and Israelites, shall *no more* be a *prey* to the heathen.” They have been, and still are, a prey to the heathen; therefore, &c. the usual and oft repeated conclusion.

EZEKIEL—CHAP. XXXIII.

1. Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,
2. Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman:
3. If, when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people:
4. Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning: if the sword come and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.
5. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning: his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul.
6. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand.
7. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

8. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand.

9. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

10. Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?

11. Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

12. Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth.

13. When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.

14. Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right;

15. If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

16. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

17. Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal; but, as for them, their way is not equal.

18. When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.

19. But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby.

20. Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways.

21. And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten.

22. Now the hand of the Lord was upon me in the evening, afore he

that was escaped came, and had opened my mouth, until he came to me in the morning; and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb.

23. Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

24. Son of man, they that inhabit those wastes of the land of Israel speak, saying, Abraham was one, and he inherited the land: but we are many: the land is given us for inheritance.

25. Wherefore say unto them; Thus saith the Lord God, Ye eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes toward your idols, and shed blood: and shall ye possess the land?

26. Ye stand upon your sword, ye work abomination, and ye defile every man his neighbour's wife: and shall ye possess the land?

27. Say thou thus unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, As I live, surely they that are in the wastes, shall fall by the sword; and him that is in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured; and they that be in the forts, and in the caves, shall die of the pestilence.

28. For I will lay the land most desolate, and the pomp of her strength shall cease; and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate, that none shall pass through.

29. Then shall they know that I am the Lord, when I have laid the land most desolate, because of all their abominations which they have committed.

30. Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls, and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brothee, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh from the Lord.

31. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.

32. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.

33. And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them.

Baruch (though not canonical) is very explicit on this point. He says, speaking of the restoration, or rather he says that the Lord says: "And I will *no more* drive my people of Israel out of the land that I have given them." Many, many other passages, might be quoted to support my positions, but these are sufficient to convince any reasonable man.

If I have said enough to excite even the honest christian's curiosity to read these prophecies, I have no fears but he will pronounce, after an ho-

best perusal of them, all my positions, not only tenable, but well sustained. Your doctors have gone into what you are pleased to term profane history, to prove that Moses, in Deuteronomy and Leviticus, had reference to the siege of Jerusalem by Titus. They quote the account given by Josephus, of the rich lady (probably a widow, as no husband is mentioned,) eating her child. And because Moses says, that in *the* siege (no place and no time specified) the delicate and tender woman shall eat her husband, and her children, and her after-birth; therefore, he had reference to the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, because there was, in that siege, what is common in all sieges, great famine and distress, and because a woman ate her child. I admit, that Moses had reference to no particular woman. He is to be understood as asserting, that "so great would be the distress in this siege of his, that *women* should eat their husbands," &c. But, even on this admission, before you can avail yourselves of Josephus' statement, you must shew from him, or some other source, that women, in your favorite siege, ate husbands, &c. But why go to profane history, to find a case of a woman eating her child? If such a circumstance is of any avail to prove that a city, where it happened, is *the* one referred to by Moses, he must have had reference to *two* cities and *two* sieges; because we are told in 2d Kings, 6th chapter, that a woman of Samaria killed, boiled, and ate her son, during the siege of that city, by Benhadad. But you pass by this piece of canabalism, because it does not answer your purpose, and lay hold of a similar one, perpetrated in Jerusalem, because it does; or rather, some of your fathers have interpolated this whole account into Josephus' history, for the purpose of proving that the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans was foretold by Moses. I do not pretend that I can prove this assertion to a mathematical certainty, but I will shew, that the probability is greater that some other person wrote it in his book, than that Josephus did. I need not remind you that, before the invention of printing, copies of large works, like this, were not multiplied to any extent; hence an alteration, or an interpolation, would not be so easily or readily detected as at present. We all know that such interpolations were common. You admit that many have been made in the small works of the several authors of your new testament. Now, Josephus has given us as full, if not a more particular account, of the "woman eating her child in Samaria," than is found in Kings. He makes no remarks on the circumstance—says nothing to call our particular attention to it—it does not appear to excite his special wonder. In about two hundred pages after this account, we find the other. He introduces the second with a great flourish; and what excites our special wonder is, that he tells us the like had never happened before under the sun. Now, is it not more probable, that some zealot interpolated all this

flourish, at least, than that Josephus should be guilty of a falsehood, of which his own book would convict him? Is it probable that he would say, in his introduction to the second account, that he feared his veracity would be questioned, (the fact about to be stated was so wonderful,) when he had related a precisely similar fact about two hundred pages previous, and said nothing about veracity—manifested no apprehensions for the loss of it? It is almost certain, that some other person must have written the introduction to this second account of child murder. If such liberties were taken in those days, is it not probable that some person, other than Josephus, wrote the whole story?

I have not labored this question of interpolation, believing there was any force in the argument growing out of this account of child murder; but to shew my readers what little confidence is to be placed in the writings of those you call the fathers. Daniel settles this question in my favor. Alluding to the distress of *the* siege of Moses, he says, in his 9th chapter, 12th verse: "And he (that is God) hath confirmed his words which he spake against us (by Moses—see previous and succeeding verses) and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil, (that is the siege,) for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem," (during the siege by Nebuchadnezzar.) This is strong language. You may interpolate into Josephus—you cannot invent any expressions that will more fully respond to those of Moses.

It escaped my notice, until after the foregoing was in press, that Jeremiah in the 18th verse of his letter, prophesies that the Jews who were under Zedekiah would become, in Babylon, a *curse*, an *astonishment*, a *hissing*, and a *reproach*!

I have now finished what I intended to say on the prophecies respecting the dispersion of the Jews, and the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans. If I have not made myself so fully understood as that my arguments can be duly appreciated; I am certain that I have said sufficient to induce even the mentally sluggish to examine the prophecies, and to read them with more pleasure and satisfaction than they have heretofore done. Much of the obscurity found in them, is, no doubt, owing to a defective translation; though in some parts of Isaiah and some of the lesser prophets, there is no connexion between consecutive sentences.

The size of the bible deters the great mass of the people from attempting to understand it. The arrangement of the books tends to produce confusion. Not more than one in a thousand, of those called professors, is familiar with this arrangement, or knows of what each book treats—if historical, when it was said to have been written, and if prophetic, when the author is said to have lived. Nor does he know, that we have no

canonical history of the Jews, from the time of the restoration to the time of Christ—a period of about five hundred years. A great majority of christians look upon the bible, as a collection of isolated sayings, and think, that one part affords *as good reading* as another. There are, also, thousands of learned and intelligent men who will tell you they believe the bible; yet think it low and vulgar for a christian to introduce his religion as a topic of conversation in a mixed company; and beneath their dignity to examine the scriptures critically, or be able to converse upon them intelligently and fluently. Many a young gentleman, and, I may add, young lady too, who would take it in high dudgeon to be charged with infidelity, would be deeply offended and mortified, to be charged with an intimate knowledge of the scriptures. The language of such is, “I seldom or ever read the bible. I have not had one in my hand for several years.”

Hence, these scriptures are so little understood. The christians charge the infidels of disbelieving without examination. If the charge be true; I reply, that it is more rational to disbelieve without a rigid scrutiny, than to believe thousands of prodigies, merely because they are printed in a book. But the charge is not true. Our people, take them as a body, believe upon trust—because their fathers and neighbors do; but few disbelieve what their fathers believe, without examination.

Our preachers exhort their congregations to read their bibles. Should their advice be taken, they would soon cease to have congregations. For, if I were called upon to suggest the most effectual means of overthrowing the christian religion, I should say, let the people be compelled to understand the scriptures. Enough of this.

I have said, that we have no canonical history of the Jews, from the restoration to the appearance of Christ;—that is, we have no bible during this period, of about five hundred years. All the books, that we call canonical, are said to have been written before the restoration, except Nehemiah and Ezra, and some one or two of the lesser prophets.

Have you, christians, ever asked the question, how and when, and by whom these books were collected into a volume—by whom they were declared to be the word of God, or canonical, or inspired? Who placed the few lines of some of the lesser prophets in the canon of scripture? Have you ever inquired whether the Jews at the time of the restoration (before which time you allege the prophecies were written) were looking for or expecting a Messiah—some talented prince—to arise from the royal line of David—whether at this time they were divided into three sects, Sadducees, Pharisees, and Escenes—whether they all returned to Jerusalem with Zorobabel at the restoration: or whether the greater part of them did not

remain in Babylon, *scattered among all nations?* Have you ever inquired whether the majority of the inhabitants of Judea, at the time of Christ, were Jews or not? What is the subject before us? I wish to remind the reader and impress it upon him, that there was, what I shall call, an interregnum, of about five hundred years, immediately preceding Christ, for which we have no bible; and I also wish to convince him, that the material parts of the bible must have been written during this interregnum. The books of Nehemiah and Ezra, Haggai, and Zechariah must necessarily have been written after the restoration; for they treat of it.—Kings and Chronicles must also have been written by some man who lived many ages after the time of the restoration; for he gives us the names of the descendants of Zorobabel, for several generations. Zorobabel, it will be remembered, was the messiah, or the person sent by Cyrus to lead back the Jews at the restoration, and to rebuild the temple. From many passages in the first five books of the bible, which have been noticed by Mr. Paine, it is evident these books were written as late as the Chronicles, probably by the same man. (Some few of the first chapters of Genesis to be excepted.) The writer gives names to places, which they did not bear till long after the time of Moses, the reputed author; and alludes to a time, before which, there were no kings in Israel. Moses lived some hundred of years before there were kings in Israel. Mr. Paine, as usual, was very happy and conclusive on this point.

The books of Isaiah and Jeremiah, and many of the lesser prophets, could not have been considered as the words of God, or as bible, before the captivity, for two reasons. First, they did not cease prophesying till the captivity: and, secondly, their prophecies or warnings were rejected, and their persons treated with contempt, by both kings and people.

Ezekiel and Daniel did not begin to prophesy until after the captivity—they both wrote in Babylon. I am then justified in the assertion, that the material parts of the bible, both historical and prophetical, were either not written, or, if written, were not held canonical, before the restoration.

I have asked, if the Jews, at the restoration, were looking for a great Prince—a Messiah—the desire of all nations. This question I now answer in the negative.

Had they been expecting such a person to arise during their captivity? I answer, yes. But he came to them at the restoration, or rather, such a person or prince or Messiah arose, and led some of the Jews out of captivity, to their former home. This was Zorobabel, of the line of David. He was the great prince that was to arise, and to whom the prophets had reference, before the restoration. But as all their prophecies failed, respecting the power of this prince and the quiet and rest, and peace which

the Jews were to enjoy after their return, and the wealth and splendor of their renewed kingdom; the Jewish doctors, during these five hundred years, made the people believe, that these prophecies had a future reference—that the great prince, foretold in them, was yet to appear, and the enemies of the nation yet to be put down. I wish here to be distinctly understood. I say, then, that at the restoration, the Jews thought that all the predictions of all their prophets were accomplished—the restoration itself, had been a matter of prophesy—it was now history—a prince and a leader had been predicted—he had appeared in the person of Zorobabel.

Now for the proof. The prophet Haggai, the first in order of the lesser prophets, who wrote after the captivity, was sent, as he says, to Zorobabel, after the latter had come to Jerusalem, and after he had, as appears from Daniel and Ezra, laid the foundation of the temple, to encourage him to go on with the building; telling him, that the Lord would be with him, and “would shake the nations, and that the *desire of all nations should come*, and that the Lord would fill the house with glory.” For; (and I wish the reason to be noted.) “The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord.” “The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts.” The nations may have been shaken, but not enough of the *desire* of all nations, viz. money, was shaken out of them, to build a temple equal in glory to the first. The expression, *shake the nations*, is certainly a figurative one, and in this place equivalent, (in my opinion) to levying contributions. The *glory* of the house was its splendor, and the *desire* of all nations was the silver and gold, with which the house was to be ornamented, or made splendid. Zorobabel obtained a great sum from Darius, the king of all nations, (if you will admit Esdras and Josephus as authority,) by making a very good speech on truth. He had obtained from Cyrus, previously, a heavy sum. Ezra also obtained other large sums from the king and from the Jews, that were *among all nations*. Yet, this *desire* of all nations has been personified and converted into Jesus Christ. And your doctors, not knowing how to reconcile the declaration of Haggai, that the glory (by which he undoubtedly meant its splendor,) of the second temple, should exceed that of the first, with that of Ezra, who tells us that the second temple was so inferior in point of splendor, to the first, that the old men who had seen the first, wept, because of the inferiority; tell us, that Haggai had allusion to Christ’s body, or to the entry of Christ into the second temple, by which it was so greatly glorified.

By showing that the *desire of all nations* did not mean a man, I have not shown that the great prince and redeemer so much talked about, was Zorobabel. We will, therefore, go to Haggai’s second and last chapter,

and give the reader this last communication of God to him, to be made to Zorobabel:

“Speak to Zorobabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them: and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zorobabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts.”

Here, then, is the chosen one of the Lord, that was to be a signet, in some great and terrible day that was to follow.

We will now attend to Zechariah, who, with Haggai, went to encourage Zorobabel and Joshua, the two leaders of the Jews; the latter being high priest. (See Ezra V. 1 and 2.)

This writer introduces an angel, who talks to Joshua, and in his 3d chapter, 8th verse, this angel says: “Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men wondered at, for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the *Branch*.” Now we saw, that in Haggai, God called Zorobabel his *servant*; therefore he is meant by the word *Branch*. This reasoning may not be satisfactory; we will, therefore, resort to the fifth chapter, for light on this matter. In this chapter he tells us, the word of the Lord came to him requiring him to take certain men and conduct them to a certain house, and to speak unto Joshua, the high priest, saying: “Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man, whose name is the *branch*, and he shall grow up out of his place, and *he shall build the temple of the Lord*.”

We all know, that Zorobabel did build the temple of the Lord; there can, therefore, be no doubt, that by the word *Branch*, he was alluded to.

I may have spoken of the prophets in such a manner as to lead the reader to the opinion that I believed them inspired, and that they actually foretold future events, such as the captivity, ages before it happened, and its exact duration. It was only to prevent circumlocution that such language has been used; and my admissions, as to Deuteronomy and Leviticus, were only for the nonce.

I will now prove, from a comparison of Haggai and Zachariah with the other prophets, that the latter did not even write the books attributed to them, but that some other person must have written a great part of them at or after the restoration. It must be recollected, that Haggai and Zachariah wrote at the very time of the building of the second temple, and that they spoke to, and encouraged the builder, Zorobabel. That this Zorobabel

was of the royal line of David, appears from Matthew's first chapter. All who speak of him assert that he descended from Judah, through David. For this reason he could have been the Jewish Messiah of the prophecies. That he was governor of Judah, appears from many passages in the writings of those who speak of him, and particularly from Haggai I. 1. hereafter quoted. For this reason he could have been the Messiah. That he was, or was to be, king of the Jews, appears also from various passages, particularly from Zachariah, vi. 13. "Even he (Zerobabel) shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall have the glory, and shall *sit* and *rule* upon his *throne*, and he shall be a *priest* upon his *throne*." (It appears that the kingly and priestly offices in one person were not incompatible.) For this reason he could have been the Messiah. That he was to be a priest, appears also from the passage last quoted; and for this reason, also, he could have been the Messiah.

In order to put it beyond controversy, that Zerobabel and *Branch* were with Zachariah, two names for the same person, let us compare the 8th and 9th verses of his 4th chapter with the 9, 10, 11, and 12th of his sixth. The former are: "Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerobabel have laid the foundations of this house, (the temple;) his hands shall also *finish* it; and thou shalt know that the Lord hath sent me unto you." The latter are:

9. And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

10. Take of them of the captivity, even of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah, which are come from Babylon, and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Judah the son of Zephaniah;

11. Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest;

12. And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord.

Zerobabel had laid the foundations, and God said he should *finish* the house. There is no mistake here. Zerobabel is expressly named in the former verses, and, in the latter, the man, whose name was Branch, was also to build the house. Can there be any doubt that Zerobabel and Branch were two names for the same person? If there cannot be any doubt, it follows that *Branch*, and *The desire of all nations*, can *not* be one and the same person; for the prophet Haggai addresses Zerobabel directly, who had *already* come, and was then at Jerusalem, and tells *him*, that *The desire of all nations* SHALL come, and that in a little time.

I have wandered from my point, which is, that some of the prophets, and particularly Isaiah, did not write all that is found in the books bear-

ing their names. In the mean time, however, I have established these important positions: first, that Zerobabel must have been the Messiah spoken of by the prophets. Secondly, that *Branch* and Zerobabel were names for the same person, according to Zachariah. Thirdly, that *Branch* and The Desire of all nations were *not* one and the same person.

The other prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah, also speak of some person under the title of *Branch*. Did all these prophets, greater and less, have reference to the same individual? *The christians say they did, and that that person was Jesus Christ.* I have already proved, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that the lesser alluded to Zerobabel. If the greater designated the same person by the same name that the lesser did, then they (Isaiah and Jeremiah) must have designated Zerobabel also.

I will here copy certain portions of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zachariah, that their coincidences may be the more manifest, and also for establishing the important position, that a great portion of the books of the former were written as late as the latter. Let the two chapters of Haggai be read in connexion with these extracts.

ISAIAH—CHAPTER XI.

1. And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

2. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord,

3. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.

4. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

5. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

6. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together: and a little child shall lead them.

7. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den.

9. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the

earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

10. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

11. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

12. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

13. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.

14. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them.

15. And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dry-shod.

16. And there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

CHAPTER XIV.

1. For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.

2. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place; and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

3. And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve.

CHAPTER XLIV.

24. Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;

25. That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish;

26. That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof:

27. That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers;

28. That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

CHAPTER XLV.

1. Thus saith the Lord to his annointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut:

2. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron.

3. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

4. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

CHAPTER XLIII.

1. But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

20. Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans; with a voice of singing declare ye tell this; utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob.

JEREMIAH—CHAPTER XXIII.

1. Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord.

2. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people, Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them; behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord.

3. And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

4. And I will set up shepherds over them, which shall feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord.

5. Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous BRANCH, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

6. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

7. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

8. But, The Lord liveth, which brought up, and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

ZACHARIAH—CHAPTER VI.

13. Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

13. And the crowns shall be to Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedajah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of the Lord.

15. And they that are afar off shall come and build the temple of the Lord; and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you. And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God.

CHAPTER IV.

5. Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my Lord.

6. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

7. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace, unto it.

8. Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

9. The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you.

10. For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord which run to and fro through the whole earth.

HAGGAI—CHAPTER I.

1. In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,

2. Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house shall be built.

3. Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying,

4. Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?

5. Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways.

6. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put into a bag with holes.

7. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways.

8. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.

9. Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of my house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.

10. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.

11. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

12. Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, (as the Lord their God had sent him,) and the people did fear before the Lord.

13. Then spake Haggai the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the Lord.

14. And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts their God.

15. In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the King.

CHAPTER II.

1. In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the Lord by the prophet Haggai, saying,

2. Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying,

3. Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

4. Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work; for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts.

5. According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

6. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;

7. And I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.

8. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.

9. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.

10. In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying,

11. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying,

12. If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.

13. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.

14. Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this

nation before me, saith the Lord, and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean.

15. And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord;

16. Since those days were, when one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten; when one came to the press-fat, for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty.

17. I smote you with blasting, and with mildew, and with hail, in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the Lord.

18. Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider it.

19. Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig-tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive-tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.

20. And again the word of the Lord came unto Haggai, in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying,

21. Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth;

22. And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.

23. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts.

“The Lord will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land.” This must have been written at least as late as the captivity, for it purports to be a prophecy of a return from an *existing* captivity. Isaiah could not have written this, for it was at least one hundred and seventy years from the time, his book says, he began to prophesy, to the captivity. He says he began in the days of Uzziah. Any one can make the calculation. See extract from Isaiah, on page 83.

“I am the Lord, that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited, thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built,” &c. See extract from Isaiah, on pages 83 and 4. Here the author again speaks of Jerusalem as being *then* uninhabited; and of the temple, as being *then* in ruins; and prophecies that the one *shall* be rebuilt, and that the foundations of the other *shall* be laid. This must have been written by some one after the commencement of the

captivity. For the reasons above, it could not have been written by Isaiah. Again: "Thus *saieth* the Lord to his *ANNOUNCED, Cyrus, whose right hand I *have* holden to subdue nations, and I *will* loose the loins of kings." Here the writer tells us what the Lord *had* done for Cyrus, and what he *would* do for him. Besides, this sentence is found in connexion with those in which Jerusalem and the temple are represented as being *then* in ruins. It must therefore have been written at or after the restoration.

Isaiah, therefore, could not have been the author. I know you tell the people, that this is a prophecy of the very existence of Cyrus. It purports to be only a prophecy of what a person, by the name of Cyrus, *then existing*, would do. Had it been a prediction of the reign or existence of a certain king who was to come, it would have been in a very different dress, something like this: "Thus the Lord *will* say to Cyrus who *shall* come," &c. It is most singular that your doctors will take such liberties. They would not pretend to take them in any other case. Who gave them the right to construe this book differently from any other? Should any historian hereafter assert, that Andrew Jackson was a great favorite of the people of the United States, and *had* been twice elected President by overwhelming majorities, do you believe that any one could be found, thereafter, of so much effrontery, as to assert that our historian was prophesying of an Andrew Jackson that was to appear one or two hundred years afterwards?

The divines lay hold of the expression in Isaiah, (XLV. 3.) "I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name," to convince their gaping auditors that Isaiah was predicting the birth and reign of Cyrus. That this was a common expression, indicative of favor or affection, see Isaiah, XLIII. 1. quoted on page 84.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the *second* time to recover the remnant of his people that shall be left, from Assyria and Egypt, &c. The *second* time. What *time* was this? To what does the writer allude? Undoubtedly to the coming of Ezra, who came with a great number of the Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem, after the first company, under Zerobabel and Joshua, had been there and finished the temple. This being admitted—and no other reasonable construction can be put upon this passage—it follows, that he had been previously speaking of the leader of the first company, under the title, or name of *Branch*, which was no other than Zerobabel. Compare the first ten verses of this II. Isaiah with Haggai and Zachariah, and all doubt that he had reference to Zerobabel will vanish. The spirit of the Lord, and the spirit of wisdom, the fear of the Lord, &c. were to rest on Isaiah's

**Christ* and *annointed* are synonymous. Cyrus was therefore a Christ, or one of the Lord's Christs.

Branch, and this *Branch* was to stand for an ensign, &c. Zachariah says, that his *Branch*, or Zerobabel, was to come, not by power, nor by might, but the Lord's spirit. The Lord was to make him a *signet*, because he had chosen him. He was also to build the temple, and bear the glory of it, and to sit and *rule* upon his *throne*, and to be a *priest* upon his throne, and the counsel of peace was to be between them both, that is, between the altar and the throne, or between himself and Joshua.

Jeremiah's *Branch* was also to be a king, and to execute justice and judgment. Judah was to be saved in his time. From what? Why, certainly, from the captivity, of which the writer had, in the preceding verses, been speaking. But the succeeding verses put it beyond all doubt, that the writer was speaking of the person who was to lead the Jews out of Babylon; for he says: "Therefore, behold the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth which brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt; but that the Lord liveth which brought up, and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the *north country*, (meaning the Babylonian empire.) Jeremiah's *Branch*, therefore, was to be this second Moses. We know that Zerobabel is said, by Ezra and others, to have been this rival of Moses; therefore, Jeremiah's *Branch* must have been Zachariah's and Haggai's Zerobabel, or *Branch*. Many more passages from all these prophets might be cited to prove these points, but these are sufficient for the ingenuous reader.

JEREMIAH—CHAPTER XXIV.

1. The Lord showed me, and, behold, two baskets of figs were set before the temple of the Lord, after that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakin, king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon.

2. One basket had very good figs, even like the figs that are first ripe: and the other basket had very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad.

3. Then said the Lord unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? and I said, Figs: the good figs, very good: and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.

4. Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

5. Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good.

6. For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them

again to this land; and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up.

7. And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

8. And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the Lord, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt;

9. And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt, and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them.

10. And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them, and to their fathers.

CHAPTER XXV.

1. The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakin the son of Josiah, king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon;

2. The which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying,

3. From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even unto this day, (that is the three and twentieth year,) the word of the Lord hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened.

4. And the Lord hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear.

5. They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the Lord hath given unto you, and to your fathers, for ever and ever:

6. And go not after other Gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no hurt.

7. Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the Lord, that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.

8. Therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, Because ye have not heard my words,

9. Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring

them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and a hissing, and perpetual desolation.

10. Moreover, I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle.

11. And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

12. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years 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 desolations.

13. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations.

14. For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands.

15. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me, Take the wine-cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it.

16. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them.

17. Then took I the cup at the Lord's hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the Lord had sent me:

18. To wit, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, a hissing, and a curse; (as it is this day;)

19. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people;

20. And all the mingled people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Azzah, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod,

21. Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon,

22. And all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the isles which are beyond the sea,

23. Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all that are in the utmost corners,

24. And all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert,

25. And all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes,

26. And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth:

27. Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.

28. And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thy hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Ye shall certainly drink.

29. For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts.

30. Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth.

31. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth: for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations; he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord.

32. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.

33. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.

34. Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersion are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel.

35. And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape.

36. A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and a howling of the principal of the flock, shall be heard: for the Lord hath spoiled their pasture.

37. And the peaceable habitations are cut down, because of the fierce anger of the Lord.

38. He hath forsaken his covert, as the lion: for their land is desolate, because of the fierceness of the oppressor, and because of his fierce anger.

CHAPTER VI.

Isaiah is by far the most unintelligible of all the greater prophets. There is such a confusion of persons and tenses, and such a total want of connexion between consecutive sentences, in the same chapter, that it is impossible in many, very many instances, to divine his meaning. I will refer the reader to a few. In the last verse of his 6th chapter, he says: "They (meaning the wizzards, or those who advised to consult them, no one can tell which,) shall look upon the earth, and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness; nevertheless, (continues the 9th chapter,) the dimness shall not be such as it was in her vexation, when, at the first, he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterwards did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations."

Next verse. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon these the light hath shined." Any connexion between this and the preceding?

But we will go to the next verse.

"Thou hast multiplied the nation, (what nation?) and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, (what, not increased the joy, and yet they rejoicing like the husbandman in harvest! they must have been very happy before they were increased,) and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil." Any connexion between this and the previous verse? Again, the next verse: "For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, (the school boy would ask, here, for the antecedent of this pronoun *his*,) and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian." What burden? what staff? what oppressor? and what connexion between a man, the burden of whose yoke has been broken, and the nation, whose joy has not been increased? Again, the next verse: "For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire." *For*, that is, *because*, the burden of his yoke, the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, have been broken, there is to be a terrible battle. Where is this battle to be fought? between whom, and for what cause? Again, the next verse:

"For unto *us* a child is born; unto *us* a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting father, the prince of peace." *For*,

that is, *because*, there was to be a most terrible battle, with burning and fuel of fire, a son was born, to be called, among other great Hebrew names, the *prince of peace*.

Now, I ask any honest man, if he can discover the least connexion whatever between these verses? Is it not evident, that some editor or compiler picked up scraps here and there, and, as the printers say, threw them into *pi*. Strange as it may seem, in this great obscurity, your doctors have discovered a future Christ, a saviour, a son of God, and God himself. I shall speak more particularly hereafter of this *son*, barely remarking, at this time, *that* he was the same son, or child, that is spoken of as to be born in the 7th chapter, the account of whose birth is given in the 8th; whose father was Isaiah himself, and whose mother was the prophetess, Isaiah's wife; *that us* means Isaiah and his wife; *that* he gave this boy some very extravagant or significant names, as he tells us he was wont to give such to all his children: "I and my children are for signs and for wonders;" *that* these names are not more wonderful than hundreds of other Hebrew names, such as Elias, signifying God the Lord, or the strong Lord; Eliphalet, God of deliverance; Elisha, salvation of God; Abimael, a father sent from God; Absalom, father of peace, and the like; and, finally, *that* the translators put these names, that Isaiah chose to give his boy, into English, in order to astonish the credulous and sluggish, and make them yield the point, that here was a God foretold, but which, had they, like other Hebrew names in the bible, been left in the original, would have excited no wonder at all. As a still further proof of this *pi* operation, many chapters of Isaiah and Jeremiah are historical, and some of them are exact copies of some of the chapters found in the historical books. Some of Jeremiah's chapters are biographical sketches of himself, written in the third person. The same verses are also found in different books of the prophecies.

A conclusive proof that Kings and Chronicles must, at least, have been edited, if not written by the same person, or if by two, at the same time, is, that each refers to the other. I could refer to a book already written, but the author of the supposed book could not refer to mine, which was not written.

I must pay more than a passing notice to the finding of the book of the law in the rubbish of the temple, by one of Josiah's scribes, which, we are told, had been lost for at least four or five hundred years. Josiah, and the whole nation of the Jews, were wholly ignorant of its contents; of course, there had been no book of the law for this great length of time among the Jews. It follows, also, that they never had but one. That a book which, we are asked to believe, was the very foundation of their national polity and religion, should have been lost, and nothing said about its loss in all

their previous history, is too wonderful to believe. That a people should have had but *one* copy of such book, is also past belief.

A majority of our people are fully persuaded, that, in the time of the Judges and Kings, the bible, just as we now have it, was read to the Jews in their synagogues every Sabbath day. If they will reflect but a moment, they will become convinced, that a great part of the bible could not possibly have been written at that early period. They should also be aware, that synagogues are not once mentioned in the old testament. These small temples, in which the law was taught, were first erected during the interval of five hundred years. The inner court of the temple was the only place at which a Jew was permitted to worship. Nehemiah, in his 8th chapter, says, that Ezra, and the other priests, caused the people to understand the book, by reading it to them every Sabbath day. No such practice of teaching existed before the captivity. They were *made to understand* the law; consequently, they were *ignorant* of it before. They were also told, by Nehemiah and Ezra, that the first day of the seventh month was holy unto the Lord, and that they must not weep nor mourn. "For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law." From all this it appears that these Jews, the whole body of them, knew nothing of one of their great feasts, until taught out of Ezra's book. Nehemiah expressly tells us, that the feast of tabernacles was wholly unknown to all these Jews, and had not been kept from the time of Joshua. How did Nehemiah know that it was kept in Joshua's day?

If there had been a written history of the Jews, from the time of Moses, till the restoration; such a history as Nehemiah intimates there was, in which this feast and the reason of its institution were found; or if they had had the law of Moses as we now find it; it is impossible to believe that this feast would have been discontinued for a single year: for, the same reasons that induced the Jews to hold this feast in Nehemiah's time, would have been in continual operation. The conclusion is, that no such history or law had existed among the Jews. This feast must have been instituted *then viz*, in the days of Nehemiah. How could he have known, I repeat, that this feast of tabernacles was held in Joshua's time? He must have learned it either from a written history or tradition. If there were either, then, as before argued, this feast could not have been discontinued for a single year. The same argument applies to the assertion of the author or authors of Kings and Chronicles, that *such* a passover as Josiah's had not been held since the days of the Judges. Truth cannot exist amidst such confusion.

It is fair to presume, that, if Nehemiah had given us an account of the assembling of the people on the fourteenth day of the first month, he would

have told us, that he and Ezra informed the chiefs of the fathers, the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, by reading, from the law, that that day was the feast of the *passover*; for there is no more reason why they should have *forgotten* one than the other. Both are found in the same chapter, in the pentateuch, and are said to have been instituted at the same time by Moses. Here is another strong argument that your feast of the passover was not uninterrupted. But I ask, if it be not wonderful, and past belief, that all the Jews, except Ezra and Nehemiah, should have totally forgotten any one of their great feasts during the seventy years captivity? Jeremiah, it is said, was corresponding with them. Daniel was with them during the whole term; for, it is said, he lived till the restoration. Many old men returned who had seen the first temple. Can it be believed, that all these fathers had forgotten their great feasts? If the people of these United States were to be taken captive over the rocky mountains, and kept there for seventy years; would those, who were but little boys when taken, forget the fourth of July, or what is called Sunday? No one can believe it, for a moment. The case supposed is in point. That a lone individual might, if taken when a child, and not suffered to hold any communication with any other individual of his nation, forget its institutions, I think is very probable; but that a whole people, who were suffered to hold, and did hold, communications with each other after their captivity, many of whom became dignitaries in the greatest empire of the globe, and one of their females an empress—the capitol of which empire was not more than one or two hundred miles from their own—should all but *two* forget their great feasts in the course of seventy years, is beyond belief.

The period that elapsed between the return of the Jews, under Zerobabel, and the birth of Christ, is remarkable for the following particulars in reference to the Jews:

First. The introduction of what is called synagogue worship on the Sabbath day.

Second. The division of this people into many bitter and opposing sects, two of which are mentioned by the writers of the new testament, viz: the Sadducees and Pharisees. The latter embraced a new doctrine not taught by any Jew before the captivity. I allude to the resurrection of the dead. You would make the people believe, that Christ was the first who taught this notion to his countrymen, when you know that his biographers expressly state, that there were Pharisees in Judea, when he commenced his ministry, and that they believed in the existence of Angels, and Spirits, and the resurrection of the dead. Now, of these two sects, you must confess, that the Sadducees must have been the one that followed what are said to be the institutions of Moses. These are denounced, by your own great

apostle, as carnal ordinances, and imperfect, because they did not teach this great Pharasaical or christian doctrine. The question then naturally arises, where, or from what source, the Pharisees derived this doctrine? Certainly not from these carnal institutions of Moses. Did God reveal it to any leading Pharisee? If so, who was he? when and where was this revelation made? This fact would have been as worthy of record as the appearance of God to Moses. But we have no such record. As they could not have derived it from the writings attributed to Moses, nor from those of the prophets; and as there is no pretence that it was directly revealed to any one of them, some one must have originated the notion, or they must have obtained it from the heathen philosophers. My promise is not to go out of the book to show its falsity; but I must be permitted to state, here, what every body believes: that the heathen philosophers, long before Christ, taught the immortality of the soul. I will further add, that there never existed a people, except the Jews, with whose history I am acquainted, that did not have some notion of a future existence, and who did not make it a principal item in their religious creed. I pronounce it proved, beyond cavil, that Christ was not the *first* to declare this doctrine to his countrymen.

Third. During this interval, the practice obtained of converting simple historical narrations, the mad ravings of some infuriated partisan, and snatches of old songs, into prophecies of some wonderful chief, who was to arise and govern the Jews, and conquer their enemies.

Fourth. During this period the Romans conquered Canaan, and made it one of their dependencies. At the birth of Christ, the king of the Jews was a descendant of Esau, the proscribed; so the scepter had departed from Judah, and gone over to a descendant of his abused uncle, before your Shiloh came. Herod, to whom I allude, was not an independent prince, but held his crown at the will of the Roman emperor.

That some of the Jews, while in captivity, might have anticipated, or rather hoped for, a restoration, is highly probable. That they might have corresponded on this subject, so important and interesting to them, and even written songs about it, is equally probable. That some bungler, after the restoration, collected extracts from these letters and songs, threw them into *pi*, and inserted *it* in a book, bearing the name of Isaiah, thus making him the author of what was written at least a century after his death, is almost *certain*. Every honest man, after a careful perusal of the writings of those called prophets, must be convinced, that all their songs were in reference to the restoration, which took place under Zerobabel and others. No *gentleman* will contend that these writers looked beyond their *then approaching* restoration; to *another* captivity and another restoration. It

is perfectly absurd to suppose, that the Jews, in the days of Zerobabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, were looking out for any great prince to lead them out of a captivity from which they had just returned, or from a captivity which they had been assured, or flattered themselves would never commence; and, if possible, still more absurd to suppose, that they were looking out for a prince who was to come and die before their final dispersion, and then come again, thousands of years after this dispersion, and lead them back to Jerusalem.

For some time anterior to the birth of Christ, the Jews were expecting this great Messiah. They must, therefore, have been in thralldom. If so, what becomes of the Shiloh prophecy? The sceptre was not to depart from Judah till he should come. The christians not knowing what else to do with it, reverse it so as to make it read, "Shiloh shall not come till the sceptre depart from Judah."

Had the Jews not been subjugated and brought under the Roman yoke, that is, had the sceptre not departed from Judah, they never would have dreamed that these prophecies had reference to any other Messiahs than those who led them out of Babylon. The christians laugh at them, because they are still expecting a Messiah. Why should they laugh? Are they not expecting him also? What is to be the object of his coming? Both answer, "To gather the Jews from all nations, and reign over them as a temporal king, in the land of their fathers."

The christians never could explain to me why they are compassing sea and land to convert the Jews to christianity, and thus to frustrate the prophecy touching their return to Palestine.

If the Jews pervert the prophecies by contending that a Messiah is yet to come for the *first* time, what shall we say of the christians who insist that he was here once, and will be here again, of which *second* appearance there is not even a hint in all their prophetic books.

I advise them both to read the writings of their prophets, and put that construction upon them, and only that which their words taken in their common acceptation will warrant, and thus become convinced, as the Jews were at the restoration, that those who had led them out of their captivity, such as Zerobabel and others, were the Messiahs and the only Messiahs to whom they had reference.

The reader will perceive that this chapter is somewhat of a salmagundi.

CHAPTER VII.

We are now prepared to introduce Jesus Christ more formally upon the stage. The first question to be asked and answered is: Who are the witnesses of the remarkable facts respecting him? The christians answer: "Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, and Jude." This is as far as they can go. They can enumerate no more. On the supposition that the books and letters, composing the volume of the new testament, were written by the persons whose names they bear, there are but Matthew, John, and Peter. It is not pretended that Mark was one of the immediate followers of Jesus. Luke tells us, expressly, he wrote from hearsay. Paul never saw Jesus Christ, but in a vision. James and Jude, if they were the brothers in blood of Jesus, were not his followers while living, if you credit Matthew and John. But call them all witnesses. Our business is to examine their testimony. I must here repeat, that nothing is to be presumed in favor of any one of them. You must not presume that they were inspired, for that is presuming the whole question. If you presume inspiration, you are bound to admit that all they have written is true.

We will begin with the book called the Gospel, according to St. Matthew, one of the biographies of Christ, written that men might believe that Jesus was what the book says he said he was. It is matter of indifference with me whether St. Matthew, one of the twelve immediate attendants on Christ, shall be determined to have been the author of this book. Truth, however, compels me to state, that its genuineness is very questionable. There is not the least hint or intimation given, throughout the whole of it, from which we can draw a conjecture as to its authorship. It is certainly very strange, that a man who had seen those numerous miracles, said to have been wrought by Christ, and who had witnessed his resurrection and ascension, should have written an account of them, and never even hint to us who he was, or that he was an eye or ear witness of all he wrote. John is the only one of the biographers that tells us he saw what he gave an account of. The author of this first book does not let us know when he wrote. We are told, but no ancient authority is given for the assertion, that this book was written in the year 64.

We have *modern* authority, in abundance, on this subject—some bishops contending for the year 36, others for 38, and others for 61. As to Mark, some contend for 63, some 64, others for 65, and others for no time;

that is, the subject is involved in so much doubt and difficulty, that they can fix upon no date. As to John, some contend for 67 and 8, and some for 97. Strange that the *date* of inspired writings should be lost.

Doctor Paley, in an elaborate work, entitled, "Evidences of Christianity," has brought forward (it is to be presumed) *all* the proof that exists in support of the genuineness of these books. It *all* amounts to this:

First. Clement of Alexandria, in Africa, in the year 194, wrote a book, in which he quotes a letter ascribed to Barnabas, which letter contains this passage: "Let us beware, lest it come upon us *as it is written*: There are many called, few chosen." Barnabas, to whom this letter is ascribed, is alleged to have been the companion of Paul. It is to be remarked, that this letter has no date, nor any thing upon its face, shewing that Barnabas was the author. "It purports," says Dr. Paley, "to have been written soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, during the calamities which followed that disaster; and it bears the character of the age to which it professes to belong."

The expression, "There are many called, few chosen," which this letter quotes from some book or writing then existing, is twice found in Matthew's gospel; therefore, argues Dr. Paley, the author, Barnabas, must have had reference to this gospel, and therefore this gospel was written before the letter. In order to arrive at his conclusion, the Doctor supposes, first, that Barnabas wrote the letter—the only proof of which is, that it was ascribed to him by Clement and other fathers; and, secondly, that it was written soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, because it purports to have been. Granting the Doctor all his premises: is he justified in his conclusion? This quotation from a certain writing, ("there are many called, few chosen,") is of six words only. It was, no doubt, a favorite expression, being pithy and antithetical. We have hundreds such in as many books at the present day. The expression, *as it is written*, is equivalent to ours, *as the saying is*. If I should, to-day, in a letter to a friend, write thus: "We are, as the saying is, *going the whole hog* for Harrison, in Kentucky," could any writer, hereafter, with the least propriety, argue that I had reference to a particular book that might fall into his hands, containing this favorite expression of the West?

I have, though contrary to my settled convictions, agreed to admit the genuineness of the gospels of the New Testament. We are now enquiring as to their *date*. This letter of Barnabas, it is admitted by the Doctor, was written *after* the destruction of Jerusalem. The writing to which it refers may also have been written *after*. It does not follow, because Barnabas wrote at some time, no one knows how long *after*, that the book, or writing to which he refers, was written *before* the destruction of Jerusalem.

Secondly. The Doctor avers, that one "Papias, a hearer of John, and companion of Polycarp, as Irenus attests, and of that age, as all agree, in a passage quoted by Eusebius, from a work now lost, expressly ascribes the respective gospels to Matthew and Mark, and in a manner which proves that these gospels must have publicly borne the names of these authors at that time, and probably long before." This Papias, in this lost letter, undertook to state from what source Mark collected materials for his book, viz: Peter's preaching, and that Matthew wrote in Hebrew. All which the Doctor doubts.

The reader will keep in mind that the question before us is, "At what time were the books written?" and not who were their authors.

We must, however, necessarily blend them a little. What, then, is this argument of the Doctor's? Papias was a hearer of John. Who says so? Irenus attests it. When did this father write? In the year 178. How, then, could he attest? He says nothing about this lost work ascribed to Papias. Who does? Eusebius. Who is Eusebius, and when *did* he write? He is the father who gives a most ridiculous correspondence between Christ and Abgarus, king of Edessa, which the Doctor argues is either a forgery on the part of Eusebius, or an interpolation upon him. He wrote in 315. Admitting that Papias did write a book, there is no proof, or even an insinuation, that he wrote *before* the destruction of Jerusalem; consequently, there is no proof arising, from his ascribing certain works to Matthew and Mark, that these works were written before this event.

Thirdly. One Hermas, the same Hermas (so the Doctor contends) mentioned by St. Paul, it is said, wrote a book, entitled, "The Shepherd of Hermas." Irenus quotes from it in 178. Its antiquity, says the Doctor, is therefore incontestable. We are also told, that, in this work of Hermas, there are *tacit* allusions to St. Matthew's, St. Luke's, and St. John's gospels. Grant all this, and more—grant that he makes *direct* allusions to them—the question *when* he wrote is not touched. (It has been mentioned before, that the siege of Jerusalem was about the year 70.)

Fourthly. Ignatius and Polycarp are said to have written epistles, in which are allusions to the books of the New Testament; but no one presumes to allege that they wrote before the destruction of Jerusalem. If there be any proof whatever extraneous of the New Testament, that any part of it was written before the memorable siege, I have never met with it. That most of the books were written but one or two years before, and one some twenty years after, is admitted by the most learned divines.

Alexander Campbell, who may properly be styled the champion of the cross of modern times, acknowledges that "much difficulty is found in settling, with chronological accuracy, the dates of the several books of the

new institution." "Matthew, for example," says Mr. Campbell, "is *said* to have written his testimony in Hebrew, in the year 38, and it is *said* to have been translated into Greek in the year 61. Now, *some* contend for the Greek as the original, and some for the Hebrew," &c.

Who *said* that Matthew wrote in this or that language? Let us have their names. We want to know on what authority they ground their assertions. Who are these *some* that are contending, and on what documents do they rely? They can have none that are satisfactory, or there would be no doubt, no difficulty, no perplexity on this important point. Just think of it for a moment. You have many books, said to have been written at the dictation of the Holy Spirit, and not one soul of you can determine, with certainty, when any one of them was written, or in what language. It is admitted that the original christians kept their books a secret to all but the initiated, just as the Thompsonians do their patent books at this day. Hence has arisen the great difficulty in fixing, with accuracy, their respective dates; and the more than rational conjecture, that no such books, as we have at present, existed in the first days of christianity. But you all contend that the three first Evangelists wrote before the siege of Jerusalem. Now, why? Because they make Christ predict its destruction. How fond you all are of miracles! You *will* believe that these books, the dates of which are involved in such great perplexity and doubt, were written before a particular event, in order that you may not be deprived of the pleasure of believing in a miracle. A miracle you will have. Did it never strike you, as passing strange, that these followers of Christ should have put off writing his history for thirty odd years after his ascension? Matthew is the only one who is alleged, by any divine, to have written before the year 63. Christ was crucified, you all say, in his 33d year. Had the christians no books during these thirty years? No doubt they had, but they were all rejected, and declared apocryphal by later christians, in council, and other books substituted.

There is one expression in Matthew's gospel, which proves, conclusively, that it was written after the destruction of Jerusalem. I allude to the 35th verse of his 23d chapter. It is in these words: "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."

Jesephus informs us, that a man, named Zacharias, the son of Barachias, was thus slain, during the siege of Jerusalem, by the Romans. His account is as follows:

"And now these zealots and Idumeans were quite weary of barely killing, so they had the impudence of setting up fictitious tribunals for that

purpose; and as they intended to have Zacharias, the son of *Baruch, one of the most eminent citizens, slain." Then, after giving an account of his mock trial, Josephus adds: "So two of the boldest fell upon Zacharias, in the middle of the temple, and slew him." You may contend that Jesus, in this verse, (for Matthew tells us it was his language) alluded to Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada, who, according to 2d Kings, 24. 21. was slain in the court of the house of the Lord. Grant it; and grant that Matthew, through inadvertence, misquoted him, yet, how will you account for his stumbling on the name of *Barachias*? Grant that there were two Zacharias slain in the court of the temple, one some hundreds of years before the other—the first, the son of Jehoiada; the latter, the son of Barachias; and that Christ alluded to the former, the question still recurs, How came Matthew to stumble upon the name of the father of the latter? His giving us the true name of the father of the latter, admitting a misquotation on his part, is proof conclusive, that the latter incident was familiar to him. Conclusive, I say, unless you can shew that Jehoiada and Barachias were synonymous.

I shall now proceed to examine this book, and all the others of the New Testament, on the supposition that the authors were the very persons spoken of in the volume, under the names of Matthew, or Levi, the publican; John Mark, Luke, the beloved physician; Saul of Tarsus; John, the son of Zebedee; Simon Peter, James, and Jude, the brothers of Jesus, or the sons of Alpheus. I do not wish to be understood, here, as asserting, that the brothers of Jesus, and the sons of Alpheus, were the same persons; but I mean to say, the christians may determine whether they shall be the one or the other. Matthew begins his account, by giving us the genealogy of a certain person by the name of Joseph, a carpenter, it is said of Galilee, a district of Judea. The country, formerly inhabited by Jews and Israelites, is sometimes called the land of Canaan; sometimes the Holy Land; sometimes Palestine; and sometimes Judea, though, originally, that part of it allotted to Judah, was called Judah, or Judea. It lies on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, and is about one-fourth as large as Tennessee. Galilee was one of its northernmost districts. Nazareth, the town where this Joseph is said, by Luke, to have lived previous to the birth of Christ, is about fifty miles north of Jerusalem. I have already remarked, that Egypt is but one or two hundred miles from the latter city.

That this Joseph had a genealogy, is certain. That he might have descended from Judah, through Solomon, may or may not be true. It is a matter I shall not labor. But why state this man's pedigree? Why wish

* Baruch for Barachias, as John for Johannis, and Roman for Romanos, &c. &c.

to shew that he descended from Judah? Matthew no where tells, nor does he intimate the reason why he gave this genealogy. As there appears to be no connexion between it and the subsequent narrative, it is suggested, whether it be not an interpolation.

If Matthew wrote it, his object, you say, was to prove that Christ descended from Judah. A most singular inference this; as, in the verse following the genealogy, he expressly informs us that Joseph was not the father of Jesus. You might, with the same propriety, have made the same inference, had he given the genealogy of Joseph of Arithmathea, or Gama-liel. It is immaterial to the inquiry respecting Christ's descent, what this or any other Joseph's genealogy was, unless you prove him the father of Jesus. But, you say, Luke shows that Mary, the mother of Jesus, descended from Judah, through David. I deny it. But granting, for a moment, that he does. Did Matthew and Luke write in concert? You deny this. We are now inquiring whether *Matthew* has shewn, or attempted to shew, that Christ descended from Judah. You must admit that he has done neither, but, on the contrary, has asserted, that he did *not* descend from Judah, on the side of his father. What Luke may have written, cannot affect this question, especially as you all contend that Matthew wrote first. The conclusion is, that this follower, and inspired apostle of Christ, has given us a long pedigree of an obscure individual, without an object; or that some ignorant zealot has supplied this book with its present preface. Nothing has ever surprised me more than the assertions of your learned doctors, that Luke has given the genealogy of Christ on the maternal side. He commences it in these words: "And Jesus began to be about thirty years old, being, as was supposed, the *son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli, which was the son, &c.*; and so it continues, *son* all the way through. Not a female is mentioned in any part of it. I believe some of your bishops pretend to know all about the family of Mary and Joseph, and to give the reasons why Joseph could be called the son of two fathers; for Matthew says he was the son of *Jacob*. If they pretend to know more about these persons than can be learned from the Evangelists, let them shew from what source they gathered this information. We want to know book and page. If they tell us this or that father wrote all about it, then we shall ask, how he knew? If you will believe the different sectarians, each of these fathers must have been the father of many lies.

If Joseph was not his father, we are naturally led to ask, who was? Matthew and Luke both inform us, that no man was his father. The question, who or what begat him, is not yet answered. These writers inform us, that something, or somebody they call the Holy Ghost, begat him. Admitting that we can conceive of the Holy Ghost, let me put the plain

question, which any man, woman, or child, can decide as well as a Newton or a Locke, a Voltaire, or a Volney. Let me put it to every individual of my country, Would you believe any woman of your acquaintance—she may be a married woman, for whom it would be no disgrace to be found with child—she may be one of the most exemplary and truth-telling women in the circle of your acquaintance—I ask, would you believe this woman, should she come into one of your courts of justice, and make oath that she was with child, without the aid of a man, but by the Holy Ghost? I am bold to affirm, you would not. No, you would not believe her, even if her neighbors and husband should swear that they saw the Holy Ghost overshadowing her. Why, then, will you believe this man, Matthew, who does not even condescend to tell us that Mary told him what he states. He avers that Joseph had a dream, which confirmed him that his wife's tale was true; but this Evangelist does not tell us that Joseph related to him this dream. Mary is the only human being who could testify, knowingly, in this matter; and we have not even her *hearsay* testimony. Matthew roundly asserts the fact, but does not tell us how he acquired his information. Such testimony, from the most respectable man in our community, would not send a notorious offender to the pillory. Let this witness state, in general terms only: "The prisoner at the bar stole the money," and refuse to state further, and no jurors would convict. They would desire to ask the witness, how he knew? whether the prisoner had confessed the theft to him? whether he saw him take the money, or had seen it in his possession, knowing it to be the stolen money?

Matthew goes into none of these particulars. You have not the direct, or even the *hearsay* testimony, of the only person (the mother) who could testify, knowingly, to the fact. She would have been an interested witness, had she been introduced. The desire to wipe out the disgrace, and purge the crime of fornication, or adultery, would have gone far to discredit her testimony before any jury, even if her tale had not been miraculous. Yet you will believe Matthew's round and sweeping assertion of a miracle, and, at the same time, confess that you would not believe the sworn allegation of your most respectable matron, embracing the particulars of a similar miracle, even if supported by the oaths of her husband and friends, all equally respectable. Now, let us hear you reason on these cases. In the case supposed, you would say: I can hardly bring myself to believe that Madam ——, who has uniformly supported a spotless reputation, would wilfully perjure herself—she is no doubt deceived—probably there has been some temporary alienation of mind; and, while in this situation, she may have had the address to impose upon her husband and friends; and what she merely *fancied*, she now *alleges* as fact. Yet, rather than believe that she

is pregnant by the Holy Ghost, I will set her husband and friends down as perjured wretches." We will now attend to your argument in the case before us. "The prophets (say you) foretold just such a personage hundreds of years before he made his appearance." Grant that they did assert, that just such a person, as described by the Evangelists, was to appear, and at the very time that they said he did appear; that he was to be begotten just as they say he was begotten; that he was to be born just as they say he was born; and that he was to be crucified, rise from the dead, and ascend to heaven, just as they say he did; yet these prophets saying so, does not prove it was so. Their saying that a person should be begotten by the Holy Ghost, suffer under Pontius Pilate, be crucified, dead and buried, and rise and ascend to heaven, did not prove, or have the least tendency to prove, that these facts would happen; nor can their assertions be now quoted to prove that they have happened. I have labored this point before. You will recollect the case put, by way of illustration, of my growing fifty feet high. You continue: "God made Abraham his favorite, and determined that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. This grace, or partiality, descended to Isaac, from Isaac to Jacob, and from Jacob to Judah, from whom this seed, or the Saviour, Jesus Christ, was to trace his descent, through David." Grant that Moses, and other writers of the old testament, expressly say all this, which I deny, the question arises, from what source these authors acquired their information. Who told Moses, for instance, that God appeared to Abraham so frequently, and talked so much and so familiarly? This question you cannot answer to your own satisfaction, for Moses is silent upon it. You *conjecture* that God communicated to him all the facts which he has recorded. Grant that Moses so asserts—will you believe him?

This is a question precisely similar to the one now before us; and I have, as I think, incontrovertibly shown, that if you would not believe any individual of the present day, some Catholic priest, a Joe Smith, a Matthias, or (if you please) the most respectable man in community, should he assert that God appeared and talked to him, you cannot believe Moses. I refer you to the argument in chapter I. As a last resort, you say: "Matthew was inspired. Why, he was one of the apostles of Jesus Christ! Who was the Son of God? and who gave his apostles his holy spirit, soon after leaving the world, that they might testify of him, and establish his holy religion? I will believe God before I will man," &c. The argument is closed, the debate at an end. You have settled the question at once, by taking for granted, the whole matter in controversy. I have frequently protested against this circular mode of argument. Still, I wish to advert to certain expressions which are familiar with you christians, such as God's

testimony, and holy religion. You have liberty to use these to each other; but it is an insult to an infidel to use them when in controversy with him. You might talk about God's testimony, if he had ever spoken to you; but, as he never has, you can only arrive at this testimony through the testimony of man. If you believe Moses, for instance, you may be said to have the testimony of God; for Moses tells us what God said to him; that is, you believe the testimony of Moses, a man, and, through this, you arrive at the testimony of God. Yet, how often do we hear your divines, in what they choose to call their sacred desks, exclaim, "Oh, ye vile infidels, who will neither believe the testimony of man nor of God," when they know full well, that all their pretended testimony of *God* is obtained from, or contained in, the writings of certain *men*. Your terms, *sacred, holy, pure, and good*, when applied to your religion, are so many *petitio principii*. You say to the infidel: "Why do you wish to overthrow our *holy* religion?" His answer ought to be: "If your religion be holy, by which, you mean, true and pure, I would not raise a finger for its destruction." Your children, from their infancy, have been compelled to associate the ideas of goodness purity, and holiness, with your religion; so that, to make war upon it, strikes them with horror, as much so as to make war upon chastity, sobriety, honesty, and fair dealing. But Christ, you say, gave his apostles his holy spirit. Who told you so? Why, one of the men who states the fact now under discussion. Here, then, is your circle: "Matthew and Luke say, that Mary was gotten with child by the Holy Ghost. This allegation, although of a miracle, should be believed, because Christ gave his holy spirit to these apostles, and the first converts. It was a spirit of truth; they, therefore, could speak nothing but truth." When asked, how you became convinced of *this* miracle, viz: the gift of this holy spirit to the apostles, you reply: "Oh, Luke told us so in his book of Acts." A witness, according to this mode of reasoning, establishes his claim to your faith, in his narration of one miracle, by relating another. You can, therefore, give no good reason why Matthew's statement should be believed, that cannot be given for any similar one made at the present day; or you can give no good reason why our supposed lady's statement should be disbelieved, that will not apply, with much greater force, to Matthew's.

But Matthew quotes a prophecy, in point, to prove his statement. I have more than once stated, and proved, that a prophecy cannot prove a fact; and will now prove, that the citation of *this* prophecy, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive," &c. so far from supporting, throws distrust upon his whole book. This prophecy is found in the 7th chapter of Isaiah. In order to understand it, we must ascertain under what circumstances, and to whom, it was delivered. It appears to have been spoken to Ahaz, then

king of the Jews. The neighboring kings of Israel and Syria were about to make war upon him. The Jewish kings were in the habit of consulting their prophets, as other kings were their oracles, when about to embark in any important enterprise, or be involved in any serious difficulties. Ahaz, not having much confidence in Isaiah, neglected, or refused to consult him. Isaiah forces himself upon the king, and tells him he shall have a sign, and then delivers the passage quoted by Matthew: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a child, and shall call his name Immanuel: butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good; for before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be deprived of both her kings." And *this* you call a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

In the first place, I will remark, that the Hebrew word, translated *virgin*, is properly rendered *matron*, or *woman*, in more instances in the bible, than *virgin*.* That it should be so rendered here, I will show presently. But even admitting that *virgin* is the proper rendering, does the expression, "a virgin shall conceive," convey the idea of a miraculous conception? that she should remain a virgin after conception? that she should not lose her virginity, in the act of conception? If I should say, that this or that young virgin shall conceive and bear a son in the course of two years, would any one understand me as asserting that she would be visited by the Holy Ghost? Would not all understand me as asserting that she would be married, and conceive in the usual way? Should I assert that some honest man would steal, and be sent to the penitentiary, in the course of a year, would I not be understood as asserting, that he who had previously sustained the character of an honest man, would be guilty of a dishonest act? Could I be understood as asserting that he would be honest after his theft, or that he would not lose his character for honesty, by the act of theft? It is a gross perversion of the text of Isaiah, to say, that he alluded to a miraculous conception. Again: This child was to be born, but not to be old enough to refuse the evil and choose the good—to tell butter from honey—before these two kings of Israel and Syria were to be overthrown. All which must have happened in the course of one or two years; for Pekah, one of these kings—the king of Israel—reigned but twenty years, and, in the 17th year of his reign, Ahaz began to reign in Judah. This invasion happened, therefore, during the last three years of Pekah's life. He was slain by Hosea. Ahaz sent to the king of Assyria for assistance, who came and slew Rezin, the other of these kings. At what particular time, we are not informed. But Ahaz is represented as sending for assist-

* For this assertion I depend upon the declaration of those who understand the Hebrew.

ance immediately on being informed of the meditated invasion; and the king of Assyria is represented as going with his army, immediately on receiving the invitation, to Damascus, the capitol of Syria, and slaying the king, Rezin.

The Hebrew scholars tell us, that the proper translation of the passage is, "Behold, a woman has conceived," in the past tense, and not in the future, *shall conceive*. A comparison of this verse with the first four of the next chapter, will satisfy us that the present translation must be incorrect. It is admitted, on all hands, that the prophet is speaking of this same child in the first part of the 8th chapter. He says, he took witnesses to record. To record what? Not the act of conception. No one will contend for this; but to record the birth of the child. Who was its mother? We are here informed it was the prophetess. It now reads thus: "And I went unto the prophetess, and she conceived and bare a child; then said the Lord unto me, call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz; for before the child shall have knowledge to cry, my father and my mother, the riches of Damascus, and the spoil of Samaria, shall be taken away before the king of Assyria." The prophet could not have intended to say, that she conceived and brought forth the same hour. One thing is certain, he tells us the child was born. We are therefore bound, in charity, to say, that here is also a mis-translation, as it makes the conception and birth simultaneous. It should no doubt be thus: "And I went unto the prophetess, who *had* conceived, and was now being delivered of a son."* We have the child born, however, under any translation. The prediction is therefore accomplished, and not to be fulfilled, in the birth of Jesus Christ.

But you say, the mother was to call the child Immanuel. She may have done so. Isaiah has told us nothing to the contrary. He says, the Lord told *him* to call it Maher-shalal-hash-baz. Mary may have called her son Immanuel. It would have been very easy for her to have done so, and just as easy for Matthew to have said she did; but he has not told us so. I merely give it as my opinion, that Immanuel was a title given to the reigning king, whoever he might have been, for the reason that Isaiah concludes his address to Ahaz, (see VIII. 8. Isaiah) with the exclamation: "O Immanuel." "His wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, Oh Immanuel." God had been the temporal monarch of the Jews. A king, therefore, was in the place of God, or God with them. The prophet tells us, in the next chapter, that he intends to give this child five or six more wonderful names, as his children were to be for signs and wonders; but we

* Let these two verses be thus translated, and they will harmonize.

never hear any thing more of them. Probably he was disappointed, as many other fathers have been.

Now, I ask all honest, truth-loving men, if he could have been one, who attempted to torture this passage of Isaiah into a prophecy of Jesus Christ?

In Matthew's second chapter, he proceeds to tell us, that Christ was born in Bethlehem, the birth place of David, a village six or seven miles south of Jerusalem; that certain Magi, from some eastern country, came to see him, having been led by a star; that Joseph and Mary, being apprehensive that Herod the Great would destroy their child if they should remain at Bethlehem, went into Egypt, and remained there till Herod's death; that, on receiving news of his death, they started to return, and having come into the land of Israel, (probably that part allotted to Simeon) they heard that Archelaus, the son of Herod, had succeeded him; and fearing him, they dared not go into the Canton of Judah, from which they departed, but went around another way, probably along the shore of the Mediterranean, and came to the city of Nazareth, in Galilee. The last verse of this chapter is in these words: "And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene."

Let the whole chapter be read. I contend, that, in this chapter, Matthew gives us to understand, that Joseph and Mary lived in Bethlehem previous to the birth of Christ. This is the fair, and the only construction. The city of Nazareth is not mentioned till the last verse; and the expression, "a city *called* Nazareth," shews, clearly, that it was a strange city to Joseph and his wife. This author speaks of the birth as being at Bethlehem—does not intimate that they were on a visit, or that Bethlehem was not their place of residence. Why did they go to Egypt first, instead of Nazareth, their alleged home, at which place they could have been safe? for they went there afterwards, instead of returning to Egypt. To what place in Canaan would they have returned, had they not heard of Archelaus' reigning? Evidently to Bethlehem. But hearing this news, they changed their course. It is manifest, therefore, that Nazareth was not the place for which they had originally started from Egypt. Again. It is evident that Jesus had never been in Nazareth, before he was carried there, on this return from Egypt. It is further manifest, that he was not entitled to the appellation, or epitheton, of Nazarene, before he was taken there on this return. In short, it was, according to Matthew, by virtue of his parents going there with him at *this* time, and nothing else, that he became entitled to this appellation. If the settlement, or domicil of his parents had been at Nazareth, previous to, and at the time of his birth, he would

have been born a Nazarene, notwithstanding his birth might have happened at Bethlehem, where his mother was upon a visit.

Now for Luke's account. He tells us, expressly, that the place of residence of these parents was Nazareth, before, and at the time of the birth of Jesus; that Mary was at Bethlehem, on a special business, (to be enrolled) when taken in labor; that, at eight days old, the child was circumcised, (at Bethlehem, probably;) at thirty or forty days old, it was taken to the temple at Jerusalem, to be done with according to the law; and that, after the due performance of the proper ceremonies, the parents took the child to Nazareth. According to Luke, then, the child was born a Nazarene. This trip from Jerusalem, direct to Nazareth, must have been the first one the parents made to the latter city after the birth of their son. It could not have been the one detailed by Matthew, for that was from Egypt. Yet Matthew gives us to understand, as plainly as if he had said it in so many words, that the arrival at Nazareth, spoken of by him, was the first after the birth of the child. According to Luke, the journey to Egypt could not have been made until after the return to Nazareth from Jerusalem. If, therefore, the child's being carried to Nazareth gave it the appellation of Nazarene, it must have had it before it was carried there from Egypt, which, Matthew says, conferred it upon him. As it is plain, from Luke, that the journey to Egypt, if ever made, must have been after the return to Nazareth, I ask you to find a place in Luke's account, where you can wedge in this trip to Egypt.

He says that Mary was delivered in a manger. Matthew says, the Magi found her in a house. Luke says, the parents took the child to the temple, directly in the face of Herod's court, where the old prophet and prophetess, before some of the people, declared him to be a light to the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel, and spoke of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Yet Herod's jealousies were not aroused, nor fears excited. Matthew says, that his fears were so great, that he put to death all the children under two years old, at Bethlehem and its neighborhood, hoping to include, among his victims, this future king.

These I call discrepancies—contradictions. "Oh, no," say your doctors, "they are not; for it is *possible* that the child may have been carried to Egypt after it was taken to Nazareth. Mary *may* have been on a visit to Bethlehem, where the wise men came to visit the child, after this first return to her own city, at which time she *may* have been in a house. Herod *may* never have heard of the child till this second supposed visit of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. Matthew *may* have known that they lived in Nazareth, notwithstanding he speaks of their going to a place *called* Nazareth. He does not say, *directly*, that they did *not* live there."

I have already said, that mathematical certainty was not to be required of us. Probabilities, and probabilities only, are what we expect to arrive at in all our researches of this nature. I ask, then, if it is *probable*, that the child was carried to Egypt after it was taken to Nazareth? Is it probable that Mary was on a visit? Is it probable that such a massacre could have taken place, for the causes alleged by Matthew, and Luke not have mentioned it? Is it *probable*, that what both these authors say is true?

Let the first two chapters of Matthew, and the first three of Luke, be read. It will be perceived, that Luke says not a word about the heathen philosophers, called the wise men by our translators—not a word about the flight to Egypt, or the Bethlehem massacre, but does say, expressly, that Joseph's residence was at Nazareth, at and previous to the birth of Christ.

I have not yet defined a miracle, but will do so in some future chapter. It is admitted, by all of you, that a miracle is never wrought except to answer some great and important purpose.

Only Matthew and Luke give an account of the conception, birth, and infancy of Christ. The star that conducted the wise men, also the dreams they and Joseph had, in which they were directed to return home another way, and *he* to fly to Egypt—the appearance of the Angel to Mary—the commotion among the Angels, and their information to the shepherds—the inspiration of Simeon and Anna—and, lastly, the conception itself, I shall call miracles. Let me, in passing, remark here, that they are related by men who could not have witnessed any one of them. Luke says he writes from hearsay; but Matthew does not condescend to tell us that. We are naturally led, after reading the account of these prodigies attending the conception, birth, and infancy of Christ, to ask: "For what purpose were all these!" And the answer would naturally be: "To enable Christ to establish his pretensions." What must be our surprise, after reading his whole history, to find that, in no one instance, does he allude to any one of them during his ministry; nor does he once assert that Mary was his mother, or that he was begotten by the Holy Ghost, although he was called upon frequently to establish his pretensions.

Had these wise men visited Herod's court, having been led there by a star—had the birth of the child excited so much interest in the capitol, as that the learned Jews were consulted as to the birth place of the Christ—had Herod been so thoroughly convinced, that Jesus was the Christ, or so alarmed under the apprehension, that he, or his friends for him, might make claim to the crown, as to have perpetrated the most wanton and cruel butchery found in the annals of any people—had Simeon and Anna taken up the infant, and publicly declared, in the temple, that he was the long

looked for Prince—had these Magi worshipped the child at Bethlehem, and presented the mother with gold, frankincense, and myrrh—had the shepherds called at the stable, and returned home, telling all their acquaintances what they had seen, having informed them previously of what the Angel said they would see—had Jesus been taken to Egypt for the reasons alleged—and, finally, had he, when a lad of twelve years old, conversed with the learned doctors in the temple, and exhibited a maturity and strength of mind that astonished them—if all these things had happened, as detailed by these writers, is it not probable, that he would have alluded to some one of them, when hard pressed to prove that he was some wonderful personage? Yet he never does allude to, or rely upon, one of them. These miracles were, therefore, all for nothing. To be serious. Is it *probable* they ever happened? If what these authors state be true, Christ had every thing cut and dried to his hand. There was no need of a harbinger to clear the way, and make ready a people prepared for him. He had only to identify himself, which he certainly could have easily done, especially among that people, who were so particular in the registration of births, as that an obscure carpenter could trace his descent regularly up to Adam. When those stubborn and stiff-necked Jews refused to believe in him, notwithstanding the miracles he was said to be daily exhibiting before them, instead of appealing to them alone, (the miracles) he could have appealed to facts which must have once astonished the court of Jerusalem, and even the court of Rome, (I allude to the visit of the wise men and the Bethlehem massacre,) facts which must have been announced, and well known in farther India—facts which, for the previous thirty years, must have been the favorite theme of conversation among the shepherds of Judea. He could have said: “You must recollect the visit of the Magi, and its object. I am the person whom, guided by the miraculous star, they came to worship. For what did Herod slaughter the innocents of Bethlehem, but to include him, who was born king of the Jews, among the victims? I am that person. Did not old Simeon and Anna take up a child, and declare to you all, that in him was the redemption of Israel? I am he. But eighteen years ago, your learned doctors were amazed at the wonderful precosity of a young lad, about twelve years old. You behold him in me. Your shepherds have whiled away many an hour on the hill side, in reciting and listening to tales told them by their fathers concerning a child, whose birth was announced to them by numerous hosts of Angels. I am he, whose birth caused such joy to these heavenly beings.” No such appeals as these were made.

It is rational to suppose, aye, and it is more than probable, that these wise men, on their return home, would have told their countrymen all they

saw and did in Judea; and how the star, after having lost its way, went straight along the great public road to Bethlehem, according to the directions of Herod's learned men. It is more than probable, also, that the star, and the object of its appearance, would have been known throughout the Indies, and not have been forgotten for centuries; yet we do not hear that the first missionaries found a people there prepared for the Lord; and our missionaries of this day report to their patrons, that these Indians are still obdurate. Jesus need not have made these appeals. The people would have put these questions to him. They would have made them the test by which to determine the pretensions of those Messiahs that were springing up, in that day, like mushrooms, throughout Judea. They must have been fully convinced, if Matthew is to be believed, that the Messiah had been born. Identification was all they required.

Is it to be supposed, that a person, whose star drew the Magi from their far homes, and the annunciation of whose birth caused that unprecedented butchery, could have remained unknown, and lived in obscurity, till thirty years old? After reminding the reader that no author, *sacred* or *profane*, except Matthew, has ever alluded to this visit of the wise men, or the Bethlehem massacre, I shall leave it with him to determine upon the credibility of this writer.

We will now compare the first chapters of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, with John's. The former tell us that Christ, immediately after his baptism, was taken into the wilderness, and there tempted, by the Devil, for forty days; and that, *after* John the Baptist was put in prison, he went to Galilee, and commenced his ministry, and, soon after, began to call his twelve disciples. John commences his narrative, by telling us what John the Baptist testified. He states, that the next day after the Baptist's interview with the Pharisees, who had been sent to ask him by what authority he baptized, he said to some of the people who were assembled at Bethabara, on seeing Jesus, that he was the Lamb of God; that he knew him to be such, because he saw the spirit of God descending upon him, by which sign, he who sent him to baptize, told him he might know him. And the next day, this John the Baptist, standing with two of his disciples, saw Jesus, and told them he was the Lamb of God, by which they were induced to follow him. One of these was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. Andrew immediately leaves John to follow Jesus, and finds his brother, the famous Peter, and induces him to become a disciple of Jesus also. The next day, Jesus, after calling one or two more disciples, started for home. It will be remarked, that all this calling was at Bethabara, a place at least forty miles from the sea of Tiberias.

After this, that is, after his return to Galilee, he went with his mother,

brothers, and disciples, to Capernaum, stayed there a few days, and went to Jerusalem—remained there during the great feast, and then went into the country with his disciples, and tarried and baptized. At which time, John the Baptist was baptising near Salim, “*for he was not yet cast into prison.*” Where, in the book of John the Evangelist, can you crowd in the forty days’ temptation? You may answer, that he does not say when Jesus was baptized; but that when the Baptist pointed him out to the people, he spoke of his baptism in the past tense, and, therefore, Jesus might have been on his return from the wilderness when the circumstances here detailed occurred. Here you are met by the fact, that Jesus, according to the first three, did not leave the wilderness to go to Galilee, nor call a disciple, until John the Baptist, his cousin, was in prison. John the Evangelist, therefore, takes him and his disciples to Galilee, where he converts water into wine, at a wedding; thence to Capernaum; thence to Jerusalem; and thence to the place of his baptising, during the time that the other biographers keep him in the woods. How will you get along with this? Again. Mark says, *expressly*, that Jesus did not go into Galilee till *after* John was put in prison. John the Evangelist says, that Jesus went to Galilee, Capernaum, and Jerusalem, and to his baptising place, *before* John the Baptist was in prison. Here is a technical contradiction. Again. The three first say, that Andrew and Peter were called, while fishing on the sea of Tiberias. John says, they were called at Bethabara, at least forty miles from that sea. How are all these discrepancies to be reconciled?

I will here observe, that Andrew’s, having previously been the disciple of John, appears to pass unnoticed by you all, as well as the fact, that Jesus baptized, which is twice positively asserted by John in his 3d chapter, and denied but once, (in the fourth) and that denial in a parenthesis, a mark, at least, of its being an interpolation. I have never heard any of your divines preach from either of these passages. Some father, no doubt, finding it difficult to explain why, and in what name, Jesus baptized, made this interpolation, by which this baptism was put on the disciples, but which you find as difficult to explain as Christ’s.

Luke tells us, that Jesus was the last man baptized by John at Bethabara. If so, he could not have been on his return (as your bishops allege) from the temptation, when John pointed him out to Andrew and others; for he did not go into the wilderness till after his baptism; and it is idle to suppose that John remained forty days at Bethabara, with a great crowd, doing nothing. I assure you, it is impossible to find a place for this forty days’ temptation in John’s book.

CHAPTER VIII.

According to Luke, an angel of God, by the name of Gabriel, a celestial being, one not having his habitation on this earth, visited Mary and told her what should happen to her, viz. that the Holy Spirit, another heavenly being, whether God or not is a question yet moved by the sectarians, should overshadow her and cause her to conceive, and that the holy thing or person to be born of her, should be called the son of God; that he should be great and be called the son of the highest; that the Lord God should give him the throne of his father David, and that she was in high favor with Deity, and should be blessed among women.

He also tells us that she did conceive (be it unto me according to thy word,) by the Holy Ghost; that, after this conception, she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, about whose conception the angel had informed her, and whose fetus leaped in her womb at the sound of Mary's voice; that these cousins compared notes, and spoke of the future greatness of their sons, especially of Mary's. The circumstances attending the birth and infancy of this child, have been already noticed. Now, I ask, if it be *possible*, not *probable*, but *possible*, that a mother, who knew that the spirit of God had overshadowed her and gotten her with child—a mother, who was told by this angel of God, that the child, thus begotten, should be called the son of the highest, and rule over the house of Jacob forever—a mother, who felt assured, that through this son, all generations would call her blessed—a mother, the birth of whose son, was announced by angels to the shepherds of Judea, and by a wonderful star to the eastern Magi, all of whom visited her at her accouchment—a mother, whose husband was directed by deity, to take her and her son to Egypt, to preserve it from the fury of Herod—a mother, whose son was declared in its infancy, by the inspired Simeon and Anna, what the angel told her he should be; I say, is it *possible*, that a mother *knowing*, not *believing*, but *knowing* that her son was begotten by God, or his spirit; *knowing* that God's angel, the mighty Gabriel, had told her that he would be literally the son of God; could for a single moment of her life, reject his pretensions or deny his assertions, that he *was* this son of God.

Could she, for any moment of her life, treat him or speak of him with disrespect, or call him a madman; however extravagant his pretensions, or wild his conduct might appear to every other person of sane mind? She

knew, that he was, in a peculiar manner, the son of God. She could not therefore scoff at his pretensions to this sonship.

That Mary according to these same evangelists, and one other, did disbelieve in him, mock at his pretensions and feel scandalized at his career, I now proceed to prove.

Matthew, in his 13th chapter, tells us that Jesus, having been treated rather cavalierly at his native city, made this observartion: "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country and in his own *house*" (or family,). Mark makes him say; "A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own *kin*, and in his own *house*" (or family,); that is, he was not esteemed or honored or believed in, in his own city, among his own kindred, in his own family. You may say, that no one of these expressions necessarily includes the mother. That the brothers were included is certain; for John expressly says that his brethren did *not* believe in him. It is probable, therefore, that by the words *kin* and *house* or family, Mark intended to include his mother. I will now show, that it is certain he so intended.

Matthew, Mark and Luke, all tell us, that on a certain occasion, his mother and brothers came to a house filled with a crowd, listening to him. It was told to him, by one of his auditors, that his mother and brethren were without, desiring to speak to him; and that he, instead of sending them a civil answer back, said unto him who told: "Who is my mother and who are my brethren;" and then extending his hands towards his *disciples*, said: "Behold my mother and my brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of my father, which is in heaven, the same is my brother, my sister, and mother." This is Matthews' version. Luke says they could not *get at him* for the crowd or press, and that his answer to the person who told him that his mother and brethren were without and wished to speak with him, was in these words: "My mother and brethren, are *these*, (to wit. his disciples, who were listening to him,) which hear the word of God, and do it." That is, "those out of doors, there, are not my mother and brothers, because they do not acknowledge that my father is in heaven; you, sir, who say, that those standing without there, are my mother and brothers, are mistaken; they are not my mother and brothers, but *these* persons here, who have followed me and are now listening to me, and believe that what I say, is the word of God; *these*, and not *those*, are my mother and brothers.

But Mark puts it beyond all doubt. He says in his 3d chapter, 21 verse, that his kinsfolk, * on hearing with what a multitude he was surrounded,

* For this word see the margin of your large Bible.

and how he was conducting himself, went out or started to go and lay hold on him; "for they said he is beside himself." In the 31st verse of this same chapter, Mark lets us know, who these kinsfolk were. They were no other than his mother and brethren, for he says: "Then came his *brethren* and his *mother*, and standing without," &c., as detailed by Matthew.—The truth is, according to the accounts given us by the evangelists, that Jesus was well aware, in what light his career was viewed by his kin.—He was, no doubt, well aware of their object in coming to the place, where he was holding forth. To use a familiar phrase, he *smoked* them; he did not intend they should *lay hold* of him, and put him in a straight jacket. And as they could not get at him, he did not intend to go to them. John in his 7th chapter, informs us that his brethren had jeered and insulted him, plainly insinuating to his face, that he was an impostor. His pretensions, according to all of his biographers, were a subject of railery with all the family.

Can all these statements be true? Can it be true that Mary was conscious of all the miracles attending the conception, birth and infancy of her son, as detailed by Matthew and Luke, and also true, that she considered him a maniac, for asserting that he was, what an angel of God had vouchsafed to her, he should be? The thing is impossible. How could his brothers and sisters have rejected him? Must not the history of his infancy have been familiar to all of them? Did the parents keep their journey to Egypt and the cause of it and the visit of the wise men, as profound secrets from all their children? What became of all the gold given by the Magi? It is reasonable to suppose, that Mary must have kept a few pieces for a memento, and that these would have been shown to the family, and their history made known to them. We should naturally conclude, that the other boys would have been for pushing their elder brother forward, to take the station he was destined to occupy; instead of throwing obstacles in his way. Strange that all these primary miracles should have made a convert of no one in the family, not even of the mother. The Jew Appelles, would not believe it; neither will I.

We never hear anything of Joseph after the sparring of his son with the Doctors, in the temple.

Your teachers are sadly perplexed to ascertain who these persons were, that were called Christs' brothers and sisters. Some, I believe, have said they were Josephs' children by a first wife, the fact of his ever having married this first wife being assumed without the least data whatever.—Others say (our American Doctors universally,) that they were the children of the virgin's sister, whose name was Mary also, and whose husband was Cleopas; therefore, although called brothers, they were in fact first

cousins of Jesus. Now our plain people, when they see the word *brothers* in any book, understand it to mean two male persons, who have the same father and mother, or the same father or mother; and as they learn from your testament that Joseph did not put away his wife Mary, but that he went with her to Jerusalem every year at the passover, until Jesus was twelve years old, and are never informed of his death; when they read of the brothers and sisters of Jesus, they, poor souls, are very apt to think that these persons were the sons and daughters of Joseph and Mary; especially since the biographers make the people of Nazareth ask, if Jesus was not the son of Joseph the carpenter; and if his brothers and sisters were not living among them. The words of Matthew are: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren James and Joses, and Simon and Judas?" Can any man, learned or unlearned, wise or simple, doubt as to the sense or meaning of the author here? Is it not plain, that he means to tell us, that the Carpenter and Mary were the father and mother of James and Joses, and Simon and Judas, as well as of Jesus?

If this is not the construction, then the people ought not to read the book; for it will only mislead them, and the claim of the Pope is well founded.

Granting for a moment that brother does not mean brother, in other words, that these four persons were not, in truth, the brothers of Jesus, but for some reason that does not appear, were so called—I proceed to show: First, that no one of them, according to the four evangelists, was of the twelve disciples; and, secondly, that Paul contradicts the whole four.

You must confess that there is a disagreement between the three first evangelists, as to the names of the twelve disciples. The translators make them all say that the second James was the son of Alphaeus,—they make Luke say, that the loyal Judas was the brother of this James.—Matthew and Mark mention but one Judas, the traitor. Their Lebbeus or Thadeus, is in the place of Luke's loyal Judas; but they do not intimate that Thadeus was the son of Alphaeus, or brother of James. John gives us the names of but four of these twelve, one of which is Nathaniel. The three first plainly intimate that none of those persons called Christ's brothers, were of the twelve. John does more; for in his 6th chapter, he tells us that, on a certain occasion, some of those who had followed Jesus, left him; whereupon he said to the *twelve*, "Will ye go away also? have not I chosen you *twelve*?" John commences his 7th chapter in these words: "After these things," that is, after Jesus had chosen the *twelve*, "Jesus walked in Galilee," &c. John then proceeds to give an account

the insults offered to Jesus by his brethren, and by way of explanation, he says: "For neither did his brethren believe in him." His brethren, therefore could not have been of the *twelve*.

Besides James, the son of Alpheus, there was another James, the son of Zebedee, who was one of the twelve; so there were two James' among the twelve. The author of the Acts of the Apostles, says that Herod put to death this latter James, the son of Zebedee. He also tells us, that one of these twelve having proved a traitor, and having hung or thrown himself from a precipice, another was chosen, who was numbered with the eleven *apostles*. These twelve then, and no others, according to Luke, were called *apostles*. They were, by way of eminence, called *the* apostles of Jesus Christ, to witness of his resurrection; because, says this author, they had been with him from the baptism of John, till his ascension.—You by this time are ready to ask, where the difficulty or discrepancy is, of which I spoke. I will tell you. The man Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, states that on his return from Damascus to Jerusalem, he saw *Peter* and none other of the *apostles* except James, the Lord's *brother*.

The argument is this: all the evangelists agree that James, the Lord's brother, was not one of the twelve disciples. No one, not of the twelve, except Matthias, according to Luke, could be called one of *the* apostles. Yet Paul calls James, the Lord's brother, another of *the* apostles, ranking him with Peter. My second position is fully sustained by Luke in his first of acts; for he says that, besides the eleven disciples, there were upwards of a hundred persons then at Jerusalem, who had companied with them (the eleven) all the time, the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, from the baptism of John unto the ascension of Jesus; and out of these *one*, and but one was to be ordained. Now for what purpose? Why "to witness," says Peter, "with us (the eleven) of the resurrection." Two of these persons, to whom allusion had been made, and of whom one was to be chosen, were put in nomination. Matthias was elected. Previous to the final vote or drawing the lots, they (the eleven) prayed and said: "Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and *apostleship*, from which Judas by transgression fell." &c. The lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven *apostles*. The complement was now again made up—the vacancy was now filled—no more were to be elected, twelve being the limit. James, the Lord's brother, was not one of the original twelve—he was not elected; in truth, he was ineligible—he had not the proper qualifications—he was not one of those who had companied with them, from the beginning. You may reconcile Paul with the evangelists, as you best can.

The truth is, Paul appears to be ignorant of the *dramatis Personæ*.—He speaks of Christ showing himself “to Cephas, (Peter,)—then to the twelve;” thus giving us to understand, that Peter was not of the twelve, and also that there were *twelve*, when according to all the evangelists there were but eleven disciples from the time of the resurrection, to the final ascension.

CHAPTER IX.

It has been frequently asserted, that there is no direct technical contradiction in the New Testament. I think I have already shown *one*, as to the time of Johns' imprisonment. I agree, that the assertion of a fact by one writer and the silence of another, as to this same fact, is not a contradiction; so the statement of Luke, that Joseph took Mary and her son direct from Jerusalem to Nazareth, is not a contradiction of Matthew, who says, he took them from Bethlehem to Egypt. Both statements *may* be true.—Had both these authors been particular, as to *time*, there could have been no difficulty on the subject. A direct contradiction, or perfect consistency of statement, would have been manifest. It is difficult to find any two authors that directly contradict each other, except as to the *time* at which the events they detail, may be said to have happened; unless one writes after the other, and for the express purpose of contradiction. It is not the business of the historian or biographer proper, to state that the nation or the individual, that may be the subject of his history, did *not* do this or that, or that this or that event did *not* happen. This is the province of the critic or reviewer. And I further agree, that there can be contradictions between two authors, as to time and place, and still the facts related by both be true. So the statements of Matthew, Mark and Luke, that John was put in prison *before* Jesus went to Galilee, and *before* he entered upon his ministry, and the contradictory statement of John, the evangelist, that the baptist was not put in prison till sometime *after* Christ had entered upon his ministry, neither prove nor disprove the imprisonment of the baptist. So if they disagree as to the place where Christ was, and what he was doing during the forty or fifty days immediately preceding this imprisonment, one party has made a false statement; and as it cannot be determined which, the testimony of both is to be rejected—neither proving the temptation of Jesus or imprisonment of John. I need not remind the intelligent reader, that the averments of the time and place of the happening of a fact may be material, and that a wilfully false averment as to either by a witness, in a court of justice, may be perjury.

That four or more individuals should undertake to write an account of the sayings and doings of another during a very few months of his life; and that individual a vicegerent of God from heaven; and his doings miracles; and they his special favorites and supernaturally influenced by the spirit of truth; their books to be the foundation of a religion, in which all

men were to be interested; and yet be perfectly regardless of time and place, when and where the facts occurred, and sayings were had, is strange indeed. And stranger still, that in almost all instances, where they have mentioned the date or laid the venue of any fact, they disagree *toto celo*.

First as to concealment of time and place. Can any one tell on what mount, Christ is said by Matthew, to have delivered his famous sermon?—It is a matter of conjecture merely. What great wilderness was that in which Christ was tempted? All a matter of speculation. According to Matthew, the first thing Christ did, after he came down from the mount, was to cure the leper. He then goes to Capernaum, where he cures the Centurions' servant. After this cure, he enters Simon Peter's house, (now John says that Peter lived in Bethsaida,) and cures his wife's mother.—Luke says that after his first sermon at Nazareth, he went to Capernaum, where he cast out a devil, and then entered Peter's house, and cured his wife's mother. No leper yet. Luke then makes him preach in the synagogues of Galilee, and call Peter and others; and then he adds: "And it came to pass when he was in a *certain city*," &c., he cured the leper.—Now what city? Were the cities so numerous in Judea, that Luke must write in this manner? We certainly must understand him as saying that the leper was cured after Peter's mother in law. Matthew expressly tells us, she was cured first. Luke says the leper was cured in *a city*—Matthew does not say directly where, but it must have been at the foot of the mountain or between it and Capernaum. All this transpired, according to Matthew, after the sermon on the mount—according to Luke, before. I have no hesitation in saying, that at least one hundred such palpable contradictions, as to time and place, can be detected in the New Testament.

It may be asked, how I can detect so many disagreements as to time, when I admit, there is such indefiniteness as to both time and place, in their narrations. I answer, from the order in which the events are narrated by each; as in the instance we have just had under consideration, and also in that of curing the withered hand. Mark and Luke relate it long before the case of him called Legion, and before the sending out of the apostles; but Matthew after. You probably will say, the evangelists did not intend that the events should follow each other in their books in the order they happened. They must have been singular historians then and have intended to deceive. Each one of these books is independent of the other. Suppose but one had been preserved or admitted as canonical; Matthew's, for instance; would you have ever had any suspicion that he had not related the events in the order they happened? And if Mark's book had been bound in the volume, as apocryphal, would you not have said

that his narration was erroneous and false, and calculated to give us false impressions, as to the order in which the facts followed each other? But what must compel you to acknowledge the vagueness of the first three writers, is, that you cannot and will not pretend to say, how long it was from Christ's baptism to his crucifixion. If you had had but one gospel, as you call it, say either Matthew, Mark, or Luke, you never would have had the least suspicion that it was more than a year, and would have denied stoutly, that it could have been more than two years, even if John's gospel had been preserved and declared apocryphal. I admit that the season of the year in which the various events happened, is not mentioned by either of the three first; nor do they let us know at what season they happened, by referring to any of the great feasts, except the feast of the passover, at which Jesus was crucified.

It is this vagueness which affords you such fine opportunities for quibbling and evasion. If I assert, that according to Matthew, it could not have been more than a year from the baptism to the crucifixion; you will reply, that it may have been three or twenty—that the evangelists wrote so vaguely and indefinitely, that it is impossible to determine how long it was—yet you are bound to admit, that upon a fair and a rational construction of Matthew's work, considered as independent of the rest, it could not have been more than one. John is more particular. He gives us to understand, that it was a little more than two years. He tells us, that soon after Christ's baptism, he went up to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover; that again he went up at a feast of the Jews—after which he tells us in his 6th chapter, that the feast of the passover was (again) nigh at hand, to which it is evident Jesus did not go. One year has now elapsed—but he went up after this to the feast of tabernacles—was there again at the dedication feast. And lastly, he went there at the passover, when he is put to death; this makes the two years. It appears, that there was one feast of the passover he did not attend.

What I wish to call the reader's particular attention to at this time is this, that at his first visit to Jerusalem, according to John, he drove the money changers out of the temple. This was two years before his crucifixion; but according to the other three, this piece of lawless violence happened during the feast at which he was crucified. They give us not the least intimation that he attended any other. The only fetch, that can be resorted to here, in order to avoid a fatal discrepancy, is, that he *might* have overturned the tables twice. But is it probable that he ever did, even once? He could not have done it, if he had been a peaceable man; for these persons whom he is reported to have disturbed, were about a lawful business, in a lawful place. They were not, as many suppose, in the

temple proper—in the holy place, or the holiest of all; but in that row of buildings called the porticoes, surrounding the court of the Gentiles; which buildings were rented out no doubt by the proper authorities, to individuals, for the purpose of prosecuting their various occupations, in the same manner as the apartments in the Palais royal in Paris, are at this day. The money changers and cattle dealers, were not on ground held holy, even by the most pious or superstitious Jew. What right had he then, as a man; for he was now acting as such according to your own notions; to disturb these people in their lawful occupations, and commit violence on their persons? You must either admit that he did not do it, or, that he was acting the part of a ruffian.

At least nine out of ten of our people, liken the temple to one of their buildings called churches, and believe that these money changers and cattle dealers were in the broad aisle, counting their cash, and making contracts for the sale of beef. They are fully persuaded that Christ, when he is said to have preached in the temple, went up into the pulpit of a regularly built church, took his text, and made a formal sermon to a large and attentive audience. Whereas the place at which he must have preached, if he preached at all, was much more public than the Park or the Battery in New York, or Washington square in Philadelphia. This temple, by which was meant an inclosure much larger than either of the aforementioned public walks, was a place of resort for men of business, as well as for those devoted to pleasure and amusement.

Many fanatics have been found in this, our day, preaching in markets and other public places. We all know in what estimation these street preachers are held.

CHAPTER X.

I will now take up the great fact of the Testament, on which your religion rests; and if I do not show a palpable contradiction between Matthew and Luke, as to place—the place where Christ is said to have appeared to his disciples, after the resurrection, I will confess my inability to understand the plainest proposition. Matthew tells us, that Jesus told his disciples more than once, that he should be put to death, but would rise again; and he *once* told them, that after he was risen, he would go before them into Galilee; (now remember that Galilee is forty or fifty miles from Jerusalem.) He is crucified on Friday—probably put upon the cross before mid-day; from which time, Matthew says, there was darkness over all the land, till 3 o'clock, P. M. (the ninth hour,) when he died. Joseph of Arimathea, (a town some twenty or thirty miles from Jerusalem,) who had been a secret disciple of Jesus, petitioned Pilate, the Roman Governor, for permission to take the body—which being granted, he took it down and placed it in his own new vault, at Jerusalem; where he did *not* live. We pass over other particulars, as they are not material to our present question of discrepancy. On Sunday morning, about daylight, as two women were approaching the vault, an angel came down and opened it; and turning to the women said: “Ye seek Jesus, who was crucified; he is not here; for he is risen, as he said; come see the place where the Lord lay: and go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, lo, I have told you.” That is, “Jesus is on his way to Galilee, as he said he would go there after his resurrection. Now run and tell his disciples all this, that they may immediately start for that district, if they intend to see him; for they must go there in order to see him; and they ought not to keep him waiting there.” The women obeyed orders, and did run to bring the disciples word.

Now why the necessity of this great haste, if Jesus was to remain in Jerusalem a week, and have frequent interviews with these disciples? In truth, what the necessity of this message at all, if Jesus was not on his way to Galilee? Did the angel state a falsehood, when he said that Jesus was on his way to Galilee? Did he intend to send these eleven disciples on a Tom-fools' or an April-fools' errand; holding out to them, as an inducement to go to Galilee, that Jesus was on his way thither; knowing a^t

the same time that he was not and *did not* contemplate going! Did he not intend that they should start immediately? If they had started, they could not have been back that same day. They did start as we shall see presently. I said the women obeyed orders, and did *run* to carry the disciples word, not only that Jesus had risen, but that he was journeying (upagon) to Galilee—the communication of this latter circumstance, to the disciples, seemed the great object of the angel's anxiety. On their way, the women fell in with Jesus. He told them just what the angel told them, viz: "Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there they shall see me." Was not this equivalent to saying: "Tell my brethren if they wish to see me, they must go to Galilee; for they can see me no where else; as I told them, before my crucifixion, I would go *before* them to Galilee, after my resurrection." Is it not evident he had not yet seen them, and also, that he did not expect or intend to see them, till he should see them in Galilee? Else, why send them this word? Did not he intend they should go there? If he intended to see them in Jerusalem, that same day, why send them word they must go to Galilee to see him? The women left Jesus to go to the disciples. Here Matthew takes occasion to narrate what occurred between the chief priests and the guard; and immediately after finishing this narration, he adds: "Then (to wit, that same day) the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world." The author intends to say, that some worshipped him, and some doubted.

Why did the disciples go to Galilee? Was it not because the women had told them what the angel and Jesus had enjoined upon them, to tell them? Can any other reason be given? Does not the author intend we shall so understand him?

I ask these questions, apprehending you may invent some other reason, why they went to Galilee; merely because Matthew has not said expressly, that the women did see the eleven, and deliver the message. But if you deny that the women did see the eleven, and deliver the message, I will bring up Luke against you, who says they told all these things to the eleven, and all the rest. Why did some doubt, if they had seen him before? I submit it to the ingenuous reader, if, from the very terms in which this interview is stated, it is not manifest, that the author intended to be understood that this was the *first* interview after the resurrection. I also ask

him if, in his opinion, there can be the least doubt that the author in his two last verses, did not intend to be understood, that it was also the last.

Now for Luke's statement. He tells us, that on the same day that Jesus rose from the dead, two men who had followed him from Galilee, were going to Emaus—he fell in company with them—they did not know him—when they arrived there, (not yet knowing him,) they asked him to take a late dinner or an early supper with them—he finally assented—at the table they recognized, him, and *immediately*, “that same hour” they returned to Jerusalem, where they found the eleven, (who according to Matthew, had started for Galilee,) and began to tell them, what they had seen, and while they were making this communication, to wit. on the day and year aforesaid; to wit. on the day of his resurrection; to wit. at Jerusalem; Jesus appeared, and stood in the midst of them; and they were affrighted and supposed they had seen a spirit. Does not Luke mean to be understood, that this was the *first* interview with the disciples, after the resurrection?

As I am arguing this question on the supposition, that a resurrection is not a miracle, being satisfied there is not sufficient testimony in this case, to establish any disputed fact; I am bound to admit that he *may* have risen from the dead, notwithstanding this discrepancy; but you must also admit, that this testimony has not the least tendency to establish the fact. The burden of proof lies on you—the man must be supposed dead, till your witnesses prove him alive. They make their statements all averring from hearsay, except one, (John) that the body was missing from the sepulchre. But this is not sufficient to prove that it was reanimated; nor would the general averment, that he was alive, be sufficient. The witnesses appear to be aware of this, and therefore each of them goes into a detail of the particulars, as to the time when, the places where, and the persons by whom Jesus was seen alive, after his crucifixion. We have seen how two of them directly conflict with each other, as to the place where he was first seen, and whence he ascended. I say, *whence he ascended*: for it is manifest that Matthew intends us to understand that he ascended immediately after his interview wrth the eleven, at Galilee. Luke is express, that he ascended from Bethany, a suburb of Jerusalem, and on the very night after his resurrection. The statements of these persons therefore prove nothing. Their confliction destroys the force of both.

Take a familiar case, by way of illustration. Doctor A is charged with cutting up a body, that had been buried. Two witnesses appear against him—they both state that the grave was opened, and the body missing but do not pretend they saw the doctor open the grave, or take the body

away. (You will bear in mind, that no one, not even the angel, avers he saw Jesus rise, or come out of the tomb.) But one says he saw the doctor cutting up the identical body in Georgetown, D. C.—that he (the witness) waited there till the doctor had finished the operation, and boiled the bones; and that he (the Doctor) then packed them in a trunk, and took them to Baltimore. The other says as positively, that he saw him cutting it up at Bordentown, N. J., and boil the bones, &c., and then start with them for Philadelphia. Would any jury convict upon this testimony; both witnesses being upon an equality, as to reputation? They would not be authorized to believe even that the grave had been broken open; much less, that the doctor was guilty of the charge alleged against him.

We will now take up Mark. He appears to be a writer of great brevity—despatches things at once—seldom lays venues, or gives dates. I have agreed for the present, to admit that he wrote the book bearing his name, but he certainly must have had some one to help him write the last chapter; or he must have copied from two manuscripts, as he has given us two distinct versions of this affair of the resurrection; for we find two distinct headings or commencements. Thus far I must qualify my admission. In the first account, he appears (appearance only) to follow Matthew, till the close of it; when he contradicts him and Luke, the latter, in so many words—a flat negation.

Let us compare the first few verses of Matthew's and Mark's last chapters. Matthew says: "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre." Mark says: "And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and *annoint* the body; and very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre, at the rising of the sun." Both agree; in fact, they all say that Mary Magdalene was along. Matthew says the two Marys went to *see* the sepulchre. Mark says, they went to *spice* the body. Both say, that these women saw it put in the tomb. Then why did they want to go to *see* it? for you assert, and quote John to support you, that none of his followers expected him to rise.

If hard pushed, you may quote from Luke, for the same purpose. True, he asserts that Jesus told these disciples that he would be put to death, and rise again; but he takes special pains to add, that they did not understand a word he said. Was there ever the beat of this? Jesus, it is said, spake as never man spake! Luke certainly wrote as never man wrote. He makes Jesus hold the following language to his disciples:

“Then he took *unto him* the twelve; and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and they shall scourge him, and put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again.”

Nothing can be more plain and intelligible than this; yet in the following verses he tells us, that these disciples understood none of these things—that this saying was *hid* from them; neither knew they the things that were spoken. (See Luke 18. 31–35.)

Luke does not intend to be understood, as attributing their inability to *know these things*, to their natural stupidity; but to some charm brought over them by Jesus. He represents this son of God, as converting his auditors into mere blocks of wood, or figures of wax; and then making or pretending to make important communications to them.

Who could have told Luke what Jesus said on this occasion? Certainly no one of these spell-bound disciples, from whom the whole speech was *hid*. None else were present to hear this *saying*; for, Jesus *took unto him* the *twelve*, and spake to them, and them only. This is a hard question to answer; is it not?

What trick, what device, what starting hole can you here find out, to shield your evangelist from the open shame of asserting, without the least proof or testimony whatever, except the impudent assumption that this *holy* man wrote at the dictation of the divine spirit?

To resume the argument, let me ask, why this visit on the part of these women, at this unseasonable hour, merely to *see* a tomb they had seen before? Let us see, if Mark's pretence, for this untimely visit, will bear the test of examination. He also admits, that these same women had seen the body laid away; yet they went on Sunday morning to *spice* it. Why want to buy spices to anoint it, when according to John, they must have seen it wrapped up in a hundred pound weight; enough in all conscience, to perfume any corpse of common dimensions.

Matthew in continuation, “And behold there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door; and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment as white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and become as dead men.”

Mark: “And they, the women, said among themselves, who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? and when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away, for it was very great; and entering

into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted."

Matthew gives us to understand that the earthquake happened, and the angel descended and rolled away the stone and sat upon it, at the time the women were approaching the sepulchre; so that they saw the descent of the angel, and removal of the stone, as well as the shining garments.— You cannot change the tense of these verbs into what is called the pluperfect, so as to make the text read, "and behold there *had been* a great earthquake—the angel *had* descended—*had* rolled," &c.; for neither the Greek text nor the sense will authorize it, as you must continue the same tense throughout; and then it would read: "and *had sat* upon it, his garments *had* been shining," &c. Mark represents the women as having arrived after the descent of the angel, and the rolling away of the stone, and sitting upon it; for he says, they found it rolled away, and the angel had changed his position, and was sitting within the sepulchre, and not upon a stone, on the out side of it. Mark's, as well as Luke's and John's silence, as to the earthquake and setting of the guard, does not positively disprove them; but I ask, if it is not *probable*, they would have mentioned such important facts; important to their cause, if they had happened.— Matthew again: "And the angel said unto the women, fear not ye, for I know ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen, as he said; (foretold) come see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and behold he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall you see him." Mark puts almost the same words into the angels mouth. 'Tis true, he adds the name of Peter. "Tell his disciples and Peter," &c. One of your standard writers explains, by saying: "it is a *notorious* fact, that Mark wrote under this apostle's direction—from his information," &c. How came this *notorious*, and how does this author know it. Some men pretend to know more about the evangelists, than they ever intended they should.

Matthew again: "And they (the women) departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and did *run* to bring the disciples word." Luke: (24. 8.) "And they (these same women who had been to the sepulchre, and had the interview with the angel,) remembered his (the Lord's) words, and returned from the sepulchre, and *told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest.*" Mark: "And they (these same women, (went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre, for they trembled and were amazed; *neither said they anything to any man, for they were afraid.*"

Here is a flat contradiction—a technical issue—an affirmation on the one side, and a negation on the other.

I have now quoted all of Mark's first version, and will proceed to his second; or what I say, is his second, commencing at the 9th verse of his last chapter. It is as follows: "Now when Jesus was risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils; and she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept."

Now if the reader will refer back to the first two verses of this same chapter, he will be convinced that Mark is commencing in the 9th, an account of the resurrection *de novo*. I proceed to show, that the first eight verses of his last chapter have either been interpolated, or that he must have been a compiler merely, and misplaced them. This 9th verse, just quoted, should have been the first, in other words, should have followed the last verse of the 15th chapter, to which it has immediate relation. The reader will observe that the most important word in this verse, to wit, *Jesus*, is in italics, and therefore not found in the original—a strong circumstance to show that the verse is out of its proper place. If the translators had supplied the word *he* instead of *Jesus*, they could with propriety have been asked to whom this pronoun *he*, related; for it is certain there is no immediate connexion between this verse and the preceding 8th verse; and the only antecedent of the pronoun *he*, in this 8th verse, is the indefinite *any*.

It will be necessary to inform those unacquainted with the Greek and Latin languages, that it is not necessary in those languages, to use the pronouns *I* and *he*, as we do in English. The ending of their verbs indicates what pronoun must necessarily be understood. For example: *Amo* in Latin, and *agapao* in Greek, mean *I love*; but there is no Latin or Greek word in either instance for *I*. *Ego* is in both languages, the word for *I*. We will take the case before us for proof. The last verse of the 15th chapter, is, in English in these words: "And Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses, beheld where *he* was laid." Now there is no word for *he* in the original, in this verse, but the very ending of the verb *was laid*, in the Greek, indicates or carries with it (*ex vi termini*;) the pronoun *he*; and it was not necessary for the translators to have intimated that this pronoun was not in the Greek, by putting it in italics. So, if this 9th verse of the 16th chapter, had followed the one just quoted, there would have been no necessity of italicising any word in it. It would have commenced thus: "Now when he was risen," &c,—the pronoun *he* relating to the same person, that it did in the last verse of the 15th chapter, viz: *Jesus*. Again. I assert that the 9th verse upon its face, is a commencement of a narration *de novo*. Inspection is all that is necessary. Argument is useless.

Had we never read this chapter in our childhood, the position for which I am contending, would be readily admitted. I will, however, state a similar case:

“On the first day of January, early in the morning, 1835, the ship *Good Intent*, got under way at the port of New York, bound for Liverpool, having on board as passengers, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, and was capsized in a squall soon after leaving the Hook, when all on board perished, except the two Marys, who swam to shore; but were so exhausted, that they could not and did not relate to any one the least particular of the shipwreck.

“Now when the ship *Good Intent*, left the port of New York, early in the morning, on the first day of January, 1835, she was lost just outside the Hook, and all on board perished, except Mary Magdalene, who caught the long-boat, and returned safe to port, and related all the particulars of the shipwreck, to all the persons concerned in the vessel or cargo.”

It reminds me of the Yankee witness, who, on being interrupted by the counsel, would commence his story anew: “Capt. Rice he gin a treat.”—To the credit of the Yankee, it should be remarked, that his tale as far as he was suffered to proceed, was, in each instance, most provokingly identical.

Your standard writer, Mr. West, acknowledges that there is an apparent discrepancy between Matthew and Mark, as to the time of the arrival of the women at the sepulchre. But he, of course, contends it is only apparent; and that Matthew’s account should be read as if in the pluperfect tense, thus: “And there *had* been a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord *had* descended and *had* rolled away the stone from the door, and *had* sat upon it;” for he labors to prove that the appearance of the angel sitting on the stone, mentioned by Matthew, was to the keepers only; that is Matthew must be understood to say, that the angel’s garments *had* been as white as snow, and his face like lightning while frightening the soldiers, but that he had gone into the sepulchre, and had assumed a milder aspect at the time the women came up. As Lord Mansfield has said in another case: “This is a matter of construction merely—all men can judge of it;” and (I add,) ought to treat with contempt him who will assert, that Matthew intended to be understood as saying, that the angel was not sitting on the stone, when he addressed the women. But we will examine this writer’s arguments a little further. He says the expression of the angel in Matthew: “Come (*dute*, which might more properly be translated *come hither*) see the place where the Lord lay;” is proof that he was in the sepulchre when he used it; and therefore he argues there is no disagreement between Matthew and Mark—the latter of whom says expressly, that the angel was in the sepulchre. This is presuming that the women could not

have looked into the sepulchre from the stone on which the angel was sitting, or from any place outside of it; yet John says that he, while on the outside, by stooping, saw the linen clothes lying, and when he entered it, he saw nothing but the napkin. And Luke tells us that Peter "stooping down saw the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed wondering;" though John says that Peter "entered in," &c. The expression "Come and see the place where the Lord lay," cannot help him out of the difficulty.

To end this argument and show that there is a discrepancy in this small matter, let Mark be heard. He says expressly, that the angel was in the sepulchre, and in a sitting posture, when he addressed the women, and that he did not address them until *they* had also entered into the sepulchre. Matthew says *come and see*, clearly showing that the women were outside when he addressed them. Mark says *see or behold* only, they having already entered.

Our author also lays great stress upon the Greek word *exelhousai*, translated in Matthew *departing*, and in Mark *going out of*, as if this word must or does always mean going out of a tomb or a cellar.

This writer speculates upon the objects the angel had in view, and tells us he assumed a most terrific aspect, a face like lightning, in order to frighten the soldiers into fits of swooning; and when this was effected, he clothed his face with smiles, that he might not terrify the women and other disciples, who were to flock there that day. And he adds "This supposition is neither presumptuous nor unreasonable." Why did they wish to flock there that day? Can this author tell us? As a specimen of the mode of reasoning of your champions and standard authors, I will copy several sentences from this writer.

"In the latter, (Matthew's gospel,) indeed, this angel is also painted with a "countenance like lightning," and the keepers are said to have trembled, &c., for fear of him. The purpose of this angel's descending from heaven seems to have been, not only to roll away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre, that the women who were on their way thither might have free entrance into it, but also to fright away the soldiers who were set to guard it; and who, had they continued there, would certainly not have permitted the disciples of Jesus to have made the necessary inquiries for their conviction, could it be supposed that either they or the women would have attempted to enter into the sepulchre, while it was surrounded by a Roman guard. For this end it is not unreasonable to suppose he might not only raise an earthquake, but assume a countenance of terror, and after it was accomplished, put on the milder appearance of a *young man*, in which form the women, as St. Mark says, saw him 'sitting within

the sepulchre, on the right side.' This supposition, I say, is neither unreasonable nor presumptuous. For, although to argue from the event to the design or intention may, in judging of human affairs, be deceitful or precarious, yet in the actions of God, the supreme disposer of all events, it is most certain and conclusive."

He describes the angel, as playing his several parts, like Matthews in the stage coach, or Alek Drake in Three & One, and all for the purpose of frightening the soldiers, so that they would not prevent the women and disciples from entering into the sepulchre, and seeing—Seeing what? not the reanimated body of Jesus, but his grave clothes; and believing—Believing what? not that Jesus was alive, from seeing and handling him, but from the report of the angel, which report and the circumstance of the body being missing, would not have been sufficient to have convinced them that he had risen; for, from the accounts of all the evangelists, it was deemed requisite that Jesus should show himself to the disciples, in order to their belief in his resurrection. This stage trick at the sepulchre, on which our author lays so much stress, and to which he attaches so much importance, was all to no purpose. He himself believes, that Jesus rose from the dead, because it is said the apostles saw him alive after his death, and not because this *angel* is reported to have said he was risen. But it is the last sentence of the quotation, to which I wish to call the attention of the reader. "To argue," says the writer, "from the event to the design or intention, may in judging of human affairs, be deceitful or precarious, yet in the actions of *God*, the supreme disposer, &c.; it is most certain and conclusive." For whom or to whom is this man writing? With whom is he debating? With christians? They must necessarily believe in the resurrection. No, he is debating with infidels; and behold his impudence. I have no other name to give his bare faced *petitio principii* here; as he takes for granted that this being that is said to have rolled away the stone, was an angel of heaven, and that what he is reported to have said and done, were the saying and doings of God, the supreme disposer of all events. How can we argue with such men, who trample upon all rules of logic, and settle questions by their own *ipse dixit*? The writer has here settled the question. Why then write hundreds of pages to prove the resurrection, after he has taken for granted, that a being, who, he says or takes for granted, was an angel from heaven and mouth-piece of God Almighty, had declared that Jesus had risen from the dead. It is by such argumentation, that your system of facts has ever been, and still is supported, as is plain and manifest to him who reads your standard authors.

Mark in his second version follows Luke—alludes to the two who went to Emmaus—says that Jesus after that, appeared to the eleven as they sat

at meat—no day or place mentioned. After giving us Christ's parting injunction to his disciples, he concludes as follows: "So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." He here speaks of these heavenly transactions in the same positive and confident manner, that he does of the events that occurred in our week-day world. How did he learn whether he sat upon the right hand or left hand? What did he know about heaven or its locality? You apply the universal solvent here, namely, inspiration, which puts an end to all argument, and by the application of which you confess your inability to support your cause by sound logic.

Another argument, common in the mouths of all of you, even of your learned bishops, is this: "What, not believe that he rose, when he was seen by so many?" Which is equivalent to: "What, not believe he rose, when he did rise?" For if he was actually seen alive, by even one person, he certainly must have risen. After being driven from this assumption, they change the question to something like this form: "What, not believe that he rose, when we have so many witnesses, namely, the one, two, three, four or five women; the men that went to Emmaus, the *rest* that were with the eleven at Jerusalem, and the five hundred that Paul speaks of. All these are witnesses? witnesses to us? from not one of whom have we a scrip of a pen; and of the eleven, there are but five who can be called witnesses, viz: Matthew, John, Peter, James and Jude. In this manner, witnesses can be increased to any number. If I should tell you, that a perfect orange grew and ripened at the end of my finger, which I plucked and ate, you would not believe. Should I affirm further that five hundred men saw it, you would still be sceptical, and ask me to bring forward my five hundred, that you might inquire of them.

Had my father once acted on the principle for which you contend, I should, when quite a lad, have escaped a flogging. I told him that I could not find the cows, for which I was sent; and fearing him more than I ought, (he was a good man though,) I told him that Ben Remington helped me look for them, and that he could not find them. My father did not *yet* consider Ben as a witness, that they could not be found in their usual range; but went and inquired of him, when lo, Ben told him, he had not seen me that day. The consequence I have already intimated.

We will now give Luke's last chapter a more particular examination, with a view to ascertain the time of Christ's ascension. Here, as in Mark, it is a matter of construction merely—all men can judge of it. I am justified in the assertion, that this chapter is a well connected and a continuous narration. We have his positive assertion, that the two men went out to Emmaus on the day of the alleged resurrection, that they ate or

sat down to a late dinner or an early supper at Emmaus with Jesus.— Was not this dinner or supper on the day of the resurrection? While at this meal Jesus was made known to them, and they rose up that *same hour*, and returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven gathered together. Was not this returning and finding on the day or evening of the resurrection?— And they told what things were done on the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of bread, and as they thus spake or while they were thus speaking, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith: “Peace be unto you; but they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.” Was not this relation of the things that happened on the way, this standing in the midst and fright of the persons present, on the day of his resurrection? And he said unto them, why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts; behold my hands and my feet; that it is I, myself—handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. Is not this a continued speech, all made at one time; and was not that time the day of or the evening after the resurrection? And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. Was not this exhibition of his hands and feet, on the day of or evening after the resurrection? And while they yet believed not for joy and wondered, he said unto them: have ye here any meat? and they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey comb, and he took it and did eat before them. Were not this inquiry for meat, and their presenting him with fish and honey and his eating, all on the day and year aforesaid? And he said unto them, these are the words that I spake unto you while I was with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets and in the Psalms, concerning me. Is there any break here? Was not this speech made on the day and year aforesaid?— Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures; and said unto them: Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins might be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem; and ye are witnesses of these things. Was not this speech made on the day and year aforesaid; to wit, on the day of the resurrection? And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye here in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. Is not this a continuation of the speech last quoted, and was it not made on the day and year aforesaid? And he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. Is there any break here? Is there the least intimation that this leading out and ascension, were not on the day and year aforesaid? Can any man

honestly assert, that we can understand from this chapter that there were forty days between the resurrection and ascension?

I have been thus particular and tedious, for the reason, that you all say, there is no discrepancy between this account and the one in the first chapter of Acts; where, it is said, Christ was seen forty days by his disciples, after his resurrection. As this latter book is dedicated to Theophilus, the same man to whom Luke's Gospel is dedicated; and as it refers to a former treatise, Luke is said to be its author; and therefore it is concluded that the first chapter of Acts is an explanation of the last of Luke's Gospel. The better conclusion is, that the latter is a contradiction of the former. This conclusion cannot be avoided, unless you say that Christ was backwards and forwards from and to heaven, for forty days previous to what was said to be his final ascension. It will be recollected, that Paul says Jesus visited and spoke to him, two or three years after all this.

I will call the readers attention to two expressions in this last chapter of Luke, viz: the injunction of Christ, that his disciples should not leave Jerusalem and their compliance with it. Now John tells us they did leave Jerusalem, and return to their original occupations; and that Jesus appeared to Peter and six others, while fishing on the sea of Tiberias.

We will now recapitulate. Matthew mentions but two women that went to the sepulchre. Mark in his first version two—in his second one. Luke three with an *et cetera*. John but one. Matthew says they went to *see* the sepulchre. Mark in his first version, to *anoint* the body—in his second, no object mentioned. Luke, to anoint the body. John mentions no object, but tells us that Joseph and Nicodemus wrapped him up in a hundred pound weight of spices. Matthew says they saw the angel sitting on a stone *outside* the sepulchre. Mark, sitting *inside* the sepulchre.—Luke, *two* angels, and probably inside. John's woman saw none. Matthew says his women saw Jesus before they went to the disciples. Mark in his first version does not say they saw Jesus at all—in his second, his woman saw him before she went to the disciples. Luke does not mention the important circumstance of their seeing Jesus. John says that his woman, on seeing the stone rolled away, ran and told Peter and himself, then met Jesus in a garden, and then told the eleven. Matthew says his women ran to tell the disciples what the angel and Jesus told them. Mark says they did not tell it to any body. Luke says they did tell all to the eleven, and the rest. John's woman was also communicative. Matthew mentions the guard and the earthquake. The others say nothing about either. Matthew says he first showed himself to his disciples in a mountain in Galilee. Mark mentions neither time nor place. Luke says Jerusalem, and in the evening after the resurrection. John does not specify the

place, but the time was the evening after the resurrection. Matthew, Mark and Luke mention but one appearance to the disciples. John three. Matthew says, Jesus and his disciples started for Galilee early in the morning of his resurrection. Luke says, he was on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus, in the afternoon of that same day, and his disciples at Jerusalem in the evening. Peter says, (Luke makes him say it,) that Jesus did not appear to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen of God; even to *us*, who did eat and drink with him, after he rose from the dead. Witnesses of what? Why, of the resurrection. See Acts, first chapter, already commented on. Who were these witnesses? The same Luke tells us, they were the twelve. Say, that he meant those also that were with them when the two men returned from Emmaus. The question then arises, how many there were. Luke also tells you in this first of Acts, that there were, including the eleven, one hundred and twenty. We have no account of Jesus eating or drinking with any, except these. Paul says he appeared to *above* five hundred brethren at once. Which is your best witness, Paul or Peter? Where did these *above* five hundred see Jesus?—Your standard writers say, at Galilee; and allege, that this meeting at Galilee, for which Matthew says Jesus started immediately after his resurrection, and to which the eleven were told to hasten; did not take place, until at least a week after the resurrection. What assurance! The only reason these divines give, for the postponement of this meeting, is, that the eleven dare not leave Jerusalem till the close of the feast; when it is evident from John, that Jesus himself before his crucifixion, did not attend one of these feasts. Besides if it was improper they should leave Jerusalem, why did he on Sunday morning, send word by the women, that they must meet him in Galilee, he *then* being on his way thither? Again. I believe you say, that at this time, the whole Jewish ritual, at least, was abolished. But Paul has said, that he appeared to above five hundred, after he had appeared to the *twelve*—and Paul must be supported—a place must be fixed for this next week's meeting. You have chosen a mount in Galilee; therefore Matthew's last chapter must be tortured for the support of this position. The angel must be made to say to the women: "Run and say to the eleven: Your Jesus has risen, and is on his way to Galilee, where he told you he would meet you after his resurrection, but you need not go there till next week; as your Lord would rather wait there that long, than that you should violate the least tittle of the Jewish law, by leaving Jerusalem a moment before the close of the feast." And Jesus himself must be made to say to these same women: "Run and tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, *next week*. True, I intend to see them all this very evening, and meet them frequently during the course of the week in Jerusalem. and shall go

to Galilee, for which place I am now on my way, merely for form sake, which journey I can perform in five minutes; as I am now a *spiritual body*, yet you better run and tell them of the appointment, for fear I may forget it, among the multiplicity of more important matters to be communicated to them." And the 16th and 17th verses must be made to read, "*Then, viz., the next week*, the eleven and above five hundred more of the brethren, went into Gallilee, into a mountain, where Jesus had appointed them, and when these above five hundred other brethren saw him, (the eleven having seen him daily for the week past in Jerusalem,) they worshipped him but some doubted." Now men who will thus torture a plain simple narration, to support a favorite position, can do any thing. Such zeal will prompt them to interpolate, to forge and erase; and it is to such zeal that we must attribute the interpolations, forgeries and erasures, practiced by the Fathers, upon each other, and upon every other author, when the practice of such knavery might aid a favorite cause. Can the reader have confidence in the integrity of men, who will resort to such means for the support of their cause; and can he have confidence in a cause that requires such means for its support? I have endeavored to put such a construction on the different accounts of the resurrection, as the plain meaning and common acceptation of their words will justify—such a construction, as every honest, ingenuous searcher after truth must and will put upon them.

When the angel says to the women, "*go quickly* and tell his disciples to go into Calilee," I understand him as intimating that the message should be speedily delivered to them that they might get under way immediately. And I appeal to the ingenuous reader, if he is not a dishonest man, who will assign any other reason. And when the author makes Jesus say to the women, "Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee and there shall they see me." I understand him as asserting, that Jesus had not yet seen them and did not intend to see them until he should see them in Galilee. And he is a dishonest man, and an enemy to truth, who will pretend to understand him differently. When Matthew, after stating distinctly the day, proceeds to give an account of the transactions of that day, and among others of the proceedings of the Jewish Sanhedrim, and continues his account by passing to another transaction, without intimating a change of day, by the words: "and then:" I understand him as saying that this event happened on the same day. And he is a dishonest man and an enemy to truth, who will say that he meant *next week*.

Your doctors and champions and standard writers pursue a course of argument and give their sanction to principles in the support of this cause that they would repudiate in every other,—principles for holding which, they would consider me or any other individual as mean and contemptible.

For example; they will insist that there is no discrepancy between the evangelists, as to the number of women that went to the sepulchre.—When we say that Matthew says *but two*, John *but one*, they reply; “You are unfair and even dishonest, Matthew and John were not obliged to mention *all*—they mentioned as many as answered their purpose. Neither of them says that no more went.” I agree, that according to the strict rules of special pleading, there is not a contradiction here. And do you mean to set down your evangelists as special pleaders, as speaking by the card, as modern diplomatists, as men whose writings must be construed strictly. Do you insist upon the exclusion of any conclusion not warranted by the strict and technical import of every word? Is no latitude to be given to us in any question of discrepancy and the widest range to be given to you in this and in every other? Do you intend to allow Matthew to say: “I said *two* women and the reader has no right to make any inferences, that there were more or no more. I have not said that there were more or no more, there may have been more, I have not said that there were not, neither have I said that there were.” A man, who would resort to such quirks and shifts and niceties in the common concerns of life, would be spurned the society of all honest and honorable men. Should you ask Mr. A., who came passengers in the stage with him, from Frankfort to Louisville, this morning, and he should answer; Messrs. B. and C.; and should you, afterwards on further enquiry, ascertain that Mr. D. was also along, the person about whose journey you were anxious to be made certain, though not wishing your anxiety should be known; would you not condemn such evasion in Mr. A., as mean and contemptible. And should you on meeting him, upbraid him with it, and he should reply: “I was not obliged to tell you the *whole* truth,—*all* that were along. I was not under oath. I told you the truth as far as I went—you were not obliged to infer that Mr. D. was not along, from what I said. I did not say he was not in the stage.” I ask, if after such a reply, you would not set Mr. A. down as a contemptible puppy, one, who ought to be kicked out of the society of all high minded and honorable men? You would punish your own son of ten years of age, who should resort to such quirks and subterfuges. An historian voluntarily makes himself the interrogatee, (let me coin a word,) of all mankind, and he is bound to answer every question, in a manner not to deceive or make false impressions, or leave the world in doubt, when in his power to prevent it. This matter of the resurrection, you allege, and the evangelists maintain, was of great importance to mankind. Every circumstance attending it, which they thought worthy of noticing, was also of importance and ought to have been stated fully and accurately, at least in such a manner, as not to leave us in doubt, and certainly not to

make a false impression. The whole world should be supposed to have asked Matthew and each of the others, this question: "What or how many women went to the sepulchre on the morning of the resurrection?" And he should have made his answer, as if the whole world were present, to hear him say: "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary." Was this an ingenuous answer, provided more than these went? If the world had received no other answer from any person; would it not have made a false impression? Would not all Christendom, had no other Gospel been written, have been at this day under the false impression, that there were but two women that went to the sepulchre? Was this answer a suppression of the truth? Proceeding on the supposition, that Matthew was an ingenuous and honest man, you are compelled to say with me, that according to his account, there were *but* two women that went to the sepulchre on the morning of the resurrection. In short, you are compelled to admit, that, Matthew has either been guilty of a piece of vulgar trickery or that Luke has stated an absolute falsehood. These observations apply to many other cases.

Your divines proceed upon the ground, that no one of these writers can be guilty of a suppression of the truth—in other words, that the suppression of truth cannot in any case be guilt in any one of your *inspired* penmen. What would be esteemed criminal or shameful in you or me, is all right and proper and even praiseworthy in them. You arrive at this conclusion, by the aid of your patent elixir or universal solvent: "They were *inspired*—therefore could do no wrong."

I have been occasionally much amused, at witnessing the shouts of victory, raised by many a Christian champion over the poor Jew as panoplied by Matthew. Thousands appear to be under the impression, that no other argument can be urged against the resurrection, than the one Matthew has put into the mouth of the Jew, and that when this is answered, victory is complete.

If there were nothing else; the account given by Matthew of the proceedings of the chief priests and the guard is sufficient to authorize us to brand him as an impostor. In the first place, how did Matthew know what transpired at the secret conclave of the chief priests? You may answer, that Nicodemus told him. Let that go. I am aware, that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus are represented as double-faced gentlemen. Can it be possible, that the most enlightened body of the Jewish nation would give money to soldiers to propagate a story, that carried an absurdity upon the face of it? The soldiers could not know who took the body away, if they had slept. Admit, that the soldiers were bribed to state that they slept, from which it might be *inferred*, that the disciples came by night and

stole him away. Could these chief priests have hoped that such a tale would gain credence? You say it is past belief, that a guard of Roman soldiers would all sleep, a want of vigilance being punished with death.—So do I. I say it is so incredible, that I cannot believe, the chief priests would have given money to the soldiers to put it in circulation.

You all contend, that the disciples had no hope, or expectation, or suspicion, that Jesus would rise, notwithstanding he had told them during a very few days, previous to his crucifixion, on five different occasions, that he would be put to death and rise again.

How happened it that the chief priests should have been suspicious of an attempt at resurrection? Could they have believed that there was a plan laid between Christ and his disciples that he should be crucified and they steal his body away, and thus found a new religion upon this piece of fraud. The supposition is absurd. These priests could not, therefore, have assigned his assertion as a reason why they wanted a guard. That could not have given them any suspicion of an attempt on the part of the disciples to steal his body away. It could have been no evidence to them of a conspiracy to practise a fraud on community. The notion that a man should agree to die, to enable a few friends to cajole the community, I repeat, is too absurd to be entertained for a moment. The chief priests therefore if they ever asked for a guard, (which I deny,) must have seen or learned something, or received some hint, that the disciples had this theft in contemplation, and must have assigned that as a reason to Pilate, when they asked for a guard, and not his assertion that he would rise. Having shown, that the conclusion the chief priests are said to have arrived at, was ridiculous and absurd, and therefore incredible, (to us,) let us see, if this alleged premise is true, viz: that Jesus did say he would rise. John, your best witness says nothing about it, directly, but he does say that, which indirectly contradicts it. He gives us to understand, that he and Peter required ocular demonstration before they would be convinced, that he had risen, and the reason he assigns why they were so hard of belief is, that they knew not the *scripture*, that he must rise again from the dead.—Now if Jesus had, according to Matthew and the other two, been telling them almost daily, during the past week that he would rise the third day; John never would have given as a reason why they were so hard of belief, that they had not known the *Scriptures*, but that they had forgotten what Jesus told them.

You may answer, that the disciples did not believe him. It is manifest from this expression of John, that even after his crucifixion and before his resurrection, he believed Jesus to be the Messiah. He certainly must have had as much faith in what he said, as what David or any other prophet had

said about him. It is strange indeed, certainly *improbable* that John should have forgotten such a wonderful declaration so recently made, and so frequently repeated, and that too, by a being that he is supposed to have believed was divine; and wholly incredible that he should have given the reason that it is said he did, for his scepticism, if the declaration had been made and he not forgotten nor disbelieved it. In truth, his scepticism is irreconcilable with his remembrance and belief of this declaration. Here is then a discrepancy between John and Matthew. And if John is to be believed, Jesus never said he would rise from the dead. The chief priests therefore could not have told this tale to Pilate.

These are not the strongest arguments against this tale of the guard.—And here I may as well kill two birds with one stone. You all aver, that it is wonderful that the apostles should have gone forth into the world propagating a lie, knowing that they should therefor be exposed to insults, persecution and death. I shall hereafter show, that those apostles did not proclaim these facts to the world—did not go into all the nations—did not found churches—did not suffer persecutions and (admitting all these,) did not *know* that they would be exposed, &c. In further reply, I ask if it be possible that these guards who are said to have witnessed all those prodigies at the sepulchre and who therefore must have had *knowledge* that Jesus was, what he said he was, could have gone into the city, and for a few pieces of silver, agreed to deny, that Jesus rose from the dead, being fully assured that he had risen and that such denial would subject them to eternal damnation. I may be answered, that this guard were Pagans, and knew nothing about Jesus or his pretensions, his promises or his threats, and that they supposed him to be one of their heathen gods, all of whom they held in contempt. Give this answer all the weight you please. The same cannot be made as to the chief priests. They believed that he had risen (according to Matthew,) and was therefore no deceiver—they were acquainted with his pretensions—were now convinced that he had power to lay down his life and take it up again—that he was the vicegerent of God—that he had the eternal destinies of man at his disposal—that he had denounced an eternity of torment to those who should deny his pretensions. Can it be possible, that men thus convinced, would not only deny themselves, but hire others to deny him? This is a question that every man can decide for himself. Argument is useless. Were I now to be fully convinced that an angel actually deposited the brass plates, where Joe Smith is said to have found them, and that Joe was divinely inspired to translate what had been inscribed thereon by the finger of God, I would become a Mormonite instantly. The wealth of the Indies could not induce me to assert and bribe others to assert, that Joe was an impostor. It is idle to talk to me of preju-

dices. Those of the chief priests were conquered—they believed; and no man ever yet believed as they are said to have done, who was active in denouncing Jesus. Those priests cannot be compared to the thousands of passive unconcerned believers of our country. The latter are not convinced that Jesus rose from the dead. They are only prepared not to *deny* it, but not prepared to *affirm* either way—many are hoping to be fully convinced of the fact, by some supernatural agent—others are putting off, to a more convenient season, the open confession and thorough obedience; but none could be found, who would pay me money to write this book, or who would write a similar one.

You cite the case of Judas against me. I reply that a most singular mode of answering an objection is to inform me that there are others much more formidable—to cite a case from which an argument of the same nature can be deduced, though of ten times the force. All men can judge of this. And can it be believed, for a moment, that a man who had heard another proclaim that he was a legate from the skies and saw him, in proof of his great pretensions, raise the dead, convert water into wine and cause fried fish and baked bread to grow five hundred fold; I say can it be believed that Judas, who had been convinced that Jesus was a being, whom the winds and the seas and all the elements obeyed, would have denied and betrayed him for thirty pieces of silver. I know it is said the devil entered into him. If these writers, by this expression, mean any thing more, than we mean by a malicious and wicked disposition, I answer as before, that they relate an incredible story, and fortify it by another unspeakably more incredible. If they mean nothing more, then the simple allegation is again before us, the truth or falsity of which we are to decide on.

As a last resort you may say, that Matthew does not give us to understand that the chief priests *did* believe. He means to say, they hired the soldiers to tell a lie. They must have believed, then, its opposite was true, namely, that the soldiers did *not* sleep—that the disciples did *not* steal him away. If they had believed the soldiers did sleep, they would not have bribed them to say so, and promised to save them harmless, but would have complained of them to Pilate and had them put to death. This would have been better proof of their sleeping, than any confession of theirs, and connivance at their guilt. How absurd to suppose that the chief priests could have hoped that such a tale could have gained credence as that a guard of sixty or one hundred men were all asleep at one time.

You also rely upon your commemorative institutions, baptism and the lord's supper. Commemorative of what? The first you say is commemorative of the burial and resurrection of Jesus, and the other of his death.

I will state the argument of Mr. Leslie in full. He lays down four rules as follows.

“ 1st. That the matter of fact be such, as that men’s outward senses, their eyes and ears may be judges of it.

“ 2d. That it be done publicly in the face of the world.

“ 3d. That not only public monuments be kept up in memory of it, but some outward actions to be performed.

“ 4th. That such monuments and such actions or observances be instituted and do commence from the time that the matter of fact was done.

He sometimes calls these rules marks, and his position is, that any fact, (alleged fact,) that has all four, cannot be false, though many may be true, that have them not. He then undertakes to bring the facts of the gospel within his rules, in other words to show that they have all the marks. He alleges, that these facts have the two first marks. What he means by the expression “Done publicly in the face of the world,” I know not. If he means *out of doors*, then, these facts have the two first;—but if he means, *in the presence of a whole people* or in such a manner that a whole nation must necessarily be conusant of them; such as the passage of the Red Sea by the whole Israelitish nation, or the war of our revolution; then, these gospel facts have not the two first marks. And I allege and will show in the sequel, that his mark, or rather his argument founded upon it, is good for nothing, unless he means “*in the face of a whole people, &c.*” I admitted, that if there had been a feast kept, in commemoration of the passage of the Red Sea, from the time it is said to have happened, it would have been almost demonstration, that such passage was effected, in the manner related. The murdering of the first born of Egypt could not have been witnessed by the people, nor is it pretended it was; besides it was done in the night time. So, it is not pretended, that any of Christ’s miracles were witnessed, or could have been witnessed, by a *whole* people. Mr. Leslie does not pretend that there were any monuments of stone or marble raised to commemorate any of these miracles; but that there were certain outward actions to be performed, such as baptism and eating the lord’s supper. Actions to be performed by whom and how many? The rule and the argument built upon it, to be of any force, must mean that they were to be performed *by a whole people*, and to commence at the very time, the matter of fact was said to be done.

None of the gospel facts have these marks. The people of Judea did not all eat the lord’s supper and meet together the first day of the week, to celebrate even the death of Christ or a thousandth part of them, at the time these matters of fact are said to have happened. You frequently bring up the anniversary of our independence, and treat it as if it was an

analogous case. Is it I ask? The people, the *whole* people of this great country, were all conusant of the fact of their being declared free on the fourth of July 1776; and from that day to this, this *whole* people of this *whole* country have celebrated that great event on that day in every year—a day, which they never celebrated for any thing before. Are the two cases alike? Some *few* persons, say one hundred and twenty, did not first assert the fact of our independence, and celebrate a day in commemoration of it, and finally persuade others to believe the fact and join in such celebration. The nature of the fact was such that they could not. The cases then are not analogous. If it had been alleged that Jesus had ascended into the air, in face of the world, and in the face of *day*, and shewed himself to *all* Judea, so that every individual there could have seen him and heard him declare audibly, “abolish the Sabbath, keep holy the first day of the week in commemoration of my resurrection;” and if the whole Jewish people had from that day, kept the first day of the week holy, and eaten the supper, in commemoration of this event and had also abolished the Sabbath, then you might have said, you had a case similar to the declaration and celebration of our independence. But what *is* your case? Your great miracle, without which all the rest are nothing, and which, you say, baptism was instituted to celebrate, was *not* witnessed or alleged to have been witnessed by *all the people*, but by a very few select or chosen ones—those few, who asserted the fact and endeavored to give currency to the assertion, by instituting some outward action. They are a small and despised party at first, they persevere and gain proselytes, each proselyte adopts the ceremonies of his predecessors, and thus it happened, that after one or two centuries a very small portion, of every civilized people, except the very people, among whom and for whom these great feats were done, performed a certain outward action (immersion in water,) in celebration as was then said of a burial and resurrection. Strange to tell, the same burial and resurrection are now commemorated by sprinkling a small quantity of water on the face, by the greater part of this small portion.

To show more clearly the fallacy of this great argument of Leslie’s, and that the gospel facts have but his first mark, viz: the allegation that they were sensible facts; let us suppose some man now to appear among us, who was born long before Jesus is said to have lived, let us suppose him to have been a great traveller and to have visited Judea, some three or four years previous to the commencement of Christ’s ministry;—and again, a few days after the great day of Pentecost. Let his journal read as follows: “Visited Judea—its inhabitants Jews, Romans, Grecians, &c., all devoted tenaciously to their respective religions.” Some fifty or sixty pages after this,

we find the following: "Visited Judea again, found *all* its inhabitants had abandoned their former religions, and had adopted a new one, the founder of which was one Jesus, who, these people all agreed, had declared himself a prophet and a son of God, had been crucified on a charge of sedition, had risen from the dead, and ascended to heaven, which ascension was in mid-day, and which was seen, as all these people declared, by the whole of them;—that while in the air, so as to be seen by all the people, he uttered in a voice, so loud as to be heard by all the people, 'I am the son of God, keep this day holy until the end of the world, by meeting together and eating bread and drinking wine, and be baptised also in commemoration of my burial and resurrection.' As all these people make the same declaration and are living in obedience to this injunction, I am convinced that the fact was as they report it."

This would have been a case, such as Leslie wished the one before us to appear—a case similar to the declaration of independence and the celebration of the day on which it was made. Let us now suppose our cosmopolite to hold this language in relation to his second visit "A few years afterwards, I again visited Judea and found a new sect of religionists there, who had all been Jews and were still very zealous of the law. They differed no otherwise from the Pharisees, than in this; the latter believed in the resurrection of the dead, because some philosophical Jew or Gentile had previously taught it; the former because their prophet, one Jesus, taught it, and because, as they affirmed, he actually had risen from the dead and ascended to heaven. Not more than one man in five hundred believed these facts. This ascension is said to have been made at Jerusalem, yet I could find none, who saw it, or who affirmed that they saw it, except a few of those, who had been his immediate followers, when alive. The chief of these, one Peter, told me, he did not show himself to all the people after his resurrection, but to a few only, who ate and drank with him, and that his ascension was in the night. They baptized those, whom they admitted into their party, in commemoration, as they said, of his burial and resurrection, and ate bread and drank wine on the first day of the week in commemoration of his death, which was on the sixth, and they had abolished their sabbath. They also affirmed, that for a year or two, before his death, he wrought many miracles in different parts of Judea; yet but very few believed in his pretensions, to establish which, these miracles were wrought; that one of his immediate followers, who had been an eye and ear witness of the whole of them, also denied and betrayed him; and that certain Jewish priests who had been fully convinced that he had risen from the dead, denied it and bribed certain soldiers, who saw the resurrection to deny it, notwithstanding this Jesus had denounced eternal damnation to all who

should make such denial." This is a caricature in these two particulars, only: 1st, the Jews who had become christians, had not abolished the Jewish sabbath. 2d, baptism was not instituted by Jesus or his followers, nor was it pretended by them, that it was continued in commemoration of any thing. But admitting these were commemorative institutions, do they prove any thing? Were they adopted by a whole people at one and the same time, in commemoration of facts which they all saw or were said to have seen? I hope I am now understood. The perseverance of the *twelve* apostles, the lord's day, and baptism will be noticed in their proper places.

Having finished our observations on the resurrection we will devote a few lines to the crucifixion. Whether there was a man by the name of Jesus crucified for sedition while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, is a matter of indifference with me. I would not waste five minutes time to prove or disprove it. Were it a material fact and disputed, I am bold to say, it is not proved by these evangelists—their statements destroy each other. If such a man was crucified, at the time they state, it is evident they knew nothing of the particulars. Many of their discrepancies have been noticed by others. I shall only call the readers attention to one that I do not recollect to have seen noticed. I allude to the position of the women while he was on the cross. Matthew and Mark say, that they, (the women) *stood afar off* beholding these things. They are particular as to names, Mary Magdelene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children. John says, that the mother of Jesus, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdelene stood *by the cross*, so near, that Jesus and his mother conversed together.

CHAPTER XI.

John's anxiety that all the prophecies should meet in Jesus, was so great, that he has run into a most laughable absurdity. He puts Jesus on the cross sometime in the afternoon (the rest before,) and tells us, that the Jews being apprehensive the three convicts would not die before the commencement of their great sabbath, besought Pilate that they might break their legs, which are not the seat of life, in order to kill them at once—that the soldiers brake the legs of the two, that were crucified with Jesus, because they were alive, but when they came to Jesus (this whole story is irreconcilable with the notion of Jesus being in the middle,) they brake not his legs because he was dead; but (because he was dead,) they run a spear into his *vital* parts. And all this breaking of legs, to kill some, and running a spear into another's vitals, because he was already dead, was to fulfil a pretended prophecy, that his legs should not be broken—a maiming which probably had never happened before to any convict. Now, if John had said the soldiers pierced the other two and broke Jesus' legs there would have been some consistency in the story, however wanton it might have appeared in the soldiers to have maimed him after death. And if the prophecy had been "his bones shall be broken," John might, with something like exultation, have exclaimed, "his bones were broken, a maiming that never happened before to any convict, but one that exactly meets the prophecy." As well might the friends of the last executed traitor, claim Messiahship for him, because his bones were not broken, as the beloved disciple of Jesus, for him.

This, you say, is a small matter. How dare you say, that any thing given by inspiration, is a small matter? Let us, however, proceed to what you are obliged to confess, is an important matter.

Matthew says, that Christ in his last interview with his disciples, enjoined upon them to go and teach *all* nations, baptising them, &c. Mark, has it: "go ye into *all* the world and preach the gospel to *every* creature." Luke: that it behoved Christ to suffer, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among *all* nations beginning at Jerusalem." According to all three, this was the only command he gave them after his resurrection. It was the last too, from all which these writers would have us to understand, it was the most important, and one which the eleven would be the slowest to forget, and the most eager to execute.—It was also a *new* command and what is more extraordinary was in direct

opposition to all his previous injunctions. He had told them, that he was sent *but* to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. When he sent these persons forth to preach, during his ministry, he told them expressly not to go in the way of the *Gentiles*; but to go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

The question now presents itself, did these Apostles obey this last, this important, this new, and to them, strange command? They did not commence, or dream of its execution, until eight years after its delivery. In truth, they *never* obeyed it. Peter did preach to some Gentiles, but not in obedience to this injunction. Instead of commencing to execute this order, we find Peter, a very few days after, declaring publicly, in Jerusalem, that Christ was risen a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto *Israel*. After the persecution that arose at the death of Stephen, we are told by Luke, in his Acts of the Apostles, that the thousands who left Jerusalem, went every where preaching the word, but to the *Jews* only, thus clearly evincing, that they had been taught by these same Apostles, that the Jews alone were interested in this gospel.

This is not all. In about eight years after the ascension, as appears from your own chronological table, while Peter was visiting the churches, which neither he, nor any other of the twelve had founded, he dreamed at Joppa, that a mighty sheet, full of living things, was let down from heaven, from which there came a voice, saying, "slay and eat." From this dream, and other wonderful circumstances, by him detailed, he was induced to go to the house of Cornelius, a Gentile. The first thing he says on meeting Cornelius, is: "ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for one, that is a Jew, to keep company with, or come unto one of another nation, but God hath shewed me, that I should not call any man common, or unclean," thus placing his justification, not on the ground of that express command from Christ, given in his last interview, but on his dream.

THIS is not all. The other Apostles call him to account, for his going to this Gentile. Can it be supposed, that they would call him to account for doing what their risen Lord, in his last interview, expressly enjoined on them?

THIS is not all. Peter as before, when at the house of Cornelius, talks about the sheet and its contents. If such a command as these evangelists speak of had ever been given, would not Peter, instead of resting his defence on the sheet, and prating about it, have said—"What! my brethren, call me to account, for doing what our Lord, the moment before his ascension, commanded us all to do! No, rather chide me, and stand rebuked yourselves, for not going about this business sooner. Our negligence is unpardonable."

There is this remarkable passage in Peter's speech on his arraignment—“Then *remembered* I the word of the Lord, how that he said,” what? Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature? No, nothing of the kind, but the following:—“John indeed baptised with water, but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost.” This *command*, to preach the gospel to every creature, could never have been given, or Peter would have remembered and quoted it here.

And *this* is not all. Paul was commissioned for the express purpose of preaching the Gospel to the gentiles, from which it is to be inferred, that no one before him, had received a similar commission. But, it is not left to inference. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, tells us expressly, that the gospel of the uncircumcision (to the Gentiles) was committed to him, as the gospel of the circumcision (to the Jews) was to Peter.

I am now prepared to ask you, if you can reconcile the declaration of Christ, that he was sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel—his injunction to the twelve when he sent them out, that they should go but to these same lost sheep—the declaration of Peter, that Christ was risen a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel—the persecuted converts preaching the word to the Jews only—the long delay of the Apostles in going to the Gentiles—the reason given why Peter went to Cornelius—his declaration on meeting him—the indignation of the other Apostles on hearing of this visit—his defence—the purpose for which Paul was called; I say, can you reconcile all these, with the declaration of the three evangelists, that the eleven were ordered by Christ, in his last interview with them, to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature? You cannot. There is falsehood somewhere. It is immaterial to me at whose door it is laid.

This is a proper place to establish the important position, that Paul was the author of the christian religion, as we now find it. Had it not been for this abortive apostle, this interloper, the christian religion would have been confined to the Jews, and probably have added one more sect to the number then existing among them. This man, Paul, (I shall never call him an Apostle,) held the Apostles in contempt, preached a gospel as different from theirs, as modern christianity is from Judaism—was hated by all the Jewish converts, and in danger of being persecuted by them unto death.—He was the first man who preached Christ to the Gentiles, although you boldly assert, that Cornelius was the first Gentile to whom the gospel was proclaimed. Paul, according to your chronological table, was converted about two years after the resurrection. And he tells us in his letter to the Galatians, that (God having thought proper to reveal his son in him, that he might preach him to the Gentiles,) he did not wait a moment, not even to

confer, or consult with the other Apostles, but went immediately from Damascus, where he was converted, into Arabia. Now for what purpose did he go into Arabia? Certainly to execute his commission, which was to preach Christ to the Gentiles. He then must have preached the gospel to the Gentiles sometime in the third year after the ascension. To suppose that he did not preach to the Gentiles before Cornelius was converted, is to suppose that this zealous, reckless individual, remained idle for six years after Christ, (as he says) appeared to him, and told him to preach to them; and also, that he went to Arabia merely on a tour of observation. His language is too pointed to admit of any such supposition, I will here quote the first, and part of the second chapter of his letter to the Galatians.

CHAP. I.

Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead,)

2. And all the brethren which are with me unto the churches of Galatia:

3. Grace be unto you, and peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,

4. Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God our Father:

5. To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

6. I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

7, Which is not another: but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

8. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

9. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other, gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

10. For do I now persuade men or god? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

11. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

12. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

13. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it;

14. And profited in the Jews' religion above many mine equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

15. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace,

16. To reveal his son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen: immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood;

17. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were Apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

18. Then, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

19. But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

20. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

21. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia:

22. And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ.

23. But they had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

24. And they glorified God in me.

CHAP. II.

Then fourteen years after, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas and took Titus with me also.

2. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run in vain.

5. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

4. And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.

5. To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

6. But of those who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person; for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:

7. But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;

8. (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

9. And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

10. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

11. But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

12. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles, but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

13. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him: insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

14. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, if thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

From this letter we learn the following particulars. First, that some persons had preached to the Galatians a different doctrine, (he would not suffer it to be called gospel) from the gospel he had preached. Second: that the gospel, that is, the gospel that *he* preached, he did not receive from man, but from Christ himself. Third: that God revealed his son to him, that he might preach him to the Gentiles. Fourth: that he did not consider himself under any obligation to confer with the twelve, as he held a commission distinct from theirs. Fifth: that some seventeen years after his conversion, he went up to Jerusalem, to compare notes with those who *seemed* to be *something*, (now mark the bitterness and vulgarity of the sneer: "whatsoever they were it maketh no matter to me,") from whom he could learn nothing; "In conference they added nothing to me." Sixth: that those who *seemed* to be *somewhat*, namely, James, Peter, and John, the most influential of the Apostles, had to learn from him, as he had received from Christ, a commission different from the one they had received. "In conference they added *nothing* to me, but *contrariwise*, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision had been committed to me, as the gospel of the circumcision had been to Peter." Is not this, of itself, sufficient to prove, that had it not been for Paul, the christian religion would have been confined to the Jews? But, seventhly: we learn that Peter, many years after Cornelius' conversion, was a Jew, though occasionally playing the hypocrite before the Gentiles, for which Paul chides him, telling him he did not walk uprightly, nor according to the truth of the gospel. Now think of this! Paul the abortive, dictating to Peter, the chief of the twelve Apostles, all of whom had been with Christ from the beginning of his ministry, and on whom the Holy Ghost had been poured out, dictating to Peter what was the true gospel!

It is manifest from this letter alone, that the present or Paul's gospel, was

not what Christ, or the Apostles taught, and that a war was then going on between the original Apostles on the one side, and Paul and his party on the other, the former contending that the Gentiles on becoming christians, should become Jews also; the latter that they should not. Paul being more talented, more learned, more persevering, and more industrious, having as he says, labored *more abundantly than all the Apostles*, was enabled to bring them to a compromise on this point. It was finally settled, that no Jewish burden should be laid upon the Gentile converts, but that they should become Jews, so far as to *abstain* from meats offered to idols, from things strangled, from blood; and from fornication. (It should not, be inferred that the Roman law, or religion permitted fornication.) But the Apostles never did yield the point to Paul, that a *Jewish* convert should be relieved from any, the least tittle, of the Jewish law. However, Paul kept up the war on this point, still contending, and preaching, every where, that the whole law was abolished, and that a Jew need not walk after it, telling him that he need not circumcise his children, until he drew upon him the resentment of all the Jewish converts, and especially of the members of the original church at Jerusalem.

All this is manifest from Luke's account of Paul's last visit to that city. He tells us, that Paul, or rather his friends, apprehended that violence would be done to his person by the *Jews*. We learn from the speech of James, found in the 21st Acts, that these *Jews* were his own converts.— This speech was made to Paul immediately on his arrival at Jerusalem, and is in substance as follows :

“ Paul! we have heard of you, and the doctrine you preach; we have heard that you tell the Jews every where they need not circumcise their children, nor walk after the law of Moses; ‘there are thousands of *Jews* here in Jerusalem who believe’ in Jesus, but are still zealous of the law; they have also heard of you, and your doctrine; it is very unpopular with them, and so are you; they will hear of your arrival, and will come together. Now something must be done to appease them. What shall that be? I advise that you play the Jew for several days, and then these exasperated christians, who are still *Jews*, will believe, that all they have heard about you and your doctrine, is a grand lie, and will be satisfied that you are still a good Jew and walk orderly, and keep the law.”

Paul took the advice, and did it. I do not cite this case *now*, to show that these holy and immaculate Apostles could resort to shifts and tricks, and double dealing, but to prove, that Paul was actually preaching a different doctrine or gospel, from the one preached by the twelve Apostles.

James does not hint to Paul, that he had any thing to fear from the disbelieving, but from the believing Jews. No doubt he was very sorry to see Paul, as he, (James) and his converts were living in great harmony with

the other Jews at Jerusalem; and he knew also, that Paul was always kicking up a dust wherever he went, and had made a fuss once before at this very city. The Jews at Jerusalem, no doubt, viewed all christians alike; they had become reconciled to the Apostles and their disciples, and had never heard that Paul was an innovator, in fact, an enemy to their much cherished law. Some Jews, (we are not told whether believers in Jesus or not) from Asia, who had heard Paul declaim in their country against the law, and on that account were hostile to him, on seeing him at Jerusalem arrested him, on a charge, (whether true or false is immaterial) of profaning the temple, by taking persons into it, that ought not to have been taken there. As no one of the Apostles is said ever to have visited Paul, after his arrest, either at Jerusalem, Cesarea, or Rome, or to have raised a voice or finger in his defence; it is fair to presume, that if they did not procure his arrest, they were not displeased at it.

But to the point. The talents, and energy, and intrepidity of Paul, finally overcame the weakness, illiteracy, and indecision of the Apostles, and a religion, called the christian, has come down to us, not as Christ, or any of his chosen twelve taught it, but as a restless, and, very probably, a disappointed Jew chose to make it. If you were to be asked, who first preached christianity to the Gentiles? you must answer, Paul. Who contended that Jewish believers should forsake the law of Moses? Paul. Who taught that the law was temporary and imperfect—a mere type? Paul. Were you, as a christian, to go to a Jew, and exhort him to forsake the law of Moses, and he should ask you, by whose authority you spoke? you must answer, Paul's. And should he ask, whether Christ or any of his chosen twelve taught any of these things? you must answer in the negative; not only so, but that they taught directly the reverse.

Paul is, then, the author of your religion. He founded churches, many churches—the Apostles founded none, except the one at Jerusalem. My position, that the Jewish converts, at the time my cosmopolite visited Judea the second time, had not abolished the Sabbath, is a corollary from the preceding argument. And let me add, that if you were asked, who abolished the Jewish Sabbath? you would be obliged to answer, Paul. No one of the witnesses of the resurrection ever preached any such doctrine.

I said, that baptism was not instituted by John or Christ, or his Apostles, or continued by them, as commemorative of any thing. Would you suffer me to go out of the book, I would settle the first position off hand; but I will prove from the book itself, that baptism was practised by the Jews before Christ's appearance; that is, that the Jews, were in the habit of frequently baptising themselves, or of being baptised, in order to effect an inward cleansing. When John came to the Jordan baptising, we are told, the

Jews sent certain persons to pump him. If this baptism had been a new thing, these persons would have been sent to ask, and would have asked him, "what new thing is this you are introducing;" as well as "by what authority are you doing it." But instead of this, among other things, they asked him, if he was a prophet? and he answering in the negative, (though Christ afterwards contradicts him, and says he was the greatest of prophets, and Elias to boot) they then retort upon him: and ask, "by what authority then do you baptise?" thereby intimating, that were he a prophet, it would be lawful for him to baptise, in other words, that prophets did baptise.— We are told also, that Nicodemus, in his interview with Christ, confessed his ignorance of the new birth, to be effected by water and spirit. Christ is astonished that the expression "being born again," should be new or strange to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. But if this expression, "new birth," or "being born again," was something new, and then for the first time introduced by Christ, it is absurd to suppose, that he could have been surprised at the ignorance of Nicodemus, although he was a learned man among the the Jews.

Now, as we are here in doubt, and the whole matter wants explanation; it is proper to go out of the book for it, for the same reason that we go out of it to learn why it was, that old bottles would not, in that day, hold new wine. In the one case we learn, that bottles were made of leather, and in the other, that when a Gentile was admitted into the Jewish church, he was baptised, that is, immersed all over in water, every part of his body being touched with it. He was then said to be regenerated—to commence his existence anew—so that his children, born before this, did not inherit—in short, all things past, to him, were as nothing.

Nicodemus, no doubt, knew all this, but he could not understand how a *Jew* was to be born again; and Christ being very fond of little equivoques, would not help him out of the difficulty, but upbraided him with ignorance of the Jewish law. He did not tell him plainly, that as Gentiles were born or brought into the Jewish kingdom, so Jews were to be born or brought into his. But, by his answer, he lets us know, that Gentiles were in some form, born into the Jewish church by water. From other sources we learn, that this form was immersion into it.

Before I can introduce direct proof from the scriptures, to support my position, it will be necessary to settle the meaning of the Greek word *baptism*. The controversies among the christian sectarians, have created this necessity. A more definite word cannot be found in any language. Strange, indeed, that volumes sufficient to fill this room, have been written in the controversy as to the meaning of a word, representing some definite, sensible, bodily action. A strong case this, to prove, that any human language yet known

is too frail and imperfect a medium for the communication of God's will to man. Your most learned Doctors agree, that the English word immersion, though of Latin derivation, best expresses the meaning of the Greek word baptism. As in our language, so in the Greek, there are certain words that may be said to have a definite meaning; that is, always used to express one and the same idea. In truth, every word in every language had originally a primary and definite meaning. Some are converted into, or become, what we call general terms, others not. Of the first class is the word *wash*—of the last, is the word *immerse*, or *baptise*, though in one or two instances this word is used figuratively in the scriptures.

To explain. The primary meaning of the verb *to wash*, is to cleanse, by the application of water, assisted by rubbing or friction. Thus, if I tell a servant girl to wash my towel, she understands me as commanding her to apply water to it, and rub it, until all the filth and dirt be out of it. Still we use the word wash to signify any cleansing, no matter by what means effected; and sometimes to signify a mere wetting, and sometimes the great force of water. Thus we say, "the shower has washed the mown grass," "the flood washed the mill-dam away;" so we can say, "wash yourself by being sprinkled, or by having water poured upon you, or by being immersed in water;" but we do not say, "sprinkle yourself by being washed," or immerse yourself by being washed," or "arise, and be washed, and thus baptise, or immerse, or sprinkle away your sins."

We have thus shown, that to baptise, as well as to sprinkle, is a *definite* term. The question now is, what is its meaning? No honest man can look me in the face, and say, it means any thing else than to immerse, or dip or plunge. And if the translators of the bible had been honest men, there would have been no difficulty at this day, on this subject.¶

There is a Greek word *nipto*, a definite term also; its meaning is the same as the primary meaning of our verb to wash, though applicable to the hands only. So it would be contrary to all rule to say, "arise, be baptised (*baptistheti*) and *nipto* away your sins," as much so as to say, "be immersed and scour away your sins."

All this is introductory to the seventh chapter of Mark, in which the question now under discussion, is settled in express terms, in the original. But because our translators have taken the liberty to translate the definite verb *baptiso*, by the general and indefinite English verb *to wash*; I have been drawn into this very tedious philological disquisition. I am well aware also, that unless I can shew, that the present translators make the evangelists speak nonsense, all my disquisitions will pass unheeded, by those who choose to call themselves unlearned. The passage, in this 7th Mark, to which I allude, is in these words, in our translation—"For the Pharisees

and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders; and when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not."

In the first place, let us inquire, what is meant by the word *oft*? Does the evangelist mean to say, that they washed their hands several times, before each meal? Grant that he does. Let us now read the passage with this substitution. "For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands several times, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders; and when they come from the market, they eat not, except they wash! Wash what? Their hands? Their face? How oft? or how many times? Was there less to be done, when coming from the market, where a superstitious Jew imagined that he might be defiled by the contact of thousands of unclean persons or things, than when he had been exposed to no such defilements? You must agree that something *more* was to be done, by way of purification, after returning from the market, than usual. But they washed oft, or several times, as a general rule, before eating; and yet, according to our present translators, they merely washed before they ate, after returning from the market. Why state an extra case, unless something extra the general rule by way of purification, was to be performed? It is at present translated, as if I should say: "as a general rule, I wash my mouth with my finger after every meal (I never did this, but have seen it done) but when I eat onions, I wash my mouth." Would you not be disappointed? Should I not raise expectations in you, by stating the extra case of the onions, that after eating them, I scoured my mouth out with a stiff brush, dipped in pounded charcoal?

It must be apparent to every one, that here is a false translation. I will now quote the passage using the Greek verbs. "For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they *nipsoantai* their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders; and when they return from the market, except they *baptisoantai*, they eat not." As Mark has used different words here, he intended to convey different ideas. *Baptisoantai* (a form of the verb *baptiso*) must have meant something more than *nipsoantai*, (a form of the verb *nipto*.) The Greek word rendered *oft*, is *pugme*, which means, *like a pugilist*, or *up to the elbows*. So the real meaning of Mark would be expressed in English thus: "For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands like a pugilist, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders; and when they come from the market, they eat not, except they immerse themselves, or are immersed, or have themselves immersed."

Your own learned Grotius, learned in the customs and antiquities of the Jews, tells you, that on coming from the market, (a foro) they purified themselves (*purgabant se*) by immersing their bodies (a *mersando corpus*.) See

Bishop Horne's work for this quotation from Grotius. See also the same work, for a quotation from Manonides, in which that learned Jew, particularly describes the immersion of beds and tables, by his countrymen—such as holding the bed by the fringe, and dipping first one end, and then the other, of the table, until every part should be once under water.

It having been thus shown, that the Jews, before, and at the time of Christ's appearing, were as run mad on the subject of immersion, as the Catholics ever were on the subject of sprinkling; the conclusion I drew from the colloquy between John the Baptist, and the scribes and pharisees sent to pump him, will not be considered far-fetched, viz: that prophets were in the habit of baptising Jews, for the purpose of effecting a moral cleansing. This was one of those institutions, that sprung up during the interregnum of four or five hundred years, immediately preceding Christ. The reply of John to Christ, "I have need to be baptised of thee," indicates clearly, that this baptism was no new ceremony; and also, that the greater the prophet or teacher, the greater the propriety of his being the administrator; and lastly, the fact, that Christ baptised, (for John states the fact twice positively, which is but once denied, and that in a parenthesis; a mark of spuriousness) is proof positive, that all reformers, or teachers, or prophets, at that day baptised—that baptiser and prophet, or reformer, were convertible terms—in other words, that the administration of baptism was an office or duty, without which, no one could aspire to the character of a reformer or teacher of a new doctrine. It was the ceremony by which a Gentile was initiated into the Jewish congregation or church. It was also the ceremony of initiation into the respective parties of John and Jesus. See John III. 22—29, and IV. 1, also, Acts XIX. 3. From which it is plain, that it was the ceremony of initiation, at that day, into any and every new sect or party.

John was not then the first baptist or immerser. After him Christ or his disciples immersed. They could not have done so, in commemoration of his burial and resurrection, which had not yet happened. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, did not say, "be baptised for the remission of sins, and also, in commemoration of Christ's burial and resurrection. No Apostle has ever hinted at such an idea. (It will be recollected that I do not include Paul among the Apostles.) Baptism is not, therefore, a commemorative institution. But admitting, that it was instituted by Peter, for the purpose contended for, on the day of Pentecost: for the reasons before given, it prove nothing.

Having bid Mr. Leslie farewell, we will pay our particular respects to John the Baptist. We are told by Luke that he was second cousin to Jesus—about six months the elder—that their mothers met while pregnant,

both having full and particular information as to the parts their sons were to enact—that they talked all these things over—that John while in the womb leaped for joy, at the salutation of her who was then carrying his future Lord. Now John may have forgotten all these things, but did his mother and her cousin Mary forget them? If they did not, is it to be supposed, they wholly concealed them from their sons? Had John never seen his cousin Jesus, till he saw him at Bethabara? Was he inspired to proclaim himself the harbinger of a Messiah, not having had the least intimation who *the* Messiah was to be. This is not probable. Yet, the evangelists, John in particular, wish to make us believe, that John the baptist, was wholly unknown to Jesus, and that the God of the universe, acted as master of ceremonies at their introduction.

CHAPTER XII.

Perhaps the most fatal discrepancy between the writers of the New Testament, is that respecting the time at which Christ is said to have made known his pretensions. And in this particular, each, as he is commonly understood contradicts himself. All assert, that at this baptism of Jesus, a dove appeared and sat upon him, and at the same time, a voice was heard from heaven, saying: "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." This was at Bethabara on the Jordan, where, we are told, thousands were congregated.

The first inquiry is, who saw the dove and heard the voice. You are all ready to answer, that the whole multitude there assembled, saw and heard. So much the worse for the evangelists, but not one of them says so. Matthew and Mark assert, expressly to the contrary, as to the dove, and leave it doubtful as to the voice. The language of Matthew is: "And lo! the heavens were opened unto *him*, (Jesus) and *he* saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon *him*; and lo a voice from heaven saying, &c." How did Matthew know this, if Jesus only saw and heard? An honest and fair construction will not make Matthew say, that the multitude heard the voice. Mark gives the same version of this matter. Luke tells us, that Jesus was the last who was baptised by John at Bethabara. The fair inference is, that no one, but the administrator, was present to witness the baptism, or the spiritual prodigies. John the Baptist tells John the evangelist, that he saw the dove, or spirit of God, descending upon Jesus, but says nothing about the voice. I am willing to admit, that it can not be fairly inferred from the accounts given of this transaction, that the dove was seen, or voice heard, by any other than Jesus and John. You all say, that Jesus was then and there anointed by God, with the Holy Spirit, it having then been poured upon him. He thence became Christos, or Christ the Anointed. If therefore, you contend that all Judea and Jerusalem, and the regions round about, saw this anointing, and heard this voice, you make the first three evangelists the most stupid and inconsistent writers that ever lived; for they all tell us, that Jesus kept this unction, and his sonship, a profound secret even from his disciples, till near the close of his ministry. With what propriety could he enjoin upon the twelve to tell no man, that he was Christ, the son of the living God, if all Judea and Jerusalem, and the regions round about, had seen the spirit of God constituting

him the one, and heard his voice from heaven, proclaiming him the other. John's first chapters are in confirmation of my construction; for in them we are given plainly to understand, that Andrew and Peter, and Philip and Nathaniel, did not know the character of Jesus, even after his baptism, till John informed them.

Now Andrew had been an attendant upon John, and must be presumed to have witnessed Jesus' baptism, and to have seen the dove and heard the voice, if the one was seen, and the other heard by all the congregation. But this is inconsistent with the baptist's saying to him—"Behold the Lamb of God," and giving him the reason why he knew it; and also inconsistent with Andrews running to find Peter, and telling him after his interview with Christ, and not before, "we have found the Christ;" and furthermore inconsistent with the reason given by Nathaniel, who was at Bethabara, and must have heard of these celestial prodigies, why he confessed him to be the son of God, viz: because Jesus saw him under the fig tree. God's voice would have been more satisfactory proof than that.

But John in his 5th Chap. tells us plainly, that the multitude did see the dove, and hear the voice. He therein represents Christ as endeavoring to establish his pretensions before a company of Jews. Granting Jesus his premises, his argument is very logical. He first lays down the undeniable principle, that the testimony of him who lays claim to a Messiahship, and the sonship of God, ought not to be regarded—that they ought not to rely upon his mere ipse dixit as proof of his high pretensions. This is all fair and proper. He then proves his Messiahship by appealing to his works. Then he states his sonship, by alleging, that the Father had testified of him; and proves it by appealing to the appearance of the dove, and to the voice from heaven. This was virtually alleging that a great portion of the inhabitants of Judea were at Bethabara to witness both, and that some of those present were of the number. I am aware, that according to our common translation, Christ is made to state the proposition, and then tell the people that they must depend upon his own ipse dixit for the proof, all which is in direct violation of the principle upon which he started. It reads thus in our common translation: "The father also, which sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape." This is stating a proposition, and making the utmost exertions to disprove it—an absurdity that no man was ever guilty of. It ought to read, as we find it in the translations of the most learned biblical scholars: "Did ye not, at a certain time, hear his voice—did ye not see his shape?" As at present translated, it is, as if I should say: "The President has spoken highly of me, though no man ever heard him say a word about me."

You are here in a dilemma. If you contend that all the evangelists are

to be understood as asserting, that the multitude saw the dove, and heard the voice, then the first three contradict, or are inconsistent with themselves; for they make Jesus, towards the close of his ministry, ask his disciples, who men said that he was. On the supposition, that this dove was seen, and voice heard, by so great a multitude, that Jesus could refer to them, before a promiscuous company of Jews, in proof of his pretensions, he could not, with the least propriety, ask his disciples this question. They are made to answer: "Some say Elias, some Jonn the Baptist." This answer is also irreconcilable with the aforesaid supposition. Peter, however, said, that he (Jesus) was the Christ, the son of the living God. Jesus then assures him, that flesh and blood had not revealed it unto him, but his father who was in heaven. (This is in direct contradiction to John, who tells us, that Andrew, a piece of flesh and blood, told this same Peter, that Jesus was the Christ.) I have clearly shown the folly and absurdity of this charge, on the supposition that the dove was seen, and voice heard by all the congregation.

If you contend, that the evangelists are not, when giving an account of his baptism, to be understood as asserting, that the dove was seen, and a voice heard, then you make John irreconcilable with himself, and all the rest; for no honest and rational man will contend, that the King's translation of the 37th verse of his 5th chapter, is correct; and in his first chapter he represents those who were at Bethabara, where Christ was baptised, as being ignorant of his divine character.

But, have all this as you please. Matthew and Mark represent him as working miracles, (not exactly for the purpose of producing faith, for his miracles were directly as the faith of the people—no faith, no miracles—much faith, many miracles,) and requiring faith of the people. Faith in what? That he was Christ, the son of the living God? By no means; for he carefully conceals, even from his disciples, his Messiahship and sonship, till near the close of his ministry. And when he ascertains that they understand both, he strictly charges them to tell no one that he was the Christ. Yet John gives us to understand, that Jesus divulged his real character in full, very soon after his first setting out, makes him declare to Nicodemus, that he was the only begotten son of God—to the woman of Samaria, that he was the Christ; and strongly contend before a company of Jews, that he was both the Messiah and the Son.

I have already mentioned many important particulars in which John cannot be reconciled with the others. I now state, and will prove, that on a fair construction, he contradicts Matthew and Luke, as to the place of Christ's birth, and descent. In his seventh chapter he tells us, that certain persons believed on him as the Christ, "But some said shall Christ come out

of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem where David was." This form of objection is equivalent to saying: "This man cometh not of the seed of David, nor out of the town of Bethlehem, and therefore cannot be the Christ." John does not correct them, and therefore, he is to be presumed as admitting the truth of their allegation, but denying their conclusion.

If the future historian shall write, that the people of the United States were about to support Daniel Webster for President, but some said, "does not the constitution say, that he must be a native born citizen of the United States; in order to be eligible to this high office," would not posterity believe, and be authorised to believe, that he was not born in the United States? They could have no other belief, unless the author should give the true place of his birth in some other part of his work, which John has not done as to Christ. I insist, that the statement by an author, of an objection, without an answer or denial, is equivalent to an admission of its truth. I must again remind the reader, that these evangelists did not write in concert, but independently of each other.

CHAPTER XIII.

I have already noticed one of Matthew's quotations from the prophecies, respecting a conception by a virgin. In his second chapter he introduces many others, all in this form: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying." As many of these quotations are evidently not prophecies, but matters of history, having no relation to Christ, your teachers have come to the conclusion, that Matthew did not mean what his words import, but that he quoted to show a mere *consimilarity* (I believe this is the word) of circumstances; in other words, that Matthew was another Dr. Pangloss, or Pangloss another Matthew.

A very learned Bishop, (Dr. Sykes) has lately confessed, that the passage in Isaiah, respecting the virgin, was not a prediction of Christ, and contends that Matthew did not quote it as such. His language is: "The evangelist, in citing this passage, (which, as appears by the context, concerned a child which was to be born *before* the land should be forsaken by Rezin and Pekah, who then invaded Judea, and overran it) only cited them (it) as words of Isaiah, remarkably agreeable to the miraculous birth of Jesus, and not as a prophecy of his birth. Matthew, observing the providential disposition of things, and seeing the surpassing and extraordinary birth of the Messiah, in so wonderful a manner, expressed it thus: "All this was done that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet:" but yet he meant no more than an *accommodation* of the prophet's words to the case in hand."

This learned Doctor admits the correctness of the position for which we contend, viz; that this child was born *before* the overthrow of Rezin and Pekah, and has the effrontery to assert, that Matthew did not quote the passage from Isaiah, as a prophecy of Jesus. If Matthew had used these words only, "All this was done that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet," there would have been some pretext, though as a school-mate used to say, "a precious little one," for the assertion, that the evangelist meant no more than an *accommodation*: but when his language is; "All this was done that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken **OF THE LORD** by the prophet;" for the doctors (Sykes is not alone) to insist, that Matthew did not mean to say, that the prophet spoke of, or had reference to **THE LORD**, is a piece of unparalleled, as well as unpardonable impudence. With the same propriety they might contend, that Matthew in the first

verse of his 5th Chapter, _meant to say, that Jesus *not seeing any body*, went *down* into the *plain*, and when he *stood up*, his disciples *departed* from him.

Matthew was so determined, that every act and movement of Christ, should be in fulfilment of some prophecy, that he has not only pressed historians into his service, but actually misquoted them. He says, that Christ was taken to Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a *Nazarene*." No Jewish poet, prophet, or historian, ever used these words, or words conveying the same meaning. The angel, according to the anonymous work, entitled the book of Judges, told the mother of Samson, that her son should be a Nazarite. A Nazarite was one of a religious order among the Jews; he was to abstain from wine and strong drink, and not to suffer a razor to come upon his face or head. For more particulars on this subject, see 6th Numbers. A person can be a Nazarite and live any where, but a Nazarene is one whose domicil is the town of Nazareth. You may call this a small matter, but it is sufficient for the condemnation of the whole book. What! an author, chosen by God himself, to give a true history of his son, resort to such low and petty tricks as this!

As the major part of these quotations have the same introductory words, viz: "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet:" who, I ask, authorised your doctors to say, which were predictions, and which were not? By what rule are we to determine? They ought to furnish us with some unerring standard, by which we may determine with certainty. This they cannot do. This Panglossism was a very happy discovery, for when driven from the position of prophecy, you mount upon it, and exclaim: "here we are safe—our authors cannot be accused of misinterpreting, or misapplying the prophecies, for they do not quote them as actual predictions, but merely to show a singular coincidence or consimilarity of circumstances; all which is equivalent to this; that the writings of the prophets, quoted by the evangelists as prophecies, are not predictions.

No Bishop in Christendom, twenty years ago, dared to have hinted, that the quotations from Isaiah, respecting the conception by a virgin, was not an actual prediction of Jesus. There are some references to the prophets to which this consimilarity principle cannot apply. The first in Matthew, is found in his 3d chapter, respecting John the Baptist. He is there said to be "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." And in his 11th chapter, he tells us, that he is also the person of whom it is written: "Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." The first of these quotations is from Isaiah, XL. 3d, the other from Malachi, III. 1.

As Isaiah is the most unintelligible of all the writers of either the New, or the Old Testament, except Micah; and as Matthew has told us that these prophets referred to the same person in the passages quoted, it will be only necessary to ascertain to whom Malachi had an allusion. And if I can shew, that *he* did not allude to John the Baptist, it will follow, that Isaiah did not.

In the first place, let me notify the reader, that Malachi, if our present translation be correct, is misquoted. His words are, as James' Bishops translated them, "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before *me*." The prophet continues: "and the Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

2. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers soap:

3. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord, an offering in righteousness.

4. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years."

According to Matthew's translation, God was to send some one before, to prepare the way for another. Admitting Matthew to be correct, the question now comes up, who was this messenger? and who was this Lord that was to come to his *temple*. I answer, that Zerubbabel was the messenger or Messiah, and Ezra was this Lord. Ezra did not return from Babylon to Jerusalem, until the *temple* had been rebuilt by Zerubbabel. He (Ezra) was the messenger of the *covenant*, He was to instruct the people, and did instruct them in the covenant, or law, (called Moses' law,) for "he had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." (See Ezra, VII. 10.) And he was authorised by king Darius, to execute judgment, even unto death, upon all those who would not obey the law or covenant. (See his 7th chapter, and 8th Nehemiah.) He was to be like a refiner's fire, and fullers soap, and to purge the Levites.

I will here quote the 9th, and part of the 10th chapter of Ezra, that the reader may be satisfied, that Ezra is alluded to by Malachi, as the Lord who was to come to his temple, and to be the purifier of the Levites, and that Zerubbabel was his fore-runner.

CHAP. IX.

Now, when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, the people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations,

even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.

2. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons; so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this tresspass.

3. And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head, and of my beard, and sat down astonished.

4. Then were assembled unto me, every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.

5. ¶ And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God,

6. And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush, to lift up my face to thee, my God; for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our tresspass is grown up into the heavens.

7. Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great tresspass unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is this day.

8. And now for a little space grace hath been showed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage

9. For we were bond-men; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem.

10. And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments,

11. Which thou hast commanded by thy servants, the prophets, saying, the land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness.

12. Now therefore, give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth forever; that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever.

13. And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God, hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this;

14. Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldest not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?

15. O Lord God of Israel, thou art righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day, behold we are before thee in our tresspasses, for we cannot stand before thee because of this.

CHAP. X.

Now, when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men, and women, and children; for the people wept very sore.

2. And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, we have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.

3. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God, to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my Lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

4. Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee; we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it.

5. Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they should do according to this word: and they sware.

6. Then Ezra rose up from the house of God, and went into the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliashib; and when he came thither, he did eat no bread, nor drink water; for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away.

7. And they made proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem unto the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together unto Jerusalem;

9. ¶ Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days; it was the ninth month, and the twentieth day of the month: but all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain.

10. And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel.

11. Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.

12. Then all the congregation answered, and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do.

13. But the people are many, and it is a time of much rain, and we are not able to stand without, neither is this a work of one day or two: for we are many that have transgressed in this thing.

14. Let now our rulers of all the congregation stand, and let all them which have taken strange wives in our cities come at appointed times, and with them the elders of every city, and judges thereof, until the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us.

15. ¶ Only Jonathan the son of Asahel, and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah, were employed about this matter; and Meshullam, and Shabbethai the Levite helped them.

16. And the children of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, with certain chief of the fathers, after the house of their fathers, and all of them by their names, were separated, and sat down in the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter.

17. And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the first day of the first month.

18. ¶ And among the sons of the priests there were found that had taken strange wives: namely of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren: Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib and Gedaliah.

19. And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass.

The prophecy next quoted by Matthew, is found in his 4th chapter.— He is responsible, although he makes the devil quote it. The words of his devil are: “If thou (Jesus) be the Son of God, cast thyself down (from the temple) for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.” I shall not permit you to resort to your consimilarity principle, for Matthew tells us directly, that some writer in the Old Testament had recounted a conversation between God Almighty and his son, in which the Father tells the son, that he would give his angels charge concerning him, when he should send him into the world on the great errand of reformation and salvation. So every reader understands him, though not one in ten thousand ever looked back into the Old Testament, to ascertain who was the reporter of this pretended conversation.

A great majority of this *enlightened* community will swallow a whale, rather than be at the trouble of a few minutes search in order to ascertain

whether it be necessary to swallow any thing. I will admit, that the Psalms, and all the poetry of the Old Testament, owing to a defective translation, are in many instances wholly unintelligible. Solomon's songs are acknowledged by your learned divines, to be a play, founded upon his marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh. On this supposition they can be made intelligible.

Take, for instance, the 6th Chapter. It commences thus: "Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? Whither is he turned aside, that we may seek him with thee."

This is said by the bride maids to the bride. She then answers:

"My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, to gather lilies."

Solomon is now discovered, or in the language of the stage, "enter Solomon," who thus addresses his spouse:

"Thou art beautiful, O my love, &c. &c."

The translators must have known all this. What then can be said of their integrity, who must knowingly have converted what was plain and intelligible, into a mass of unintelligible jargon, to confound and bewilder mankind.

The ninety-first Psalm, a part of which Matthew puts into the mouth of the devil, is evidently a dialogue, between David and one of his courtiers, and the Almighty. It is intelligible on this supposition, and wholly unintelligible on any other. It will be remarked, that God is made by all the Jewish writers, to hold conversations with his creatures.

I will now quote the whole Psalm as a dialogue.

David.—He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge, and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Courtier.—Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot,

against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

God Almighty.—Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will deliver him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.

David in this dialogue, states a general proposition to the courtier. The courtier flatters David, by making it applicable to him personally. God then enters and confirms the proposition, and its application by the courtier.

I know, I say I *know*, that every ingenuous reader will sanction this construction, and agree with me, that this Psalm, like many others, is a piece of loathsome adulation, written by some one of David's courtiers, (a blasphemous wretch he must have been) to tickle his vanity. Strange, that at this day, we should be gravely told, by men, who call themselves the salt of the earth, that this Psalm had reference to Jesus Christ, merely because one Matthew, in an age of perversions and panglossisms, said so.

I will now proceed to some quotations from the Old Testament, said to have been made by Christ himself, and shall shew, that he misapplied and perverted them. Before I enter upon this argument, it will be necessary again to remind the reader of the christian's universal solvent, viz: the taking for granted, that the evangelists were inspired, and that Christ was a legate from the skies, or the Son of God. I wish the reader to proceed upon the true principle, said by John, to have been laid down by Jesus himself, in his argument before a company of Jews.

Jesus says, that the 110th Psalm, beginning with, "The Lord said unto my Lord," was written by David. I say it was not. He says, that the Lord, who was to sit on the Almighty's right hand, was Christ, that is himself. I deny it. You christians settle this question off hand, thus: "Christ says it was written by David; Christ was the Son of God, therefore what he says must be true." Now the intelligent logician will reply: "The great question in debate, between the infidel and christian, is, was Christ the Son of God; and if the infidel can shew, that he falsely attributes the authorship of this, or any other Psalm, to David, and also puts a false construction upon it, it is permitted to him, by all the rules of fair argument, to do so. David was or was not the author of this Psalm; and it is not in the power of Jesus or the Almighty, now to make David the author, if he was not; any more than it would be in their power to make General Henry Lee commander-in-chief of the American armies, during the revolutionary war. And if the infidel succeeds in his attempt, he can most assuredly say: "Therefore your Jesus was not this Son of God."

In order that the reader may be able duly to appreciate my argument, he should be informed, that Saul, David's immediate predecessor, was aware, that David not only endeavored to succeed, but to supplant him, having brought over the unnatural Jonathan, the heir apparent, to his interests. Immediately after Saul's death, David usurped the throne. Several of the tribes at first refused to acknowledge him as their King. At this time he was in the dew of his youth, being about thirty years old. Like all the other deceivers and impostors of that day, he pretended that God frequently met with him, and revealed to him his will. These revelations he would report to the people, and dub them the *Statutes*, the *Law* and the *Word of God*. His strong hold, or fort, was on the hill of Zion. He was the Napoleon of the Jewish nation.

Now to the question. The Psalm is in these words:

PSALM CX.

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

2. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

3. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

4. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedec.

5. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

6. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

7. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

Let the reader carefully peruse this Psalm, on the supposition that David wrote it, and his first exclamation will be: "What horrid blasphemy!" On this hypothesis, David must have entered the court of heaven, and heard the God of the Universe, surrounded by his angels, addressing a being called his son, in the language of an earthly autocrat to his son, about to place him on the throne of some one of his remote provinces: "Sit thou my son on my right hand, and I will make thy enemies thy footstool:" that is, "Be loyal to me, and obey my *statutes*, and I will enable you to trample on your enemies, and 'stamp them as the mire of the street.'" What effrontery this, to put such language into the mouth of Diety.

Again. "I will send the rod of thy strength out of Zion, you shall rule in the midst of your enemies."

Here some of the heavenly courtiers may be presumed to have asked:—

“Zion! Zion! What is that?” Gabriel, who was frequently sent on business to this corner of his master’s dominions, may be supposed to have answered: “Zion is a little fort at Jerusalem, the capitol of a petty kingdom called Juda, at the east end of one of the seas of that little dirty planet yonder.”

The choir in reply. “Wonder what more he is a going to do for young master.”

Gabriel—Hark!

God Almighty.—Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning: *thou hast the dew of thy youth.*”

Choir.—When he shall be firmly seated on his throne, the people will be obedient. That is a truism that might have been spared; but our young master is a fine blooming young fellow, that is true.

Think of this my christians readers; a being that you contend was from the beginning, be said to be in the dew of his youth!

God Almighty.—I have sworn it, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedec.

Choir.—Who is Melchizedec?

Gabriel.—He was a petty burgomaster of this Jerusalem, when it was a mere hamlet, and called himself a priest.

Choir.—Our young master is to be highly honored—wonder if he will want to take any of us along, to wear mitres and chapeaux.

God Almighty.—Thou shalt be at my right hand, my son, and shalt strike through Kings in the day of thy wrath. thou shalt judge among the heathen, and shalt fill the places with the dead bodies, thou shalt wound the heads over many countries—(O! shocking!!)—thou shalt drink of the brook in the way, therefore thou shalt lift up the head.* (Most horribly impious to put such language in the mouth of Diety!)

Let us now read this Psalm on the supposition that it was an adulatory address to David, written by one of his wives or courtiers. The blasphemy in part remains, but the absurdity vanishes. The parasites of kings and emperors in modern days tell them what course of measures their majesties have resolved on, after their majesties have told them. In the days of the kings of Judah, the courtiers told their Jewish majesties, that the Lord would do so and so for their majesties, knowing full well that their majesties intended to accomplish these things for themselves. This was the language of adulation in those days, viz: “The lord will do for my

*Do not let me be understood here as ridiculing any thing but the low and grovelling notions of a God, that those who believe that he held the language attributed to him in this Psalm must entertain.

lord," that is, "The God of the universe will do for my lord the king."—So, "The lord said unto my lord sit thou on my right hand till I make thy enemies thy footstool," meant nothing more nor less than this: "The God of the universe said unto my lord king David, be loyal, and obey my law and I will enable you to conquer the heathen nations, that are around about you. "The lord will send the rod of thy strength out of Zion, thou shalt rule in the midst of thine enemies," is in plain unsophisticated English. "You, my liege will march your army out of the fort on the hill of Zion, when about to invade and conquer the neighboring tribes, and when you shall have conquered them, you will rule over them."

"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning—thou hast the dew of thy youth." That is, "You are still young, but thirty years old, (this having no doubt been written soon after Saul's death,) enterprising and talented. Your power will increase till those tribes who now refuse, will acknowledge you as their rightful sovereign.

"The lord hath sworn and will not repent: thou art a priest forever after the order of Molchisidec." David was anxious to concentrate in himself the powers of church and state and render them perpetual in his family; hence we find him on various occasions wearing the ephod, and calling upon God at the altar; and this Poet Laureat was in this Psalm furthering his views. The order of Melchisidec can mean nothing more than the kingly and priestly office united in one person. All men of this order are held as enemies to mankind. The Pope is the only priest after the order of Melchisidec now in Christendom.

"The lord at thy right hand," that is David at the right hand of God shall strike through kings—fill the places with dead bodies, drink of the brook and lift up the head.

That the reader may be convinced that this Psalm was written in the common adulatory language of that day, I will refer him to the interview between David and Abigail when she met him with the tribute. Hundreds of other passages might be cited to the same effect. She addresses David in the following language:

"Now therefore, my lord, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.

"And now this blessing, which thy handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given to the young men that follow my lord.

"I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thy handmaid: *for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house: because my lord fighteth the battles of*

the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee, all thy days.

“Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God: and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling.

“And it shall come to pass, *when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel.*

“That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but *when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thy handmaid.*”

There needs no comment upon this; a child can see the similarity and make the application. As a last argument to prove that this song was addressed to David by some flatterer about his court, knowing that it would please him and hence become a popular song; I will refer the reader to the 5th chapt., 1st Kings, 3d verse:—

“And thou knowest how that David my father could not build a house unto the name of the Lord his God, for the wars which were about him on every side, *until the Lord had put them under the soles of his feet.*”

Solomon here tells us, that the Lord performed to his father, what in this Psalm he is said to have promised. The phraseology of Solomon, “put them under the soles of his feet,” shows that he had reference to this very popular song, whose language is, “make thy enemies thy footstool.”

I consider this question as now settled in my favor, namely, that the author of this Psalm was not David, but one of his parasites—that it was not intended by its author to be understood as a report of a conversation between God and his son.

I am aware that the christian will struggle hard before he will yield the point. I care not how bigoted he is, if he be only intelligent, he will be compelled to agree with me. He will with great reluctance abandon his favorite theories and particularly the ingenious system of Paul built upon this Psalm and so fully elaborated in his letter to the Hebrews. But all must go by the board, Melchisidec, tythes and all.

Since we are upon the subject of tythes we will despatch it at once.—How Paul could say that Abraham gave tythes to Melchisidec, I cannot conceive, for if the writer of the book of Genesis does not say to the contrary, viz: that Melchisidec gave tythes to Abraham, there is not an assertion in the book. It appears that some marauders had come from the north and taken off the people of a few hamlets in the neighborhood of Salem (now Jerusalem,) and all their goods. Among the captives was Lot the neph-

ew of Abraham. Abraham with his retainers, pursued after the robbers and retook the captives and all the plunder. On his return he halted near Salem to refresh himself and his men. Melchisidec who was then the chief man and priest of this village, feeling under obligations to Abraham for having chastised these land pirates, went out to pay him his respects and carry him some refreshments. The language of the book is:

“And Melchisidec king of Salem brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the most high God. .

“And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth.

“And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

“And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

“And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted up my hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth.

“That I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich.

“Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eschol, Mamre, let them take their portion.”

This is all that is said of Melchisidec. Out of this small scrap has grown the tythe system. And upon a perversion of the 110th Psalm, in which mention is made of Melchisidec, Paul has founded an argument which goes to the destruction of the Jewish priesthood, but the tythes still maintain their ground.

But who gave the tythes, Abraham or Melchisidec? Read it over again. “And *he* blessed him.” Who was *he*? Here there can be no doubt.—The pronoun has relation to, and stands for Melchisidec. “And he blessed him and said, blessed be Abraham of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be the most high which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand, and *he* gave him tythes of all.” Can you say that this last *he* does not represent the same person that the first *he* did.

If you contend that here must be a change of persons and that the pronoun *he* in the last clause of the sentence is used for Abraham, because priests do not give but receive tythes; I reply that you must prove that at the time of this transaction there was a priesthood who received tythes—that the tythe system was then perfectly understood. If you can do this, I will cheerfully surrender the point. I do not say that you cannot, though I do not know that you can. Until you do I shall understand this passage

according to the plain import of its words, its grammatical construction and the circumstances of the case. Who had conferred a favor? Abraham. Who felt and expressed his obligations? Melchisidec. Who ought to have received tythes or tribute money? Abraham most certainly. David, before he was king, demanded tribute not merely for protecting the rich farmers and graziers that dwelt near his strong holds or lurking places, but for not plundering them himself. The same system has existed in our own day in Scotland, under the name of black mail. And is it unreasonable to suppose that Melchisidec made Abraham a handsome present for signally chastising these marauders and thus securing him against future onslaughts? What could have induced Abraham to give away the tenth part of the goods that he declared did not belong to him—of goods not one shoe-latchet of which he would retain from the former owners? What right had Melchisidec to them? Were these persons who had been plundered within his Dioces? Would he have received a tenth part of these same goods from their owners, if they had not been taken from them by these banditti? As Abram is particular in mentioning what he reserved of the goods and for what purpose he kept some of them back, he certainly would have included this tenth part among these reservations, had he given it to this priest.

But the language is “tythes of *all*.” Of all what? You answer of all the goods that Abraham had brought back. Can I not answer with equal confidence, “of all the goods of Melchisidec’s village.”

For what purpose and on what occasion Jesus introduced the first verse of this 110th Psalm I have not particularly brought to your notice. It appears that some Sadducees had been discussing with him the doctrine of the resurrection, whom he put to silence by a most singular argument, which I will presently notice. The Pharisees then took him in hand. And after some little sparring between him and a lawyer, he puts them this question: “What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?” That is, from whom descended. They answer “the son of David.” That is, he is to descend from David. He denies it. And asks “how then in spirit doth David call him Lord, saying; The Lord said unto my lord, sit thou on my right hand till I make thy enemies thy footstool.” He continues, “If David then call him Lord how is he his son?” And the Pharisees, we are told, were nonplussed, and dared not ask him any more questions. This is a specimen of Jewish argumentation—a sample of the fairness, and candor, and great logical acumen of Jesus, or rather of the hero of these evangelists. To confuse and embarrass an opponent by a mere verbal puzzle, was in the opinion of these writers, as it is yet of all low and vulgar minds, the perfection of logic. He, who could with the most ingenuity pervert the scriptures

and torture them to suit his purposes or support his side of any question was declared the victor. But why did Jesus wish to support the position that Christ was not to descend from David? I cannot, for my life, discover any motive, other than the vain desire of appearing victorious on the wrong side of the question. None is given. That Christ was to descend from David, all Jews as well as Christians contend. Matthew and Luke have given two long genealogies to prove that this same Jesus did descend from David, and might, therefore, be the Christ. I know that you will say that Jesus was here speaking of himself in his divine character, or alluding to his divinity.

If he was, why did he not say so? Why say one thing and mean another? Was it becoming a son of God, sent down from heaven to instruct mankind, to deal in dark hints and inuendoes. If these Pharisees were convinced by his argument, of the truth of his position, they left him under the false impression, false, according to your own creed, that Christ as a human being, was not to descend from David. How can you reconcile the deliberate making of false impressions with sound morality?

But this argument in point of vulgarity and disingenuousness is not to be compared to the one said to have been advanced by him against the Sadducees. He wished to convince them that the dead would rise; and the method he adopted was to prove, that some men who had died, had also risen, to wit: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The argument he advanced in support of this position, is enough to raise a smile on the cheek of gravity itself. We are informed when God met Moses in Midian, in order to identify himself as the same God whom Abraham, Isaac and Jacob worshipped, he exclaimed: I am (Jehovah,) the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. Therefore says Jesus, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, are alive, for God is not a God of the dead, but of the living. This present tense argument when reduced to proper form must run thus: *I am* (at the present time,) the God of Abraham, therefore Abraham *is* (at this present time.)—Little did Moses suspect, when this declaration was made to him, that it contained the doctrine of a future state or announced to him the resurrection of his progenitors. Little did the Israelites and Jews when speaking of the God of their fathers and of David, dream that they were at the same time preaching the great and leading doctrine of the Pharisees. Little did they imagine that from the simple expression, "Jehovah, God of Abraham," life and immortality would be brought to light.

If the present tense will bring to life, the past will certainly put to death. God spake these words to Moses, as found in the 6th Exodus: "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, (some time ago,) therefore, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, *were* (some time ago,) not now.—

You see they are dead, by the mere force of the past tense. The one is as powerful to kill, as the other to bring to life.

The truth is, that this argument cannot be considered as an ingenious school boy quibble, for the reason that the word *Jehovah* means *I am*. In order to have kept Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in their graves. God should, according to this sifter of words, have said to Moses: "I AM *was* the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob."

That the reader may be satisfied I am not misrepresenting this argument to the Sadducees, I will quote Matthew, xxii. 31, 32, and Mark xii, 26, 27.

"But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying.

"I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?—God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

"And as touching the dead, that they rise; have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

"He is not the God of the dead, but the God of living: ye therefore do greatly err."

The other argument put into the mouth of Jesus to prove a resurrection, (for there are but two,) is found in John, xii. 24, in these words: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Now we know that if a grain be dead either before or after it is put into the ground, it will not grow or bring forth fruit. Old Mr. Stump knew that when he boiled the seed rye, that he was to present to his neighbor in return for the splayed sow presented to him for a breeder. I am not about to discuss the doctrine of the resurrection. It is out of my range. But if it be as you all contend impossible to prove it, or conceive of it by the light of nature,—if our faith in this matter is to depend on revelation from which we can only be assured of it; why did Jesus undertake to prove it—why undertake to do what he could not accomplish except by a puerile perversion of Moses' writings and false physics. A son of God sent to reveal it would not have done so.

There is one prophecy quoted by Matthew, having the usual introduction, that I believe has not yet been placed on the list of panglossisms. I allude to that taken from xlii. Isaiah, found in xii. Matthew.

"Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased; I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles.

"He shall not strive nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

“A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

“And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.”

I will here quote certain passages from Isaiah, a perusal of which, I apprehend will convince the reader, that the servant of this quotation was Jacob or Israel. If these shall not convince him, I request him to read carefully from the xli. to the xlvi. Isaiah, inclusive.

“But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen; the seed of Abraham my friend.

“Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant: I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. [Isaiah xli., 8, 9.]

“Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen;

“Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun whom I have chosen.

“Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant; O, Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.” [Isaiah xliv., 1, 2, 21.]

“Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he: I am the first, I also am the last. [Isaiah xlvi., 12.]

If it be still insisted that this servant was an individual, that individual must have been Zerubbabel.

As the Jews returned to Jerusalem without noise or tumult, or bloodshed, so their leader Zerubbabel, who is sometimes called God’s chosen servant, as well as the whole nation, was represented as averse to strife and bloodshed. However, in the verses quoted by Matthew, I have no doubt, and think the reader will have none after a due examination of Jeremiah, Isaiah, Haggai, and Zachariah, that Isaiah alluded to Jacob or the house of Israel, and not to an individual.

I will now notice another quotation by Jesus, from 118th Psalm: “The stone which the builders refused, is become the head of the corner.” If I understand him, he applies this to the Gentiles, that is, they were the stone that had been refused, but were to succeed to the Jews in what you call God’s favor. This is so unlike and so diametrically opposite to other expressions attributed to him, to which I have called your attention, that, I cannot but think it an interpolation. I have this further reason for thinking so. Peter applies it to Christ, and calls him the stone which the Jews refused.

However, have it as you please. My object is, to show it was a prophecy of nothing. These Psalms are called David’s Psalms, though it is admit-

ted that there are many he did not write. This one is attributed to him by your divines, that is, to no one else, but there is no doubt, it was written for, or by, King Hezekiah. To be convinced of this, the reader has only to read the 20th Chapter, II. Kings; 38th Isaiah, and the Psalm itself. All which I would transcribe, were it not that it would appear like book-making. It appears, that Hezekiah was sick, and Isaiah told him, from the Lord too, that he would surely die, and left the room. The King prayed for restoration to health, turning his face to the wall; and the Lord answered his prayer. Isaiah had not got out of the court yard, before the Lord told him he had altered his mind, and would restore the King. Isaiah returns, and informs the King of this change of purpose. The King is greatly rejoiced, and promises, that he will praise God all the days of his life. His language is a little remarkable, as furnishing proof, not only that he was to make and sing songs or Psalms, for this recovery, but that he had not learned that any of the dead had risen, or would rise. He says:

“For the grave can not praise thee; death can not celebrate thee; they that go down into the pit, cannot hope for thy truth.

“The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known thy truth.

“The Lord was ready to save me; therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord.”

Now for the Psalm, the whole of which I will transcribe,

PSALM CXVIII.

O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good, because his mercy endureth forever.

2. Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth forever.

3. Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth forever.

4. Let them now that fear the Lord, say, that his mercy endureth forever.

5. I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place.

6. The Lord is on my side; I will not fear; what can man do unto me?

7. The Lord taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.

8. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man:

9. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.

10. All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.

11. They compassed me about: yea, they compassed me about; but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them.

12. They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the Lord I will destroy them.

13. Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall: but the Lord helped me.

14. The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

15. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.

16. The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.

17. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord,

18. The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.

19. Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord:

20. This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter.

21. I will praise thee, for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

22. The stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner.

23. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

24. This is the day which the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it.

25. Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord; O Lord I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

26. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord; we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.

27. God is the Lord, which hath showed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.

28. Thou art my God, and I will praise thee; thou art my God, I will exalt thee.

29. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

This I contend is one of the songs which Hezekiah promised to have sung to stringed instruments, all the days of his life, for his wonderful recovery. Compare it with the chapters before referred to, and see if it does meet his case.

“I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord: the Lord hath chastened me sore, but he hath not given me over to die.” This shows that the author had been very sick, and that he had determined to praise God, for his restoration.

“Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord: the gates of the Lord into which the righteous shall enter, I will praise thee; for thou hast heard me, and become my salvation.” That is, because the Lord heard his prayer, when he was sick, and restored him to health, he would praise him. And what comes next? Why the famous text about the stone, to wit:

“The stone which the builders refuse, is become the head of the corner.” What an abrupt break off is here according to Matthew and his hero—a jump from an account of his recovery from a bed of sickness, to a prediction of the church of Christ, or Christ himself. And what follows?

“This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.” That is, my recovery was marvellous. What an isolated prediction this must be. You ask, what it was, if not a prediction? It must have been one of those adages or saws, among the Jews, (such as are found among every people,) used to express a recovery of a person from sickness to health, whose life had been despaired of, as had been the case of Hezekiah. We have hundreds such. “Whip the devil round the stump”—“Great cry and little wool”—“Hold with the hare, and run with the hounds”—“Gave him the bag to hold”—“Kicked the bucket”—which last is applicable to the case of a King, or any other individual, who does *not* recover from a sickness: but of whose origin or derivation not one in ten thousand (myself among the rest) can inform you: but be careful how you use it, as it may become one of the foundations of some religion, some thousand years hence.

CHAPTER XIV.

For the sake of variety, I will take up the history of Paul, as found in the Acts of the Apostles, and show that it cannot be true.

In the first place, I remark, that Judea, at this time, was a Roman province, and that the Governors sent there from Rome, appeared to have absolute power—the Jews had no political or civil power whatever—they dared not take down the bodies of convicts from the cross without leave from the Roman Governor. These Magistrates in all the provinces looked upon the quarrel between the Jews and Christians with perfect indifference and contempt, and would not take cognizance of any charge of heresy brought by one Jew against another, or by a Jew against a believer in Jesus, but seemed to be impartial between them: they understood the rights and privileges of the citizen, and were disposed to protect him in both, as in the case of Paul, when he was arrested in Jerusalem, and his life threatened by a mob. It would seem that the Romans so far respected the superstition of the Jews, as to protect their temple from profanation. The temple guard was composed of Roman soldiers, and the charge against Paul—the one on which he could have been tried and punished—was the taking persons into the temple that ought not to have been taken there. All these particulars we learn from the book itself.

Secondly: Paul was a Pharisee, the disciple of Gamaliel. The Pharisees, believing in angels and spirits, and the resurrection of the dead, did not persecute the christians, but the Sadduces, who believed in neither, we are told, did.

Luke first introduces Paul to our notice, as the young man who held the clothes of the *murderers* of Stephen. I know your book says *witnesses*, and from this word the careless reader takes up the impression, that Stephen was put to death according to the form of law. It appears that a company of Jews were offended at Stephen for a speech he made to them, and dragged him out of the city, and there put him to death, by stoning.—There is nothing remarkable in this. Riots and murders are no uncommon occurrences. But the impunity of these murderers, and their accomplices if known, is irreconcilable with our notions of the police of a large city, under a Roman Governor. But you say he was before the council. What council? A council of Jewish priests. Was this council a judicial tri-

bunal? Had it the power of life and death? Had it the power to execute its decrees affecting life, or even the liberty of the citizen. You know it had not.

We are next told, that Paul was making havoc of the church—entering into every house, and haling men and women to prison—that anxious to extend the field of his operation, he went to the Chief Priest, and obtained a warrant from him to seize all christians he might find in Damascus, and bring them bound to Jerusalem. In his speech before Agrippa, he says he received authority from the chief priests to shut up the christians in prison, and when they were put to death, he gave his vote or voice against them.

Can Luke be reconciled with the others, or even with himself? Are not these statements, respecting Paul, irreconcilable with the political state of Judea at that time? Let us suppose, Paul presenting a christian to a Roman jailor for incarceration. The jailor asks for his mittimus. Paul shews him the warrant from the chief priests. The jailor replies, that he acknowledges no such authority—that he does not know this body as a judicial tribunal, that heresy is no crime, and consequently he cannot receive the prisoner. Can it be believed for a moment, that the chief priests of Jerusalem had cognizance of crimes, affecting life or limb, and that their jurisdiction extended to Damascus. Would a Roman Governor or chief captain in his absence, who thought that christianity was a mere question of the Jewish law, and not worthy of death or bonds—who would drive from his court a complainant preferring it as a charge—who would protect this same Paul, after he had become the great champion of the cross, from the violence of a mob, and order an escort of 470 men to accompany him from Jerusalem to Cesarea, that he might not be assassinated by the enraged Jews; I say, would such a Governor, suffer these same Jews to drag men and women to prison, and murder them, having no accusation against them, of which he would take notice, “but certain questions of their own superstitions.”

To what tribunal did Paul belong when he gave his vote that the christians he had immured, should be put to death? Did mob law prevail at that day, in that great city? Were an enraged populace, under the eye of the regularly constituted authorities, suffered to put to death any and every individual that might be obnoxious to them? Can it be believed that such outrages as the murder of Stephen, were common and frequent at Jerusalem, and the actors suffered to go unpunished. Luke tells us so, and yet this Luke tells us that, which renders all such allegations wholly-incredible.

It will be remembered, that Paul is made to say, he was a Pharisee, a disciple of Gamaliel. When he was brought before a Jewish council to be examined, that the Roman Governor might know of what he was accused,

he relies upon his Pharisaism to ingratiate himself with those of the council who were of this sect. It is true, as he afterwards confesses, that he played off a little finesse upon them. shifted the question, and put them on a false scent; stating, that he was charged with preaching the doctrine of the resurrection, whereas, (as he well knew) the real charge, whether true or false, was a profanation of the temple. This piece of stratagem succeeded, for we are told, the Pharisaical part of the court, arose and said, they found no fault in him. Now I ask, if it is not incredible, that a young pharisee of the strictest sect, should be banded with his bitter enemies the Sadduces, in persecuting the christians, who taught the great and leading doctrine in which he had been educated, and for teaching which, the other Pharisees were well disposed towards them, and particularly Gamaliel, at whose feet he had been educated. For we are told that this learned doctor not only dissuaded the Sadduces from further molestation of the christians, but recommended mild measures towards them.

What could have been Paul's motive? The christians differed from his party only in this, that they believed in a resurrection, because Jesus taught it, and, as they alleged, proved it by risng himself. Both were still zealous of the law. We would suppose, that the Pharisees would have been pleased with this accession to their party, and with this further alleged proof of the truth of their great and leading tenet. And so they were. Paul is the only exception. His singularity is not attempted to be accounted for by Luke, nor can it be now, on rational principles, by your greatest divines.

John informs us, that Pontius Pilate was willing to deliver Jesus over to the Jews, to be judged or condemned, according to their own law, and that they refused, saying—“*It is not permitted us to condemn any man to death.*” How can you reconcile Luke's account of Paul's making havoc of the christians, haling men and women to prison, and giving his voice against them, when they were put to death, with this declaration of the Jews, in answer to Pilate?

We cannot learn from the book, with certainty and exactnes, the extent of jurisdiction, belonging to a Governor, stationed at Jerusalem. But Luke in his gospel gives us plainly to understand, that the province allotted to him, did not embrace Damascus: for he tells us, that Pilate ascertaining that Jesus was from Galilee, handed him over to Herod, as Galilee was in his (Herod's) jurisdiction. And he also lets us know, that at the commencement of Christ's ministry, which could not have been more than a year or two before Paul commenced his persecutions, Pontius Pilate was Procurator of Judea, which never embraced Damascus, that that this same Herod, tetrach of Galilee, and Lysanias of Abiline, which did embrace Da-

mascus. Here I ask, if it is credible or probable, that Lysanias, or any other tetrach of Damascus, would suffer a young hot-blooded Jew from Jerusalem to come into his territories—load his citizens with chains, and drag them from their homes? The idea is preposterous.

Thus much as to Paul's persecutions. I will now compare Luke's account of his proceedings after his conversion, with the one given by Paul himself, in his letter to the Galatians.

In the 9th Acts we are told, that immediately after he was struck dumb, Paul was taken to Damascus, where he was baptised, and that on receiving meat he was strengthened.

“Then Saul was certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

“And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of Cod.

“But all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on his name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

“But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews, which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

“And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him.

“But their laying wait was known of Saul; and they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

“Then the disciples took him by night and let him down by the wall in a basket.

“And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

“But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoke to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

“And he was with them coming in, and going out at Jerusalem.

“And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: and they went about to slay him.

“Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.”

After the reader has carefully examined this extract, I wish him to determine how long it must have been, on a fair and reasonable construction of this passage, from the time of this conversion, to Paul's return to Jerusalem. Luke says he was certain *days* with the disciples before he began to preach, and that after *many* days the Jews sought to kill him, watching

the gates day and night to apprehend him, and that his friends finally let him down in a basket out side of the wall when he went to Jerusalem.— How long was it I ask? We never make use of the term days when we speak of a period of time equal to a month, We must therefore conclude, it could not have been a month from the time of his baptism till he commenced preaching—nor a month from that time till he was on his way to Jerusalem. But say it was six months, (no man can ask more,) from the time of his leaving Jerusalem, till his return to that city. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, says expressly, that he did not go from Damascus to Jerusalem, immediately after his conversion, but went into Arabia, and then returned to Damascus, and then, after three years, that is, three years after his return to Damascus, he went to Jerusalem. It was, then, more than three years according to Paul, before he went to Jerusalem. How much more we do not know, for he does not tell us how long he was in Arabia. Paul, or his parasite must state falsely here—both statements cannot be true. But this is not the main point in which they conflict.— Luke says, that on Paul's return to Jerusalem, he was coming in and going out with the apostles, and spoke so boldly that the Jews there also sought to kill him, which his brethren hearing, conducted him to Cesarea, and sent him home to Tarsus. Now Paul in this same letter informs us that on his first visit to Jerusalem, after his conversion, he was *incog*—that he went to see Peter only, but by accident saw James, but no other of the apostles—that after his leaving there, he was *unknown by face*, to the churches of Judea; only they had *heard* that he who once persecuted now preached the gospel. Luke says, the great church of Judea *knew* Paul *by face*, and *knew* that he preached. Paul says they had only *heard*. If you contend that there is no discrepancy as to the time of this visit, you must admit that there is, as to the facts attending it.

CHAPTER XV.

Much stress has been laid on the disinterestedness of the apostles. I have already alluded to this argument. The assertions of your divines, as to their sufferings, journeys, labors and persecutions, and martyrdoms, are gratuitous. There is no warrant for them in your scriptures. Allowing the historical part of the testament to be true, (miracles always excepted,) I now proceed to show that the twelve apostles, were not merely fanatics, nor men actuated by those motives of self common to our species, but that they were villains of the first water, hypocrites, swindlers, and murderers.

This is a serious and startling charge, but if I do not make it good, I stand convicted of baseness of heart or obliquity of intellect. Bear in mind, that in matters of fact, mathematical certainty is not to be expected. I am now to make out a highly *probable* case—to show that it is more probable they were villains than saints.

It is admitted by all of you, that they entered the service of Christ, and continued his followers, out of worldly and interested motives, and those only. Stars and garters, and all the paraphernalia of a splendid court, were dancing before their delighted imaginations. They expected and were made to believe, or (if you like the expression better,) *did* believe that Jesus would become a King in Judea, and they Lords and Dukes, and grandees of his court. I need not quote from the gospels to prove this. The question now arises; when did they become disinterested saints—spiritually minded men. You answer, at the resurrection or ascension, or outpouring of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost. I have already shown there was no resurrection, no ascension, and consequently no affusion of the Holy Spirit,

Here, however, you introduce your great argument, somewhat in this form: “Can it be believed that a few ignorant and uneducated men, would have had the boldness and assurance to have proclaimed these great facts in the face of the Jewish people, if they were not true? Is it not a miracle that such men would have asserted these falsehoods, and built a system of pure morality upon them? Is it not a miracle that these men should have endured penury, want, contumely, stripes, and finally, death itself, in defence of what they must have known to be falsehoods? How can you re-

concile the the purity of their lives with the continual asseveration of a lie. Reasoning thus from the well known principles of human nature, and human action, we must come to the conclusion that the facts were as they stated.”

All this is very pretty, and would be very strong if the premises were true: but these apostles were not reduced to penury, did not journey, and labor, and toil, and endure privations—did not receive stripes, except in one instance—did not suffer martyrdom in the cause of christianity. There is not the least hint in the scriptures that one of them ever left Jerusalem after Pentecost, except John and Peter, both of whom went down about thirty miles into Samaria, to confirm a few disciples that Philip the deacon had made and baptised, and the latter of whom went down through all parts, *after*—mind that—after the churches had rest, that is, after all danger was over, to visit those churches that the disciples—not the apostles—but the churches that the *disciples* had established—those disciples that fled from Jerusalem on account of the persecution that arose after the death of Stephen. One of the letters ascribed to Peter, is dated at Babylon. These are all the travels or missionary tours of all the apostles that the book gives us any account or intimation of. Not a single church out of Jerusalem unless Cornelius and his family be called one, was founded by any apostle.

The scriptures are not altogether silent on this subject; for Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, tells us that on his second visit to Jerusalem, John, Peter, and James, who were pillars, were there. This must have been nineteen years after the ascension, on the supposition that Paul was converted in the third year thereafter; as he tells us he went there three years after his conversion, and then fourteen years thereafter, he made a second visit. Luke in his 15th chapter says, that Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem, to refer the Gentile question to the apostles, that they found there the *apostles* and elders—and the *apostles* and elders wrote a letter, &c., &c. According to your chronological tables, this journey was made in the year 51, eighteen years after the ascension. Luke also tells us they were all there on Paul's first visit. Thus we find these apostles at Jerusalem, in the fifth and nineteenth year after the ascension, and as we are no where told they ever left that city, we are authorised in the conclusion that they did not. But this is not all. It seems that persecution could not drive them from it; for when the disciples they had made there, were compelled to leave their homes in consequence of a real or sham persecution, the apostles remained. All the Christians fled *except* the apostles. What has become of the journeys, the labors, the fatigues, the penury, the starvation, the watchings, the contumely, the stripes, the per-

secution, and the martyrdoms of your great champions of the cross!—Where shall I find them? Will you direct me to that huge pile of pious frauds and forgeries, called the books of the fathers? Bring them forward entire—not a scrap here and there from this author and from that. Let your missionary and bible and other societies for the spread and advancement of the gospel, publish one, or some, or all of these works and present them to the people, if, in their opinion, they will aid in establishing its truth. They will not be guilty of so suicidal an act. They know full well there is no man in our country so weak as not to discover that the authors are liars and impostors, and, consequently, not entitled to the least credit whatever. Such a step as a dissemination of these works would be a death blow to their religion.

Let us return to the question as to the time when the selfishness of these apostles was converted into disinterestedness; for one position of your argument is that they were disinterested, and had the present and eternal happiness of their fellow beings only in view in the promulgation of these facts. I answer never: and affirm that man cannot conceive of a situation presenting stronger temptations, or more powerful motives to fabricate falsehoods and adhering to them with pertinacity, than that in which the apostles found themselves on the night succeeding the crucifixion.

They had left *all* to follow Jesus—their wives, kindreds, and friends, and no doubt, in opposition to their wishes, and in spite of their most earnest remonstrances. They were undoubtedly, apprised, that their friends and neighbors looked upon them, as the kindred of Jesus looked upon him, as beings demented—had heard their jeers, and taunts, and gibes, and listened to their insulting inquiries, as to what places they were respectively to occupy, in the new and splendid court about to be established.

Their great leader died—their hopes were blasted. Try to conceive of the intensity of their chagrin and mortification—their horror at the thought of meeting their good-natured friends. What must have been their several self communings. Let us listen to some one of them, say Peter, in soliloquy.

“He is dead, and I am not a prince—my friends told me it would be so, they ridiculed the pretensions of our leader, but I heeded them not. But now!—the thought drives me to madness—Can I go for home? The citizens of Bethsaida will meet me in mock procession—present to me mock petitions, and in mockery question me, as to where I shall establish my court—what is to be the fashion of my coronet, the length of my batoon, and the dimensions and color of my state robe. I will not see my friends, unless something can be devised, that shall remove this stigma. Stop!—A thought strikes me.—He shall be our King “although he be dead”—a

King in heaven, and we his vicegerents on earth—he shall rise from the dead, and ascend to heaven, and we will all say we saw him, and make some of the women say so too, and we will persist in the assertion even unto death—better to die, than to live and have the children point at us, and say: “there goes one of the dupes, there goes his grace, Prince Peter.”

Is this unnatural? Is it not just such a soliloquy as any man, under the same circumstances, would make? Were not here motives incomparably strong, to induce the Apostles to fabricate falsehoods? I do not introduce them as proofs that Jesus did not rise, I have argued that question already, but to rebut your arguments, bottomed on the position, that the Apostles had no motives for asserting, and persisting in a lie.

I will now trace the history of these men more particularly, with a view to the question of disinterestedness. On the day of Pentecost, the first of their commencing operations, we are told they made about three thousand converts. (I have agreed to admit every thing but the miracles) In a few days thereafter, we hear of five thousand *men*, more, believing—then that the number of disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly, even a great company of priests became obedient to the faith. The number of men must have been about ten thousand. This is the estimation of your most learned bishops. All of these sold all their possessions, and laid the price at the Apostles’ feet, thus making them the depositaries of a common-fund—each one gave up all he had—called nothing his own.

On the supposition they had fifty dollars a piece, and this is very moderate, the common fund must have amounted to half a million, all ready cash too—a very pretty sum for twelve poor fishermen to have the control of—a very tempting bait indeed. What became of these deposits?

Before proceeding to answer this question, let us review the case of Annanias and Saphira. It appears they sold their possessions, but kept back part of the price in their own hands. Peter was made acquainted (by whom we are not informed) with this retention. He charges it home upon Annanias in a very sharp speech. Annanias thereupon, falls down dead at his feet. This must have been a very *sharp* speech. Some young men came in, and wound him up, and carried him out *instantly*, and buried him. I say *instantly*, because they could not have dug the grave, and covered him up, and been back in three hours, unless they had taken him up and carried him out immediately after he fell. On their return, or a few moments before, which was about three hours after Annanias died, his wife, rather, his widow, came into the presence of Peter, not knowing what had happened. Yet, we are informed, that great fear came upon *all them* that had heard of Annanias’s death. Who were *all them*? How many *had*

heard, on whom such great fear had come? Sufficient time had not elapsed for the news to have reached far, before another similar catastrophe happened, which caused great fear also, to all the church. *Saphira* had not heard of it, and she was one of the same society, and no doubt, was somewhere about the premises: it must, therefore, have been purposely concealed from her, or but few could have heard of it, previous to her making her appearance before Peter.

We hear frequently, of *great fear* coming upon the disciples, and others, and here we are told, that the deaths of *Annanias* and his wife, caused great fear to come upon the whole church. What were they afraid of?—Did they fear that Peter would put them to death, believing that he had the power to call down the wrath of God, to destroy whom he pleased. Had he done so before? Was the *great fear* spoken of before, the result of a like cause? Did the meek and lowly Jesus give him this power? Was the system the Apostles were enjoined to set up, to be one of terror and of blood? We are told at the present that it is a system of love, of peace, and of joy. Did Christ tell them to revolutionize the world, by effecting a radical change in the organization of society? Did he say, “go and preach my gospel to every creature, commanding each and every individual that believes, to sell his lands and houses, and place the price at your feet.”

Let us return to *Saphira*, whom we left in the presence of Peter. On the supposition, that *Annanias* did actually die of fright, or fall down in convulsions under a deep sense of guilt, (I feel compunction in making this supposition) from which he did not recover; I say, on the supposition that all was fair, in the case of *Annanias*, and that Peter was filled with that mild, amiable, and philanthropic spirit which prompts one to forgive trespasses, and to pray, “lead us not into temptation,” and to say, “blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy;” on these suppositions, I ask, what ought Peter to have done, and said, on the death of *Annanias*? He should immediately have sent for *Saphira*, and as her guardian, her spiritual guide, have shown to her, her dead Lord, and told her all the circumstances, regretted her misfortune, wiped the tear from her eye, should have apprised her of his knowledge of their keeping back a part of the price, implored her to repent and make restitution, and assured her, that on such repentance her Saviour would forgive her. But, instead of this, he proceeds against her with all the stealth of a tiger, and when he gets her within his reach, he pounces upon her with all the ferocity of that merciless animal. Without giving her the least intimation of what had happened, he endeavored to entrap her, by putting the leading question: “tell me whether ye sold the land for so much.” He must have been assured, nay, he must have wished, she would answer in the affirmative: “yea, for so much.” This answer

was made, on the supposition that her husband was alive, and she did not intend to betray him; and Peter was convinced she would not, when he asked the question.

Was this the proper course for an Apostle to pursue, towards a sister in the church, whose duty it should be, to endeavor to reclaim the backslider? An advocate, desirous of distinction, might practice such finesse towards a notorious and hardened offender; but, for an Apostle to do it, towards an erring sister, who had already been punished by the death of her husband, is monstrous! Can you, in the face of your God, declare, that this language is too harsh? So far for the stealth: now for the ferocity—the savage joy, with which he announces to her the death of her husband, and the similar fate that awaited her. “How is it, (says he) that ye have agreed together to tempt the spirit of the Lord? Behold the feet of them, which have buried thy husband, are at the door, and shall carry thee out.”

What a scene for the tragic muse! How a Shakspeare and a Byron would have revelled here! If the blood of Abel *cried* from the ground, hers must have **SCREAMED** in the ear of the fancied Archangel, against the deep damnation of her taking off. Say, ye mothers and daughters of my country: have your tears all been shed—your sympathies all been exhausted for your fictitious martyrs—have ye none left to feel for the fate—none to bedew the grave of your sister Saphira, who with no friend near—the death tale of her husband stunning her ears—the dagger red with his blood, and brandished by his croaking murderer, searing her eye balls—and the announcement of her own instant doom curdling her hearts blood, at the same instant.—Say, can ye not mourn the fate of her, that was hurried to her grave under such appalling circumstances.

He predicts her death. Christ, we are told, brought people back to the world after they had left it, but we never hear of his taking any out, by virtue of his miracle-working power. If he had gone through the country killing folks, he never would have been admired for his philanthropy, nor have had any followers. Certainly, that man's faith must be more than sufficient to remove mountains, who can believe, that any such power was conferred on any man, by the God and Father of all. As Peter predicted, he must have determined upon her death.

Was her guilt of so deep a dye, as to call down the wrath of God in this miraculous manner? Ought she to have been denied all space for preparation to meet her God? I put these questions to christians. Was her's a greater crime than Peter's denial of his Lord, and confirming it by vulgar oaths? Why was not he struck down? This same Peter was guilty of dissimulation before the Jews, at Antioch, (so says St. Paul.) yet his life was spared.

James advises Paul to play the hypocrite, by going into the temple, for

the ostensible purpose of purification according to the manner of the Jews, but for the real, and secretly avowed purpose of deceiving the thousands who believed at Jerusalem, and were still zealous of the law. Yes! for the purpose of inducing them to believe, that Paul did not preach to the believing Jews, that they ought not to follow Moses, when the fact was, he did so preach. Yet James was suffered to live on, after the commission of this pious fraud.

Paul went into the temple, as advised, and was there *acting* the lie for several days. Was not his lie to the Holy Ghost, as well as Saphira's, or was the Holy Ghost specially interested in these money matters. Yet Paul lived after this, many years, and was the object of God's special protection.

Let us return to the narrative. "Then she fell down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost, and the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her with her husband. Then great *fear* again came upon all the church. No wonder. Was it the custom of the Jews to bury persons the moment they died? Did they make no coffins—no shrouds—have no funeral service—no processions—no ceremonies—invite no friends of the deceased, to view their faces for the last time, and assist in this last sad ceremony? Or did they wind them up and throw them into holes, as they would dead dogs? Tell me, ye admirers of Peter, tell me, why he did not follow these bodies to their common grave, and say: "Dust to dust, ashes to ashes—the body shall return to dust as it was, and the spirit to the God who gave it." How can his neglect of these pious and christian duties be explained, on the supposition, that these persons came to their death, by the visitation of God. All was secrecy and despatch. Nothing consistent with fair play.

Many pertinent questions might be asked here. Saphira came in.—Where? Who was present? Who were those young men? How happened it that they came in so opportunely at the death of each of these victims? Great fear came upon all those that *heard* of these things. No one *saw* them but Peter, not even his lictors. Let it be borne in mind that for no offence except for this concealment of *money—money*, do we hear of a miraculous death. What could have been the object of this signal punishment for so slight an offence? It could not have aided the cause with the world. Besides, these murders could not have been made public. The Roman Governor would most assuredly have enquired into the cause of these sudden deaths and hasty burials, had they come to his ear. The wrath of God for keeping back a small portion of their own *money*, would have been no defence to Peter, when arraigned before this governor on a charge of murder. Nor would it be at this day, before any jury of Kentucky, were Dunlavy to be arraigned on a similar charge. Let it be once bruited

in that state, that a man and his wife who had joined the shakers, had died within three hours of each other, and both uncoffined and unshrouded been thrown into one hole immediately on life leaving their bodies; and the indignation of that warm-hearted and gallant people can scarcely be conceived of. The allegation that the spirit of God was poured out in wrath upon them, would be hooted at. No judge would permit such a defence to be made. Would a New York jury have listened to such a defence on a trial of Morgan's murderers?

The object in murdering Annanias and Saphira, was in part to compel those of the society to surrender up what they might have kept back, but the principle object shall be developed in the sequel.

It is impossible to ascertain with certainty how long this community of goods continued. It could not have been long. Besides it is not to be supposed that these ten thousand men, and probably as many women expected to live on this fund all their lives, as idle drones. They must have pursued some occupation, as members of similar societies do at the present day—have done something for their support; and it is therefore fair to presume that this common fund could not have diminished, while the society existed, but must have increased rather. From your chronological tables, it appears this society was broken up, and its members scattered the next year after the crucifixion. It could not therefore have existed two years and might not as many months.

We have traced this fund into the hands of the apostles, and we never hear of their disgorging. The society, bear in mind, was not dissolved because its funds gave out, but because of a persecution. The account of this dissolution is in these words:

“And at that time there was a great persecution against the church at Jerusalem, and they were *all* scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria *except* the apostles.”

It will not do to say that the word *all* is here used indefinitely or hyperbolically, meaning nothing more than a great part, for it is rendered definite by the exception. It would be absurd to say that a great part were scattered abroad except the apostles and the other part.

Except the apostles! Think of that! Why this scattering abroad?—Because of a persecution. Why this persecution? Because of a heresy adopted and held by the fugitives. Who were the authors and principle promulgators and leaders of this heresy? The twelve apostles. Where are they? Oh, they are in Jerusalem still. Are they persecuted there, burnt at the stake, or drawn in quarters? Nothing of the kind, but are living wholly unmolested, and in peace and good fellowship with all the Jews, so far as we can learn from the scriptures. I have once asked what

became of these deposits? Did any of the fugitives check for the whole or any part of what he laid at the apostles feet? We have no evidence that they did. Remember also that great fear had come upon them in consequence of the *energetic* measures of Peter towards Annanias and Saphira. No one would have called upon this *energetic* cashier for a settlement previous to his departure, or presented to him a check for *fear* of being doomed to a similar fate. To fall down dead, and be wrapped up instanter, and thrown into a hole, could not have been very pleasant ideas to these persons who were flying from their homes to escape persecution.

The object of this violent procedure towards Annanias and Saphira, is now apparent. The whole was a preconcerted plan. These murders were committed in secret, and the deaths of the victims attributed to the wrath of God, for the very purpose of exciting this great *fear* among the depositors, to whom alone the murders were made known, and thus silencing all clamors and demands for money on their part, when the alarm cry of persecution should be sounded. The apostles had cash enough in their hands to purchase their peace and bribe the Jews to a sham persecution.

These are the legitimate inferences from the facts as detailed. Why did these apostles remain in Jerusalem? What could they do there, or expect to do? Could they suppose that any one would become a convert to their religion, at that time, in that city, at the hazzard of his life! They certainly could not have entertained a hope of making a disciple in a city, from which he would be compelled immediately to fly or be massacred. But why were *they* not put to death? Will you answer that they secreted themselves? Was this skulking a course proper to be pursued by persons who had but a few months before been enjoined by their risen lord to preach the gospel to every creature? Who were to support them during this sequestration? Their adherents had all left the city. To sum up the argument: If the persecution was such as to make it expedient for the ten thousand converts to leave Jerusalem, *a fortiori*, was it expedient for the apostles to leave it. If these apostles continued in Jerusalem after the dispersion of these converts, it is evident the persecution spoken of, was a mere sham. On the supposition they did not secrete, but showed themselves openly, the question arises how they supported themselves? Did they return to their original occupations? There was no sea of Tiberias there for Peter, and Andrew, and John, to haul their nets in. It is impossible to account for their continuance in Jerusalem, but on the supposition that they had money enough, not only to buy their peace, but to support themselves, without labor; that is, like priests.

There can be no doubt, on a full and candid investigation of all the facts as stated, that Jerusalem became their continual abiding city, and that

they lived there in clover, unless, like the most of their tribe, (for they never ceased to be Jews,) they were misers.

I wish it to be particularly borne in mind that after this dispersion, we never hear of any persecution of the twelve apostles or their converts, or opposition to them on the part of the Jews at Jerusalem, nor any hint to that effect, except the assertion that it pleased the Jews that Herod killed James.

As I have shown in the case of Paul that the Pharisees, a numerous and influential sect of the Jews, were partial to the christians, and that the Romans were not ill disposed towards them; it follows, that this persecution that drove the ten thousand disciples from Jerusalem, must have been waged by the Sadducees alone. Could that sect, who must have acted only as a mob, have driven these ten thousand from their homes? Was this mob so powerful as to overawe the government supported by its legions of Roman soldiers, and backed, as it must have been in this case, by the Pharisees and Christians? As Luke does not tell us by whom this persecution was waged; I shall not attempt to be wise above what is written, but shall leave it as I find it, a persecution in the abstract.

I must repeat, that after a full and candid examination of the history of these apostles, the conclusion irresistibly forces itself upon my mind, that after they had obtained their object, that is, filled their pockets with cash even to overflowing, by this trick played off upon their first converts, they were disposed to go no further in this business of christianity, but to let it die as quiet a death as possible. The disciples however kept up the war—they no doubt were sincere—they went every where preaching the word to the *Jews*—the apostles went nowhere and preached to nobody. They could not be so inconsistent as to forbid their own converts from preaching, nor so disinterested as not to turn this preaching to their own advantage, by assuming the superiority over all disciples wheresoever and by whomsoever made, and thus becoming a board of control or supervisory and directory council. Nothing worldly and selfish in all this! To take the spiritual control of thousands of Jewish christians throughout the Roman empire manifested a meek and lowly spirit! Paul, however, was a great eye sore to them. They were antipodes to each other, he preaching down and they preaching up the law. This hatred was mutual, and the more bitter because it was smothered. They being conscious of his talents and perseverance, were afraid to denounce him, and he, conscious of their power (acquired as we have seen,) did not dare to make open war upon them.

They finally outmanaged him. Not wishing to be annoyed by him any longer they determined to get rid of him, by a trick that a Vidoq would have been ashamed of. They tell him to go into the temple with the four

men, and no sooner is he out, than he is arrested and on a charge of taking improper persons there. They then leave him to his fate, or with more truth, they so manouvre as finally to have him transported to Rome, whence he never returned.

CHAPTER XVI.

Matthew gives us to understand, that the Eastern Magi came into Jerusalem, and were inquiring of every body they met where the child was that was born King of the Jews. A most singular errand for either Arabian or Indian Philosophers! How came they to be so interested at this particular time in the affairs of Judea. Oh! but they had seen a star—a singular star. Who told them, that this star appeared to intimate to them, that a King of the Jews was born? Matthew is silent here. Did any body else see the star? Have we any account, or even any tradition of the appearance of any extraordinary star, at that time, except this of Matthew's? Did it accompany them from their homes as far as Jerusalem, and then stop until they could inquire for, and ascertain the town where this young King was? And did it then go and point out the very house where he and his mother lay? If it led them to Jerusalem, and could go to the *house*, what the necessity of their inquiring for the *town*? In order to designate a particular house, it must have been very near the earth, for, upon the well known principle of optics, were this same star no farther off than the moon, it would have appeared directly over every house, within a circle of two and four hundredths miles, and if as far as the sun, this circle would have been extended to 950 miles.

Should a stranger in the night, request you to direct him to the house of the Mayor of New York, and you should tell him, it would be under a particular star, at a certain time of the night, he would set you down as a lunatic, or a blackguard.

My object is not at this time to inquire into this wonderful tale of the visit of these wise men, but to ascertain whether the quotation from Micah was a prediction of Christ. It is said, that Herod, hearing of the inquiries of these Magi, asked the learned Jews, that were about his court, where Christ was to be born? and that they told him at Bethlehem, and quoted to him the 2nd verse of 5th Micah, which is in these words:

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.”

If this tale of these wise men, be a fiction, as every man in his senses believes, then this verse never was quoted, by the scribes of Herod as such

prediction: but I wish to show, that this scrap from Micah, was not a prediction of Jesus, and if I can do so, then it follows, that Matthew was an impostor: for here there can be no pretence of a Panglossism.

Micah, in his first verse, says, that he wrote in the time of Ahaz, yet the bulk of his seven chapters, relates to the Babylonian captivity and restoration of the Jews. Ahaz lived one hundred and seventy years before the captivity.

A single perusal of the book will convince any ingenuous mind, that it is like the one attributed to Isaiah, a piece of patch work—a pudding stone—a giblet pie—printer's *Pi*—any thing in truth, but an entire work of a man who lived in the time of Ahaz.

I will here transcribe the 4th, and part of the 5th chapter of this wonderful book.

CHAP. IV.

But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

2. And many nations shall come and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

3. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

4. But they shall sit, every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.

5. For all the people will walk, every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God, for ever and ever.

6. ¶ In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted;

7. And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast afar off a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.

8. ¶ And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.

9. Now, why dost thou cry out aloud? is there no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? for pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail.

10. Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail, for thou shalt now go forth out of the city, and thou shalt

dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hands of thine enemies.

11. ¶ Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion.

12. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor.

13. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion, for I will make thy horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass; and thou shalt beat in pieces many people; and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth!

CHAP. V.

Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops, he hath laid siege against us; they shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.

2. But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.

3. Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth; then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.

4. ¶ And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide; for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.

5. And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land; and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men.

6. And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof; thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders.

7. And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.

It will be observed that the first three verses of the 4th chapter, are an exact copy of the 2nd, 3d, and 4th of the 2nd Isaiah, and has reference to the return of the Jews from captivity. Does not this identity of verses prove conclusively, that this book is a compilation—a piece of patchwork? Does any one pretend to say, that two men would write three verses of this length, in precisely the same words. The truth is, that neither Isaiah or Micah wrote them, for there can be no doubt, that when taken in connection

with the three following verses in this 4th chapter of Micah, they relate to the Babylonian captivity. The author, whoever he may have been, was speaking of the captivity as then existing. The Jews were to return, and the Lord was to reign over them in Mount Zion, from henceforth, even *forever*.

Here is another proof, that the dispersion of the Jews at this day, is in direct contradiction to the whole drift of prophecy.

At the 8th verse commences another scrap from some other author on the same subject. Something is here personified, and what is it? He calls it the tower of the flock—highly poetical, no doubt, because perfectly unintelligible; but he explains, and tells us, he means a strong hold, that is a fort—strong hold of what? or what strong hold? O! the daughter of Zion. What does he mean by the daughter of Zion? Probably he means Jerusalem. So this strong hold was the fort on the hill of Zion. Dominion was to come to it as at the first, that is, it was to be as strong, and as well manned as in David's time.

I can go no further. There are too many daughters here, for me to supply with mothers. First, there is the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, then the daughter of Jerusalem, and then again, the daughter of Zion. Now what was the daughter of Zion? If you say Jerusalem, then we want to know, what was the daughter of Jerusalem? What instruction can be gathered from such a confusion of metaphor? One of these daughters is not only to travail, but to travel as far as Babylon, and there lie in. The notion of a fort travelling, and travelling, and lying out in the fields, and finally being delivered at her journey's end, is too absurd to be ridiculous.

By the expression, "daughter of Zion," in the tenth verse, fourth chapter, the author must mean, the Jews in captivity. But this daughter was to go out of the city. You ask what city? I answer, any city or town in the great empire, in which any Jew might reside. They were to go to Babylon, and from that city be sent home to Jerusalem. Where is the close of this bombast? O! here it is, poor stray thing! away out of its place, immediately after the prophecy in question. Yes, the third verse of the 5th chapter, should have been the 11th of the 4th.* "Therefore will he give

*This is not the only instance of the misplacing of verses, or their removal from their proper places, in the prophetic books. The 6th verse of the 9th of Isaiah, that contains that famous prediction of a son already born, that was to be called by so many wonderful names, should follow the 18th verse of the previous chapter. The two would read thus:

"Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion,

them up." Whom? Why the enemies of the daughter. By the expression, will give them up, the writer means, will let them alone. The remainder of this verse is easily understood, after being restored to its proper place, from which it has been long removed, by the ignorance, carelessness, or knavery of the compiler.

The 11th verse of the 4th chapter, is a matter of history, and has relation to the invasion of Judah, by Pekah and Rezin, the Kings of Samaria and Syria, in the time of Ahaz, and might have been written by Micah. The 12th verse is a prediction, that these Kings will be discomfited; and the last verse of this chapter, and the first of the fifth, are an exhortation to the people of Judah, to rally around their King, and repel the invaders, assuring them victory.

He calls Judah, the daughter of troops, alludes to the invasion of his country by the King of Israel, calls upon his countrymen to gather themselves in troops, that is, enroll themselves, and lastly, assures them, that they will smite this King with a rod upon the cheek. All this was very patriotic in Micah, but his anticipations, like those of many other patriots, were not realized: for we are told in Chronicles, that the King of Israel smote Ahaz with a terrible slaughter.

After this patriotic appeal to the Jews, follows the prophecy which Matthew puts into the mouth of Herod's scribes. Now, I appeal to the good sense and candor of the reader, if there be the least connection whatever, between this verse, and the one preceding it. I have already shown, that there can be none between it and the succeeding verse, as this third verse should succeed the tenth verse of the previous chapter. If the King spoken of, in the 4th, 5th and 6th verses, be the ruler of the second verse, then the writer could not have alluded to Christ: for Jesus never defended

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son to given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

The connexion is now manifest. The writer in 8th, 18th, states, that he and his children are for signs and for wonders, and in this 9th, 6th, which should follow it, he tells us, what he means, or how his children are to be for signs and for wonders, namely, by receiving significant or wonderful names. I have already shown, (pages 94 and 5) that this verse has no connection whatever, with the one that now stands before it. You will ask, what I will do with the one (9th, 7th,) that follows it. I will place that after the 5th of the 11th chapter, where it properly belongs. Let the student read and judge for himself. I ask no one to swear in my words. Many of these mislocations, are to be attributed, no doubt, to the ignorance, or carelessness of the compiler, but these two verses were removed from their proper places, and put in juxta position, with design, and for the purpose of imposition.

his countrymen against the Assyrians, nor wasted the land of Nimrod. As I have shown that this book of Micah, is made up of scraps and odd ends, picked up here and there, some of them having been written at least, one hundred years after his death, may we not reasonably conclude, that this 2nd verse was a part of some ancient manuscript respecting David, who was born in Bethlehem, and became a ruler of the Israelites. Micah must have been a Jew, for all the prophets were Jews. We have nothing from the pen of an Israelite, or one of the ten tribes, after the death of Solomon. It will be remembered, that after his death, the dissolution of the Israelitish confederacy took place, the ten tribes it is said, *revolting* from two. These ten tribes, notwithstanding they were called revolters, retained the original name, and their kingdom was called the kingdom of *Israel*. That of the other two was called the kingdom of Judah, and its subjects Jews. It is really laughable to hear our republican clergy, talk about the revolt of the ten tribes.

Had Carolina withdrawn herself from the Union, she might, with the same propriety have talked about the revolt of the other twenty-three states. The writer of the book of Kings, treats of them as separate and distinct kingdoms universally denominating the one as the kingdom of Israel, and the other as the kingdom of Judah, as thus: "Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea, the son of Elah, king of Israel, that Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, the king of Judah, began to reign." The wise men asked for the young child who was born king of the *Jews*, and not for a ruler in Israel. Is it to be supposed, that Micah, a Jew, hating the Israelites, and a contemporary of king Ahaz, between whom and the king of Israel, fierce war was being waged, would have prophesied for the Israelites, making them the special favorites of God. Is it not wholly incredible that this Micah called the people of Israel, God's people, and prophesied that God would call forth a ruler for them out of the town of Bethlehem in Judah. Keep in mind, that in the days of Micah, an Israelite and a Jew, were as distinct as a Jew and a Heathen, and the hatred between them more bitter. Can it be believed that Micah would call upon his countrymen the Jews, to fly to arms, and repel their invaders, the Israelites; and the next breath, the very next verse, tell these same Jews, that these invaders were God's people, and that God was about to place over them, a prince of his own choosing, and this prince to be a Jew.

Such a declaration as the verse in question, coming from a Jew at that juncture would have cost him his life. But it is just such a one as a partisan of David at the time he was intriguing with the unnatural Jonathan for the crown of his father, might be supposed to have made. The union at that time had not been dissolved—the twelve tribes composed one king-

dom—the kingdom of Israel. David was born in Bethlehem, was a man after God's own heart, (so said his favorites and flatterers,) and became king of the Israelites. In the language of these prophets, he came out of Bethlehem unto God, whose goings forth were of old, to be a ruler of his people Israel. No learned Hebrew scholar, if honest, will tell you that the word *whose*, in this verse refers to the ruler. The goings forth were of God, unto whom the ruler was to come or of Bethlehem. If of Bethlehem, the verse should read: "And thou, Bethlehem, &c. whose boundaries have been established, time out of mind, &c.," outgoings or goings forth, being synonymous with boundaries or limits. (See xix. Judges.)

CHAPTER XVII.

The 53d chapter of Isaiah is quoted by the christians more frequently than any other portion of the prophecies to prove that the coming of Jesus and the object of his mission, were foreseen by those holy men called prophets. I shall here transcribe the 52d and 53d chapter of Isaiah.

CHAP. LII.

Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

2. Shake thyself from the dust; arise and sit down, O Jerusalem! loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

3. For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.

4. For thus saith the Lord God, My people went down aforetime into Egypt, to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.

5. Now therefore, what have I here, saith the Lord, that my people is taken away for nought? They that rule over them make them to howl, saith the Lord, and my name is continually, every day blasphemed.

6. Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak; behold it is I.

7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

8. Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.

9. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

10. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

11 Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing: go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord-

12. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord

will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your re-re-ward.

13. Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

14. As many were astonished at thee; (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:)

15. So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard, shall they consider.

CHAP. LIII.

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

2. For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground, he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

3. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not.

4. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted.

5. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6. All we, like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7. He was oppressed and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

8. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him: he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

11. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

12. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Before I proceed to comment on these chapters, let us examine the argument founded upon them. The writer says that *somebody hath* no form nor comeliness. The christian replies that Jesus had no form nor comeliness, therefore he was that somebody. Could not Richard III., after descanting on his own deformity, have with the same propriety added: "Therefore, I am that somebody." From the representations as given by christians, Jesus was in person most beautiful. The writer says that his *HE is* despised and rejected of men—a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief—*hath* borne our griefs and carried our sorrows—*was* wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities—the chastisement of our peacc *was* upon him—with his stripes we *are* healed—the Lord *hath* laid on him the iniquity of us all—he *was* oppressed and afflicted, yet he *opened* not his mouth—he *is* brought as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. Nothing *future* in all this! Yet the christian triumphantly exclaims that a person by the name of Jesus, (a very common name among the Jews,) six or seven hundred years after Isaiah lived, was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, &c., &c., and, therefore, he was that somebody that had been before rejected, &c.

I have twice remarked that a prophecy cannot prove a fact; but *this* argument of the christian, even on the supposition that the foregoing declarations were in the future tense, takes for granted every fact in dispute between the infidel and himself. It presumes the garden—the tree—God's prohibition to eat of its fruit—the talking serpent—the temptation—Adam's yielding to it—God's curse which extended to all Adam's posterity—his sorrow that he had made man—and the plan he finally adopted by which he put it in man's power to relieve himself from the curse, and regain his favor; for, if all these are not true, then Christ cannot be said to have suffered for us, to have been bruised for our iniquities, borne our griefs, or carried our sorrows, nor can it be said that on him was laid the iniquity of us all. The argument also takes for granted all the wonderful facts related in the new testament respecting Jesus.

Had the writer (you may call him Isaiah,) been more minute and definite; had he prefaced his assertions with all the facts from the old testament, which this christian argument takes for granted; would such a preface have proved them? Isaiah's assertion, no more than yours or mine, can add to the credibility of Moses' statements. If you can prove all the

transactions of the garden, and consequently this curse, and that Jesus did die and rise from the dead for the purpose of redeeming man from it, then you establish the inspiration of your prophet, that is, you cannot prove your great facts by your prophet, but their establishment proves his inspiration. Again: Could you prove that Isaiah or any other man some six or seven hundred years before Herod, wrote and published that Canaan would become a Roman province, and that a man by the name of Herod, an Edomite, would be its king under the Romans, and that another man by the name of Pontius Pilate would be procurator of Judea, some twenty or thirty years after the death of the former—that at the latter end of the reign of the one, an extraordinary person, giving out that he was the literal son of God, and Redeemer of mankind, would be born, and put to death under the Procuratorship of the other; then on our admitting that such men did reign and govern, you might demand our faith in every other statement your prophet might have made.

But you have no such case. Besides, Isaiah's hero, his somebody, his *he*, was not to be, but had been—not an *erit* but a *fruit*—he was not an extraordinary person, nor had any thing extraordinary happened to him. He was ugly. Our president is not called a handsome man, (Jesus was,) yet I never learned that Gen. Jackson flattered himself that Isaiah was alluding to him. *He* (of the prophecy,) was afflicted, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. We are all of us continually complaining of our lot—to use your own cant language—we all have our trials, and tribulations, losses and crosses in this troublesome world. *He* of the prophecy suffered for others. How many have done the same? There have been thousand of martyrs to the cause of liberty, as well as of religion.

The prophets assumed to be important personages, and gave out that they were laboring in the great cause of God and man. We learn that many were stoned to death; of such it was said by their followers and partisans, that they fell in the cause of philanthropy. Hence it may be reasonably inferred that this 53d chapter has relation to some of these martyrs.

Let us examine parts of these chapters, verse by verse.

LII. 1st. The writer calls upon the Jews in their captivity to prepare for their return to Jerusalem.

2d. Continuation of the exhortation. In this verse, Jerusalem is expressly declared to be in captivity: "O captive daughter of Jerusalem."

3d. Restoration or redemption from this captivity promised.

4th. Simply a declaration of what had previously befallen the Israelites.

5th. Complains of the hard treatment of the Jews by their captors.

6th. Promise of redemption repeated.

7th. That the messengers who carried the news that Cyrus had given permission to the Jews to return to Judea were cordially welcomed by them throughout the great empire.

8th. How matters will be managed at Jerusalem after the return of the Jews to that city.

9th. An exhortation to the Jews to rejoice on account of their redemption.

10th. Reiteration of the fact of redemption.

11th. Urges those to remain undefiled, who were to carry back to Jerusalem the vessels which Nebuchadnezzar took thence to Babylon, and which Cyrus delivered to Sheshbazzar or Zerobabel to be returned.

12th. Promises God's protection to these porters.

I have no doubt, though I shall not labor to convince the reader, that the preceding twelve verses are the work of four different authors. At the 13th commences an extract from some other author and ends at the fourth of the next chapter. The *servant* in this extract, as in many places, is Jacob or the Israelites, who were about to be redeemed from captivity.—I have already shown that in this book, entitled Isaiah, Israel or Jacob frequently represents the whole of the children of Israel, and is as frequently called God's servant. The extract is intelligible only on the supposition that the *servant* of the 13th verse represents Jacob or the whole of the children of Israel. All the writers called prophets flattered themselves and so asserted that the Jews after their restoration would become a great people, whose dominion would extend over the Gentiles, therefore, this writer says, (13th verse,) that the servant (Jacob,) would be extolled, and exalted, and be very high; although heretofore, (14th verse,) in consequence of the evil treatment he, the servant, that is, the whole body of the Israelites, had received at the hands of his (their) captors, during a captivity of many years, he, the servant, that is, the whole body of the Israelites, could be compared to a man whose visage had been marred and body battered by ruffians.

15th *verse*. This servant, Jacob, would sprinkle many nations. What the writer meant by this figure can only be guessed at. The word sprinkling is frequently used as synonymous with scattering: thus we say, "a *smart* sprinkling of votes."

I therefore *guess* that the prophet intended to say that the chiefs of the Israelites living at the city of Babylon, would scatter or sprinkle their messengers over the great empire, in order to inform their countrymen that were scattered and sprinkled over it, that Cyrus had issued a decree permitting them to return to their former homes; and that these messengers

would show this decree to the satraps of this great empire, at which their mouths would be stopt.

LIII. 1st. I have no doubt that this verse is erroneously punctuated. The writer simply *asserts* that Jacob (the pronoun *who* relating to the servant of the previous chapter,) had believed the report of his redemption and that the arm of the Lord had been revealed to him.

2d. "For he (the Lord's servant, Jacob,) shall grow up before him (the Lord,) as a tender plant," that is, the Jews and Israelites, although now so weak and poor and degraded as to appear like Falstaff's men, will acquire strength and again take their place among the nations of the earth.

3d. Means nothing more than that Jacob had been an astonishment and a hissing among the nations during his captivity, and had led a troublesome life of it, having been continually harrassed upon every side.

Should this interpretation be rejected, it does not follow that Jesus was this servant or *he*; for the prophet speaks of a person in *esse*, and tells us what he *is*, and what he *will be*: "He *hath* no form or comeliness—he *is* despised and rejected of men, but *will* grow up like a plant." Besides, this is not applicable to Christ. He was not, from the accounts of the evangelists, despised and rejected of men, but was the most popular reformer we have any account of. Throngs followed him constantly—once he stole away from a crowd that wanted to make him king—was uniformly addressed by the title of Rabbi—once he resorted to a boat to address the people the press being so great on the shore—at another time, seeing a great multitude at the foot of a mountain, he went to the top of it, where his disciples came unto him. So great was his popularity that five thousand persons remained with him at the hazard of starvation, even forgetting they were hungry. Again we find the press around him so great that his mother and brethren could not *get at* him. And lastly when he went into Jerusalem for the last time, (the first time he *rode*,) he was *CHEERED by much people*, who took branches of Palm trees and went forth to meet him crying, "Hosana, blessed is the *King of Israel*, that cometh in the name of the Lord."

It was for the purpose of receiving this demonstration of partisan attachment, this expression of popular applause, that he mounted an ass. How astonishing that our clergy, in the face of all these facts, will still insist that Jesus was despised and rejected of men. Sidney, Hampden, Emmet, and others, were rejected and put to death by the powers that were, but not despised by the generality of their fellow men. It does not follow that because a man fails in an attempt at revolution, that he is therefore set at nought by his countrymen or the world at large. Crucifixion is the only

evidence that can be relied on to prove the unpopularity of a man who had thousands constantly at his heels.

Let us talk a little more about this triumphal entry into Jerusalem.— Luke tells us that when Jesus and his party had come nigh to Bethpage on their journey to Jerusalem, he sent two of his disciples to get a colt or fiery young ass, that belonged to a stranger, telling them that if the owner asked who wanted it, to tell him that his (the owner's) Lord, *Kurios*, wanted it. Here is humility for you! They did as they were ordered and got the colt. Now, what was this young ass wanted for? Had Jesus been in the habit of riding? There were no horses there in those days, and a person was not only respectably but honorably mounted when on the back of an ass. Why did he want to ride *then*? I know that the evangelists wish to represent this feat of horsemanship as an act of humility, and quote from Zechariah who was alluding to Nehemiah riding alone in the night time around the city of Jerusalem. What a position for the meek and lowly; surrounded by an immense concourse of partisans, he, the most conspicuous figure of the group, being the only one mounted, some throwing off their garments and spreading them in his way, some breaking off and strewing branches of palm trees before him, and all shouting, "God save the King." A very meek and lowly procedure!

Why, I say, want to ride through the streets of Jerusalem, amidst the shouts and huzzas of a mob? The great experiment was now to be made—the public pulse was to be felt—it was now to be ascertained if all things were ripe for a revolution—whether his partisans could safely proclaim him king! In more truth, they commence a revolution in form—are all guilty of treason—they set their leader on an ass—throw their garments in his way, and proclaim him King of Israel. The attempt failed, and their leader was, as is usual in such cases, put to death. This is meekness and humility is it? This is the man in whom Pilate could find no harm. Let the popular Mr. O'Connell try such an experiment in the streets of London, and he would be immediately brought to the block.

The statement that Pilate told the people to put to death a man, that he pronounced innocent of any crime, carries falsehood upon its face.— That many a corrupt and cruel Prince has put to death innocent persons, I do not deny. In such cases, however, it is alleged, though falsely, that the victim is guilty of some offence; but, that a Roman Governor, or any other magistrate, should say: "Take this innocent man and crucify him after I have scourged him," is too glaringly inconsistent for belief. The most cruel tyrant will have some excuse—some pretext for his deeds of blood. It is not to be credited, that Pilate could say he found no fault in

him, when but a day or two before, he had committed an overt act of treason, in the presence of thousands, and in the very heart of the capital.

All the histories we have of this personage are written by his friends and partisans, whose interests and inclinations led them to suppress every circumstance, that might tend to the prejudice of their hero. His call, however, upon his disciples for swords, requiring those who had none, to sell their garments and buy them—his castigation of the money changers and the upsetting of their tables, and lastly, his pompous entry into Jerusalem, followed by a multitude shouting *vive le roi*, show clearly, that he was not so meek and quiet, harmless and retiring, passive and inoffensive a gentleman, as his partisans, at the present day, would wish to represent him.

Let us return to the famous 53d. At the fourth verse commences, what I have no doubt is a lamentation or jeremiad, over Jeremiah himself. As my object is not so much to show what it is as what it is not, I shall merely refer the reader to 3d Lamentations, and request him to compare it with the verses under consideration. Let him bear in mind that the burden of this Lamentation of Jeremiah is his imprisonment by Zedekiah, for which imprisonment, see thirty-ninth Jeremiah, and some previous chapters.—The learned differ widely in their translations of this 53d Isaiah. All agree that the present translation is unintelligible and nonsensical. Jeremiah was put in prison and taken out again. Christ never was in prison, and therefore the 8th verse cannot apply to him, though it may to Jeremiah. This prophet in his lamentation says: "They have cut off my life, in the dungeon—this 8th verse says that *he* was cut off out of the land of the living." In the 7th verse it is said that *he* opened not his mouth, but, like a lamb before her shearers, was dumb.

Christ, according to Luke, never refused to talk but once, and that was on his trial before Herod. It is not uncommon for prisoners to stand mute. If he went to the place of execution without resistance, his conduct was not singular. Not one convict in ten thousand makes resistance—some address the crowd, and some open not their mouths. But Christ, according to John and Luke, was not silent either before the chief priests or Pilate, but answered all their questions, except the civil one, (whence he was?) and put some to them. Neither was he silent on the cross, but opened his mouth, and complained in a loud voice that God had forsaken him. Merely because he stood mute to one or two interrogatories, you conclude that Isaiah must certainly have alluded to him.

The somebody of the 53d, had done no violence, therefore, say you Jesus was alluded to. What think you of the flagellation of the money changers, and the overthrow of their tables, his seizing the man's colt

merely because he wanted him, and riding at the head of a noisy rabble?

He of the prophecy was numbered with the transgressors. Every convict either before or after Christ, whether guilty or not guilty of the crime charged, has been numbered with transgressors; but Christ, from the evangelists own showing, was guilty—guilty of treason, unless that unlawful assembly, of which he was leader were destitute of implements of war, in which case, I believe, that according to our common law, his offence would be reduced to sedition. The evangelists do not tell us how this was.

I have already shown, that the argument founded on his dying as an intercessor, takes for granted, all the matters in controversy between the infidel and christian.

It is amusing to witness the attempts of the evangelists, to throw a veil of mystery over the most common every-day transactions. A colt cannot be procured and rode without a miracle and a wonder.

First they give us to understand, that Jesus by miracle, or inspiration, knew the identical post to which the colt was tied. Then they wish to excite our special wonder, that Jesus could ride such a wild colt, amidst a tumultuous crowd, that were hooting, clapping their chopped hands, and throwing up their sweaty night caps. Why send *two* men after this colt. But two reasons can be given. First that he was so wild, that one could not lead him, and the other, that he was to be taken, by force, if the owner, should refuse to give him up. It is evident from the different accounts, that they were to get the colt, peacably if they could, forcibly if they must.

I must here copy Mark's description of this extraordinary procession.

“And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him;

“And many spread their garments in the way; and others cut down branches off the trees, and strewed them in the way.

“And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying: Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:

“Blessed be the kingdom of our father David; that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.”

This must have been a great and terrible day for the good and quiet citizens of Jerusalem. “A *very* great multitude,” says Matthew, “spread their garments in his way, and cut down branches of palm trees, and strewed them in his way;”—multitudes *before* and *behind* him, crying, what was equivalent to, “Huzza for the rightful heir to the throne of David.”

Thus escorted, he arrives at the temple, and commences operations for the procurement of funds—enters the exchange offices—drives out the bro-

kers, and—what? Merely overturns the tables, that's all—the money was of no consequence—neither he nor his myrmidons, would pick it up from the pavement. All this, I suppose, is in fulfilment of the prophecy, that he should make no noise or clamor in the streets.

You may say, that I misrepresent here—that Mark says, he did not enter the Exchange offices, till the morrow, but returned to Bethany, the same day that he made his grand entry into the capital. I admit that Mark says so, but Matthew and Luke contradict him; Matthew in direct terms. (Read the first 22 verses of Mat. xxi., and the last 20 of Luke xix. See also, Mark's 11th Chap.)

Matthew represents Jesus as entering this great square or temple, and overturning the tables of the brokers, on the day of this great show, and as returning to Bethany in the evening, and lodging there that night. He says expressly, that he returned to the city the next morning, and that on this return he saw a fig tree, and cursed it, because it bore no fruit.

Mark says, that on the day of the great parade, Jesus went into the temple, and merely looked around, and when he had satisfied his curiosity, he and his disciples returned to Bethany to spend the night—that on the morrow, he and his disciples returned to Jerusalem—that on this return he saw and cursed the fig tree, and that *after* this cursing, and *not* on the day *previous*, as Matthew has it, he entered into the temple, and assaulted the brokers.

As already remarked, we are dependent on the partisans of Jesus, for all our information in relation to this bold throw for a kingdom. By what means it was frustrated, and at what time he and his adherents finally despaired of success, the evangelists say not. These choice spirits may have been repulsed at the brokers' offices, or may not have found what they wanted—the *desire* of all *nations*, and of all adventurers particularly; and hence, turned the tables over in their rage at the disappointment. A shrewd and prudent man—and brokers are generally distinguished for these qualities, would be very certain to secrete his specie, on hearing that the canaille having mounted their leader on an ass, were making their way towards his counting room, shouting, "Hail to our King."

Admitting that Jesus and his chosen twelve, attempted to effect a revolution without even a "broken reed as a substitute for a spear or a lance"—a bloodless revolution—yet after their failure, he thought it expedient they should stand on their defence, with arms in their hands. Hence, he tells those who had none, to buy swords, and they procured them. He does not tell them that two swords are enough. When they say to him, "here are two swords," he replies: "*It is enough:*" that is, "enough said—I have issued my order, and it must be obeyed."

It is manifest they all had swords at their master's arrest; for Luke says that "when they which were about him, saw what would follow, they said unto him, 'Lord shall we strike with the sword?'" Were there but two persons near him, or about him? A few verses previous, we are told, he was with his disciples. According to this same Luke, there must have been at least, one hundred and twenty of them. This command to his disciples to purchase swords, their drawing them, and cutting ears off; I suppose is in fulfilment of the prophecy, that to establish his kingdom, violence sufficient to put out the burning wick of a candle, would not be resorted to.*

You will reply, that he rebuked Peter for using the sword. Had not Peter every reason to believe, it was his master's wish he should use it.—The only reason that can be given, why Jesus did not use his, is, that he saw he was outnumbered, and had more discretion, or less valor, than Peter.

He is finally arrested, and brought before Pilate, where, strange to say, he asserted that his kingdom was not of this world: that if his kingdom had been of this world, then his servants would have fought, but as it was not, they would not fight. They certainly manifested every disposition to fight, whether his kingdom were of this or some other world, and all this in obedience to his implied injunction. But there was no deceit—no equivocation or prevocation to be found in his mouth.

Let us listen to Herod's supposed examination of the accused, for it will be recollected that he was turned over to Herod, by Pilate.

Herod.—If your kingdom is not of this world, as you have just now told Pilate, why did you send for the colt, and mount him, and then ride through this city, preceded and followed by a noisy multitude, shouting, Huzza to you, as their king, to the great terror of the good people thereof, and against the peace and safety of this commonwealth.

Prisoner stands mute as a lamb before its shearers.

Herod.—You have told Pilate that your servants would not fight, because your kingdom was not of this world, then pray tell us for what purpose you told them to procure swords, at the sacrifice of their wearing apparel?

Not a word from the prisoner.

Herod.—What excuse have you for assaulting the brokers? You are not a priest, and if you were, you would have no right to molest them in the court of the Gentiles, that not being holy ground.

Prisoner refuses to answer: therefore, the famous 53 is literally fulfilled

*We are told by the learned biblical scholars, that the expression, "a bruised reed shall he not break," means that he will not use even a broken reed for a lance; and that "the smoking flax" which he would not quench, means a live or burning candle wick.

Herod.—Were your servants quarrelling a few days ago, about rank or superiority of place in this kingdom that you are about to establish in some fairy land?

Prisoner still snllen—punished for his contumacy, and sent back to Pilate.

The multitude that accompanied Jesus, on his grand entry was so great, that some of the Pharisees, said to others, who were endeavoring to quell the mob: "Perceive ye, how ye prevail nothing. Behold, the *world* is gone after him." Therefore, he was despised and rejected of men—therefore, the famous 53d is a literal history of Jesus!

According to your notions, all the transactions, institutions, and persons, of the old testament, are typical. The terms, prototype, and antitype, are very great favorites with the learned clergy. The simpletons of their flocks are delighted with them, because they are, in their estimation, big words, and evince great learning in him who uses them. Jesus, I believe, is said to have been the antitype of many prototypes. Jona was one, the Jewsh High Priest another, and how many more I do not know. If an antitype can stand in the relation of a prototype, as a daughter can in that of a mother, then Jesus must stand in the relation of a prototype to ——— He who is familiar with Skakespeare, can readily fill up the blank.

You complain, that I believe every thing that is related to the prejudice of Jesus, and reject every thing in his favor, or that goes to explain suspicious circumstances. You insist, that I ought, according to the established rules of evidence, to take into consideration all that a party confesses, as well that for him as against him. I agree it is a rule founded in good sense, that if a party be accused of murder, and the prosecutor rely upon his confessions to convict, and a witness be brought forward, who heard the accused confess that he killed the deceased, and at the same time insist, that he killed him in self defence, the witness should be compelled, after stating the confession of killing, to state that at the same time the prisoner asserted he killed the deceased in self defence.

So, if a witness should state that A confessed to him, that he bought a hoase of B for one hundred dollars; he ought, if the fact be so, to state that A at the same time, said he had paid B. But you cannot bring the case of Jesus within this rule. He was not charged upon his confession, but was caught, as it were, *flagrante delicto*. Grant him the privilege of this rule, still his case is not within it. He did not say, or intimate, when he sent for the colt, or when he mounted him, or at any time during the march through Jerusalem, that he was about to enact, or was enacting a part in this pageant, the better to entitle him to a seat at his father's right hand in heaven. He said then, nothing about a kingdom *not* of this world, but it

was all Hurra! and Huzza! for the kingdom of Israel or Judea—a little spot of earth, on this terraqueous globe, and inhabited by beings composed of flesh and blood, like himself. Admitting that he had said all this at the time, would you believe him? Is the character of an act to be changed by the assertion of the party committing it, that it was done in obedience to a mandate from Heaven? Should a party who was seen deliberately plunging his dagger into the heart of his fellow, be acquitted, on the plea, or pretence, that Gabriel, or the the holy splrit, or Jesus Christ, or some other heavenly messenger, commanded this murder, that a stop might be put to the ravages of the cholera. You would execute, or confine the prisoner in a mad house. Should an individual come into your store, throw down your goods, pull out your drawers, and belabor you with hickory switches; would you not play back upoh him with your yard stick, even if he should assert, that he was authorised by God Almighty, whom he might call his father, to break up your establishment, because it was too near one of his temples?

I have, in several instances called Jesus a reformer, and in others an adventurer. I admit, that according to the common acceptation of these terms, they are not synonymous. My excuse is, that sometimes he is represented as a promulgator of certain doctrines, that might have been new to a portion of his countrymen, but not to all; for as before observed, the great principle of forbearance, which modern christians repudiate, was what distinguished the Essenes, from the other sects of the Jews.

At the close of his life he is represented as endeavoring to overthrow the established government. His career may have been very inconsistent and improper, but not uncommon. We are frequently obliged to wait till the end of the play, before we can ascertain the true characters of the *dramatis personæ*. Sir Peter Teazle thought Joe Surface a young gentleman of the purest morals, of the nicest sense of honor, and of most *noble sentiments*, until he detected him, in an intrigue with his wife. You tell us the devil puts on the robes of an angel of light, and clothes his face in smiles, when about to allure a victim, within his toils. Cromwell commenced his career as a stickler for the rights of conscience—a religious enthusiast. He closed it in the chair of his murdered King. Bonaparte in '93, could vociferate *vive la republique*. In fifteen years thereafter, more than half the civilized world were shouting *vive l'empereur* to him. The deceiver, or hypocrite, is so common a character, that the expressions: “to preach is one thing, and to practice another”—“the devil can quote scripture”—“he shew'd his cloven foot”—“beware of him who makes a parade of his honesty”—have become proverbs.

Jesus "stole all courtesy from heaven, and dressed himself in such humility, that he did pluck allegiance from men's hearts, loud shouts and salutations from their mouths even in the presence of" two Roman deputies. This *stealing* and *dressing*, were preparatory to this *plucking*, in the case of King Henry. So the great poet makes him confess and boast. And why not in the case of Jesus? To sum it up. We judge of men, not from the first, but the last scene—not from what they *say*, but from what they *do*. Upon these principles, the real character of Jesus, is to be determined from his *conduct* during the last few days of his life.

When we take into consideration, the part he bore in this unlawful assemblage of the people, his approbation of their shouts, and his trespass on the money brokers, our opinions concerning him, must be far from favorable. When we extend that consideration to the excuses, or defences, he made before the people and Pilate, he becomes an object of loathing and contempt. The first is bottomed on the false assumption, that the court of the Gentiles was holy ground, and the other, on the necessity of this pageant as a prelude to his coronation in heaven.

The closing scene of this drama, when rightly considered, adds force to my charge against the apostles.

I had intended to rest this case here, but as the charge of treason and rebellion, is somewhat startling, I have thought proper to support it by other statements from the evangelists. They tell us, that Jesus sent out his disciples, (eighty-two of them according to Luke) to preach to the *Jews* only. They were to proclaim, that a kingdom, styled by these writers a kingdom of heaven, was near at hand. It is immaterial what they called it. It is evident the disciples understood it to be a temporal kingdom. This point is conceded. The twelve disciples returned from their missionary tour, and after their return we find them quarreling about precedence in this kingdom. Could it have been a spiritual kingdom?

It being conceded that these disciples firmly believed, until his death, that their leader was about to establish a temporal kingdom, it follows, first: that they must have taken up this impression from his conduct and conversation. Second: that their Hosannas, or Huzzas, when he made his grand entry, were to him as a temporal king. Third: that instead of preaching, as is generally supposed, spiritual matters, these disciples, after receiving their commission, acted the part of recruiting officers, under their chief: for they must have understood this commission as authorizing, and requiring them to drum up and enlist partisans for this kingdom. And can it be supposed they did not execute this commission as they understood it, or that Jesus was not aware, how they understood it, and how they were executing it?

‘After these things, the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. (Luke x. 1.)

The passover week was the time when, and Jerusalem the place where, these recruits were to assemble from the different cantons of Judea, to strike the decisive blow. Previous to this feast Jesus took a circuit through these cantons—his partisans previously enlisted, flocked to his standard—their numbers rapidly increased as he approached the capitol—on leaving Jericho, so numerous was the host, and so great the press to see him, as he passed along the road, that men of low stature were obliged to climb trees in order to get a view of him. Blind men, startled at the tramp of this *spiritual* army, cried out, “what is this?” and were told, that “Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.” As these multitudes (for Matthew says a *great multitude* followed him out of Jericho) drew nigh to Jerusalem, Jesus sent for the colt in order to make his entry in style. John says, that as these multitudes drew nigh to Jerusalem, “much people that were come to the feast, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him,” and cried, Hosanna, Blessed is the *King of Israel* that cometh in the name of the Lord.

This entry has been described. Will any man be so blind, as not to see the object of all this? Will he suffer that spiritual jargon—that medley of rant and devotion of humility, and extravagance of pretension, of empyricism, mysticism, and sooth-saying, with which the evangelists have interlarded their accounts of this insurrection, to deprive him of his common sense? Will he be so downright a fool, as not to see, that if Jesus and his party had not been thwarted, the Roman power in Judea would have been subverted, and he crowned King? Can he be so stupid, as to believe, that Deity required of a son, a temporal crown, as a passport to the courts above? Must he not see the absurdity and ridiculousness of the defence which is put into the mouth of Jesus. when arraigned before the Roman Governor—“I admit that this looks very like rebellion, but nothing of the kind is intended. I merely wish to be proclaimed, and if possible, crowned King of the *Jews*, not that I want to subvert your authority, or govern *here* a single moment; I am to rule in heaven, but somehow it is so fixed, that I must go through the ceremony of a coronation here, and be acknowledged King by this multitude of *Jews*, before I can take my seat on my celestial throne. You are still to be the *Ruler* of the *Jews*, I their heavenly *King*.” This is the only defence he could make, and is in truth the one his *Gentile* partisans at this day, make for him.

The Romans sent out a cohort of five hundred armed men, to assist the proper officers in arresting Jesus. Could he then have been a common malefactor? Does not the employment of this military force, show that he

must have had a strong party at his back? Pray tell us for what he was arrested, tried, and executed. Can you make the world believe that a Roman Governor would send out a regiment of armed men to arrest a meek and lowly, despised and rejected individual, and try, and convict, and then execute him, merely because he differed from the Jews, in some points of doctrine—those Jews whom this same Roman Governor, despised, and whose religion he held in contempt.

No doubt, Jesus would gladly have gathered Jerusalem under his wings. Spiritual wings say you! Riding at the head, or in the midst of this noisy procession, was a most singular position for imparting spiritual instruction. Why, if his object was not revolution and usurpation, did he not inform this multitude of followers, that were cheering and proclaiming him King, that they were laboring under a great mistake—to use a westernism—barking up the wrong tree.

These questions cannot be answered, nor the foregoing conclusions be avoided, but by a denial of the facts on which they are founded. You may take either horn of the dilemma. If you admit the facts, I impale you on the inferences. A denial of them is equally fatal.

That the statements on which the charge of rebellion is founded, are irreconcilable with other statements of the evangelists, I admit. The betrayal of Jesus by Judas, is a most absurd tale and wholly irreconcilable with the previous history of Jesus, as given by his biographers. In what particulars could Judas have betrayed him. He could not have disclosed to the proper authorities, the *crime* for which he was crucified—publicity being its main gist—a *secret* tumult or sedition, being a contradiction in terms. He could not have betrayed him, by identifying or pointing him out to those sent in quest of him: for his person must have been familiar to almost every inhabitant of Judea, and particularly to the citizens of Jerusalem, to whom he had but a few days before exhibited himself, as the leader of a tumultuous throng, bent on the overthrow of the existing government. He could not have betrayed him by directing the sheriff, and his posse, to the place of his concealment; for he was arrested in a public garden, and boasted that he had not skulked. Be pleased to suggest any other particulars in which he could have been betrayed.

His remaining in Jerusalem unmolested, for several days after the commission of the crime for which he was executed, and exhibiting himself daily in the temple, are wholly inexplicable. Such inconsistency of statement, would discredit any other author.

I cannot close this chapter, without warning my friends to be on their guard against false, or immaterial issues. The christian asserts that this 53d had reference to Jesus. The infidel says it had not. This is one

The infidel asserts, that the greater part of this chapter, related to Jeremiah, or some prophet. The christian says it did not. This is another issue, but an immaterial one: for if in this issue, the christian proves the infidel in an error, he does not prove the truth of his allegation, in his first issue; that is, by showing it did not relate to any prophet, he does not prove that it had reference to Jesus.

CHAPTER XVIII.

In the argument of the question respecting the philanthropy of the apostles, I agreed to admit all the facts stated by Luke in his second book, (miracles excepted.) I now proceed to show, either that the apostles were not imprisoned, or if imprisoned were not released by any celestial being called an angel.

It will be borne in mind that the Jews had no power to put any man to death for any cause—that they dared not take down dead bodies from the cross without leave first had and obtained from the Roman governor.— Luke asserts in his fourth chapter Acts, that the priests and captain or ruler of the temple, and the Saducees came upon Peter and John and put them in hold, or held them in custody till the next day, being greived that they taught in the name of Jesus. The next day the chief men of the Jews assembled and called these apostles before them, and after an examination, dismissed them. How can you reconcile this seizure and imprisonment of the apostles, by these Jews, with the express declaration of John and the indirect admissions of this same Luke, of their total want of power. This captain or ruler of the temple was not, as has been insinuated, the Roman centurion. I make this assertion, and my opponents must show, from proof, that he was, before they can assert that this authority to seize these apostles was derived through him. Admitting that he was, can it be contended that he would arrest and imprison men on a charge that the Roman authorities would not take cognizance of? This charge, it will be recollected, was for preaching in the name of Jesus.— The Roman magistrates, throughout the empire, at this period, and long after, would drive from their presence, all parties complainant, preferring it as an offence. A profanation of the temple they would take notice of, but this was not the charge against Peter and John. The probability, therefore, is that the account of this arrest of these two apostles is a sheer fabrication. The same reasoning will apply to their subsequent arrest.

After the death of Annanias and Saphira, we are told by Luke, that the Sadducees were filled with indignation, (though not on account of these deaths,) and arrested the apostles and threw them into the common prison. It is clear from the previous argument, that this arrest, if ever made, was an illegal one, for two reasons, viz: the want of authority in those who made it, and of criminality in the act for which it was made.

From this imprisonment we are told the apostles were released by an angel of God. Do my fellow citizens, my rational, intelligent, well educated cotemporaries ever seriously reflect that they are called upon to believe, that a corporeal being, in human shape, (for angels are always represented in this form,) was sent from some other orb, no one can tell what or where it is, to this lower world, by the being that created the universe, to enter a Roman jail and liberate these captives? Can it be possible that my countrymen are so fond of miracles, so determined upon their own degradation, and the abuse of their rational faculties, as to set their faces against him who will endeavor to convince them that there were other means of escaping from prison than the interference of a winged messenger of the air?

Admitting that these men were thrown into prison and were at large the next day, and that this release or discharge was without the knowledge or consent of those who committed them; is it the part of rationality to believe the unsupported assertion of one man, and he an interested partisan, that a celestial being broke their bonds and unlocked their prison doors?—Does it not behoove us as *men* to endeavor to account for this escape in some other manner. The imprisonment, we have seen was unlawful—the prisoners were at large the next day, and in the most public place in the city, and not recommitted. We hear of no charge of negligence being brought against the jailor. When Peter broke jail, after being imprisoned, by a Roman governor, who *had* authority, the keepers were put to death for their negligence, notwithstanding it is alleged that an angel rescued him; from all which, the conclusion is irresistible that he and John were previously released from an unlawful imprisonment by the proper authorities—that the angel that opened the doors was no other than a legal or Roman officer.

Luke informs us, that notwithstanding their release from prison, the apostles on being summoned, appeared before the Jewish council, when, and where Gamaliel advises the Jews to let them alone, lest they should be found fighters against God. We are next told that the Jews yielded to Gamaliel, or took his advice. And what next? They called up the apostles and scourged them. This scourging was a most queer way of letting them alone. It is said that Pilate, after pronouncing Jesus guiltless, scourged him. I am totally at fault, as to this process flagellatory. This is the only scourging, however, that the apostles are said to have received.

I have already commented on the persecution that arose after Stephen's death. The convicts fled, but the apostles remained. Not a hint thrown out that they were during this persecution scourged or imprisoned.

In the 12th Chap. Acts, we are told that Herod laid hands on *some of*

the christians, and put James to death. For this he is represented as hostile to christianity, or the christians generally. The writer does not intend that we shall so understand him. Had Herod been unfriendly to this sect, he would have laid hold of *all* the individuals composing it. The charge against James could not, therefore, have been a heresy in religion. It cannot be too often repeated, that the Romans at this period, and long after, looked upon the religious quarrels among the Jews with indifference, and even contempt. This same Herod Agrippa, or his son, afterwards, listened to Paul patiently, and told him that his religion, although Paul was ultra in every thing, constituted no charge against him. It cannot be supposed that an enlightened Roman would have wantonly put James to death, no charge whatever being preferred against him; and as it is plain that christianity could not have been the charge, we are bound to conclude that James and some other of the christians, had been guilty of some offence against the state. Peter is also seized. It must have been a matter of speculation on the part of Luke, that Herod arrested him merely to please the Jews. No Roman governor ever confessed that he incarcerated an individual for no other reason than to please a party. The general character of this prince is at war with any such conjecture. I believe Luke says, that an angel of the Lord smote him. We learn from Josephus that *this* angel was an owl. Angels' visits are said to be few and far between—not so here—we no sooner despatch one, than up rises another. Peter's last, is now waiting for an audience: "How do you do, sir, you must be quite a powerless or heartless personage. Between you and Peter, and Herod, several innocent jailors were led to execution. Whenever you rescue prisoners again, provide some means by which the lives of innocent jailors, whom you may chance to bring into difficulty, may be saved. Our governors and judges will not believe that any such sprites as yourself, do, or will, or can break into jails, and let out prisoners, and thus interfere with the regular administration of justice. You should have appeared before Herod as a witness for these keepers when on their trial—confessed your agency in this jail delivery, and established their innocence. You and your partisans are endeavoring to attach all the blame to Herod. It wont do. You and Peter are alone culpable. Herod did no more than any other inflexible and energetic magistrate would have done under the same circumstances. For shame. For shame."

To be serious, if Peter was put in prison by Herod, and escaped, we are bound as rational beings, to believe that he broke jail as thousands had done, and have done since. If he was delivered through the instrumentality of angels; they must have been such as Marmion scattered to the crowd. He showed the keepers a Benton purse—the angels peeping out of the in-

terscices—nooded and looked towards the door—said nothing—he dropped the purse and left the prison—they divided the spoil, and ran the risque.

After the great parade that has been made about the sufferings of these apostles, who would have thought that seven pages of loose manuscript, would have contained not only a history of all their trials and tribulations, but a labored argument to prove it false, Two imprisonments for one night, each, one scourging, neither of which any rational man believes, and all told.

What has become of your great argument, growing out of the martyrdom of the apostles? It runs thus, if I remember aright: “Martyrdom proves the sincerity of the martyr. The apostles were put to death for persisting in the assertion that they saw Jesus alive after his crucifixion and heard him converse and afterwards saw him ascend to heaven; therefore their testimony must be true.”

This is a very pretty argument: but where are your martyrs? You have not one; for you cannot have the hardihood to assert that James could have saved his life by denying the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Herod, and the other Roman officers of that day, knew as little and cared as little about Jesus, as our president and cabinet do of Joe Smith, and looked upon a christian with the same pity, surprise and contempt, as the latter do upon a Mormonite. Apprehending no danger from the christians, they were led to commiserate, not to hate or fear them. The letter of Claudius Lysanias to Felix, and Festus’ statement of Paul’s case to Agrippa, speak volumes on this question of Roman persecution. They also prove that these Romans understood and were determined to protect the citizen in his rights.

From the great clamor raised by the Jews against Paul, Lysanias suspected that something serious was laid to his charge, and was somewhat vexed, when he ascertained that all this noise and fuss were about “certain questions of their own superstition,” and that Paul was accused of “nothing worthy of death or of bonds.”

Festus was still more surprised and vexed; for as he passed through Jerusalem on his way to Cesarea, the Jews besought him to proceed to judgment against Paul, without a hearing. This anxiety on the part of the Jews led him to suppose that Paul was charged with some very heinous offence. He expresses his surprise to Agrippa in these words: “Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed; but had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

Agrippa expressing a wish to see and hear Paul, Festus brought his prisoner before him the next day, who after hearing the wonderful tale of

this busy apostle, declared that he had been guilty of no crime. Can it be supposed that Lysanias, and Festus, and Agrippa, would treat this ring leader of the sect of the Nazarines with so much lenity and his religion with so much levity, if this same Herod Agrippa or his father had thought it incumbent on him as one of the guardians of the great empire to check the further spread of this heresy by putting the apostle James to death.

You cannot believe that this James was a martyr, but must be satisfied that he was executed for some offence against the state. The probability is, that James and Peter were endeavoring to get up another common-fund society, and dupe another set of converts.

I never felt so much contempt for the species *Homo*, as when laboring to disprove the existence and exploits of those jail breaking angels. The believer may curl the lip in scorn, and affected derision at this declaration; but let him be assured, that to the disbeliever, there is nothing so wonderful and unaccountable as his belief. The infidel stands amazed, and bewildered, when he is reminded that at this day, and in this country of colleges, schools, and printing presses, there are thousands and millions, who believe the prodigies even of the new testament. But, that a christian—a believer in these prodigies, and spiritual influences, can affect surprise that his co-believers should become fanatics, and run after such impostors, as Cochran, Matthias, and Joe Smith, is really amusing. That the gifted Col. Stone, should write a book, the object of which is, to furnish an antidote to fanaticism, is a matter of no astonishment to his friends, who know the goodness of his heart: but that he should prescribe “the simple requisitions of the *word of God*, (meaning the bible) taken in their most obvious sense, and in their own native simplicity and beauty,” as this antidote, is mortifying to one of his friends who knew him, when Mr. Folger was a lad—when the three were residents of Hudson—when the Col. was called “Little Stone,” by those who would fain believe, that genius is confined to certain families, and places, and that nothing great or good could come from the little town of Herkimer, away up the Mohawk—when the more observing, and liberal, however, plainly saw, that he would in a short time stand at the head of his profession, and become an honor to the country which gave him birth.

When such a man as Col. Stone, can recommend *the pure milk of the word*, as a specific for fanaticism, let us no longer laugh at the old lady who told her little daughter, that had accidentally set her foot in a kettle of hot mush, not to scrape it off, as it was “the best thing in the world to take the fire out.” Christianity, as the Col. would define it, is fanaticism—as much so, as Matthiasism, or Cochranism, or Mormonism. He deals in generals. Let us come to particulars, and hear his prescriptions for the individual

cases that may come before him. The Col. must not be offended if we style him Doctor.

Mrs. *** the daughter of the retired clergyman, appears before him. She complains of an over-weening desire, to denounce the modern gay head dresses of the ladies. The Doctor recommends the following *simple requisitions of the word of God, taken in their most obvious sense, and in their own native simplicity and beauty:*" viz. the 1st. Peter, iii. 3d.

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plating the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel."

She returns the next day—says she followed the prescription—symptoms more aggravated, and others of a dangerous character appearing, such as a desire to convert the world, and a conviction that it behooves her to enter into every house, public or private, and pray for the regeneration of its inmates. She is directed by the Doctor, to remember, that Christ, said: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." And "He that will not abandon father and mother for my sake, is none of mine." And that Jt. James said: "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avail-eth much."

Mr. Pierson next presents himself. He is sore vexed with the conviction, that direct revelations of the will of God, are made to him through the audible agency of the Holy Spirit. The Doctor assures him, that according to the simple declarations of the inspired penmen, taken in *their most obvious sense*, the Holy Spirit was visible and *audible* on the day of Pentecost—that it filled the Apostles, and made them for the time, the first linguists of the age—that it fell on Cornelius and his family—was given to all who acknowledged the name of Jesus, and submitted to his ordinances—that there were diversities of gifts, and operations of the Holy Spirit, and he particularly enjoins upon the patient to read the 30th verse of the 4th chapter, 1st Cor. in which St. Paul says: "If any thing be *revealed* to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace."

Mr. Pierson having followed the prescription, also returns—disease, instead of having abated, is raging with ten times its former violence—he is now persuaded, that he can restore the sick, and raise the dead, or that God will restore the one, and raise the other, in answer to his prayer. The doctor prescribes the careful perusal of the last seven verses of St. James' epistle, the words all to be taken in their *most obvious sense*,* and the ac-

* "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

count of Peter's raising Tabitha or Dorcas, also that of Paul's restoring the young man who fell out of the window of a three story house. Should the Doctor be applied to, he could prescribe similar doses daily, for a month, but he is no more interrupted—his two prescriptions have run his patients stark mad.

Matthias or Robert Matthews, makes the next call. He is fully impressed, that all diseases are evil spirits, or devils, which can be driven from the patient, by the prayer of faith. The doctor refers him to the different accounts of Christ's casting out devils, and particularly enjoins upon him to read the 17th and 18th verses of the last chapter of Mark, and to take them in their *most obvious sense*. "And these signs shall follow them that believe, In my name *shall they cast out devils*, they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Matthias never returns. And we next hear of him as a confirmed maniac.

It will not do for the Col. to say, that these supernatural, or miraculous, or spiritual gifts, were to continue but for a season, for this would not be taking the simple unqualified declarations of his evangelists in their most obvious sense. Jesus, according to Mark, did not say to his disciples on leaving them: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned, and these signs, *for two or three hundred years* shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they, *for two or three hundred years*, cast out devils." If this be the obvious sense, then on the same principle of construction, we must read the 16th verse thus: "For two or three hundred years to come, he that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved: but, for two or three hundred years to come, and no longer, he that believeth not shall be damned.'

We should not be construing James' epistle according to its most obvious sense, should we say it had relation only to the age in which he lived, and was applicable to those disciples only, to whom it was addressed. The Col. would not allow me to read it thus: "Should any among you, *during*

"Confess your faults, one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

"Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

"And he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him:

"Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

this generation, be sick, let him send, &c. and the prayer of faith, *during this generation*, shall save the sick, &c." For then he would be obliged to read the preceding verse thus: Shall any man among you, *during this generation*, be afflicted, let him pray. This principle of construction, properly carried out, would make the verse read: "Should any man among you, during this generation, be afflicted, let him pray, but afterwards, let him sing songs."

No, no, Col. do not tell us, that because these miraculous, or spiritual gifts, are not possessed by the believers in these days, that Jesus and his apostles intended them only for the first converts; for you have not the least intimation in your scriptures, to warrant this conclusion, besides it would be directly in opposition to the plain and obvious sense or import of your sacred writings.

Do liberate your fine intellect from the fetters with which a long association with fanatics, has hampered it, and march straight up to the proper conclusion. Thus:

"We denounce him as an impostor, or a lunatic, who pretends to these miraculous gifts—no man is endowed with them at this day, or has been for centuries. The writers who alleged, that believers were once thus endowed, also asserted, if we take their declarations in their most obvious sense, that they ever would be; therefore, these evangelists were impostors."

Are you afraid, Col.? Why do you fear, and what do you fear? The loss of subscribers? The refusal of certain families to associate with yours? You cannot convince me that you believe. Frankly confess your infidelity to those whose virtues and talents you most admire. And my word for it, such numbers will respond to you, that a society can be formed, into which, those whose proscription you now fear, will be proud to enter.

CHAPTER XIX.

A miracle is defined to be something done in violation of a law of nature, or simply, a violation of a law of nature. Law is defined to be a rule of action. A law of nature then is a rule by which nature acts. A mutable rule is a contradiction in terms. Deity is said to be the law maker—and unchangeable; besides; a law maker as such, cannot violate his own laws. Let it be admitted, that he can repeal or modify them; such repeal or modification would continue until the law be re-enacted, or re-modified. For example. It is a law of nature, and so admitted by both parties, that a stone thrown into the air, a few feet will return to the earth. Should this law be repealed, a stone thus thrown would not return. It is also a law of nature, that a man once dead, shall not be restored to life. Were this law to be modified, so that a man, after being dead three or four days, shall come to life, then all men forever after, until the law be re-modified, would be restored to life three or four days after death. I believe there is no pretence that such repeal or modification has ever been made. Nature, by which, in this discussion is meant, the beings of this world, cannot violate these laws. A miracle, therefore, is an impossibility, it being a violation of an immutable rule or law.

But you may say, that there were provisoes to these laws, co-existent with them. For example. It is a law of nature, that the particles of matter composing a fried fish, shall not unite together, in such proportions as to form a fried fish, and assume its shape and appearance, but by a certain process. The proviso to this law must be, according to the creed of the christian, somewhat in this form: "Provided that these particles of matter, shall not be prohibited from thus combining, when my son shall desire such combination, in order to prove his mission from me, when I shall send him into the world to redeem man from the curse I shall pronounce upon him, in consequence of Adam's transgression."

What reasons have you christians to suppose, that God added provisoes to his laws? You reply, that nature has not operated uniformly—that certain phenomena have happened, which will not happen again, under the same circumstances. For all this, you rely upon the testimony of witnesses, that you say lived and wrote some eighteen hundred years ago.

I wish it to be distinctly understood, that you christians admit that there are laws of nature. Your definition of a miracle, presumes their existence. It is not necessary, therefore in this discussion to resort to experience to prove their existence. If there are none, then there are no miracles—if no miracles, then what becomes of Christ's pretensions as a special legate from the skies. He becomes only, a greater natural philosopher, or juggler, than any since his day, on the supposition that all that is written of him be true.

Mr. Hume, if I recollect rightly, (I have not read his dissertation since I was a lad) unnecessarily undertook to prove from experience that there were laws of nature. His opponents contended, that they could not be proved from experience. I know not how else they could be proved, but it is immaterial how we came by the notion that there are such laws—both parties admit their existence. We must, therefore, agree that some of them are known, which knowledge is common to both parties. We both agree, that it is a law of nature, that water, at a certain temperature, will become solid, and at a certain other will go off in a vapor—that it will not become wine. If you contend that this last is not a law of nature, then you must admit, that the water at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, was not converted into wine by any divine agency of Jesus Christ. Let me ask you, how you came by the opinion, that nature is uniform in her operations, and that the foregoing are her laws. You must answer, from personal experience, and the testimony of others: If I ask you how you came by the belief, that there are provisos to these laws, you must answer, from the testimony of others, and from that alone. Now we do not admit the existence of these provisos. You rely upon testimony to prove a few wonderful facts, and from these you infer the provisos, though in many instances, the witness who narrates the marvellous fact, gives the reason of its performance. For example: Moses says, he converted his staff into a snake. This we have always called a miracle, the object of which, this same Moses tells us, was to convince Pharoah, that he (Moses) was sent of God, and thus to induce him (Pharoah) to permit the Israelites to go into the wilderness to sacrifice. The law of nature is, that a living, crawling serpent shall not be made out of a stick, the proviso to which, must be, if you believe Moses, in this form: "Provided, nevertheless, when my servant Moses, shall wish to impose upon the King of Egypt, a serpent may be made out of a stick." Take the proviso to the law, that water shall not become wine. It is like all the other new testament provisos, bottomed on the fall of man, which was brought about by the instrumentality of a talking serpent. You must admit, that it is a law of nature, that a living, crawling serpent shall not talk the proviso to which must be thus: "Provided, that whenever a big copper

head wishes to entice my *chef d'ouvre*, man, to disobey my laws, and thus bring destruction upon himself, and cause me sore trouble and vexation, he may talk, and be the author of lies."

Enough of this. It is trifling. You have no right to your provisos. I have granted them to you for a moment only, to see into what aburdities you would run. The allegation of a miracle, is not aided by the further allegation of the reason of it, which, of itself, is, if possible, a still greater miracle. How can a miracle, which we have seen is an absurdity, be explained?

You resort here, to the assertion, that the same God who established the laws of nature, can change, modify, suspend, and even violate them at his pleasure. What do you know of the nature of Diety? Is it not the height of presumption to say, what he can, and will do? We know that he cannot work a natural impossibility—cannot make a circle without a centre, or change an unchangeable law. You say he is unchangeable, and that he established the *laws* of nature—grant it, though I know nothing about it. A law carries with it immutability. I again ask, how it can be changed, and again remind you, that the reasons given for your new testament miracles, are founded on other miracles, and these last asserted by an anonymous writer, the author of the book of Genesis.

Again you ask, if we are to believe nothing that we cannot explain and assert, that we cannot understand, or explain, why or how the grass grows, or blood circulates, &c.; yet, say you, we *know*, that the grass does grow, and that the blood does circulate, under certain circumstances.* All this I freely admit, and I admit further, that we do and ought to believe many other inexplicable facts and principles, as reported by others. I once was fully of the opinion, that potash and soda, were simple substances. I now believe, from testimony alone, that Sir H. Davy, and other Chemists, have decomposed both, and that they are oxides of metals.

*This is one of those arguments, when carried to the extent the christian wishes, that proves too much. It will prove any wild statement to be true. By the aid of it, any fanatic or impostor, can establish his pretensions and demand your faith in his vagaries, however peurile and preposterous. He can, for instance, assert, that men shall rise from the dead, of a pea green color, with seven heads and ten horns. You deny his assertion. He can reply, in the very language of the christian argument. "Can you give the reason why men were created in the first place? Why there were some black, some red, and some white?—why they had one head, and horny substances at the ends of their fingers and toes? Can not the same God, who created men as they are, raise them from the dead with a different color, and more heads, and give them horns, as he has to animals now on the earth: my assertion is no more wonderful than thousands of others that you believe." Nothing can resist this argument, in other words, there is nothing that cannot be established by it.

I once was of the opinion that the metals were not combustible. Afterwards I *believed* from the testimony of others that a watch spring made of iron would burn like a shaving. I now *know* it, for I have seen it, and am of the opinion, reasoning from analogy, that all metals are combustible. Yet I never opined that Sir H. Davy and other chemists had wrought miracles by decomposing the alkalies, or burning a watch spring. Had it been reported to me that these alkalies were *not* compounds and that iron was *not* combustible, but that the former had been converted into two substances, and that iron had been burned, in violation of the laws of nature and in answer to prayer for the effectuation of some political or religious object; I would not have believed the report, neither would you. Every new fact of this nature reported to us and believed by us, we opine establishes or is in conformity to some principle or law of nature, before unknown to, or hidden from us, and not in opposition to, or in violation of any law.

You all run into the grossest fallacies on this subject. You assert that the conversion of water into ice, is as a miracle to him who was never out of the tropics and never heard of or saw ice, and your conclusion is, that if the conversion of water into wine cannot be proved by human testimony, neither can the conversion of it into ice be proved to our man within the tropics.

Let me state your argument as it should be, and the fallacy will be apparent: "The infidel contends that a miracle cannot be proved by testimony. The conversion of water into wine, he contends, and we admit, is a miracle, therefore he concludes it cannot be proved. Now, certainly the conversion of water into a solid is as a miracle to him within the tropics, therefore, according to the infidel's mode of argument an apparent miracle, but which is not one in truth, cannot be proved to this individual."

This is a palpable *non sequitur*. The argument is based on the position that likes are equals. Our man in the tropics is not told that the conversion of water into ice is a miracle—a violation of the laws of nature—but we are *expressly* told that the conversion of water into wine was. I agree that if you state a *falsehood* to this man within the tropics, viz: that the conversion of water into ice is a miracle—a violation of the laws of nature, you cannot rightfully demand his faith in your allegations. *It is the violation of the law of nature* not the *novelty* or inexplicability or wonderful nature of the fact, that should induce him to reject all testimony.

Your doctors have never met the real question. The questions they have discussed, have been whether there were laws of nature, and whether any such laws could be proved from experience, both of which are put to rest by the definition of a miracle.

I admit that we cannot from any reasonings, *a priori*, determine what are the laws of nature. A man who had never seen alkali and lard combined, could not affirm that the compound would be soap, nor oil of vitriol with soda, Glauber's salts.

We give credit to reports of men of science. Important discoveries are being daily made, not by reasonings, but by experiments—discoveries, not of new laws of nature, but of those that have existed, since nature commenced, but which have remained unknown. A chemist might impose upon us, and make us believe a miracle; not, however, by reporting it as such, but as a law of nature. He might, for instance, report the discovery of some gas, which, when exposed to water, was absorbed by it. His discovery of the gas may be true, but its liability to be absorbed by water may not be one of its properties. Yet we should have no hesitation to believe the absorption of the gas by water. But if he should report that he ascertained it was *not* one of the properties of his gas to be absorbed by water, but that on praying to God, that a certain jar of it might be, and it was done, we should not believe him any more than we should, were he to state any other miracle.

I shall close the argument by asking the great question which must come home to every one; viz: Is it more probable that an admitted law of nature should be violated, than that Moses, or Joshua, or Mark, or John, or any of the apostles, should intentionally deceive or had been deceived?

CHAPTER XX.

There are certain questions uniformly put up by the religionist, in defence of his system.

First: How came the world into existence? If we answer, that God spoke it into existence; they reply, that we derived this notion from the writings of Moses. It unfortunately happens, that this same Moses, (supposing him to be the author of Genesis) dates the creation of all things, only about six thousand years back; whereas, we have proofs stronger than your holy writ, that the earth must have existed myriads of years before the existence of man.

No individual, who ever reflected for a moment, believes, that the solar system, and the innumerable other systems, of which the fixed stars are supposed to be the centres, were spoken into being, no longer ago than the existence, of a man, up to whom, a gentile christian (Luke) could trace the descent of the obscure Joseph. The reply to this question should be, that we cannot answer it. We know just as much about it as the writer, or writers of Genesis, and that is nothing at all.

We are told, that but for the Bible we should have been ignorant of the how or the when, all things came into existence, So, those people who were told that the earth rested on the back of a turtle, might have said, that but for the writings of their philosophers, they would not have known upon what the earth rested.

Because we cannot give the how and the when, the why and the wherefore, the earth and its inhabitants came into existence, it does not follow, that we must become the disciples of every dogmatist that may publish his crude notions to the world.

Second: We are asked how man became the being that he is?

There would be just as much propriety and good sense, in the question, why the earth was spherical, or why it revolved around the sun, or why the deer was timid, and the tiger fierce and voracious. To such questions we can only make the child's answer—*because*. We would not believe him however, who should assert, that tigers were originally as mild and harmless as the deer, and fed on herbs, but that a great drought happening in Asia and Africa, they were driven by hunger, to prey on each other, and hence, their nature was changed; even if he should allege, that God appeared to him, and told him so. Nor will I believe that the nature of man has

been changed, because some wild dreamer, has told a tale about a garden and talking serpent.

Third: We are asked what will become of us after death?

The original Israelites, (I must say this for them) were more rational on this subject, than the philosophers of the Nations. They knew nothing, and therefore said nothing about it. During the five hundred years immediately preceding Christ, the Jews having mixed with the Heathen, many of them adopted their notions of a life after death. Hence the sects of the Pharisees and Essenes. The biographers of Jesus were, or pretended to be, of this sect, and would have us to believe that he and his twelve were of the same party; hence, they represent them as travelling without money in their purses. By referring to the chapters of Josephus, in which he gives an account of these Jewish sects, the reader will discover that Jesus taught nothing new, not even the immortality of the soul, or the resurrection of the body.

To this question I reply, that I know nothing about a life after death, and shall say nothing about it, except that it wants proof.

Fourth: We are asked what we will substitute for the religion of the bible?

I answer, nothing. I have no substitute to propose. The question presumes that man must necessarily have some religion. This principle, if carried out, would prove that all the religions, that ever existed, must have received the approbation of God, and therefore, have been true.

I am fully persuaded, and have endeavored to prove, that we would be happier without any religion. It is not to be presumed that any prophet ever alluded to me, yet I shall presume to explain by parable.

A friend of mine, kept a pet monkey, that was constantly in all manner of mischief, which greatly disturbed the equanimity of the good lady. I advised him to part with this pest. He replied, that he and his ancestors before him, had always kept a pet monkey about the house, and he did not know how he would get along without one, acknowledged that its pranks sorely vexed his wife, and concluded by saying, that he had serious notions of exchanging it for a squirrel or a coon.

Fifth: What notions have you of heaven?

None at all.

Sixth: What of hell?

If possible, less than none.

Seventh: What not believe in Heaven, or hell. You must be worse than a heathen.

I acknowledge that in this particular, I resemble the followers of Moses. They were worse than the heathen but not on this account.

Eighth: Can you believe that a just God would send us into this world of sin and sorrow, to live a few years and then die and be no more.

This question presumes that all men will finally exist in heaven; for if God is to be presumed cruel and tyrannical for compelling us to abide for a very short period in this world of trouble and misery, how much more cruel for taking us out of it, and placing us in another, replete with torture, and for an unlimited period.

You appear to claim existence in a future world as a right, founding it upon God's wisdom and justice. You certainly must be very unreasonable and exorbitant. You claim that this world and all things in it, both animate and inanimate, were made for you. To the question why all things else were made, man answers, 'tis for me. Your great difficulty is to know why man was made. You subject the animals to your dominion, compel them to labor for your gratification and slay and devour them, and then tell your creator that these are the miserable things of time and sense.

You plough the earth, and entrust to her your seed corn, which she is faithful to return some fifty fold, and then you call her cursed, because she will not furnish you with the staff life spontaneously.

You cheat, defraud, harrass, enslave, and murder each other, and then exclaim: Oh! what a world of sin and wickednes! Will not God reward us with a better world for the sufferings we now endure in this? It appears to me that these are singular grounds of application for a better world, the most conspicuous among them being the slander and abuse of this.—When reduced to plain English it reads thus: "You, Our Creator, have made the world and all other things therein, for our use, but it is a very scurvy, world, and it will be a very scurvy trick in you, if you do not give us a better. The animals that we have beaten and eaten, are not worthy of a better mode of existence, they were made for us: had no souls, their brains being not as large in proportion to their bodies as ours, having fewer ganglions, and composed of grosser materials. Having given us capacities to hate and despise this world, the creation of which cost you so much trouble, and to conceive of, and hope for another, you are bound in all good conscience to give it to us."

Let me in turn ask the christian what notion he has of heaven and hell. Do these terms in your vocabulary, represent states or places. Have they locality? Can their latitude and longitude be ascertained. Are not these vexed questions, at this day.

A distinguished divine, one of your standard writers, Dr. Dwight, gives locality to heaven, supposes it to be some orb, whose latitude and longitude, and distance from the earth can be ascertained, believes it to be, in a peculiar manner, the residence of God and his angels to whom he gives palpable bodies. By supposing the distance of this orb from the earth to be

given, and the exact moment of the day when the angel, who visited Daniel, left it, and the exact moment he touched the prophet, the Doctor made an arithmetical calculation, by which he ascertained how far he flew in a minute. It was very fast flying. Hence, the Doctor concluded that one of the properties of angels was great speed.

If you believe the facts of the Bible, you must concur in opinion with the Doctor. But Hell! Where is that? Is that an orb? We are always in the Bible directed downwards for this place of damned spirits.—It is now known that up and down are relative terms, up, being from the earth, and down towards its centre. Hell, therefore, must be the place at or some place between the centre and surface of the earth.

Is it not time for us to reject all such weak, and puerile, and heathenish notions as these? Is it not time that we should cease quarreling for titles to places in a world of which we neither know, nor can know any thing.—Although we abuse the world we inhabit, yet we are constantly contending with, and murdering each other for small parcels of it. Certainly, disputed titles to small spots of this earth are a sufficiently fertile source of contention and bloodshea. Then why introduce those of an imaginary world? It should be our great object to diminish the causes of strife and wrangling. In all soberness I ask, if you know of any cause more productive of jealousies and heart-burnings and all those evils which embitter life, than religion or the form of proceeding, in order to secure a title to a seat in your fancied heaven. You build costly and splendid temples, and employ, at a great expense, guides, to point out to your souls the way thither. So many charts, or rather charts by so many men, have been laid down, that these pilots necessarily differ, as to the bearing of this desired haven. You listen to their directions, with the different charts before you, for forty or fifty years, and are no wiser than at the beginning. In the mean time, you have learned to hate with a fierce and bitter hatred, all those pilots, and their followers, who are steering a course the least variant from your own. It has always struck me as wonderful, that it should require a life time to understand these charts, all of which can be examined through in a day. To drop the figure. If these gospels and epistles, which have now been published, as you contend, nearly eighteen hundred years, are not yet understood; can you entertain a reasonable hope that they ever will be? If they are understood, why do you pay the clergy for attempting to explain them?

I cannot but look on these temples, as so many nurseries of wrath. I can conceive of no other object you can have in view in resorting thereto, than in the language of Burns, to nurse your wrath, and keep it warm against the other sects.

Why, I again ask, do you pay men for attempting to explain those books

which treat of God, soul, spirit, heaven and hell, to none of which terms can your most learned divines give a more sensible definition than the wildest savage of our forests. True philosophy teaches us to extend our researches into the things of this world, and discover unknown truths, from those already known.

Your object in resorting to these temples, cannot be, to hear an exposition of the moral law, I mean the golden rule; for its propriety and fitness, are self evident, and your child of five years old, can apply it as well as yourself

Our great anxiety should be, to ascertain, what duties man owes to himself, that is, what mode of life he should pursue, and what regimen practice, for the preservation of his bodily, and cerebral organs in their full vigor.* His duty, towards his fellow man, has long been known, and is comprised in these words; "Do not that to another which you hate." This wants no exposition. "To write treatises upon it, is like burning tapers at noon day, to assist the sun in enlightening the world." It should be written in large capitals, and posted over our mantle pieces, on our door posts, in the market places, and on the corners of the streets, so as to meet us at every turn; and public opinion should set him down as the greatest gentleman, whose course of life, shall give the most indubitable evidence, that he knows no other law than this.

Experience taught man the sad lesson, that he was not inclined to obey this great law. Hence, it may be conjectured, (mark; I give it only as a conjecture) was discovered, the necessity of society in order to protect man from the rapacity of man. Since it is evident, that a permission to the members of any society, to steal, rob, and murder, would be a virtual dissolution of such society; this conjecture has the appearance of certainty. After societies were formed, no matter by what necessity, or for what object, (they existed long before Moses submitted his constitution to his countrymen at Sinai,) the Supreme Power in each, whether lodged in the members or an individual, must have immediately issued these mandates to each member—"thou shalt not steal—thou shalt not plunder—thou shalt do no murder."

These laws or prohibitions may be said to be necessary to the very existence of society. And as it is admitted, that men formed themselves into societies for their individual happiness, the expediency of other regulations became manifest. If in a region, subject to that contagious disease, the

*I do not, like the half christian phrenologists whip the devil round the stump, by making the brain a piano, and the mind a little sprite of a popinjay hopping from key to key.

plague, it be discovered, that want of cleanliness produces it, it would be the duty of him, or them, in whom is lodged the supreme power, to enjoin upon the citizen the performance of frequent ablutions. If in the opinion of the sovereign, the peace and harmony of society, would be promoted, by confining one man to one woman, it would be his duty to punish for adultery and bigamy. So, I insist, that if the people of any state, in whom is lodged the supreme power, are of the opinion, that the drinking of ardent spirits, is productive of more evil than good; or if they are convinced, that the citizens, taken collectively, would be more happy without it, than with it, they should instruct their representatives to lay heavy penalties upon him who shall manufacture, import, vend, or drink it.

My object is to shew, that the laws and institutions of society, are not of divine origin, but owe their existence to the necessities and wants of the people. You can, with no more propriety, contend for the divinity of the law against adultery, than for the one against bigamy. It would be far more easy to shew, that the latter was in opposition to what you call divine authority, than in conformity to it.

In a previous chapter, I spoke of acts *mala in se*, by which I mean those acts that are injurious to our neighbor. In all well regulated societies, all such acts are prohibited. Others may define them, to be such as are injurious to our neighbor, and to *ourselves*. I have not so defined them. It works no injury to my neighbor, if I labor every day in the year. Still, I admit, if it be manifest, that such continued labor is injurious to me, and every other individual, and that it would be for our health to be idle the seventh part of the time, that then, and in that case, we ought, by law, to be restrained from labor every seventh day. But such law, for any other reason, would be unjust, improper, and tyrannical, and in every state in this union, unconstitutional. If the law forbidding us to attend to our secular business on the first day of the week, has been enacted in the several states, merely because Christ was said to have risen from the dead on that day, and his disciples to have assembled on that day uniformly for the purpose of celebrating his *death*; what hinders our legislatures from the enactment of laws, compelling us to believe and repent, confess our sins and be baptised, attend the meetings of the saints, and partake of the elements. Let the legislatures undertake to enforce these christian duties, these plain, positive, direct, and undisputed injunctions of Christ and his inspired apostles, and what a buzz there would be in the camp. Tyranny, usurpation, union of church and state, villiany of the clergy, a violation of the great charter of our liberties, would be sung in all quarters. Is it not, therefore, manifest, that our laws and institutions are not founded upon the bible. And what may astonish you still more, I assert, that if a legislator should vote for

any law, merely because it was found in the bible, he would be violating his oath, to support the constitution. It follows, that we have rejected the bible as the foundation of our laws.

We have declared to our legislators, that they shall not enact laws compelling us to be baptised, or partake of the elements, nor laws prohibiting us from making a golden calf, and worshipping it. Now if it be God's command that we shall do the one, and refrain from the other, should not the one be enjoined, and the other prohibited by law, if the laws against theft, adultery, and murder, are enacted, because these acts are forbidden in the code of Moses. If theft and the like are made criminal by our laws, because forbidden in the constitution, said to have been delivered by God to Moses, and by him to the Israelites, why cannot idolatry be made penal, and the positive injunctions of the new institution (as it is called) be enforced by our legislatures? In the ancient institution, religion was law, and law was religion. Whatever God commanded was the law of the land. And why not under the new? Can there be stronger proof of the propriety of a law, than that God has sanctioned it. There certainly cannot be. And yet, you are singing praises to our sages who framed our constitutions, because they have expressly prohibited the legislatures from passing any law enforcing the injunctions of Christ and his apostles, with a preamble that such law is enacted with the sole view of enforcing such injunctions. Where is your consistency? If the injunctions of Christ ought to be obeyed, every thing that man can do, ought to be done for their enforcement. I am satisfied, and so are you, that if a great majority of this people were christians, and harmonized in their opinions, as to what christianity is, all the injunctions of Christ and Peter would be enforced by law.

I am aware, also, that each and every sectarian will cry out: "Oh no, it will never do to unite church and state." This is one of those adages that has acquired authority by constant repetition. There is no truth in it, and cannot be if religion be of God. Can such religion mar the happiness, or be inconsistent with the well being of society? If of God, and true, I ask again, can it be wrong to enforce it by law? Would not such laws make the people better, and consequently happier? You may answer that experience has taught us, that such union does not promote the well being of society, or advance the cause of Christ. I admit the first position, and will not dispute the latter. You sectarians are now so jealous of each other, that it is impossible for any man belonging to any of the different sects of christians in our country, and zealous as he ought to be, if he believes what he professes, to be elected President of the United States. All of you prefer an infidel for your chief magistrate, to a sectarian, if not of your own sect.

What is the conclusion from all this? Not that baptism, or eating a little bread, and taking a sip of wine, every seventh day, if enjoined by the laws of the state, for the purpose of promoting the health of the people, or for any other reason not connected with faith, would be injurious to society, but, (and I wish the reader to mark it well,) the conclusion is, that religion, as argued in my second chapter, makes man intolerant, cruel and even savage.

- You again reply, that it is wrong to make any law touching the conscience—that freedom of conscience should be guaranteed to every man. What an admission! Instead of weakening, it rather strengthens the foregoing conclusion: for you are well aware, that there never yet existed a body, or sect of christians, having the power, that did not use it, to do the very wrong you speak of. This is surely a further argument in support of my position, that christianity, (I do not mean morality, or the great golden rule, which is independent of Christ, but christianity as I defined it, and correctly too, in my second chapter,) has a direct tendency to pervert the judgment, and blunt the stings of conscience, and make man a persecutor and a murderer.

There can be no doubt, that to the division of the christians of our country, into numerous sects, we are indebted for the preservation, if not the establishment of our free institutions. Had they ever been united, they would, undoubtedly, have made an effort for political power, and had they succeeded in the struggle, which would have ensued, “freedom would have shrieked, and bade the world farewell.” I exclaimed a few lines back:—What an admission! Man should be allowed freedom of conscience, say you. Yes, as a politician on the stump, or in the halls of legislation, you exclaim: Meddle not with the conscience—let thought be free as air—take not the tithe of a shoe latchet, from any citizen of this free republic, if his faith be ever so heterodox.

In the sacred desk your language is: All heretics will be deservedly damned.

On the stump: It matters not whether a citizen believe in twenty gods, or no god.

In the pulpit: The torments of eternal hell, are too little for the idolater and athiest.

On the stump: The infidel should not be disfranchised for his want of faith.

On the camp ground: He that believeth not shall be damned.

On the stump: No tyranny so unreasonable and detestable, as that over the mind.

In the stand: No excuse will be received in the day of judgment for rejecting the gospel.

On the stump: If you mangle our bodies will that change our faith?

In the desk: We can all believe if we would.

In short, on the stump, you admit that faith is involuntary, and that a man cannot be rightfully punished for the want of it. In your sacred desks you insist, that we can believe, and consequently disbelieve at will, and that God can rightfully punish in some other world, for what is innocent and harmless in this.

How can you reconcile such inconsistencies? With what face can you call upon the people to embrace a religion, which, as a politician, you admit is false in principle? Your effrontery must be great, which prompts you to proclaim to the world, that God will punish man for not believing that, which he can not rightfully be compelled to believe.

If your religion which promises Heaven and threatens Hell, on the belief and disbelief of certain facts, cannot be rightfully enforced—if it be such as to disqualify its teachers for any place of trust in our government—if we should have good cause to tremble for the existence of our free institutions, should any one of the sects obtain the ascendancy; what good reason can you give for fostering it at all? Why nourish a pet that you are obliged to chain? It would be the height of folly in a farmer to suffer a pet wolf to range at liberty over his grounds. Suppose he tether him, he is still chargeable with folly. True wisdom would say, cut his throat.

Notwithstanding all these admissions, found in our constitutions, you have so managed as to make the people believe that your religion, and morality, are one and the same thing; hence, an opposer of religion is supposed to be an advocate of vice. Your argument runs thus: "The Bible denounces murder, therefore he who denies the Bible to be the word of God, is a murderer." Let it be stated properly: Moses says that God engraved the ten commandments on two tables of stone, therefore he who disputes this fact, is a thief, murderer, &c. The *non sequitur* is now apparent.

We do not question the propriety of a majority of these commands, but deny the fact of their being engraved on stone by the finger of God, and scout the doctrine that for this infidelity we shall be eternally tormented in a place called Hell.

According to your mode of argument, a series of the most absurd notions and incredible tales must be assented to and believed, if interspersed with moral precepts. The Koran enjoins temperance, therefore, according to your logic the christian, who rejects the Koran, is a drunkard, or an advocate of intemperance. In short, your argument proves too much. It would prove the Mormon Bible to be from God, and Joe Smith divinely in-

spired to decipher the scratches on the brass plates.

Your address has been wonderful. By the force of definition, you include within your pale all the virtuous and exclude all the vicious. You define religion to be the belief of the Bible, and the practice of virtue.—Therefore if a professing christian wander from the path of rectitude, you say he was no christian. You go further, and make the unthinking believe, that to comply with certain positive institutions, is goodness. There is nothing more common, than to hear one citizen say of another: He is a very good man—he goes to preaching every Sunday, or, He is a very bad man—never goes to preaching, nor says grace at table, speaks with contempt of holy men, and laughs at religion.

Let me define infidelity to be the disbelief of the miracles of the Bible and the practice of the Golden Rule; and I could deny all brotherhood with a disbeliever, who might be found tripping.

These definitions are both erroneous. The only material distinction between the infidel and christian is, that one believes certain facts which the other denies.

Morals are common stock, no sect or party can monopolise them, but *the* faith is the peculiar and exclusive property of the christian.

The majority of the religionists in our country contend that this faith alone will carry its professors to heaven. Morals are hooted at.—The only reason that a philosopher can give why the christian or any other religion should be fostered, is, that it may frighten the swinish and ignorant multitude, (for such philosophers are apt to consider themselves as a superior order of beings,) into an obedience of the great rule, by making heaven and hell depend upon obedience and disobedience. You christians scout this doctrine as slavish, and refine much upon the feelings and affections under the name of Heart. To such lengths have you gone as to assert that he who refrains from a base action through fear of hell, deserves it. You allege that your religion commences at the heart and purifies it, and purges it of all propensity to sin. The framers of our constitutions, in whose praises you are so loud, must certainly have thought otherwise. I flatter myself that I have proved the contrary. As a last resort I appeal to the observation of my fellow citizens at the present time.

Let us suppose that our religion is just what the philosopher says it should be, and what you say it is, when contending that it operates to induce the crowd to an obedience of the golden rule, viz: “He who leads a moral life will go to heaven after death.—all others will be cast into hell.” We know that men are by nature stubborn. It has become a proverb, that they can be more easily coaxed than drove. The astonishing profanity, as before remarked, of thousands of believers, may with truth be said

to be a consequence of the 3d commandment. The disposition to rebel against absolute power, and positive and unexplained injunctions appears in children. Let a father say to his little son: go not into the barn-yard on pain of a severe chastisement. The prohibition excites in the child a desire to enter the proscribed premises. He ventures in—a mischievous colt kicks him. He limps to the house, moaning most bitterly; to all of which the father replies: “did I not forbid your going there.” The child might with great propriety rejoin, “Yes, father, you did, but you did not tell me the reason of your prohibition; had you done so, there would have been no occasion for you to have added a penalty to its transgression. Had you only told me of this vicious colt, there would have been no necessity even for the prohibition.” So, if the philosopher will take the trouble to convince the ignorant which can be easily done, that it is for their happiness here, that all should obey the golden rule, he would do more to reform mankind than any system has ever done which threatens vengeance for misdeeds.

We are forced into the conclusion that the christians of the present day are endeavoring to gain heaven, regardless of the great moral law. Hence, smartness, means at this day nothing less than a violation or total disregard of this law, and is placed far higher on the list of virtues than simple honesty. How frequently do we hear the christian extolling this smartness, by such accounts as this: “A. is getting along *very well* indeed—he is a shifting, managing, keen, shrewd, smart fellow—makes good trades. Of A’s. neighbor, B., he says: He is not doing *well*—makes bad trades—too confiding—a fool and his money are soon parted—”

The great principles of forbearance practised by the Essenes, and copied by the writers of the gospels, you have wholly repudiated, alleging that Christ who is said to have inculcated them, could not have meant what he said.—The golden rule is acknowledged to be binding, but you allege that it is impossible for poor, weak, human nature to obey it fully; and, that consequently, a just and merciful God has *opened up* a way by which its violations may be pardoned,

Thus, every thing is afloat—nothing definite—nothing specific. Each is his own judge as to the number or amount of violations that will be pardoned. One envies his neighbor’s talents, and persuades himself that he will be forgiven should he slander a little, and so he slanders. By a similar process of reasoning, another persuades himself that he will be forgiven for concealing defects in his piece of property, and exaggerating those of his neighbor’s, when about to make an exchange, and so he cheats a little.

Thus your religion has swept away the whole moral law. Faith has be-

come the great virtue on which the major part of you entirely rely for salvation.

Having confessed I know nothing of heaven, I will conclude this answer by assuring you (that if I did,) the belief of certain statements found in a certain book, appears to me a most singular condition of gaining it.

Ninth: Have not some infidels been very bad men?

I answer, yes. And let me in turn ask you, if some christians have not been very bad men too? You make each and every one of us answerable for the misdeeds of every other, and have the assurance, when any one of your party makes a false step, to shove him over into our ranks. I have already alluded to your address and management in this particular. Let each party acknowledge its own culprits, and we are not afraid to compare with you from the days of Jesus to the present time, and you may include the French revolutionists. If you say it was not religion that influenced Calvin and others to burn and torture, we assert that it was not infidelity that influenced the Robespierres of the French revolution to those deeds that we all wish to forget. If the parties are to be believed, you cannot make this allegation, though we can. Your burners and murderers expressly declared that they acted under the influence of religious motives. Ours gave out that they were fired by a spirit of liberty, and, hence, made war upon privileged orders of every description and the advocates of every other institution that was hostile to the great cause in which they professed to be engaged. Some were fanatics and others cold blooded villains, and like all other fanatics and cold blooded villains, should be execrated in all time to come. It is because they were cruel and bloody butchers, that Moses, and Joshua, and David, and Samuel, and a host of other old testament heroes or saints should be detested. Could comparisons be made, they should be doubly damned, for the reason that they positively alleged that their God, and creator, not only sanctioned, but commanded their unparalleled massacres and cruelties.

Each infidel is held responsible not only for the misdeeds of every other, but for his opinions or notions upon all subjects whatever. Strange that a disbelief of certain facts, should produce harmony of opinion upon all matters which interest man, since the belief of them, does not, as to what they mean.

I should be very loth to be ranked as one of the disciples of Mr. Jefferson, either in politics or morals. His political principles, and the means he employed to obtain the great object of his ambition, will be severely censured by an impartial posterity. His fame is far from increasing with the lapse of years, though his name continues to be a watchword with those politicians who teach the people that they ought to delegate power and retain it—that they ought to establish a government no department

of which should have the least discretionary power whatever—that they ought to have a treasury, and refuse to trust any man or body of men with the safe keeping of the public money—a watchword with those who complain of the vast powers conferred on Congress, and represent the judges, as so many monarchs because they have power to nullify its acts, and the next breath accuse them of base subserviency to this very Congress because they have not more frequently exercised this power.

This is enough to show that I am a Federalist of the Washingtonian school, detesting a noisy Jacobin as I do a ranting field preacher.

My opposition to the Bible is no proof of dissatisfaction with the political institutions, or the professed moral code of my country, neither of them being founded upon it. These would exist, were the Bible to be forgotten, and the *morale*, or moral tone of my fellow citizens, it is my full belief, would be greatly improved, were it hereafter to be considered as a collection of silly fables and false facts.

Tenth: What is your notion of a God?

Just what yours and every other christian's is, namely, that God is a term used to conceal our ignorance—a mere substitute for *don't know*.

When asked how all things came into existence, we answer there was a cause and we can go no further. We flatter ourselves that naming this cause is explaining it; hence, we call it the great, and first cause, Jehovah, Zeus, Deus, Jupiter and God, but are no wiser than before, though better satisfied. If asked how, or where, this cause, or God exists, or of what materials composed, we are dumb. The ancients and especially the writers of the Pentateuch, personified or rather embodied this God, and made a huge man of it—gave to him all the weaknesses, frailties and passions of man—made him walk and talk, be weary and refreshed, angry and pacified—commit errors and repent of them. The writer of Exodus makes him countenance swindling, and enjoin robbery and murder, for which he is never made to repent. The God of Moses was a monster and should be represented on canvass as pouring forth streams of fiery indignation and wrath, from his wide spread nostrils, and brandishing in his gigantic hand a sword dripping with blood.

The heathen philosophers revolted at the notion of such a God as too gross, and being wholly ignorant of the nature of the atmosphere, asserted that God was air or spirit. Many of the Jews adopted this notion; hence, when Christ is said to have lived, the spiritual or ærial system was in vogue.

Josephus tells us that the Essenes held that souls were immortal, and came out of the most subtle air, and were united unto bodies, as to prisons.

The moderns having ascertained that air is matter, and enters into the composition of what is called gross matter, have rejected the ærial or spiritual system, taught by the heathen philosophers and held by the Pharisees and Essenes and the writers of the new testament, and become atheists, asserting, as religionists, that air, spirit, *Pneuma*, or *Spiritus*, (all names for that which your God is said to be,) is immaterial or nothing.

Let us catechise the modern christian.

Infidel.—How came all things into existence?

Christian.—There was a great first cause, that we call God.

Infidel.—What is God?

Christian.—God is spirit.

Infidel.—What is spirit?

Christian.—It is immaterial.

Infidel.—What do you mean by immaterial?

Christian.—I mean, I say, I mean, that is, I understand by spirit, an immaterial substance.

Infidel.—Immaterial substance is as great an absurdity as substantial immateriality. This immateriality is a big word, and with you christians signifies nothing. You are all atheists and not so rational as the child who stops at the answer, *because or there was a cause*.

Materies and *Spiritus*, matter and spirit, were formerly contrasted in this manner, the one meaning gross substance, such as the earth was supposed to consist of, the other, the air or any subtle fluid. Hence, immaterial was synonymous with spiritual, neither of them implying a negation of matter, as this word is now understood, but only of gross matter.

If an ancient christian had been asked what that Holy Spirit was, that was *poured* out on the day of Pentecost, that made a noise *like a rushing mighty wind*, that filled the apostles if not the house, that was *seen* and *heard*, and that *fell* on Cornelius; he would also have answered that it was an immaterial substance—if asked what he meant by immaterial, he would have answered spiritual—if further questioned he would have said that spirit was a subtle fluid, and if pushed still further, he would have asserted that this subtle fluid was some thing, though not what was *then* understood by the term matter.

It is therefore manifest, that by a change of the meaning of this word immaterial, the christians of the present day are teaching a doctrine diametrically opposite to that taught by the writers of the new testament.—The latter is intelligible at least—the former absurd.

If our religionists would tell us that spirit was some thing or some matter which had never yet come under the cognizance of our senses, and never would, they would also be intelligible, but to say that that which filled

the apostles and made them jabber like one under the influence of nitrous oxide was nothing, is an insult to our common sense

Eleventh: How can you adopt the principles of infidelity?

Principles of infidelity! Think of that! Why not talk about the *principles* of blindness, or deafness, or of any other negative? This expression, like *the testimony of God, holy religion*, and the like, is another spring to catch woodcocks. Into what a terrific being you convert an oyster, enduing him with as many principles as you ascribe to an archangel, and rendering him as mischievous as your arch fiend.

This phraseology has grown out of the practice of holding each infidel responsible for the sayings and doings of every other. Your leaders will have it, that a disbelief of certain allegations, in a certain book, must necessarily produce harmony of opinion, upon every other subject, and identity of faith, or disbelief in every other statement of facts. Why not hold the Protestant responsible for the opinions or principles of the Catholic, and *vice versa*—both rejecting the Koran—both believing in the resurrection of Jesus. I have already discussed this question.

That some infidels may have advanced and advocated unsound doctrine, is very probable. I charge no one, however, having never read any of their systems—holding all theories in utter contempt, from whatever source they may emanate.

Many, no doubt, have been led astray by the silly notion instilled into their minds, when young, by their christian teachers, that there is the relation of predicate and consequent existing between principles and facts; for, it is well known, that the christian reasons thus:

“Jesus is said to have inculcated some excellent precepts, therefore, his biographers are men of veracity; therefore he was begotten by the holy ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified, dead and buried, raised the third day, and carried up to Heaven, where he now sits, at the right hand of God.”

Having become convinced, that these facts are false, these infidels, for the reasons above suggested, may have considered it incumbent on them, to reject the precepts. Nothing more silly. Truth is truth, whether found in the Koran or Testament—whether spoken by a villain or a gentleman—a fool or a philosopher.

All men are fond of distinction. And as nothing can be more gratifying to their love of approbation, than to be hailed as the founders of sects or parties; many system-makers, have, no doubt, sacrificed truth on the altar of their ambition.

Seceders universally run into extremes. Becoming disgusted with some tenets or practices of their party, and having remonstrated in vain against

these supposed errors and abuses, their dissatisfaction is converted into unrelenting hostility, not only towards the persons, but some of the sound tenets, and innocent practices of the majority. Witness the conduct of the seceders from episcopacy in England. Their buildings for public worship, they must call meeting houses, because they had once called them churches, the windows of which must be square at the top, because those of the churches were circular.

It is, therefore, not a matter of astonishment, that the infidels of Europe, having witnessed the gross corruptions of the church, should have become so blinded with disgust, as not to be able to discover any beauty or soundness in any of the precepts attributed to Christ. But, pray do not hold me responsible for what gentlemen thus influenced, may have written.

Having shewn, that the principles of infidelity are an absurdity, let me call to your more particular notice, one of your practices or *principles*.—When endeavoring to *persuade* an infidel to believe, you are loud in the praises of the principles of your religion. When you wish to *convert* a profane, scoffing, unconverted *believer*, you expatiate largely on faith, making that the great virtue. This may be all very consistent. Pray excuse me, if I acknowledge my inability to comprehend it.

Some infidel writers may have been under the erroneous impression, that it behoved them to furnish a substitute for the religion they were endeavoring to destroy—that if they led off the monkey, they must put a squirrel or a coon in its place; and hence may have arisen the many crude systems of which the christians complain.

Twelfth: Why wish to disturb your fellow citizens in that faith in which they are so happy?

When you are asked, why the christians are moving heaven and earth, in order to shake the faith of the natives of Asia and Africa, and of the Isles of the Sea, in their respective religions, you answer that these natives are miserable idolaters and are not happy in their faith or religion. Allow me to make the same answer to your question. If you christians in your public appeals to God be sincere, if your protestations in your prayers be not a solemn mockery, you must, of all men, be the most miserable. You confess a want of faith, complain of doubts and distrusts, and represent yourselves as obnoxious to the wrath of an insulted and an offended God. Can you believe what you say, and yet tell me you are happy? Will you explain to me this want of faith? Grant that you mean (for so you confess) a want of confidence in the promises of God and his Christ—a distrust of their fidelity. No wonder you are miserable, in the belief of a God who has power to consign you to endless happiness or misery, and whom you represent as a whimsical being—one in whom you have no confidence.

This is all stuff. You have no such distrust—you do not doubt the fidelity of God, to fulfil all the promises he ever made. It is true, you have doubts, but these doubts are respecting the making of the promises. That man or woman never yet existed, who believed that the creator of the universe had actually made a promise by deputy, or otherwise, to his creature man, and yet doubted, as to its strict and literal fulfilment. These doubts, therefore, of which you complain, and which cause you so much unhappiness, are, whether the facts of the bible be true or not—whether God ever made the promises and threats therein found, or not.

The charge contained in the question is therefore groundless, as you have no *faith*, in which you can be disturbed.

This charge is made, not by the christians alone, but by infidels, (for I consider every intelligent man, who does not formally and openly confess Christ, and submit to the positive ordinances as an infidel.)

These infidels are very great men, and very great philanthropists too, in their own estimation. It is really laughable to witness the airs they put on—the port they assume—how staid and dignified they would be considered—with what pity and compassion *a la Robespierre* they look down upon the *pauvre peuple*. “Poor creatures! they are happy in their belief, and why wish to disturb them, and make them miserable!”

Such is the language of these swelling, self-important, hypocritical infidels, who affect to love, but in truth, look down with contempt upon those whom they choose to style the *people*. It should be borne in mind, that these compassionate gentry, do not accuse us of subverting truth, but of causing the misery of the poor people, by convicting them of error. What wonderful philanthropy! Their hearts would burst with grief, were they to hear me endeavoring to convince a Turk, that Mahomet was an impostor; or a Catholic, that his saint had no influence in Heaven.

These men imagine, that the influence and talents of the country are on the side of the clergy. Hence, none but the clergy and their supporters, are permitted to have any feelings. The bold and candid infidel, who sincerely believes, that Christ and his apostles, were men actuated by the basest motives, must be perfectly cool, when he is told, that these persons are his saviours and spiritual guides. In the language of the great Irish barrister, he must “writhe with grace, and groan in melody.”

When a christian complains that I hurt his feelings, by calling his Jesus an impostor; these mongrels will not suffer me to reply, that the christian does equal violence to mine, by calling this Jesus my saviour. I respect an honest, sincere christian, but these mongrels, many of whom laugh at Christ, and snarl at infidels: and *other some*, who pretend to be the friends

of christianity as a *human* institution, resemble whipt spaniels—"I have no use for them."

We give ourselves out to the world, as a christian people, yet, let a stranger travel through our country, and listen to the language of these non-descripts, and of their children, and he would come to the conclusion, that a great majority of our citizens, are not only not christian, but anti-christian—not athiests merely, but antithiests. They seldom utter a sentence, but "God and his Christ" are insulted. No expressions more common and frequent, than "Jesus Christ God damn you"—"God Almighty damn my soul."

It is certainly the part of charity, to ascribe their conduct in this particular, to their infidelity and athiesm. If they are infidels and athiests they are chargeable with supreme folly only—if they are believers (I use the term in its common acceptation) I know no language adequate to express my astonishment at their inconsistency, hardihood, and impiety. He who will knowingly and wantonly insult and defy a being that he believes to be his creator by a constant violation of a law, that he also believes was engraven by this God, on a table of stone, cannot have much respect for his fellow-man. It is amusing to hear the *gentlemen* of this mongrel party, descant upon the law of duelling, and boast of their chivalry, and the next breath extol Jesus, (making him almost divine) for his precepts of forbearance and non-resistance.

In ancient days there were but two parties, the believers and disbelievers. It was then: Believe and show forth your faith by being baptised.—With these mongrels, these neutrals, these fence men, these vulgar and profane, as well as these gentlemanly and compassionate infidels, it is: Refuse to express a disbelief, and laugh openly, or in your sleeve, at Christ and his followers. It is time for every man to show his hand on this and every other subject. Sincerity should be the order of the day. Infidels should know each other. There should be unity and concert of action with them, as with the believers. Institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge, should be established by their joint efforts. Halls of science should be erected both in town and country, throughout the land. Proper apparatus should be procured, and able men employed as professors, to teach the whole people all that is known in every department of physics. Those professors who have employed children as waiters, will attest, that a child of ten years old, can be taught all that is known in their respective departments, especially in chemistry. The days of mystery, it is to be hoped, are gone by. He who can talk about hydrogen and carbon, pneumatics and optics, nadirs and imuths, &c. should no longer be looked upon as a prodigy.

Children would be delighted to attend the lectures of such professors.—They would there learn something beside unmeaning words—something on

which they could converse intelligently with their parents, and to their great delight and satisfaction. Could such institutions be now put in operation, throughout our country, the manners and the moral tone of this whole people would be so improved, in a single twelvemonth, as to cover with shame the supporters and advocates of the numerous institutions for the support and spread of the gospel.

Thirteenth: What would you do with all our meeting houses or churches?

I would convert them into halls of science.

Reader. Let me at parting conjure you not to be led astray by names. You may not be aware of the address of the translators of the bible in this particular. Certain words which were once common or unappropriated, have been, by the christians, appropriated to particular individuals. For example, the word Messiah, as well as Apostle, means a Messenger, and was once unappropriated or applicable to any one who was sent on any message, but the christians have appropriated the one, or made it applicable to Christ alone, and the other to Paul, and each of the twelve, who, before the crucifixion, were called disciples, so that Messiah and Christ are now synonymous, and it would be considered blasphemous to apply the term Messiah to any other individual.

The translators, being fully aware of all this, have in their wisdom (serpents are said to be wise,) selected the word Messiah as the proper translation of the unappropriated Hebrew word for messenger found in certain passages of the prophecies, particularly in ix. Daniel. They knew full well that the unwary would be caught in the snare. How frequently have I heard the simple,—and let me for once say,—priest ridden christian exclaim, “What! the *Messiah* not foretold! Why, the prophets call him by his very name.”

ERRATA.

In two or three instances I have used the word "Patriarchs," for "Antedeluvians." On page fourteen, quotation should end at the word restrain. Seventeenth page, sixth line, read "that," for "therefore." Twenty-fourth page, eleventh line, for "never," read "ever." Thirty-first page, for "King of Egypt," read "Potiphar." Thirty-fifth page, twentieth line, strike out the words "make man," from the quotation. Fifty-ninth, fifth line, insert the word "it," after "apply." Sixty-first page, twenty-second line, read "18," for "17." Seventy-second page, a great error here.—The xxxiii. Ezekiel is referred to and copied instead of the xxxiv. Eighty-ninth, third line from bottom, for II. read xi. One hundred and twentieth page, second line, between the words "two," and "males," insert the words "or more." One hundred and twenty-fifth page, fourth line from bottom, in some copies, for "never," read "ever." Between the one hundred and fifty-sixth, and hundred and fifty-seventh pages, the following line in some copies is wanting, "not what Christ, or his chosen twelve taught, and that a war was then going on." One hundred and sixtieth page, after the words "scour away your sins," insert "by washing your hands." One hundred and sixty-first page, eighteenth line, between "is," and "at," insert "as." Two hundred and seventh page, twelfth line, for "O!" read Of.

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