

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 07954917 0

2EY
Orew duc

THE
PANTHEIST;
OR
THE DIAL OF PROGRESS,

BY CHAS. ORENDORFF, M. D.

"Come now let us reason together."— ISAIAH.

SPRINGFIELD, ILLS.,
STEAM PRESS OF BAKER & PHILLIPS.

1865.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
363557A
TILDEN, LEROX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1928 L

NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR, LEROX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

P R E F A C E.

I have consulted no one in regard to the publication of this work, and I owe no man an apology for the production, for *truth* has ever been my constant aim, and it requires no excuse. The subject upon which I have written concerns every human being alike, and with this fact in mind, it has been my object to bring my ideas as clearly before the comprehension of the plowboy, as the man of scientific attainments or the classical scholar. I may be in error, but I know of no better mode of arriving at the truth, than by bringing that error to the surface, in order that it may be seen, and thereby detected and exposed, and then it will be my pleasure to renounce it; but held in reserve it would pass for truth to the end of time. But if it is found that I have brought truth to the surface, then, that truth is just as obligatory as any other truth, no matter how stubborn it may appear to certain minds; and since truth has everything to gain, and nothing to lose by investigation, we should never fear to investigate any subject.

C. ORENDORFF.

ELKHART, ILL., August, 1865.

THE PANTHEIST.

INTRODUCTION.

On a certain occasion when Themistocles of Greece was making a speech to his people, his life was endangered by the violence of a mob. Says he, "Strike, but hear me." I court as much forbearance from the reader, when in the course of these writings, I make innovations on his preconceived opinions, by exposing their folly, and showing up his persistent inconsistency. Jefferson said, "It is right to tolerate error when reason is left free to combat it," and every one who has the capacity to reason, and who has any confidence that his opinions are right, must subscribe to this principle; and it presumes that there are no privileged individuals or favored classes who have the right to say for others what is truth or what is error, but that all alike have the right not only to think for themselves, but to assert or write any opinion so long as it can be maintained by reason. I rejoice to believe that reason is king over nearly all questions in most countries at this time; but it is to be as much deplored that religion is not, nor ever was governed by reason, but still continues to trample it under foot. Religion has usurped the crown, but I shall in the following pages endeavor to restore it to its legitimate inheritor. I am aware, however, that the bigot, feeling the weakness of his cause, has found it proper to place religion above reason, and that in matters spiritual, he wants nothing to do with reason. He is joined to his idols and like Jeff. Davis, all he wants is to be let alone. Mahomet said, if the mountain would not come to him, he would go to it, and this is the language of reason to religion. If "truth is mighty and will prevail," its empire is destined to be universal, and religion, too, must eventually bow its head to its mild sceptre.

But religion is not so bad now as it was a few centuries ago; and why? I answer, because there was more of it then than now, and this is not on account of its improvement, but it is on account of its abandonment; and in proportion as it loses its hold on governments and on the minds of the people, do we note its so called improvement. Religion in some countries has probably had its day, but in those countries and in those times, where and when it had attained to the zenith of its power, then and there were the places and times to properly judge its influence; and this is the rule for judging the influence of anything. We could not judge a Bonaparte, or a Hannibal, by the little school boys playing by

the roadside; we could not foretell the majestic oak by the little frail sprout pressing its tender head through the decaying leaves; the great boa was harmless in the egg shell, but we must watch the development for the result. History gives us examples where and when religion has been fully developed, and the result is always the same; yes, a result that makes us blush for poor human nature! Then has every page of history been stained with blood! It calls forth the sword, the dagger, the thumbscrew, the fagot, the flaying alive, and every manner of torture that ever entered into the heads of pious knaves to conceive, or the wicked hearts of reckless fiends to execute. All religions, whether Jewish, Christian, Pagan, or Mahomedan, are built upon miracle, mystery, revelation, prophecy and dreams. They all have the same source and are alike in their tendencies, which are commensurate with such beginnings. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. One kind of religion is no improvement on another one, only so far as it abandons something that some other religion maintains, so I shall not designate any name, but use the general name of religion to mean any or all of them. The Christian element of these factions may, however, receive a larger share of my attention than the others, but it will be for the reason that we are brought more nearly in connection with this religion in this country than with any other, and since charity begins at home I have no desire to engage in a foreign crusade, where nothing could be accomplished.

Although these various elements of religion are inharmonious, and continually at war with one another for the supremacy of power, they are alike united in their untiring opposition and inveterate hate against liberty, truth, philosophy, progress and reform; for they all well know that a blow struck at any one of them from such a source is a blow against all the rest. I intend to show that religion is no more the normal or natural condition of mankind than crime or any other evil is, and if it is true that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; or that man loves darkness rather than light because his deeds are evil; the best examples illustrative of the fact, is that given us by the influence of religion in times and places when and where it exercised its uncontrolled power, and this I will show as we proceed. But if religion is to be respected on account of its age, then all evil and all superstition is to be respected for the same reason. Because murder dates back as far as the days of Cain, that does not make it any the more honorable; because people have always believed in ghosts, spooks, hobgoblins, &c., it is no reason why we should believe in them nowadays; hence, if I do concede that it is natural for people to be religious, that does not make it right, for then it would be right to be superstitious and to tolerate all grades of evil, for such things are as ancient as religion.

It may be argued that my belief is all a negation, and before I demolish one system it is necessary to propose a better one. To such persons I say there is no more negation about my belief than there is in yours. I believe as much as you do, but I do not believe the things that you do, and that is the only difference. I would substitute reason and truth for religion, that is, for mystery, prophecy, dreams, and miracle; I would

substitute good for evil, and reality for the shadow; but reason, truth, &c., cannot enter into the minds of the people so long as these other obstacles stand in the doorway, and it is these obstacles which I negative, and this is what constitutes my unbelief. Now, if you negative the substitutes which I propose, then you are as much an unbeliever as I am. In the present state of society belief is regarded as a great virtue, and unbelief a great crime. But is this the case? I will leave the explanation to the priests of the various religions and let them satisfy it to their own pecuniary interests, and that will satisfy me, but if I undertake to explain it, it might result in withholding something from their pockets to a degree not satisfactory to themselves. If I do not believe that Joe. Smith or Mahomet were true prophets or saints, I do not incur the censure of being a fool, a scoffer, or blasphemer, although this is unbelief; but if I do not believe Joseph's dream concerning his wife and the Holy Ghost as per Matthew eighteen hundred years ago and told not by Joseph but by some one else to somebody else so that Matthew heard of it—and by the way I do not pay any attention to my own dreams—I am called not only a scoffer and blasphemer by the pious clergy and their willing dupes, but I have committed the unpardonable sin—the sin against the Holy Ghost, the kind of a Ghost that was never heard of until invented by Saint Matthew—for he is the first Bible writer that mentions any such a majesty. This same pious Evangelist has also the credit of being the first person to introduce the name of Jesus Christ, for such a person had never been thought of, until he had been dreamed of, by Joseph who appeared to be keeping this thing still, until Matthew got hold of it, when he published it to the world. I do not ask any one to show the name of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, but I do challenge all the clergy in Christendom to produce any passage in the Old Testament that has any reference in any way to the person since called Jesus Christ. I anticipate some verses they would quote in proof of this matter, but I intend to examine such verses in the course of these writings, and if the reader will bear with me, I will show him that these passages have no more reference to Christ than they do to himself; but this is a part of the mystery of religion that is called prophecy.

It would be very strange indeed if the Jews could never think or write anything about their own affairs, but were continually going a wild-goose chase into futurity, and giving all their time and attention to a person who was to be born several hundred years after they had taken their last final resting place beneath the clods of the valley to never hear anything more about this person who had given them so much trouble.

That religious institution of the Bible—human slavery—meets with my hearty condemnation and eternal opposition; and in choosing between the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the principles of the Bible as touching this point, I have no hesitancy in the choice, and my choice would be obvious to every lover of freedom. Paine, the Apostle of human freedom, says, "A man has no property in man; nor can one generation have property in that generation which comes after it." The Lord by the mouth of Moses is made to say, "Notwithstanding, if he

(the servant) continue (to live) a day or two, he (the master) shall not be punished for he is his money." (Ex. VI, 21.) The laws of our country would hang such a man; Moses and the prophets to the contrary notwithstanding. Our country has finally adopted the principles of Jefferson and Paine and discarded that of Moses and the Bible. It was the mission of Christ and his apostles to preach against sin and iniquity in every form, but Christ nor any of the apostles condemn slavery or servitude anywhere in all the New Testament. They not only give slavery a silent approval but they say, "Servants, submit yourselves to your masters"—"Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, for it is pleasing unto the Lord"—that is—unto Christ for he said he was the Lord. Slavery of white persons was no unusual thing in the time of Christ, and he could not help being cognizant to the fact; but since he does not condemn it, he must have considered it as being right or else he would have spoken as much against it as he did against any other sin. Now according to this Bible code how long would it have taken the United States to rid herself of this religious and infernal institution? But now since slavery is dying out in this country, and the noise of its clanking chains, and the crack of the driver's whip will soon be heard no more in all this land of liberty, let us inquire what is killing it? Certainly not the Bible! for the tendency of its teachings would be to rivet tighter the chains of human bondage, and if the "slave is his master's money" he has as much right to him as he has to his money. The question is one of easy solution, and it is this:—that the American people have finally been forced to receive and to adopt the principles of liberty, and of the rights of man, as taught by heretics; that man has no property in man, and that all men are born free and endowed with equal rights; the scriptures to the contrary notwithstanding. Well, are not the pious clergy on the side of freedom? Yes, of course they are now and no other people throughout all the land are making louder demonstrations against slavery than these same pious clergymen, and they have lately discovered that this darling babe of theirs which they had so long gathered in their tender embrace, has proved itself to be a child of the devil, and now they have a special mission to choke it, as Hercules did the huge snake. The Devil it is said, sometimes takes on the garb of an angel of light, but these pious god-fathers did not discover their mistake, until liberty and truth in their onward march to universal empire, bore down against them like a mighty avalanche, and then they surrendered at discretion! But now it is presto! change! How we apples swim! There is a special providence working in all these things! It was through God's providence that the great and the noble Abraham Lincoln was murdered by the midnight assassin! It would be supposed that this was a crime in its conception and accomplishment diabolical enough to be ascribed to the Devil, but our Christian theologians take the responsibility off of the shoulders of his Satanic Majesty, and charge it upon the Lord! They had better not have any Devil for they are leaving him no work to do; the Lord permits all the crime which is done, therefore the Devil is not responsible.

I dislike to dignify such nonsense with even so much as a passing notice, but since the priests are making it somewhat popular and orthodox, I believe it merits a little share of my attention as well as a great share of my condemnation. This is a full indorsement of what Pope says: "Whatever is right;" and therefore it is impossible to do any wrong, because God in his providence permits it. If the story of Eve is correct, then God in his providence permitted her—although as sinless as himself—to entail sin and misery on the whole human race for all time to come. There is as much of God's providence in permitting Eve to eat the forbidden fruit as there was in the assassination of the lamented President. To this every honest mind will say, yes. When a surgeon treats a fractured bone successfully he deserves credit for his skill, but if he breaks a bone in order to prove his skill, it would be considered disreputable, however successful he might prove himself in the treatment, after such an injury. Just so God through his providence has permitted or rather given us the disease of sin, and has very compassionately through his providence permitted the Physician—Christ—to heal us, and that is very condescending indeed on his part to make us well after he had made us sick. If it would not be considered "blasphemy" for me to inquire of the rascally surgeon, why he broke the bone of the man who was sound and well before, I hope I may be permitted to inquire why God permitted sin to be entailed upon a race which would otherwise have been perfectly holy and happy? I know there can be nothing wrong in my asking this question or any other question, for the providence of God permits it and I can no longer do anything wrong because God would not permit me doing such a thing! Yes all is right and nothing is wrong any more! The Devil is dead and "Othello's occupation is gone." No, I mean the Preacher's occupation is gone, and he has killed it. But if the Devil is not dead and is doing anything, he is now doing right, and there is no use of any more preaching, for there is nothing to preach against, and at the same time the war is over and the brave boys in blue are coming home, for there is nothing more to fight against. Well, then, if the clergy have killed the Devil, and the soldiers have captured Jeff. Davis; let us fling out our banners to the breeze, and let the clergy tear off their gowns and throw away their crosses, and we will have such a time of rejoicing as has not been known since old lady Eve was first tempted in the garden of Eden; for now God sanctions everything; all is right, and all is peace. Surely this must be the millenium day! But would the Priests rejoice because the Devil was dead or that he was chained so as to be harmless? No, not by any means, for then "Othello's occupation would be gone sure enough. I imagine I could hear these privy counsellor's of the Lord saying, we must not kill the Devil nor hurt his majesty, for he is our best friend; he gives us fat salaries, and encourages us in idleness, and for these reasons we must take the responsibility of the assassination of Mr. Lincoln off of his shoulders, and put it on the Lord, and the credulous gullets will swallow everything we say; besides, we can give them a little scripture if necessary; for Paul says, "If the glory of the Lord more abounds through my lie why should I

longer be called a sinner?" And if we confound the works of the Devil with that of the Lord we can give them scripture for the mistake, for David, a man after God's own heart was moved to go and number Israel, either by Satan, or the Lord, but was not certain which one it was. "And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel and he moved David against them to say, go number Israel and Judah." (2 Sam. XXIV, 1.) When the same story is again related in I Chronicles, chap. XXI, ver. 1, it is said: "And Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel." When inspired penmen make such blunders, it gives our modern clergy license to make any kind of a mistake. If the pious clergy were consistent they would see God's providence in the publication of this book. But they will fail to see it, because, if it were generally disseminated its instructions might militate against the "occupation," by curtailing the allowance of loaves and fishes. They can read God's providences in any kind of devilish wickedness and diabolical crimes, but it is not to their interest to see his providence in the outspoken expression of honest opinion, deduced from reflection and free inquiry, such as may be found in this work; but no crime can be too black nor any scheme too hellish for his providence! According to the doctrine of Priestcraft Judas Iscariot ought to be the greatest name in the catalogue of saints, for he brought about the scheme of salvation for which the pious clergy are so thankful by betraying Christ which led to his crucifixion and death, but I have never heard the clergy say that they saw any manifestation of God's providence in this thing, nor does Judas even get so much as a "thank you" from their pious lips; but this man of all others who has done the greatest good to mankind according to their own story, is the man of all others to receive the greatest share of their pious condemnation. Jesus did not *live* to save sinners but he died to save sinners, and if there is any merit in his death, most certainly Judas should be entitled to a share of it. Had Judas permitted Jesus to die with the fever or any disease I suppose the whole scheme of salvation would have fallen to the ground. I have given this subject of "God's providences" so much notice with the hope that I will not be obliged to recur to it again, for it is so at variance with God's goodness and wisdom, that it amounts to "blasphemy," if the clergy will permit me to use their favorite expression. I am not yet ready to commence the work of building up. First of all error and superstition of every grade must be removed out of the way; for to be building on such a foundation as this would be like building on the sand. As a growing city expands, the old crumbling walls and dilapidated houses are removed that new and better buildings may occupy their places. And it is during the work of such demolition that the rats—the pious rats—are thrown into confusion and their cry is raised against the innovators.

The old wrecks of buildings are superstition and error; the rats are the pious clergy; and the innovators are reason, truth and free inquiry. It is more difficult to unlearn error, than it is to learn truth; and the mind of the prejudiced person may be compared to a sheet of writing paper, all scribbled over with undefined and unmeaning marks and char-

acters, which are to be erased before it can be susceptible of receiving any legible impressions. So long as a person believes in three Gods he will never have proper conceptions of one God; so long as he believes God is a blundering spirit, subject to repentance, and mistake, and placed beyond the bounds of time and space, he can never believe that God is an eternal principle existing in matter. Then, these prejudices and old rubbish once removed, the mind will be prepared to receive the impressions of truth, and in the room of error and superstition we can erect a temple, dedicated to reason and free inquiry. To gratify the reader I will anticipate a little—the plan of the book—by foreshadowing the outlines of the specification. Pantheism, the subject of this work, is the opposite of Atheism, and the meaning is expressed in the name. But with a view to the correct understanding of what God is, it is a matter of equal importance to understand what God is *not*. These positions which I now give in this introduction, are intended as nothing more than assumptions, but in the proper order and time they will be followed up with the evidence. God is not a spirit; God is not a personal Being, nor a being of any kind; God is not substance; God has no sex; (Christians say him and he.) The idea of numbers cannot be applied to God any more than it can be applied to gravitation, power or wisdom. God is the eternal principle which governs every atom of matter of which the universe is composed. God is the mind of the universe—the law which governs all nature. These principles or laws are eternal and omnipresent, because they exist every where in nature, and could not create themselves. To illustrate: It is a principle in geometry, that opposite angles are always equal. This principle could not be created, for it is eternal, and that which is eternal has not been created, neither will it ever be abrogated. This principle is eternal, because there never could have been that time when opposite angles were not equal. Again: Two and two make four. Was there ever a time when two and two would make anything more or less than four; this is a principle independent of time, and is therefore eternal, for it is impossible for this principle of arithmetic to be created; but if it has been created, then there was a time when two and two would not make four. Again: Parallel lines can never diverge from, nor converge toward each other; though they be extended ad infinitum. Could any God create this principle or can any God cause parallel lines to approach each other and still be parallel lines? Again: If matter has been created, then space—its opposite—must have been eternal. But how can the mind have the idea of space without matter with it? Space means vacancy, interval, room, &c., but how can such an idea be entertained for one moment without being connected with matter? Well, would it not be absurd to say that God created space? I suppose this will suffice to introduce the mind of the reader into the current of my thoughts. I believe that I hazard nothing when I assure him that this is the reflection of the most profound thinkers of this age, but do not understand me to confound thinkers with scholars; for they may be as opposite to each other as the Poles are asunder. It is true that they both think, but the one thinks for himself while the other thinks the

thoughts of others. There are a great many more scholars than thinkers among the religionists, but they invariably walk in the footsteps of their fathers before them, and never try an unbeaten path or mark out a new route. Their study is conformity; they never project or carry into effect any reforms. They oppose anything intended to advance the general interest and welfare of mankind until it gains respectability from the numbers who take hold of it, and then they claim all the honor for themselves! They are of but little use to the world while living, and less loss to it when dead, and like the insects that perished yesterday they are soon forgotten. I am certain I do not reflect the opinions of such parasites and plaguerists as these, and I am equally certain that I have no desire to exhibit any such a weakness. The man who has been thoroughly steeped in religion has never given the world a single invention or discovery of any importance; his mission is to "save souls" and he never does anything else. All that we are in our present state of advanced civilization we owe to "heretics."

In the common affairs of life, to know that anything is error, is considered reason enough for its rejection, and that, too, regardless of the consequences; but when we come to the subject of religion, this practical rule for the government of everything else, is set at naught; it is heresy, and no wonder, for that which is built upon error is fit only for imposters to preach and dupes to believe. Now I very politely and very compassionately request the Protestant reader not to go into a fit of hysterics until he reflects a little on his condition, when he will see that he is troubled as much or more with the sin of unbelief than I am.

I would say to him: You are so constituted that you must have a religion in some form or shape, and could not live without it. You say yes, that is so. Well suppose you had lived in Persia in the days of Cyrus, what would have been your religion at that time? Well, being acquainted with your peculiar religious disposition, I can answer the question for you just as well as you can for yourself. You would not have been a Mormon, nor a Methodist, nor Baptist, nor Mohammedan, nor Episcopalian, nor Catholic, nor Christian, but your religion would have been governed altogether by circumstances, the same as now. You would have been a worshipper of fire in Persia. You would have been a Jew in Judea, and a Mussulman in Turkey. To-day, were you born in Salt Lake City, you would be a Mormon, and were you born in Rome you would be a Catholic; and oh! you shouting Methodist, you blue stocking Presbyterians, you hard shell Baptist and you choking cravat Episcopalians; had you been born in China you would be worshipping little idols about as big as whisky bottles! and then only think how you would threaten me with the damnation of hell if I did not bow to your little junks! You are born a Catholic, you are born a Presbyterian, you are born a heathen, or you are born a Methodist; and as there is about a thousand Chinamen to every Methodist, your chances were a thousand to one that you would be born a Chinaman; then you would never have had the benefit of camp-meetings, nor ever heard of Jesus Christ, John Wesley or the Devil. Religion is an accidental thing; it is a thing of time, place, and

circumstance, and your destiny has been such that you condemn others for doing the very same thing which you would have done, had your destiny been like theirs. You are such a great unbeliever that you deny all religions but the Methodist religion, if you are a Methodist, and you are a greater infidel than I am, for I believe there is some good in all these religions; but if your object in being religious is to save yourself from hell, you had better become a member of all these various elements of religion, for the Catholic and the Chinaman would not near take your chances of salvation, and the Mormon or Baptist would not give a fig for it. You had better get on the safe side as soon as possible! The advantage which I have over you in this respect is, that I receive all that is good and true in any religion, and reject all that is false, coming from any religion. I can be born a Pantheist in China, Hindoostan, or Africa, as well as in America or Europe. I could be born a Pantheist in the days of Moses, or Cyrus, as well as in the days of Christ, John Calvin, or John Wesley. The doctrine of my principles is universal and independent of time, place, or circumstance. Cicero and Archimedes may have been Pantheists, but it was utterly impossible for them to have been Methodist, Mussulmen, Presbyterians, or Christians. Christianity has its source from Christ; Mahammedanism has its source from Mahomet; Mormonism from Smith; Methodism from Wesley; Presbyterianism from Calvin; Spiritualism from a girl in Rochester; Campbellism from Campbell; Deism from God; but Pantheism has its source from the eternal laws of nature, and it is on this eternal rock she builds her "church." And when these eternal principles are annulled, then, and not till then, is Pantheism annulled. If miracles are true then the laws of nature are not true, and this makes truth itself untrue!

Whether man is naturally a religious animal or not, matters little with me so far as my purposes are concerned; but if it is any consolation to priestcraft to believe it, they are welcome to that consolation, and after I concede them this point let me ask them what use they intend to make of it? Man, they say, is totally depraved; he is nothing but bruises and putrified sores from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet; none doeth good, no not one; men love darkness rather than light, &c. Well, if this is the case, I no longer wonder at his being naturally religious; then he is not to blame for being a Methodist, or Catholic, a Jew or a heathen, because he is naturally depraved, therefore he is naturally religious. If religion is right because it is natural, then depravity is right for the same reason; and so is superstition and evil of every description, because it is as natural for people to be religious as it is for them to be wicked.

Now I believe you will abandon your position after I have conceded it to you; but my wish is that you would hold to it; but, take whatever course you will, I demur in unqualified terms to the doctrine of total depravity. The clergy do not believe it themselves, or they would turn the key on every church door throughout christendom and forever quit preaching, if they were consistent, because there would be no principle in people to appeal to, to induce them to change their course. It would

be like a blacksmith trying to blow up a fire in his forge when there was not a spark there; or if you tell me you are washing a handkerchief, and in the process of washing you soon have nothing left, I would be justified in saying you had no handkerchief in the first place. I believe you are forced to accept the conclusion that there is at least a little good in mankind, but you are very loth to own to it, because you hope it is not so. But I intend to show that there is a great deal of good in man, if it does result in depopulating hell to the disadvantage of the clergy. They are like the old woman who refused to entertain the Universalist preacher. His honor had been traveling all day on horseback, and when the sable curtains of night began to lower in his pathway, he "fetched up" at the house of a pious old lady, and requested of her refreshments for himself and feed for his horse. The nerves of this good old lady were completely untuned when she learned from his honor's lips that he was a Universalist preacher; and old Piety did not hesitate in telling him that she did not cook for Universalist preachers; "so he could just pack off, so now." The exponent of universal salvation went on his way, but not rejoicing, however, and returned the same way again in a few weeks. He stopped at the residence of old Piety again, making the same request as before. She asked him this time whether he had changed his opinion since he was there before. He told her that his opinions had undergone some revision, and now he believed there would be seven hundred persons damned. The good old lady's face now relaxed from its pious gravity into smiles of tender compassion, and her countenance became as the first glow of morning, and in sympathizing tones she told him to alight from his horse and come into the house, for that small number was better than none!

The pious clergy, presuming a great deal on the credulity of their auditors, present them with all the cases of crime they ever heard of, and more too, for their imagination is generally pretty fertile in filling out blanks.

"What means," say they, "so many locks, bolts, pistols, dirks, Bowie-knives, slung-shots, bludgeons, penitentiaries, houses of correction, &c.? if man is not totally depraved." Well, I suppose they cannot see any manifestations of God's providence in all this, like they could in the murder of Mr. Lincoln! Neither can I, except it be in the case of Peter, the meek follower of the lowly Jesus, who carried a sword and cut off the ear of a servant belonging to the high priest.

I would ask the same clergyman what means no locks, no bolts, no dirks or Bowie-knives, no swords or pistols, no penitentiaries. I have seen doors which had no locks or bolts, and if they had, there was seldom occasion to use them. I have seen people who never carried dirks or pistols. The best weapon I carry is a civil tongue, and I have never been shot or stabbed, neither do I have any fears of getting hurt, and I have generally received kind treatment from the hands of others when I have been courteous and generous towards them; but if I abuse others without provocation, it would be right for them to return the compliment. If man is naturally depraved, I should expect to be stabbed or shot at

any moment by my best friends. It is no unusual occurrence for a man to go to an election and come home the same day without having received so much as a scratch. I can sit in my office and read or write unmolested without the fear that any one will shoot through the window at me. And when I take a walk through town, I am not knocked down at every corner I pass, nor do I have any fears of being shot by every man I meet.

I have heard Presbyterian preachers grind out long sermons, who I am certain had no dirk knife in their pocket, nor pistol on the pulpit. Several travelers have penetrated the heart of Africa, and returned sound in wind and limb. What means all our school houses, asylums, hospitals, &c., if man is totally depraved? Is it not natural for man's sympathies to go out towards the weak, the enslaved, and the oppressed? Do not most all novel writers shape their stories so as to reward the innocent and punish the guilty? They do this in order to gratify the natural desire of the mind of the reader. Who is it that reads a book of a scoundrel imbruing his hands in the blood of his innocent victims, that does not rejoice to learn that punishment has been visited on his guilty head? But if it is the fear of the law that holds people in the traces, how does it come that we have any law if man is altogether depraved? The law-givers must have the best interest of the people in mind, or they would never trouble themselves about making good laws for their government. There must have been some good streaks, at least in the characters of George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, or else they would have given us bad laws instead of good ones. The loyal people of the United States reposed important trusts and implicit confidence in their chief magistrate—Abraham Lincoln—because they believed he was not naturally depraved, but on the other hand, the whole course of his life illustrates the fact that "an honest man is the noblest work of God." Even the blind clergy have too much confidence in their fellow man to believe any such nonsense, but I never expect to hear the last of such preaching.

But if it can be clearly proven that the Bible is not a divine revelation from God, we are still told by the clergy that such evidence should be withheld from the masses for in this matter of religion, it is better for them to believe a lie than know the truth, and they act upon this principle, as the following instances will illustrate:

A paragraph appeared in a great many religious journals several years ago; the substance of which was about as follows, as near as I can give it from memory.

When Paine wrote the first part of the "Age of Reason," in Paris, he addressed a note to Benjamin Franklin, requesting his opinion about the publication of the same; and that Franklin in his letter of reply told Paine "to not unchain the tiger," and if such writings were true the publication of such sentiments would be premature and result in doing harm to the masses. To give the story as much weight as possible it was said to have been taken from Niles' Register, and this settled the matter to the full satisfaction of the clergy. I was not a little surprised to learn that Franklin—the Philosopher, and lover of free inquiry—should be afraid of

the influence of truth and advise its concealment! That kind of language appeared to me to come from the wrong source; it might do well enough for a clergyman, but not for a Franklin—the co-worker with Jefferson who wrote the Declaration of Independence, wherein he' boldly rebuked any such intrigue. He told mankind that they were born free and endowed with equal rights; which was as much as to say that one man had as much right to know the truth as any other man. This principle was indorsed by Franklin; it was advocated by him through the course of a long lifetime; it was the principle which he always cherished, and it was his fondest hope to see it prevail. What! Franklin advising his old friend and co-worker in the cause of liberty to chain up those very principles which he had so long and so fondly cherished! Franklin comparing truth and liberty to a tiger! a something that would tear the people to pieces if turned loose! As was expected, this base calumny against the old Philosopher was finally proven beyond all question to be a falsehood, cut out of whole cloth. Franklin had been dead four years when Paine wrote the first part of the "Age of Reason." Franklin died in 1790; Paine wrote his work in 1794. This falsehood has been nailed to the wall in the sight of the pious clergy, but neither they nor their pious organs have ever retracted it, although called upon from time to time to do so. They still continue to preach it because humbug answers their purpose better than truth.

Another case. Not long since I took up a book entitled "Dr. Gunn's Family Practice;" and hastily scanning over its pages, my attention was arrested by the name of "Tom. Paine." Being a humble disciple of *Æsculapius* myself, and not knowing what "Tom. Paine" had to do with family medicine, I was minded to read the paragraph in question. I found that this Dr. (!) Gunn—this pious Dr. Gunn—of Louisville, Ky., had turned out of the legitimate channel of his subject, in order to get a fling at the Author-hero, and for no other purpose that I could discover. Any live jackass can kick a dead lion. It was a story to this effect: When "Tom. Paine" was on his death bed he had his children gathered around him and commenced calling on Christ for merey, and at the same time telling his children to become religious, and not to believe as he had believed. Whether this Dr. Poptgun knew that he was writing a lie or not I do not pretend to say, but I do pretend to say that he did not care so long as it would satisfy his purposes by truckling to the prejudices of the people in order to sell his book. Had this pious Gunn even taken the trouble to inquire into the history of Paine he would have learned that he never had any children. This calumny goes unretracted for reasons already given.

Another case. "When a daughter of Ethan Allen, the author of the 'Oracles of Reason' was on her death bed she called her father to her and asked him whose advice about religion must she take, his or her mother's? who was a religious woman. After a little reflection he told her to take her mother's advice."

The facts of the case are that Ethan Allen never lost a daughter in his lifetime. This goes unretracted and the clergy are still preaching it, be-

cause error is as good as truth, and faith is better than reason, in religious matters, and it is for such preaching that we build churches and pay big salaries!

Another case. There is scarcely a clergyman in Christendom who does not belch forth his fire and brimstone against Mr. Paine; and why? Because he was a murderer? No. Because he was a robber and a thief? No. Because he was a traitor and a scoundrel? No. I defy any religionist to produce any instance wherein Mr. Paine ever wronged a single person; but on the other hand his motto was, "The world is my country, to do good is my religion;" and the history of this good man's actions shows clearly that he lived up to his motto. No other man has ever done the amount of good that he has done, with less credit for their services. Well, why all this gall and wormwood from the weak stomachs of the clergy? The question has but one solution, and that is a very obvious one. Paine struck a blow at the "occupation," in his political and theological writings. Were it the business of the clergy to preach against the sin of murder, the sin of war, and of robbery and infanticide and lying and gambling, &c., they could find plenty of examples in the history of the past, and of our own time to answer such a purpose; but such is not their purpose; they pass over all these (for they are harmless to the "occupation") in order to spew their venom against a man who is not guilty of any crime whatever. This great man whose pen made thrones totter, and crowns tremble, is not even allowed to die in peace, like Franklin, Washington, and Adams—his co-workers in the cause of American liberty, but the same vile persecution attends him while living, hunts him down even to his deathbed. Two priests (just such preachers as we have nowadays) approach his bedside; not to administer to his wants or to console him with their sympathy, but with paper and pencil in hand they stand ready to note down any expression of recantation that they could be able to extort or torture from him. "Do you now believe on Christ," they ask. "I have no desire to believe anything of the kind," was his answer and his last words. These last words of his are in keeping with the whole tenor of his life.

Every one who has been to either of those old relics of superstition, namely, campmeetings or revival meetings, has heard about "Tom Paine" calling on Christ to save his soul. Elizabeth Ryder, of New York city—an old lady of respectability and refinement who was well acquainted with Mr. Paine and who was present during his dying hours testifies before a notary public of that city as to the manner of Paine's death, as I have given it above. This would be evidence enough to settle any other question than a religious question. This falsehood goes not only unretracted, but is still preached one day out of seven. Were I to make a misstatement in writing, or tell a willful falsehood, I would be held accountable for it as I ought to be, but the pious clergy can make mistakes, and trump up religious falsehood, and it is perfectly legitimate for them to continue preaching them over after the deceit has been detected and shown to them. "Godliness is great gain," and this is what is meant by being on the safe side. This is the same kind of a religious spirit, which hung

witches in Salem and cut out the tongues of Quakers in Boston; the same spirit that burned Michael Servetus, and crucified Christ. Why are not Jefferson, Adams, and Franklin, crucified by these vile persecutors? Jefferson went further with his heresy than Paine did; He says question with boldness even the existence of a God but Paine never suffered such a doubt to enter his mind.

I will give the reader another case to illustrate the miserable strait to which the clergy are reduced to support their dying cause. I have before me a little book bearing the title of, "Reply to Paine or an apology for the Bible," by R. Watson. When I bought the book, (and it was in a religious bookstore), I inquired of the bookseller whether he had the work to which this book purported to be a reply, and bound in the same volume with it? He told me the work was never published in that shape, and he seemed to regard me as being very stupid for making such an inquiry, and indeed any one less conversant with clerical intrigue would have deserved the silent rebuke, but it fell harmless on me, for I knew better when I asked him the question. I knew that no religious book concern in the world dare publish the "Age of Reason" to put alongside of their replies. They are not honest enough to be bold nor bold enough to be honest. But this is all fair in religious matters. Does not this course of procedure imply as clearly as the noonday sun, that there is something here about which the minds of the people must be kept in darkness?

If Watson has successfully and completely refuted the argument contained in the "Age of Reason," what is the harm in publishing it along with the "Reply?" Are the American readers so ignorant that they are not capable of judging the arguments for themselves? or are they so corrupt that they will discard error after it has been shown to them? This is like the Irishman's justice, it is what the clergy are afraid of! A poor compliment to their readers! They rather tell the reader what Paine said than let him tell it himself, and in his own style, for then they have the advantage of perverting, or garbling; leaving out whatever they please just to suit their own fancy or convenience.

In the publication of debates on any other subject than religion, the imputation of unfairness is incurred if both sides are not given, and that justly, too; but to the credit of the liberal booksellers they are not afraid to publish both works—the "Age of Reason," and the "Reply"—in the same volume, although the "Age of Reason" is a work complete in itself, and they are under no obligations to publish the "Reply." Hereafter I will notice several points of difference between these two champions of their respective opinions, and the disposition which they make of them. I will not longer particularize these cases of religious impositions, but will proceed to notice in a more general manner such impositions as divine revelations, miracles, prophecy, spiritism, Gods and Devils, dreams, &c. These are the mysteries of religion and I shall make it my business to unravel them and show them up in their real colors.

As I have before intimated, all religions are alike in source, influence and tendency, and the arguments which confute one of them will confute

all the others ; but as nearly all my readers disbelieve all other religions except the Christian religion, as much as I do, it would be a waste of time to discuss questions upon which we agree. Therefore this element of religion will receive the greater share of my attention.

I will now proceed to notice the

INFLUENCE OF RELIGION.

Has it been good ? or has it been bad ? And if after an impartial inquiry and sober investigation we find that such influence is for evil ; I consider it reason enough for its rejection. But if we find that its influence is for good, although founded upon error we still have a right to reject it, if we have regard for truth. The very first plea offered for religious influence, is that the United States, France, England, and Germany are at this time the most enlightened, and the most progressive nations on earth. I admit that these nations are so in this particular epoch in the world's history, and I would at the same time have the reader bear in mind and never lose sight of the fact, that these countries are the least religious of all countries on earth, and that there are no countries to-day where the church has less power than in this country and Germany ; countries decidedly the most enlightened and progressive of all countries. Religion and progress are antagonistic terms and when put into the scales together you will find just as the one goes down so does the other go up, and *vice versa*. This country has the best government in the world and a constitution in advance of all other countries ; and why ? Simply because our government recognizes no religion and the constitution entirely ignores it ; not so much as the word " God " mentioned or implied even in the presidential oath of office. I speak nothing about church taxes, hanging witches, prosecuting Quakers or burning heretics. All this progress of which we boast so much is the fruit of an anti-religious constitution and a liberal form of government. Now I propose to examine some of the fruits of the religious tree ; not the tender sprout or weak sapling—powerless for either good or evil, but the bearing tree at full growth ; showing forth its full power, for that is the proper time and the only time to judge its fruits, for before the time that the tree begins to bear its fruit we can tell nothing about it.

Imagine yourself, reader, in the city of Boston as much as one hundred and fifty years ago ; go to the Common and there you could behold a scene that would make your blood curdle in your veins, and cause you to blush for poor human nature. You see a young lady led forth by demons in human shape, and in a state of nudity, her feet are tied to a horse and in this condition she is dragged several times around the Common and scourged with rods ! Now what was the offense that subjected her to such treatment ? Because she was a murderess ? No. Because she was a traitoress ? No. Because she was a robber and midnight assassin ? No. Because she poisoned her husband and strangled her infants ? No ; none of these. But it was because she subscribed to the mild precepts of George Fox ! This brutal abuse and causeless punishment was

not done by a reckless mob, but it was done under the sanction of the laws of the time, for we have no account that these wretches were ever brought to justice. These persons were pious and praying Christians. This young lady's name was Mary Dyar, and history bears me out in the truth of the statement. These same pious people had laws for hanging witches and cutting out the tongues of Quakers and they were enforced to the letter. Such men as Washington, Franklin, Adams and Jefferson, with the constitution and the Declaration of Independence in their hands could not have lived in Boston at that time twenty-four hours!

How different is that much religion of that day to the no religion of to-day! Mark the effect of the religious laws of those times compared with our constitution which altogether ignores all religion! From such examples of the influence of religion, no wonder that even some of the clergy oppose the union of church and state. Taking warning from the history of the past, they distrust their own religion and their own preaching when put into practice. They know it will do to preach it, but they dare not live by it! Let us look upon that Puritan tree when it was a weak and tender sapling! when it was not old enough, nor large enough to bear fruit of any kind. It was very respectable looking at that time, and its appearance was admired by all the good people who saw it. In its meekness and humility it pleaded courteously for religious freedom; it only wished to worship God according to the dictates of its own conscience! These Puritans were oppressed and could not in matters of conscience bend to human authority. They sacrificed the comforts of home in the old world, and periled the dangers of sea, for the wild and untried shores of America, that they might be enabled to enjoy religious freedom, and worship God unmolested, under their own vine and fig tree. They soon show the world what is meant by religious freedom; it meant that others had a right to think as they did and this was as far as it went. Had I lived in Massachusetts in those pious days, and witnessed the hanging of a few old women for witches, and the cutting out of a few Quaker tongues, I would have waited till the pious people had prayers, then I would have asked them if that was the glad tidings of great joy which were to be unto all people?

Religious progression is like the movements of the crawfish; always in a backward direction and will so continue as long as the Jewish atrocities are taken for the example, and their teachings for precept. "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty;" then let us learn from the history of the past to shun those breakers which now threaten to wreck the old ship of state; and if this book does so much as to secure the Palladium of our liberties, the constitution of the United States, from defilement by the foul touch of the polluted hands of the pious clergy; I will feel that I have not written in vain.

I now proceed to explain the history of the conception of the "Monroe Doctrine," and it is to be hoped that the instruction it affords will not go unheeded. The sovereigns of Prussia, Russia, and Austria, signed in the year 1815, at Paris the "league," called the "Holy Alliance." They declared in this that determination to make Christianity the basis

of their actions, domestic and foreign. They asserted their divine right to govern "three branches of one and the same Christian nation." They invited England to become a party; but the regent declined giving his signature, although he expressed his approval. At the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, France became a member of the "Holy Alliance." This congress established the principle of an "armed intervention," or in other words the members of the "Holy Alliance" agreed to assist each other with their whole military force, against their own subjects in case of revolt in either kingdom. At the congress which convened at Frappau, these principles were still further extended, and the right was claimed to interfere by coercion, in the domestic affairs of all nations. This pretended right was exercised in relation to the affairs of Spain, Portugal, and Naples; countries over which they had no right to claim authority. The people of these kingdoms had obtained better securities for their liberties by adopting free constitutions. Their respective rulers had sworn to be governed by them, and the citizens felt that they had secured the blessings of liberty to themselves and posterity. But the "Holy Alliance" sent their armies and broke up their domestic arrangements, abrogated their constitutions, and restored the sovereigns to absolute power. At this juncture of affairs the smouldering fires of ancient liberty in Greece were beginning to break out into a flame. These Grecians in their efforts to throw off the Turkish yoke and regain their independence, displayed valor and intrepidity unsurpassed by their ancient sires. The only support they had was from charitable associations in Great Britain, France and America. After they had suffered unheard of privations and miseries from the hands of the cruel Turks, and were on the eve of plucking the fruits of their long and arduous toil, this same "Holy Alliance" based on Christianity, puts forth its holy hands to throttle this babe of liberty. But everlasting credit be to England—she cries out in thunder tones "hands off." The Greeks had formed a republican form of government similar to ours and had elected their president; but the combined Powers having decided that the government must be monarchical, conferred the crown upon Prince Otho, son of Louis, king of Bavaria; and the counterpart of this on our own continent is that of France giving the crown of Mexico to a foreign prince. England exhibited her cowardice and weakness, by thus succumbing to the dictates of the "Holy Alliance" in this case of Greece.

These acts of gross violence against the sovereignty of nations were abhorrent to all lovers of liberty in Europe and America, and it was at this juncture of affairs that the government of the United States through President Monroe, took solemn notice of them, and declared that such principles should not be extended to any part of the American continent. This is the "Monroe doctrine." Everybody has heard of it, but not so many know that it is a citadel built up by lovers of liberty to resist the aggressive powers of the Christian religion; but such is the true history of the case, pervert it as you may. The United States and England did not join the "Holy Alliance," because their governments were less religious than those governments which did, and the consequence was that

the people of these two countries had too much of the love of liberty coursing their veins to become parties so aggressive against the rights of man. Such, however are the results of the principles of religion, having absolute power. It never stops with its pretended heavenly mission and with things ultramundane, but it makes a special business to decapitate liberty wherever it is found uplifting its head.

The church has never been the pioneer in any good work, nor does she number among all her hosts a single reformer, but her voice has always been raised on the side of intolerance and oppression. I here quote Wendell Phillips.

“It is a singular fact yet patent on the face of history, that all mental improvement, has come, not through the intellectual and religious institutions of the age, but outside of them. Every idea the world recognizes as valuable was heresy when it began. Colleges ignored it, churches cursed it. It fought its way standing on the pedestal of some individual martyr, up to recognition. Take penal legislation as good a sample as anything else. Two hundred years ago the world knew nothing but the Jewish model—stocks, whipping-posts, and death. * * * * When the world quitted Christianity as a sentimental abstraction, and took to the hard stones of the dungeon, and the blood posts of the gibbet, they sent us back to the sermon on the mount. Who did it? The church never uttered a word nor turned her face in that direction. Every argument, every protest, every effort, came from without. The reform does not count one so called Christian name among the laborers. It was wrought by those on whom the church stamped the label of “Atheist” and “infidel”—men who stood drinking in the fresh breezes from the mount of crucifixion in Judea, building better than they knew. Christians without being, some of them, willing to acknowledge it. From such men every one of these efforts came. No institution ever helped them. * * * Men say, ‘The pulpit is all right to-day; you may trust it.’ No! you may trust it as a vane to tell which way the wind blows, not its life in future. Temperance as an individual virtue, is covered by the earnest advocacy of nearly every pulpit in New England; but temperance as an effort of thoughtful men to make it practicable, to institute measures that shall create virtue, and subserve the safety of the great tempted classes, has not the sympathy, nor open advocacy of three pulpits in this city (Boston). You will never see on a temperance platform more than two or three of the religious teachers of the city. Ten years ago, over the door of every christian church in this country, was written, “No politics.” What is politics? When Cobden gave fifty pounds a year to the bankrupt who advised him, a clerk, not to waste his time studying, he did a private act, a kind, generous act, one the pulpit would have praised; but when he went out into England, and flung his fortune behind him, gave untaxed bread to men and women of Lancashire, making virtue possible, driving prostitution from one door, and crime from another, he was a politician. No church in England or America had a word of praise for that. It was politics. When a man pays his washerwoman’s bill he is honest. The world praises him. When he puts a bill in the statute

book, by which the wages of women are secured to them, it is 'politics.' No, that is not true—it is the talk of the street. When our church wrote 'no politics' over its door, it was hypocrisy. They did not mean it." The church is not only a dead weight on the wheels of progression but it has persecuted even to death those persons who set these wheels in motion. Every new research in any direction is contrary to scripture, and is dubbed "heresy" by the clergy, when the whole church is set upon its trail to hunt it down, but when it gains too much respectability from without for their own safety, then the clergy go about reconciling the scripture with it, which is easily done, for they can find scripture for anything. They can now see that it gives a brighter luster to the teachings of the Bible or it may be construed into the fulfillment of some prophecy! Oh how we apples swim! Truly the clergy are the weathercocks of public opinion, or in more reverend language I say the religious cocks. The commencement of Christianity had much to do with the crowing of cocks, and the clergy have been keeping it up ever since.

Jesus Christ and his Apostles were very humble, when they commenced preaching, and no wonder; the same may be said of Joe Smith, of Mahomet, and of the beginning of all religious factions. It was not expected that Jesus and his disciples would be otherwise, for if they were disposed to be unruly, how could twelve fishermen, headed by a carpenter, cope with the Roman Empire? or even the numerous Jews by whom they were surrounded at that time. Do not judge a tree before it bears its fruits. Jesus, even had trouble to keep his few Apostles in subjection; he always distrusted the fidelity of Peter, and one of them openly betrayed him, which resulted in his crucifixion. But as his religion gained strength, he became a little more peremptory in his demands. He finally says "he that believeth not shall be damned." Any bigot could say as much. Christ nor any one else gives any evidence for that belief, but still the belief must come. Then how is it to come? If by the horrible tortures of the "holy inquisition," better have it so, than be damned; and the same holy inquisition is nothing but the outcropping of such religious bigotry and abominable teachings. If my religious friend can extort belief out of me by torturing the flesh, such as tearing out muscle, bit by bit with the pinchers (as has often been done for this selfsame purpose,) I say he is justifiable in doing so, if by such means I can be saved from an everlasting hell. Those Roman Catholics, who burnt alive "heretics," and who skinned Protestants with butcher knives after having secured them by strong cords to a tree and who by means of opposite levers tore the limbs from the bodies of unbelievers, were acting consistently with their belief, as taught by Christ. I repeat again, that Christ, nor Paul nor any of the Apostles ever presumed to give any evidence for anything which they preached, and Paul anticipates the inquiry by calling the person a "fool" who dares question the truth of his preaching. The awful horrors of the "holy inquisition" were not the deeds of bad and wicked men by any means, but it was the fruits of a pernicious belief, a belief which required no evidence, because it had none to give. A more religious set of men never cursed this earth than the

perpetrators of that devilish inquisition. The only difference between them and the religionists of our day, is that the former put their belief into practice, while the latter do not. What saves me to day as a "heretic," or you as a Baptist from being burnt alive at the stake, or what prevents for the same reason our eyes from being torn from their sockets? I answer it is the spread of rationalism, or as the clergy style it "infidelity;" and it cannot be religion, for religion was the cause of the trouble, and as already shown, we have had too much of that already. I rejoice and every freeman has reason to rejoice, that we have had such good "heretics" as Washington, Paine, Jefferson, and Franklin, to give shape to public opinion and form our laws. When, however, Christianity began to bear its fruit and was able to make its power felt, then came the Dark Ages embracing a period of considerably more than a thousand years. and during all this time Christianity had undisputed sway throughout all Europe. The Bible was established by law and unbelief and rationalism were everywhere crushed out. Mark the effect! The lights of Greece and Rome were blown out and intelligence, virtue, and the love of liberty had gone out with it to be relumed only by "heretics" and "infidels;" which period was characterized by the name of the "revival of literature," and was when rationalistic views began to get the ascendancy over religion. All nations of the earth had been groping their way in darkness except it were those countries which had no Christian or Jewish Bible. A kind of a "Jack with a lantern" light was kindled in Arabia by Mahomet, which only rendered the darkness visible for a while, but it soon went out and then all total darkness again. Every page of history was stained with blood! The Christians then enjoyed their religion to full fruition; no "heretic" or "infidel" to molest or make them afraid! It was surely their millenium day! This long period of history is a blank, and no one is interested in reading it. Not one great or good character is produced to the world in all this time. We are all interested in reading the history of the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Greeks and Romans, the Medes and Persians, the Carthagenians, &c., on to the time when Christianity gained the supremacy, then we skip over a period of a thousand years as being devoid of interest or instruction until we come to the "revival of literature," then we read with interest again on to the present time. It was in the time of these Dark Ages and when the Cross was in the ascendancy, that the foolish Crusades occurred, being eight in number, and comprising a period of about two hundred years. It was a series of pilgrimages to Jerusalem engaged in by thousands of Christians from all parts of Europe, for the purpose of reclaiming the "Holy City," from the Mussulmen, or as they term them the "Infidels." This holy warfare was a see-saw game between the Crescent and the Cross in which thousands and tens of thousands lost their worthless lives, comprising both sexes and all ages, from the suckling infant to the hoary headed sire; an acceptable sacrifice to religious fanaticism! This could not have been infidel fanaticism, not only because infidelity cannot be fanatical, but because there was not an infidel in the world at that time but what was as willing for the Saracens to retain pos-

session of the "Holy city," as they are to-day; the infidels care no more for Jerusalem than they do for Hongkong or Calcutta. In those days of religious zeal and fanaticism—that is, religious purity—the wild ravings of Peter the Hermit threw all Europe into commotion, but in this rationalistic age he would have been confined in a Lunatic Asylum as a raving maniac. With this passing notice of the crusades, I dismiss the heart sickening subject, and in doing so would betray a sigh of relief.

What are such religious fanatics as Philip Augustus, Frederic Barbarossa, Richard, Peter the Hermit, Frederic II, Louis VII, Louis IX, &c. in comparison with such men as Socrates, Solon, Aristides, Napoleon, Franklin, Washington and Lincoln? Tyranny and bigotry, like hell are hard to conquer, but the harder the conflict the more glorious the triumph.

Truth and the love of liberty may be covered over and concealed like the pent up fires in the mountain, but they will eventually burst forth as a terrific volcano; and Popery, fanaticism, and superstition will lay as prostrate at their feet as do Herculanium and Pompeii, at the foot of Vesuvius.

I will now give further evidence to show that the tortures of the religious inquisition were in harmony with Christian theology. But the church, not wishing any more evidence in this direction, may be like the man was, when he was called a liar. His enemy told him he was a liar and he could prove it. Man No. 1, retorted back saying, he would rather not have him prove it. I suppose the clergy would rather not have me prove the pernicious effects of their preaching. The only indispensable things to Christian salvation are belief and baptism; and without these hell is the doom of every one, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned!" Here is the whole scheme of salvation in a nutshell. The conditions and means of belief are not evidence or testimony, but it is hearing and nothing else. These are the conditions according to Paul, and at one stroke he cuts off all further inquiry, with his "thou fool!" expression. Christ says to his disciples, "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when you depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet, for a testimony against them," &c. This is a pretty strong expression; to damn a man to all eternity because he would not hear certain preaching! This is hardly practicing the golden rule. It is what any Mormon might say to a Methodist or a Methodist to a Mormon, or a Protestant to a Catholic or a Catholic to a Protestant, but it is the "heretics" only that will hear any kind and every kind of preaching. Although the Christians pretend to not be surprised if Christ should come on earth at any time (for they say all things are fulfilled for his coming) they would be the last of all persons to go to hear him preach. If he did not declare himself a Methodist the deacons of that church would shut the church doors against him. The Presbyterians would treat him the same way if he did not preach predestinarianism. The Baptists would inquire of him if he had ever been baptised? The Episcopalians would ask him if he were an Episcopalian? and if he answered no, they would tell him they had no use for

him. And in this way the "heretics" would be the only people who would turn out to hear him. He would shake the dust from under his feet as a testimony against all church members.

These Apostles were not to tarry in one city for a year or a lifetime as preachers do now-a-days, but one sermon was considered sufficient for the conversion of a whole city, and Christ never thought of such a thing as a protracted meeting; and I infer that Paul never preached to the same people more than once. Suppose he had settled down in Corinth and continued preaching there until the day of his death, he would have made little progress in converting the world; but his preaching took such a wide range that a little while before his death he declared that the "gospel was preached to every creature under heaven," and it was he that did the greatest part of the work. Now is it not evident that he considered hearing the only means necessary to belief?

"Faith cometh by hearing," "Preach (not read) the gospel to every creature," and all such expressions as these confirm what I say. Well, an unbeliever can hear just as well as a believer; but the great sin as well as misfortune with him is, that he cannot believe without evidence, and want of evidence damns him to all eternity. But for want of evidence in the days of the inquisition the Roman Catholics used as the next best means the torch and fagot, the windlass, the pinchers, the thumb-screw, the butcher-knife, &c., and this was all well enough according to such a damnable belief. It showed what a great interest they took in the eternal salvation of their friends and neighbors. It must have been very galling and a sore trial with those religionists to inflict such torture and death on their fellow citizens, but it was their duty under the circumstances.

Spare the flesh and damn the soul eternally or torture and destroy the flesh and save the soul from damnation! This was the dilemma into which such a nefarious belief had thrown those pious Christians; and like people making a wise choice they took the lesser horn of the two, and that was to torture the flesh and save the eternal soul from hell! The religionists of to-day have the same belief and they are still in the dilemma, but they have seen proper to choose the other horn and that is, to spare the flesh and let the soul go to hell. This is the only difference between them. But should they ever get the power as they once had, I should tremble for my safety, for I verily believe that they would again take the other horn, and then if I escaped with my life it would only be done through hypocrisy! Even to-day what a premium Christianity holds out to hypocrites! The Christian hypocrite has the patronage, the prayers and the well-wishes of the whole church; he knows that "godliness is great gain," and that "heresy" will not pay. In some states of this Union the Universalist is not allowed to testify in court. They will take his word but not his oath. They know that he will tell them the truth about his belief, and therefore they take his word for it. They know he is no hypocrite and they have confidence to believe all he says, except when under oath. This is giving the Universalist a greater compliment than was intended. They will believe the Methodist and Pres-

byterian under oath but nowhere else. And here is the dilemma: The unbeliever's word is good but his oath is not, the believer's oath is good but his word is not.

According to the doctrine of the church the sin of unbelief is the greatest of all sins. The clergy do not make half as much fuss against murder, stealing, war, robbery, lying, gambling, &c., as they do against the awful sin of unbelief. According to their preaching the greatest villain that ever graced or rather disgraced this earth who has believed and been baptised is better than the greatest benefactor of mankind, who did not believe nor was ever baptised! I will explain this great sin—unbelief.

Suppose I miss my knife and afterwards find it in the possession of a well known thief and blackleg, and when I claim it as mine he tells me he picked it up from an apple tree where there were many more growing like it. I cannot see the sin in disbelieving his story, were it even true; and true or false my unbelief is just the same. The story about the miracles of Christ was altogether new to the people to whom Paul preached, and as we are all disposed to distrust everything new, especially if it be a miracle as in this case; what is the sin in disbelieving his preaching even if it were true? Christians are better to-day than formerly only because they do not carry their preaching into practice and one reason of this is that they do not believe what they preach. I will not pass this over as a bare statement, but I will prove it beyond all doubt. The main test of orthodoxy is the belief in hell and future damnation and the severer the damnation and the more of it they can believe so much the more orthodox they are and consequently the better christians. In every day life they seem to have all the feelings and passions common to humanity. They rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. They grieve at the death of a wife, or mother, or father, or brother, or friend, but once dead and gone to hell, and buffeting in a molten lake of fire and brimstone, and beyond the reach of hope, then their sympathy for such persons ceases. They could love their friend on earth but when in hell they care nothing more for him! They can laugh at his calamity and mock at his fears. I do not envy that heart or that head who can find an easy pillow or enjoy the things which nature in her munificence has given him, at the same time knowing and feeling that he has relatives and friends burning in everlasting flames. They say they are their own destroyers, and that they are not to blame for it. Well, what of it if you are not? that does not lessen their punishment. That should not make worse than a beast of you and wipe out all your finer feelings. A parent does not cease to grieve for the death of his child because drowned, against his instruction to not go near the water. You may say that the Bible reconciles you to these things, then I say so much the worse for it, and its teachings. If the better faculties of your nature such as love, kindness, affection, sympathy, charity, &c., are to be blotted out, and nothing left but the coarser feelings and grosser appetites, you are poorly calculated to enjoy blessings of any kind.

When I can peer down from the courts of heaven and look upon a

life-long friend writhing and struggling in the flaming billows of an endless hell, with complacency, and without compassion, my prayer would be for annihilation. A demon or a fiend dead to every touch of tender compassion, or any sense of respect, might do this, and this it seems are the kind of beings who are to populate heaven! The Christians are making themselves out worse than I am willing to believe they are. I know they are better people than that, because they do not believe any such stuff! Did they sincerely believe it they would not stop short of raving maniacs, and such they would have to be in order to believe it. But when one of their number does go crazy about such things—that is, for believing their own preaching—they say he did not have far to go, and I say so too. Well, if the clergy do not believe their own preaching and call every person crazy who does believe it, it is high time that we stop listening to such abominable nonsense.

To resume our subject. When literature began to revive, it met with intense opposition, and from no other source than the church; because it was antagonistic to church principles. Sir Thomas Moore, chancellor of the kingdom of England, resembled the ancient sages more than any other man who appeared in Europe for centuries, and he awakened the indignation of all Christendom because he would not acknowledge the divine right of the king; and for this offense he was executed! Fisher also suffered death for the same reason. Shortly after this, John Rogers, Latimer, Hooper, Ridley, Cranmer, and about four hundred others, were put to death; of whom two hundred and ninety were burnt at the stake, all for conscience' sake!

About this time Galileo was imprisoned and threatened with death for teaching opinions in astronomy which every one now believes. Copernicus was imprisoned for teaching the movements of the planetary system as is now universally believed. But now the church having loosened its bulldog grip on the "body politic," we are privileged to teach any theory we please in regard to literature. The church has been acting the part of the dog in the manger, she would neither learn herself nor permit others to learn. The only scrap of information that the Bible gives us is the history of the Jews, and that is written in a style so much like a newspaper that it is difficult to make head or tail out of it. It gives us no philosophy, no geography, no astronomy, no mathematics, no chemistry, no anatomy, no natural history, except it be those strange animals which John the divine saw on the Isle of Patmos, and in short no useful information of any kind; for a person may be versed in Scripture and know nothing of these branches of learning. Yet some people have the audacity and the mendacity to say that all our instruction comes from the Bible and our laws from its teachings. The only laws we have which are derived from the teachings of the Bible, is human slavery. Our constitution merely tolerated slavery, while the Bible established it. It is clearly set forth in Exodus xxi, 21, that man has property in man, and the New Testament does not annul or speak a word anywhere against slavery, but exhorts servants to be submissive to their masters—and this is one reason why we have heard so much about politics in the pulpit, and

"abolitionism" and "infidelity." Slavery has always been a great bulwark of the church until very lately. The clergy nursed the child of the devil until it sickened and died in their own arms, and now when it has become a stench under their nostrils they cry out "away with it;" "We knew it was the cause of all this trouble." They are as deeply concerned about hurrying it off to the bone yard as the "abolitionists" and infidels were in killing it. Even Mr. Beecher who is as much up with the times as any clergyman dare be, conceded while in England that the honor for the death of slavery was not due him, for he was not a pioneer in this great movement, but he referred back to such men as Garrison, Smith, Phillips, Greely, &c., not one of whom is a clergyman or anything near it. The clergy stand in the same position in regard to slavery that the copperheads do now to loyalty. Hoping the clergy will render unto Cæsar the things which belong to Cæsar, I will give them some respite on this subject.

But if the Bible is the source of all knowledge, why not use it in our common schools in the place of other books, and have nothing but the Bible. The Christians here again act in a manner quite contrary to their teachings. Well, let us imagine the experiment.

The son returns home from school; he has been going five years and during all that he has looked into no other book than the Bible. The father begins to question him to ascertain how much his promising boy has learned, and to see whether the savings of his hard toil have been paid out to any purpose. "What is a verb?" asks the father. "Don't know, sir," replies the boy. "What! did you not learn any grammar?" "No, sir, I studied the Bible." "What is chemical affinity?" "Can't tell, sir, I know nothing about chemistry." "What is the forty-seventh problem of Euclid?" "Don't know, sir, I never heard of Euclid." "How much is seven times eight?" "Don't know sir, we did not study arithmetic in our school, we studied the Bible." "What is pneumatics?" "Never heard of him." "What is the shape of the earth?" "Now you have given me a question which is easily answered. The earth is as flat as a pancake." "What is the sun?" "A big star revolving around the earth every day?" "Did it ever stop?" "Yes sir, once at the command of Joshua." "You mean the earth stopped?" "No sir, because the earth at the surface travels twenty-five times swifter than a railroad car, and don't you see if it stopped suddenly, it would fetch everything up standing!" "What are the stars?" "Little dazzling bodies a mile or so high made to give light by night." "Are they fixed?" "No sir, they sometimes fall to the earth." "Where is China?" "There is no such place." "That will do you may now apply for a professorship in some theological seminary."

But if the Bible is the source of all law, why not drink right from the fountain? by making it the law of the land, and have no other? Is it possible to embody too much good in our laws? If not and if the teachings and examples of the Bible are all good, then in the name of common sense why not establish it by law? If the Bible is all justice and you are not afraid of justice, are you not willing to be tried by it? Why

not have a union of church and state, if the church does nor teaches any wrong, but is a power for good? Then it must be an auxiliary to assist the state in its good work; and the church might stand in relation to the state as the wife does to the husband; that is Miss Church might get married to Mr. State. But how long would it be till Mrs. State would be wearing the breeches? This experiment has been tried too much already, and this is the inevitable result in every case. The clergy distrust their own preaching and taking warning from the history of the past, they dare not counsel any such measures as the union of church and state. It can be clearly proven from history that the church has made ship-wreck of everything that she has ever planted her fangs into, but in this country her power is so limited that she can do little else than fill up the Lunatic Asylums and contribute the larger share of the inmates of the Penitentiaries.

It is an old adage that figures will not lie, and the statistics bear me out in these statements. I never heard of an infamous scoundrel who paid his debt at the gallows, but what enjoyed the consolations of religion, and the blessed hope of immortality. The priests attend him from his cell to the scaffold and there pray that his soul might be saved, while the silent prayer of everybody else is that his prayers will not be granted.

One reason that the Grecian States and Rome attained to such a pitch of greatness and renown, producing so many eminent statesmen and orators, and wise philosophers, was that the governments of those countries took but little notice of any kind of religion, and not one among all those great names ever gained his high reputation on account of his piety, as did those Bible heroes, whose notoriety was built upon piety and cruelty.

The constitutions of the republics of Greece had about as much to do with the subject of religion as our constitution, and that is nothing at all. We have a Theocracy in the case of the Jewish government. There was a "thus saith the Lord" for everything. God was the Governor, continually except sometimes when the Devil took the reins out of his hands, but the people worked just as well, or rather just as badly under the one as the other.

I now proceed to notice briefly the influence of the Jewish religion; yes, briefly, because to dwell on such scenes of crimes, bloodshed, debauchery and butchery, sickens the mind and disturbs the temper.

While under the Egyptian yoke, the Israelites exhibited none of that cruelty and barbarism which was to subsequently characterize them, when they had set up for themselves. They were then like the Puritans before they established themselves in America. The one established a government of pure Theocracy and the other a government of pure Christianity.

I hope I will not be accused of attacking the small or weak points of the Bible if I do cull out a verse one place and another somewhere else, so long as it does not break the connection or destroy the meaning. But is it true that the Bible has any weak points? I will here meet the Christian or Jew on his own grounds and oppose him with his own weapons.

You claim that God the Author of nature is also the Author of the Bible and that God is as much the God of the Bible as of nature, and that the Bible is a part of his great work. Well, if he is a perfect God his works must be also perfect, and one part of his work must be as perfect in itself as any other part.

I will now compare the parts or fragments of the Bible with the fragments of nature, with a view to the discovery of a different authorship.

I have before me a microscope and a honey bee. I will take a small fragment of the bee and put it into the microscope; any part will do, but for convenience I will select the sting. Now when I pull it out I see a small drop of poison on the point of it. This drop of poison came through an opening in this delicate little sting, an opening, so small that I cannot see it. What a contrivance! How wonderful! But the microscope will facilitate the investigation. Now I see it through this medium. It is about two inches long and as big at the base as my little finger! but the point is still as sharp as ever.

I have in my hand a cambric needle; it looks to be as sharp pointed as the bee sting. I put it under the microscope and look at it; it is no longer sharp pointed, but is now as blunt as the end of my finger! Thus I may say God challenges me to show any imperfections in his works even with the most powerful microscope, or telescope, or any means which I can command. There is no blasphemy in comparing the cambric needle with the bee sting. God cannot be afraid of my detecting any imperfection in his works by such a test, because he knows it will result to the advantage of his wisdom and goodness and care even for the most trivial things. Now I will select a fragment or verse from another part of God's works! and compare it with that part which we have just examined: "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass," (1 Saml. chap. xv, ver. 6.)

These are the words of the Lord unto Saul by the mouth of Samuel. What were the Amalekites to be punished for? The verse immediately preceding this one gives the answer, "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he (Israel) came up from Egypt." Here is another fragment of God's works! "This wholesale butchery was to be perpetrated against this people because their ancestry 400 years before this time opposed the Israelites coming into their country when they came out of Egypt. It was for the reason that they had 400 years before defended themselves and homes, their wives and families against the aggressions of the Israelites! This out-Herods Herod; beats the Camanche Indians, and fully comes up to the moral standard of the Puritans. With a much better plea of justice might the nations of the world combine against Spain, and slay every man and woman, all the children and animals belonging to that country because the Spaniards 300 years ago committed cruelties against the natives of Peru and Mexico. The same butchery might with just as much reason be visited on the Germans of to-day because their ancestors overrun the Roman Empire! As well might the

same punishment be visited on the present Aborigines of America because they resisted the encroachments of the Europeans several hundred years ago.

The Israelites possessed themselves of countries without remuneration which never belonged to them, and I cannot understand that the inhabitants were to blame for defending their own territory. Such a command as we find in the verse just quoted could be given by any man, provided he was degraded enough for such a purpose; but we found in that bee sting which we examined a work which no man could do, no matter how skillful he may be. It is out of the power of man to make a bee sting with such an infinitesimally sharp point and that point punctured with an opening.

But because I have too good an opinion of the author of this bee sting to believe that he would command such an unjust and indiscriminate slaughter of innocents, it is called "blasphemy." I cannot believe that the Power which uplifts the blushing head of the Lily in the swamp and turns the smiling side of its petals to the sun, would command the dashing out of the brains of suckling babes against stone walls in the presence of their distracted mothers. When I say I cannot believe that the same power which causes the blood to course my veins—during sleep as well as when awake—would be guilty of such wanton cruelty, it is said I am a "blasphemer" and do not believe the Bible! That constitutes me an "infidel" and entitles me to damnation just because I have some respect for the wisdom and power of the Almighty.

No man that ever breathed the breath of life would attempt to punish me because I had a good opinion of him, and I am very slow to believe that the power which sustains my existence would be any more cruel; the Bible to the contrary notwithstanding.

"God repented that he had made Saul ruler over Israel, because he did not slay all the fat sheep and cattle belonging to Amalek." Well, this is adding insult to injury! God is not only made out to be a most cruel monster, but he is charged with ignorance and changeableness! He had not foresight enough to know what Saul would do when he crowned him king over Israel! Having given my reasons for clipping fragments or verses from God's works, with a view to their better examination, I hope the charge of unfairness will not be imputed to me if I continue the investigation in this way. We will next clip out a part of God's work! from the twelfth chapter of Deut. and learn what the punishment is for idolatry. Our laws are not only not taken from this part of God's work! but the persons who would in this land of liberty attempt to put them in force, would be sentenced to the state's penitentiary for life.

"If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thy own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us depart and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers; namely, the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee or afar off from thee from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth * * * thou shalt surely kill him, thy hand shalt be the first upon him to put him to death,

and afterwards the hands of all the people, and thou shalt stone him with stones that he die."

This would be a beautiful supplement to attach to the Declaration of Independence, or the constitution of the United States! It would be like tying a millstone to the tail of a kite to make it fly the better! Our constitution gives the Chinaman as much right to worship his idol as it does the Christian to worship his cross, or the Presbyterian his John Calvin. Now you can understand why it would not do to establish the Bible by law, and why the most of Christians are opposed to the union of church and state. Let us hear no more talk about our laws being founded on the Bible! This is the same kind of law that crucified Christ and persecuted the Apostles. If we are to be thankful that we live in a land of Bibles and gospel privileges, we are to be far more thankful that we do not live in a land of Bible laws and gospel practices. The missionaries should also be thankful that the heathen do not adopt in practice what they preach in principle, for they would be stoned to death as soon as they touched the heathen shores. Were the teachings of the Bible made the law of the land to-day, this night we would witness—if we escaped with our lives—a slaughter worse than that of Saint Bartholomew, when seventy thousand Christians were massacred in France in one night by other Christians. Adopt the commandments of the Bible God, as the law of the land, and the acts of the Israelites, as a precedent for example, and accompany it with the power to execute, and there would be enough tears shed and blood spilled to ride at ease the navy of the world. This is no fancy sketch nor too highly colored picture, and in further proof of this I quote from the thirtieth chapter of Isaiah.

"For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations and his fury upon all their armies; he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their hosts shall fall down, as the leaf falleth from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven; behold it shall come down on Idumea, and upon the people of my curse unto judgment. The sword of the Lord is filled with blood, it is made with fatness." Here is blood enough to satisfy anybody. Blood! Blood!! Blood!!! The sword of the Lord feasting on blood until it got fat by the occupation! Mountains melting down with blood spilled by the Lord! (This page ought to be written with red ink.) The reader may have thought that I drew a picture from an overheated imagination; but if I did Isaiah puts on the finishing strokes and completes the picture for me. But the Bible-God cries out for more vengeance: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be tured away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor." More blood? "And Moses and Eleazer the priest, and all the princes of the congregation.

went forth to meet them from without the camp ; and Moses was wroth with the officers of the hosts, with the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, which came from battle ; and Moses said unto them have you saved all the women alive ? Behold these caused the children of Israel through the council of Balaam to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord ; now therefore kill every male among the little ones and kill every woman that hath known a man by lying with him ; but all the women children that hath not known a man by lying with him keep alive for yourselves" (Num. xxxi, 13.)

Here is the crime of debauchery added to that of wholesale murder ! Although every warfare is brutal in its effects and tendencies, yet it is an acknowledged principle among all civilized nations that the women are to be protected against violence, and the wants of them and their children provided for, no matter whether they have known men or not ; and no one but an outlaw, or a contemptible fool would ever think about inquiring into such a matter. The virgins it seems were to be saved for the lustful propensities of these detestable villains ! All this is Bible language. It is neatly bound in gilt morocco, and graces the centre table of refined ladies and gentlemen. Can it be possible that the same Author which made the graceful form of woman, and implanted in her nature a sense of blushing modesty ; that painted the cheeks like the rose and the lips like the cherry ; that makes of her a ministering angel to us in times of sickness and distress ; yes ! I repeat, can it be possible that such an Author would give her over by his own commands, to the indiscriminate slaughter and debauchery of such brutal and depraved villains ? The Comanche Indian of Texas, or the wild men of Arabia, would blush to witness such unheard of cruelty, and I would much rather fall into their hands than such Bible men as we have just been noticing. I hope the religionist will reflect on these matters and consider who blasphemers.

We have been finding fault with the rebels for overstepping the limits of civilized warfare, but they have been angels to us in comparison with these Bible men. It is sincerely hoped that we may never go to war with a nation which has the teachings of the Bible established by law, for if we do we may expect to suffer the fearful consequences.

"Six days shall work be done ; but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord ; whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fires throughout your habitations on the sabbath day." (Ex. xxxv, 2.)

Under our laws I believe there are only two crimes punishable by death—murder and treason. The awful crime of kindling fire on Sunday is not punishable at all in any state of this Union. Now let us hear no more about our laws being taken from the Bible. Having given the reader a few examples from hundreds of others just as bad I will go no further in this direction at present, for I consider this enough of such abominable food for one meal, and if he can digest it, he has a stomach calculated to take in brick-bats and fish-hooks.

WHAT HAS THE BIBLE DONE FOR WOMAN?

Will be our next inquiry, and my answer is that it has done about the same for her that it has done for slavery. When a small boy I heard the following story related from the pulpit by a Methodist preacher. An infidel lady of learning and refinement, met in the streets of London, a celebrated infidel gentlemen; she extended her hand to him remarking that "we infidels ought to be more social." The gentleman stepped back a pace, and remarked to her, that he was always ready and willing to fraternize with infidels of his own sex, but that women of all people should be Christians, for the Bible had done more for them than all things else, and that in countries where there was no Bible women were still held in the most abject bondage. Here his story dropped, and he did not give us the reply—he had gone far enough for his purpose; and this sugar coated pill went down the credulous gullets of his auditors without so much as wincing. I did not believe the story because a "celebrated infidel" would have too much sense to undertake to palm off such sophistry on to a "lady of learning and refinement." They both ought to have known that it was the adoption of liberal principle and the spread of rationalistic sentiment, that freed her from that "abject bondage." How long, let me ask, would it take to relieve woman from "abject bondage" by adopting the principle of the following language:—"Samaria shall become desolate, for she hath rebelled against her God; they shall fall by the sword; their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up." These are "the words of the Lord that came to Hosea." I once read a story in a pious newspaper, that when Franklin was in Paris he fell in company with some noted infidels who were reviling and scoffing against the Bible. They requested his opinion of that book. Franklin opened a book and read a few sentences from it, when these infidels remarked that it was the most sublime language they ever heard; unequalled even by Homer or Shakespeare. Franklin then told them that he had been reading from the Bible. I have no confidence in the truth of the story, but if true I am positively certain that Franklin had not been reading the language just quoted from Hosea, to those French gentlemen, for to bestow such praise on such language as this, would be infinitely ridiculous! I would be ashamed to read such language in a fish-market, but since it graces every pulpit in the land, and every deacon and clergyman carries it in his pockets, and every Catholic kisses it, I do sincerely hope that I will be pardoned for quoting it, if it did come by divine inspiration. This is what every believer indorses as divine inspiration.

The Israelites always regarded women as nothing but the idle toy of the hour. Solomon had about a thousand of these articles of traffic cooped up in a corral for his own special convenience. David thought it no sin to have a husband put out of the way if his wife was good looking. Mormonism of to-day is the Bibleism of ancient times revived again on a much smaller scale. Such teachings by example as this, would never place woman on an equality with man, and accord to her

those rights to which nature entitles her. "Wives submit yourselves to your husbands, as unto the Lord," is the common expression of the New Testament. The *ipse dixit* of the husband is to be the law in all things. The same book says, "Servants, be obedient to your masters;" so that the wives stand in the same relation to their husbands that the slaves do to their masters. A servant cannot be the equal of his master when he obeys him, neither can the wife be the equal of the husband when she submits to him as unto the Lord. The wife and husband are to be one, but that one is the husband, and her individuality is lost in him. Paul in his letter to Timothy says, "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Any eringing slave reeling under the lash of his master might do as much as this. New England school marms, what do you think of this? Will you pick up your sachels and band boxes and dismiss your sethools, and start back east again; or will you? oh yes! will you continue to live in open violation of the sacred scriptures.

No matter how eloquent a lady may be or the much talent to instruct she may have, it must all be hid under a bushel! The words of this old bachelor must have been what the poet Gray was thinking about when he wrote the following lines:

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

Paul again says: "Let your women keep silence in churches; for it is not permitted them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law, and if they will learn anything let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame for women to speak in church. A Hannah More, a Harriet Martineaux, a Harriet Beecher Stowe, or a Florence Nightingale must sit still and hear some old brainless deacon expound the scriptures, and murder king's English, and then go to his house and ask him questions about things which she cannot understand!

Such are the teachings of the Bible, but sensible women disobey it every day, for they rise above such defunct tyrannical dogmas, and no sensible man blames them. It may be a perverted taste on my part, but if it is I am free to confess it, that I had much rather hear a sensible lecture from Anne Dickinson, or Emma Hardinge, than a tirade against the blue lights of reason—from the pulpit—ground out of the brainless noddle of some of our licensed preachers! It is said that the Mohammedans do not believe that women have any souls; probably they do not, but I would like to see the contrary proved from the scriptures, and further I would like to see it shown from the same source that women have any rights more than the slave, which the man is bound to respect.

Well then, why is it, that woman's position is so much higher than formerly, and that her condition in this country and in Europe is so much better than in other countries? I answer just because man's position is higher, and his condition better, and the reason of this has al-

ready been given. Woman is the moiety or half of ourselves and in proportion as we elevate ourselves so do we elevate her, and in proportion as we degrade her, so do we degrade ourselves. We are indissolubly connected and our lots are thrown into the same scale. Instead of woman owing everything to the Bible, she owes it but very little, for the spirit of liberty and free inquiry that has done so much for man, has done everything for her. Woman however is still living far short of her natural rights, but to discuss this subject any further in this direction, would be foreign to the subject, but as I have in mind an anecdote so apropos to the occasion, I trust the reader will pardon me for lugging it in. It is given by an author who has gained some celebrity for his progressive teachings. An old farmer of his acquaintance one day during harvest time, was telling him about the great amount of work he was having done. Says he "I have several good hands at work, but the one which does the most work in the harvest field is a big Dutch girl." "How much are you paying your hired men?" asked the author. "Two dollars a day." "How much are you paying your Dutch girl?" "Hem! huh! well, it is a very pleasant day. "Yes but how much are you paying your Dutch girl?" "We are needing rain very badly." "That is not the question; how much are you paying that girl—the one who does the most work?" "Well the truth is, I am paying her forty cents a day!"

The clergy never inaugurate any measures to better the condition of woman and as before remarked we find here again that they are the mere vanes of public opinion, and sooner than inscribe "Woman's rights" over their church doors, they would prefer putting a rattlesnake there.

Religion is no part of the condition, conducive to civilization; but to have civilization it is necessary that a people should be numerous and closely placed; that they should be fixed in their habitations, and safe from violent external and internal disturbance; that a considerable number of them should be exempt from the necessity of drudging for immediate subsistence. Feeling themselves at ease about the first necessities of their nature, including self-preservation, and daily subjected to that intellectual excitement which society produces, men begin to manifest what is called civilization; but never in rude and shelterless circumstances, or when widely scattered.

Even men who have been civilized when transferred to a wide wilderness, where each has to work hard and isolatedly for the requisites of life, soon show a retrogression to barbarism. Witness the plains of Australia as well as the backwoods of Canada and the plains of Texas. Fixity of residence and thickening of population, are perhaps the prime requisites for civilization, and hence it will be found that all civilizations as yet known have taken place in regions physically limited.

That of Egypt arose in a narrow valley hemmed in by deserts on both sides. That of Greece took its rise in a small peninsula, bounded on the only land side by mountains. Rome and Etruria were naturally limited regions. Civilizations have taken place on both the eastern and western extremities of the elder continent—China and Japan on the one hand; Germany, Holland, Britain and France on the other—while the great

unmarked country between contains nations decidedly less advanced. Why is this but because the sea, in both cases, has imposed limits to further migration, and caused the population to settle and condense—the conditions most necessary to social improvement. Even the simple case of the Mandans affords an illustration of this principle, for Mr. Catlin expressly—though without the least regard to theory—attributes their improvement to the fact of their being a small tribe, obliged by the fear of their more numerous enemies, to settle in a permanent village, so fortified as to insure their preservation. “By this” says he “they have advanced further in the arts of manufacture and have supplied their lodges more abundantly with the comforts and even luxuries of life than any Indian nation I know of. The consequence of this is that the tribe has taken many steps ahead of other tribes in manners and refinements.”

These conditions can only be regarded as natural laws affecting civilization, and it might not be difficult, taking them into account, to predict of any newly settled country, its social destiny. It is also necessary for a civilization, that at least a portion of the community should be placed above mean and engrossing toils. Man’s mind becomes subdued like the dyers hand, to that it works in. In rude and difficult circumstances, we unavoidably become rude, because then, only the inferior and harsher faculties of our nature is called into existence. When on the contrary there is leisure and abundance, the self-seeking and self-preserving instincts are allowed to rest, the gentler and more generous sentiments are evoked, and man becomes that courteous and chivalric being which he is found to be among the upper classes of almost all civilized countries.

These then may be said to be the chief natural laws concerned in civilization. The present high state of intellectual culture which we find among the white races of to-day, has been brought about by the force of circumstances, coupled with a “manifest destiny,” in spite of religious influence which has been all the time weighing it down like a mighty incubus.

There are circumstances connected with our development over which we have no control whatever—destiny carries some onwards and arrests others in their course and they cannot help themselves.

“It is a fact of the highest interest and moment, that as the brain of every tribe of animals appears to pass during its development, in succession through the types of all those below it, so the brain of man passes through the types of every tribe in creation.” Then here is the scale of development of the human brain in embryo, and the types of animals it represents, before it can attain to full human character. 1st month, the fetal human brain resembles the nonvertebrated animals as the Zoophyte, Mollusk, shell-fish, &c.; 2d month, that of a fish; 3d month, that of a turtle; 4th month, that of a bird; 5th month, that of a squirrel; 6th month, that of a raccoon; 7th month, that of a bear; 8th month, that of sloths and monkeys; 9th month, it is that of Bimana or man. It may be truly said that all animal creation commences the race from the same goal, but destiny awards the prize to man and carries him beyond the reach of all others. But here comes in a little nicer point of distinction and it is for this purpose that I have introduced this important theory.

The human brain after running through the lower animal types, passes in continued progression also, on through the types of the Negro, Malay, American, and Mongolian, if it is destined to be a Caucasian brain. To illustrate this development theory still more clearly, I will reduce it to figures, and compare it to a race; the farthest or highest point of distance will be 100 miles, and no animal existence reaches it but the Caucasian. We will have them all start from the same point, which they really do in fact. The fish runs to a distance of 20 miles and stops; the turtle goes beyond this and stops at 30 miles; the bird in its course passes the fish, and next the turtle, and goes on to the 40 mile point, where it stops; the squirrel passes all these and gets to the distance of 50 miles where he stops; the raccoon stops at 55 miles; the fox at 65 miles; the bear at 70 miles; the sloth at 75 miles; the monkey at 80 miles; the Negro at 85 miles; the Malay at 90 miles; the American at 95 miles; the Mongolian at 96 miles; and finally the Caucasian or European passes all the others and stops at the distance of 100 miles from the first point. The Caucasian is the predominant type in this country, England, France, and Germany; therefore these countries cannot be anything else than the most civilized nations on the globe, and as such they will so continue in spite of all the religions that can be invented or all the Bibles that can be made; and as these countries continue to advance in civilization, just so, do the shackles of superstition fall away, and priestcraft relaxes its hold.

Captain Burton—an Englishman—who explored pretty well the interior of Africa, informs us that he found a very religious people inhabiting a country called "Dahomey," and so religious are they that when the king dies, a thousand subjects are killed on the same day to accompany him into hades, for he has such a social disposition that he cannot be without company; but this is not all. Every subsequent six months a dozen of his former subjects are killed to carry him the news! but the main trouble about this heavenly postoffice arrangement is, that there is no return mail. This is the type of animal existence that I marked at 80; and it seems from this statement of Captain Burton that this type is much more prone to be religious than the type which I marked at 100. I believe it is natural for negroes to be religious and I never heard of such an anomaly as an "infidel negro." Queen Victoria was thought to be insane, because she once behaved in a manner very similar to these rude barbarians, but I contend that she was only putting religious profession into practice, as the anecdote will show. A short time after the Queen had lost her dearly beloved husband, a friend of hers was taken seriously ill, and not expected to live; and as the Queen believed that her friend after death would go to the same place that her husband had gone to, she desired to communicate with him through this sick friend of hers; so she gave him a verbal message to bear to Prince Albert; but as in the case of these Africans there has not as yet been any return mail.

In India the surviving wife is burnt on the funeral pile with her dead husband; thousands are yearly crushed under the wheel of Juggernaut; the mother tears her babe from her breast and throws it into the Ganges

to be drowned or devoured by the aligators, to appease the wrath of God. Hannibal on one occasion sacrificed three hundred high born Carthaginians for the same purpose; and for this reason God sacrificed Christ. These things are familiar to the reader, but does he ever stop to inquire what does it? If he has never inquired into the cause of these things, I press the inquiry upon his attention. I will give him the answer and trust to his own judgment as to its correctness. I say it is religion, and nothing but religion, and when the Christians, or Mohamedons, oppose, and make war against the Hindoo, or Jewish religions, it is precisely like the fight among the Kilkenny cats, and about as much difference between them.

I cannot dwell longer on this part of the subject, but I hope enough has been said to awaken an interest in the mind of the reader to examine for himself. I give him the tools but he must do the work.

I will next pass on to notice the props upon which religion is built.

PROPHECIES.

I will now proceed with the investigation of the prophecies, concerning the person called Christ, as referred to by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; these prophecies being of the greatest importance and the most commonly referred to; but if they have no allusion to Jesus Christ, as they are claimed to have, it would be folly to notice those prophecies which have been subsequently invented by the priests.

When I was a little boy I heard a great deal about the prophecies which were fulfilled by the coming of a person called Jesus Christ; prophecies made some of them 1500 years before his appearance. I thought this was very remarkable indeed, and so strange did it appear to me that I would not believe it, nor would I attempt any explanation about it, until I had investigated the truth of the matter. We have an account that once upon a time a certain philosopher puzzled a great many wise heads, by this question: "Why is it that when you put fish into a tub, which is full of water, that the water does not run over?" A great many explanations were given but none were satisfactory. The question produced great excitement and called out the best talent of the country and all for the simple reason that there was too much assumed to start with; it was not true that the water would not run over; and for this same reason has there been so many sermons preached and so many books written about the prophecies; it is always assumed that they are true. I intend to make it just as plain that there never were any prophecies about the person called Jesus Christ as it is plain to me that the water would run over the tub, when it was filled with fish. We commence at Matthew chap. i, ver. 18. "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost."

"Then Joseph her husband being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things behold an angel of the Lord appeared unto

him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name *Jesus*; for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord, by the prophet, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emanuel, which being interpreted is God with us."

We find there are two most remarkable events in the passages just quoted, and so wonderfully remarkable are they that it is on the truth of them that the whole fabric of Christianity is built and the whole scheme of human salvation hinges. The one is a dream told to Matthew, (no one knows by whom,) dreamt by one Joseph, 1800 years ago; and the other is the prophecy about the conception of a virgin who was to bring forth a son whose name was to be Emanuel. I shall not discuss at present that part of the story which relates to the dream, for it would be foreign to the subject under consideration, but merely remark in passing that I do not pay any attention to my own dreams, and much less those that were dreamt more than 1800 years ago, and coming down to us in such a second handed way; and as dreams are ruled out of our courts of justice, it cannot be expected that I will stake my chances of salvation on such testimony; but if the angel had appeared to Joseph in broad daylight when he was wide awake, instead of slipping into his chamber and catching him asleep, I suppose the clergy would not have believed the story, for then there would not have been so much mystery about the matter.

Well, for this prophecy about the conception of the virgin who was to bring forth Emanuel, we are referred back to Isaiah, chap. vii, ver. 14. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emanuel." Matthew says the virgin was conceived by the Holy Ghost, but Isaiah does not say so, for he had never heard of such a thing as the Holy Ghost, but his impression was that she was to be conceived by himself, and that the son's name was not to be either *Jesus* or *Emanuel* but it was to be *Mahar-shalal-hash-baz*. To prove this and in order to complete the meaning of the verse just quoted, we quote again from the first part of the succeeding chapter.

"Moreover the Lord said unto me, (Isaiah), take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning *Mahar-shalal-hash-baz*. And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, *Uriah*, the high priest, and *Zachariah* the son of *Jeberechiah*. And I (Isaiah,) went unto the prophetess and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the Lord to me, call his name *Mahar-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*." Notwithstanding, Isaiah took with him two faithful witnesses when he went unto the prophetess to record that he was the father of this son of the virgin, *Mahar-shalal-hash-baz*, the clergy still persist in

saying that the Holy Ghost was the father of this child while at the same time Jesus Christ, nor the Holy Ghost were ever heard of until seven hundred years afterwards. This son of Isaiah's, spoken of in chap. viii, ver. 4, which is now born, corresponds with the child which was to be born as recorded in verse 15, 16 of chap. vii. "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 forsaken of both her kings." Now we come to the prophecy itself, and as Paine noticed it, and the attention of Bishop Watson was called to it by him, I will let these champions speak for themselves, but if the Bishop cannot do justice to the subject there is no use of any of our smaller fry attempting it. This will be a fair investigation. After quoting Matthew and Isaiah in reference to this matter, Paine begins: "But it is first necessary that I explain the occasion of these words being spoken by Isaiah; the reader will then easily perceive that so far from this being a prophecy of Jesus Christ, they have not the least reference to such a person, or anything that could happen in the time that Christ is said to have lived—which was about seven hundred years after the time of Isaiah. The case is this:

On the death of Solomon the Jewish nation split into two monarchies; one called the kingdom of Judah, the capital of which was Jerusalem; the other the kingdom of Israel, the capital of which was Samaria. The kingdom of Judah followed the line of David, and the kingdom of Israel that of Saul; and these two rival monarchies frequently carried on fierce wars against each other.

At the time that Ahaz was king of Judah, which was in the time of Isaiah, Pekah was king of Israel; and Pekah joined himself to Kezin, king of Syria, to make war against Ahaz king of Judah; and these two kings marched a confederated and powerful army against Jerusalem. Ahaz and his people became alarmed at the danger and 'their hearts were moved as the trees of the wood are moved by the wind.' Isaiah, chap. vii, ver. 3. In this perilous situation of things Isaiah addressed himself to Ahaz and assures him in the name of the Lord, (the cant phrase of all the prophets), that these two kings should not succeed against him; and to assure him that this should be the case, (the case was however directly contrary), tells Ahaz to ask a sign of the Lord. This Ahaz declined doing, giving as a reason that he would not tempt the Lord; upon which Isaiah, who pretends to be sent from God, says, ver. 14, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign, *Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.* 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 which thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings'—meaning the king of Israel and the king of Syria, who were marching against him.

Here then is the sign which was to be the birth of a child, and that child a son; and here also is the time limited for the accomplishment of the sign, namely, before the child should know to refuse the evil and choose the good.

The thing therefore to be a sign of success to Ahaz must be something that would take place before the event of the battle then pending between him and the two kings could be known. A thing to be a sign must precede the thing signified. The sign of rain must be before the rain.

It would have been mockery and insulting nonsense, for Isaiah to have assured Ahaz as a sign that these two kings should not prevail against him, that a child should be born seven hundred years after he was dead; and that before the child so born should know to refuse the evil and choose the good, he, Ahaz, should be delivered from the danger he was then immediately threatened with.

But the case is, that the child of which Isaiah speaks was his own child, with which his wife, or his mistress was then pregnant; for he says in the next chapter, ver. 2, "And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the high priest, and Zacheriah the son of Jeberechiah; and I went unto the prophetess, and she conceived and bear a son;" and he says at ver. 18 of the same chapter, 'Behold I and the children whom the Lord had given me are for signs and wonders in Israel.'

It may not be improper here to observe that the word translated a *virgin* in Isaiah does not signify a virgin in the Hebrew, but merely a *young woman*. The tense is falsified in the translation. Levi gives the Hebrew text of the 14th ver. of the seventh chapter of Isaiah, and the translation in English with it—'*Behold a young woman is with child and beareth a son.*'

The expression, says he, is in the present tense. This translation agrees with the other circumstances related of the birth of this child which was to be a sign to Ahaz. But as the true translation could not have been imposed upon the world as a prophecy of a child to be born seven hundred years afterwards, the Christian translators have falsified the original; and instead of making Isaiah to say, behold a young woman is with child and beareth a son—they make him to say, behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son. It is however only necessary for a person to read the seventh and eighth chapters of Isaiah and he will be convinced that the passage in question is no prophecy of the person called Jesus Christ."

Bishop Watson replies:—"You explain at some length your notion of the misapplication made by St. Matthew of the prophecy in Isaiah, 'Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.' That passage has been handled largely and minutely by almost every commentator, and it is too important to be handled superficially by any one. I am not on the present occasion concerned to explain it." The Bishop makes no attempt to explain it notwithstanding the importance of the subject, and this is equivalent to conceding the point; that is, that Isaiah did not prophecy about Jesus Christ. Now I believe the reader can understand why it is that the religious book publishers do not publish the "Age of Reason" with "Watson's Reply," and he can also understand why the "Reply" is published by the liberal publishers along with the "Age of Reason." Now I do contend that if the clergy were consistent and had any regard

for truth, that they would leave off preaching such stuff that they cannot give the shadow of a reason for. Matthew gets out a part of a sentence from the seventh chapter of Isaiah, and adds a few more words of his own coining, in order to establish the divinity of Christ by prophecy. You can make a prophecy for every thing by taking such an unfair course as this. Mother Goose's rhymes would be considerably nearer a prophecy concerning this rebellion, than Isaiah's words were concerning Jesus Christ. "High ding diddle, The cat's in the fiddle, The little dog laughed to hear the sport, The cow jumped over the moon, &c."

The first line is a prophecy that there would be great commotion in the United States, the firing on Fort Sumter and the raising of volunteers both north and south. The cat's in the fiddle, expresses that the south would get into a bad scrape. The dog laughed to hear the sport, means that it was fun for France and England. The cow jumped over the moon, means that the north has whipped the south. If these lines of Old Mother Goose's could be lugged into the Bible in some way there would no longer exist any doubt in the minds of the clergy about their having reference to this wicked rebellion.

The reader cannot help but notice that all the prophecies pretended to be about Christ, are a great deal more far-fetched than the prophecies of Mother Goose concerning the rebellion. We will now quote Matthew chap. ii, ver. 1, which is said to have reference to another prophecy concerning Jesus. "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judah, in the days of Herod, the king, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem—saying, where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod, the king heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born—and they said unto him, in Bethlehem in the land of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet—and thou Bethlehem in the land of Judea, art thou not the least among the princes of Judea, for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel." No one reading this chapter would ever have thought of Christ, had not their attention been called to it by Matthew and the priests, who dubbed it as such, at the head of the chapter. In order to understand what the writers means, we must maintain the connection. The language to which Matthew refers is in Micah fifth chapter and second verse. The writer has reference to this same ruler who was to come out of Bethlehem, in the fifth verse of the same chapter. "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. And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword and the land of Ninrod in the entrances thereof; thus shalt he deliver us from the Assyrians."

This language was written about 750 years before Christ, and at that time the Assyrians were a powerful nation and it was no unusual thing for them to perplex the Israelites, but the Assyrians never troubled Ju-

dea in the time of Christ. Micah calls this ruler a "man," and says he shall be the peace when Assyrians come into our land, meaning Judea. I was not aware that the Assyrians came into Judea in the time of Christ, nor was I aware that Christ delivered the Jews from the Assyrians.

The Israelites were subject to the Romans in the time that Christ is said to have lived, and they were not molested by the Assyrians at that time, for they were no longer a nation. So we find that that verse quoted by Matthew has no more reference to Jesus Christ than it has to James Buchanan.

I now proceed to investigate another so-called prophecy of Jesus Christ. The account begins at the 13th verse of the 2d chap. of Matthew. "The Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose he took the young child and his mother by night and departed into Egypt. And was there until the death of Herod; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying, *out of Egypt have I called my son.*" Luke says nothing about Herod or the dream, or the taking of the young child into Egypt, but he says he was taken to Jerusalem. This makes a considerable difference, for two inspired penmen: in the one case the distance would be but a few miles, while in the other case, it would be several hundred miles. The passage referred to as a prophecy is in the book of Hosea, chap. xi. ver. 1, "*When Israel was a child then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt.*"

Matthew here clips out a part of a sentence from its connection and applies a meaning to it which its writer did not intend; for in the next verse we find that this people spoken of collectively under the names of "Israel," and "my son," sacrificed unto Balaam, and burned incense to graven images. This is all spoken of in the past tense, but if Hosea meant Christ, he would have written it in the future tense. But the way it stands it cannot mean Christ, unless he was an idolater. The writer had reference to the children of Israel coming out of Egypt in the time of Pharaoh, and nothing else.

I know this so-called prophecy will remind the reader of what I have already said about Mother Goose's rhymes.

The next prophecy commences at the 17th verse of the same chapter; "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet Jeremy, saying, *In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and would not be comforted because they were not.*"

The language of this verse is called out from the preceding one in which an account is given of the slaying of all the children under two years of age in Bethlehem and round about it by the command of Herod. This is not a probable story, for Herod was an officer under the Roman government, to which appeals could always be had, as it was in the case of Paul; besides no other historian mentions this remarkable slaughter of innocents.

This passage referred to as a prophecy is in Jeremiah chap. xxxi, ver. 15, and it is written in such a loose and general manner that it might be applied to any wars, sieges, or revolutions. It is written in the past tense and has no reference whatever to the future. Rachel could not have been weeping for her children in the time of Herod, for then she had been dead about seventeen hundred years!

Jeremiah the writer of this verse (15) lived in the time that Nebuchadnezzar besieged, took, and plundered Jerusalem, and led the Jews captive to Babylon. He carried his violence against the Jews to every extreme. He slew the sons of king Zedekiah before his face, he then put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and kept him in prison till the day of his death.

It is of this time of sorrow and suffering to the Jews, that Jeremiah is speaking. Their temple was destroyed, their lands desolated, their nation and government entirely broken up, and themselves, men, women, and children, carried into captivity. They had too many sorrows of their own, immediately before their eyes, to permit them or any of their chiefs to be employing themselves on things that might or might not happen in the world several hundred years afterwards. It is as already observed, of this time of sorrow to the Jews that Jeremiah is speaking in the verse in question. In the two next verses, the 16th and 17th, he endeavors to console their sufferings by giving them hopes, and according to the fashion of speaking in those days, assurances from the Lord, that their sufferings should have an end, and that their children should return again into their own land. Here are the verses which explain themselves.

“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. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border.” Jeremiah had about as much reference to the children whom Matthew makes Herod slaughter, as he had to the Digger Indians. What had those children to do with returning from the land of the enemy? How could they come again to their own border when they had never been away from it. We now pass on to the next prophecy which is a very dreamy one, as the reader will see.

Matthew chap. ii, ver. 19.—“But when Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, arise and take the young child and its mother, and go into the land of Israel, for they are dead which sought the young child’s life—and he arose and took the young child and its mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea, in the room of his father Herod he was afraid to go thither. Notwithstanding being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee; 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.”

Here Matthew’s ingenuity fails him, for he, nor all the clergy in Christendom are able to trump up any such a prophecy, in all the Old Testament. Probably it was Matthew that dreamed this time and not Joseph.

Just here by way of parenthesis let me quote Jude on dreamers: "Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities."

Here is another prophecy! chap. iv, ver. 12: "Now when Jesus heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Gallilee, and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zebulon and the land of Nephtholim. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias (Isaiah) the prophet, saying, The land of Zebulon and the land of Nephtholim by way of the sea beyond Jordan in Gallilee of the Gentiles—the people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, the light is springing upon them." Being unable to make head or tail of such gibberish as this, we will turn back to what is called the prophecy of this matter. It is in Isaiah chap. ix, ver. 1, 2.

"Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulon and the land of Naphthali and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan in Gallilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

This is a clear case of gutting up scripture. Matthew begins to quote a part of a sentence from Isaiah, where there is not so much as a comma, and leaves out other parts of the same sentence which completely destroys the meaning of the original and makes none of his own. This is an imposition palmed off on the credulity of mankind, which any one who can read can detect, if he will take the trouble to turn to the passage which Matthew quotes. The passage is historical and not in the least prophetic. It is all in the past tense and is about things that had been accomplished, and has no allusion about things to come.

Reader, it is for the preaching of such gross impositions, and ridiculous nonsense, that you build meeting houses, and pay your money to priests, who have riveted the chains of superstition so tightly about you, that you still believe it is for the good of society for these religious leeches to bleed you and to continue their deceptions. I now pass on to another passage called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

Matthew chap. viii, ver. 16. "When the evening was come, they brought unto him, (Jesus,) many that were possessed with devils, and he cast out the spirit with his word and healed all that were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias (Isaiah) the prophet, saying, *himself took our infirmities and bear our sicknesses.*"

Isaiah speaks nothing about the healing of the sick or casting out devils for such things as devils were not known in his day.

The passage alluded to by Matthew, is in Isaiah chap. liii, ver. 4, which is as follows:

"Surely he (the person of whom Isaiah is speaking) hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."

This is in the past tense; it is historical and never was intended for a prophecy by the writer. "He employs the whole of this chapter in la-

menting the sufferings of some deceased persons, of whom he speaks very pathetically; it is the monody on the death of a friend; but he mentions not the name of the person, nor gives any circumstance of him by which he can be personally known; and it is this silence which is evidence of nothing, that Matthew has laid hold of, to put the name of Christ to it; as if the chiefs of the Jews, whose sorrows were then great, and the times they lived in big with danger, were never thinking about their own affairs, nor the fate of their own friends, but were continually running a wild goose chase into futurity. To make a monody into a prophecy is an absurdity. The characters and circumstances of men, even in different ages of the world are so much alike, that what is said of one may with propriety be said of many, but this fitness does not make the passage into a prophecy; and none but an imposter or bigot would call it so. Isaiah in deploring the fate and loss of his friend, mentions nothing of him, but what the human lot of man is subject to. All the cases he states of him, his persecutions, his imprisonment, his patience in suffering, and his perseverance in principle, are all within the line of nature; they belong exclusively to none, and may with justness be said of many. But if Jesus Christ was the person the church represents him to be, that which would exclusively apply to him, must be something that would apply to no other person; something beyond the line of nature; something beyond the mortal lot of man; and there are no such expressions in this chapter, nor any other chapter in the Old Testament. It is no exclusive description to say of a person, as is said of the person Isaiah is lamenting in this chapter. "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 his shearer, is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." This may be said of thousands of persons who have suffered oppression and unjust death with patience, silence and perfect resignation. Having learned that the passage quoted does not mean Jesus Christ, I am not much concerned to know whom it means; probably it was Jeremiah, for he uses language very similar concerning himself.

We find the next prophecy in Matthew, chap. xii, ver. 14. "Then the pharisees went out and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. But when Jesus knew it he withdrew himself: and great numbers followed him, and he healed them all, and he charged them that they should not make him known: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias (Isaiah) the prophet, saying,

"Behold my servant whom I have chosen: my beloved in whom I am well pleased; I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew 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 sends forth judgment unto victory—and in his name shall the Gentiles trust." The substance of this so-called prophecy begins at the 42d chap. of Isaiah. It is written in such an indefinite and general manner having neither date, name nor place, that it is difficult to make any sense out of it, and it would be mere surmises to attempt to tell whom it means, but it is enough for our purpose to know

whom it does not mean. It is evident that it cannot mean Jesus, for it has nothing to do with the pharisees holding a council to destroy Jesus—with his withdrawing himself—with great numbers following him—with his healing them—nor with his charging them to not make him known. “The purpose for which the passage is quoted and the passage itself, are as remote from each other as nothing from something. But the case is that people have been so long in the habit of reading the books called the Bible and Testament, with their eyes shut, and their senses locked up, that the most stupid inconsistencies have passed on them for truth, and imposition for prophecy.”

It cannot be said that Jesus had any authority over the Gentiles, nor that he did not cry, and that his voice was not heard in the street; for as a preacher it was his business to be heard. It is probable however that this passage applies to Cyrus, king of Persia, although Cyrus lived about 150 years after the time that Isaiah is said to have lived, but this is to be reconciled on the ground that the Bible compilers were in the habit of getting things mixed up, and this is evident from the fact that Isaiah is made to mention the name of Cyrus, of whom he could not have had any knowledge unless he lived in his time or subsequently; just as a historian could not write the life of Bonaparte before the time that he lived.

The next prophecy we find in Matthew, chap. xxi, ver. 1. “And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethpape, unto the mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying unto them, go into the village over against you, and straightway you shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose them and bring them unto me—And if any man say aught to you ye shall say, the Lord hath need of them, and straightway he will send them. All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughters of Zion, behold thy king cometh unto thee meek, and sitting on an ass and a colt the foal of an ass.”

Is it possible that the same Agent which created the fixed stars—the nearest one of which is so remote that a race horse could not reach in ten thousand years on a level road—could find nothing better to do than to prophecy about an ass tied up to a fence! Why is it that people can read such blasphemy with calmness?

The substance of this passage is in Zechariah, cap. ix, ver. 9. It is a congratulatory address to his countrymen who were returning from captivity in Babylon to Jerusalem. He was speaking about the affairs of his own people and nobody else. At verse 16, Zechariah breaks forth again: “Therefore, thus saith the Lord, I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies; my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.”

As to Christ's riding an ass being a sign of humility it was just the reverse, for he was never so well mounted before in his life. Asses in those days were the chief riding animals, but the camels and dromedaries were the beasts for carrying burdens. Zechariah spoke of the king returning to Jerusalem; this cannot apply to Christ for he never was

king of any country. In the last passage that we examined Jesus is represented as withdrawing himself, that is, running away and concealing himself for fear of being apprehended, and charging his people not to make him known, but now although no new circumstances had arisen to better his condition, he is represented as making a public entry into that very city from which he had fled for safety. If I had more faith and less reason I presume I would be able to harmonize these two contradictory accounts.

I now pass on to the next so-called prophecy of Jesus Christ. Matthew chap. xxvi, ver. 51. "And behold one of them which was with Jesus (Peter) stretched out his hand, and drew his sword and struck a servant of the high priest, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into its place, for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot pray unto my Father; and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of Angels? But how shall the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be? In that same hour Jesus said to the multitudes, are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." For this prophecy we are referred to Isaiah, chap. liii, ver. 3, which we have already noticed. The preceding verse says, "he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." No new Testament writer represents Christ in such a way, besides all the paintings I have seen of him, give me the impression that Christ was rather good looking. When Isaiah says, "When we shall see him" (that is this homely person) he means that he was to be seen by himself and his people in his own lifetime and not seven hundred years afterward. Isaiah says nothing about the multitudes coming out against this person with swords and staves, for the purpose of taking him, but this is the very thing which Christ said must be fulfilled. I challenge the clergy to show any such prophecy about Christ. Was it possible that Christ was such a desperado that it took multitudes, armed with swords and staves, to take him?

We are also referred for this prophecy to Genesis, chap iii, ver. 15. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." This verse has about as much connection with the multitude coming out against Christ with swords and staves, as a wood shed in Oregon has to the Mexican war. It seems that after Peter cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest, that Jesus told him to put his sword back again into its place, and behave himself, and it further appears that the Apostles carried that sword by permission of Christ, for Peter had a place to put his into; but I hope I may be permitted to inquire what business had these disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus with swords if their religion was a peaceable religion?

I pass on to the next passage called a prophecy, Matthew, chap. xxvii, ver. 3. "Then Judas which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was

condemned, repented himself and brought again thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood. And they said what is that to us, see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver, and departed and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, it is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took council and bought with them the potter's field to bury strangers in—wherefore that field is called the field of blood unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet saying, "And they took thirty pieces of silver the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children did value, and gave them to the potter's field as the Lord appointed me."

In order to expose this barefaced imposition of Matthews, I have nothing to do but to quote what Jeremiah says about the purchase of a field. Let me remark, however, that I do not consider Jeremiah any more to blame for this imposition of Matthew's than I would be if some fanatic should get crazy enough to pervert my writings into a prophecy. Well, here it is, Jer., chap. xxxii, ver. 6.

"And Jeremiah said the word of the Lord came unto me saying, Behold Hanamiel, the son of Shallum thine uncle, shall come unto thee, saying, buy thee my field that is in Anathoth, for the right of redemption is thine to buy it—so Hanamiel mine uncle's son, came to me in the court of prison, according to the word of the Lord, and said unto me buy my field I pray thee, that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin for the right of inheritance is thine, and the redemption is thine; buy it for thyself; Then I knew that it was the word of the Lord—And I bought the field of Hanamiel mine uncle's son that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver—and I subscribed the evidence and sealed it, took witnesses and weighed him the money in balances. So I took the evidence of the purchase, both that which was sealed according to law and custom and that which was open, and I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruk, the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanamiel mine uncle's son, and in the presence of witnesses that subscribed the book of purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of prison—and I charged Baruk before them saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts the God of Israel, Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open, and put them in earthen vessels, that they may continue many days—for thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, houses and fields, and vineyards shall be possessed again in the land."

Now if all this has any reference to Christ, I confess freely that I am too short-sighted to see it. Matthew does not refer us to Zechariah but we will quote him notwithstanding, chap. xi, ver. 12, 13. "And I said unto them if ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord." This has nothing to do with Jesus, nor

Judas, nor the potter's field to bury strangers in, but about as near as it comes to being a prophecy is that the definite article, "*the*," is found in both passages. Matthew tells us the chief priests bought a potter's field with the money to bury strangers in. Zachariah says the money was cast to the potter. Is there no difference between a potter and a field? According to Matthew the thirty pieces of silver was the price of blood; the transaction was condemned by the Lord, and when the money was refunded, it was refused admittance into the treasury. According to Zachariah the thirty pieces of silver was a goodly price, it was as much as the thing was worth, and the transaction was approved by the Lord, and the money given over in the house of the Lord. The two cases are just the reverse of each other. A very different and contradictory account to that of Matthew is given in the Acts of the Apostles. According to this version Judas did not repent and return the money, but he kept it and bought a field for himself. He did not hang himself, but he fell headlong and burst asunder. Now reader, I know you are anxious to learn how the clergy reconcile this last contradiction. The explanation is amusing but you know it is wrong to laugh at such sacred things. Well, this is it: they say Judas first hung himself and then the rope broke, and that accounts for his falling headlong.

I proceed to examine the next so-called prophecy. Matthew, chap. xxvii, ver. 35. "And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet. They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots." This expression is in Psalms xxii chap., 18th verse, and is in the present tense. It is a part of the language of some person that is in great trouble, and is bitterly bewailing his fate. In the commencement of the chapter the language is precisely the same as that which Christ uttered on the cross; but any person in great distress could say it and no doubt a great many have said it. At verse 13, this same person says, "Many bulls have compassed me; strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths as a ravening and roaring lion." This cannot mean Christ; for there is not a word in all the New Testament that says anything about the bulls of Bashan gathering around Christ and gaping at him. At verse 16, he says, "Dogs have compassed me." Who ever heard before about Christ being troubled by dogs? At verse 17, he says, "I may tell my bones: they look and stare upon me." This person probably underwent the fate of some of our Union soldiers in the south; he had been put into prison and being ill fed, he became reduced in flesh; hence this exclamation. But there is no account anywhere that Christ's bones looked and stared at him. At verse 18, he says, "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." This must have been a person who dressed in good clothes, and possessed some property, for we take vesture in this sense to mean property and not garments, as the garments had been disposed of when they cast lots upon the vesture. This cannot mean Christ, for he had no property, and his clothing must have been very scanty if the following language is correct:

“The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.”

What absurdity it would be for people to quarrel about the property of such a person as this! But I will now call the attention of the reader to a worse absurdity than this one. If you step out of your door on any clear evening you can see a hazy belt in the skies, known as the milky way. It is made up of fixed stars, so numerous, and so infinitely far, that the eye cannot distinguish them, the one from the other: yet they are suns giving light of their own and larger than the one which lights up this little earth of ours. It would take the rays of light emanating from some of them fifty thousand years to reach our earth, and this is a time longer than our earth is said to have existed by more than forty thousand years, so that some of the fixed stars being created coeval with this earth, we could not see them for forty thousand years to come, for the light must get here before we are able to see them. Now in view of these wonderful facts, is it not ridiculous absurdity, and downright blasphemy, to say that the Power which created such wonderful machinery as we have described, and still continues to keep it in good running order, could find nothing better to prophecy about, than an old pair of breeches or a threadbare coat? I do dislike to dignify such nonsense with even so much as a passing notice, but it is thrust upon me, and I cannot get around it. The common incidents of life are not any subject for a prophecy, for man has the power to fulfill them or not, just as he pleases, but such are the circumstances of all the prophecies concerning Jesus Christ, and as in the case of this last prophecy you see how easy a thing it was for man to fulfill it. The garments were parted and the lots cast with the express purpose to fulfill it. Such procedures as this, is not evidence of anything. Suppose that I write here that when my spirit leaves this earth, and this body, that it starts directly for the sun, and that its arrival there will be known by a stone rolling down the Rocky mountains. What an easy matter it would be for some emigrant to land my spirit there after I am dead. But suppose the arrival of my spirit to the sun was to be announced by Pilot Knob, in Missouri, being shaken to pieces and leveled with its base; by all the graves around St. Louis being opened and the dead getting up out of them and going into the city; by there being midnight darkness at noonday; it would be a subject for a prophecy, and the people would pay some attention to it when it occurred, for it would be something far beyond the reach or power of man to accomplish. It would be some evidence at least that my spirit had reached the sun; whereas, in the case of the stone rolling down the Rocky mountains, it would not be the least evidence of such an arrival at the sun. Matthew tells us that the vail of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom, that the earth did quake, and the rocks were rent and that the graves were opened, and many of the bodies of the saints which slept, arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many; but he gives us no prophecy for any of these things, the very things which should have been the subjects for prophecy, since it would have been beyond the power of any one to do

such things ; but all the fulfillments of prophecies which he gives us are those did by men, and that too with an express view to their fulfillment. But it may be said that they were fulfilled by the Jews, and that Christ and his disciples had nothing to do with it.

Here let me inquire, since the Jews did not believe in Christ, why should they trouble themselves about fulfilling prophecies concerning him. It would seem to me that they would take an opposite course, and this impression is made good by the history of the case as given by Matthew at chap. xxvii, ver. 65, 66. "Pilate said unto them, ye have a watch; go your way, make it as sure as you can. So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch." This was done to prevent the prophecy from being fulfilled, which said, 'After three days I will rise again.'

The chief priests and Pharisees said that Christ said he would rise again the third day, and they counseled with Pilate, to command the sepulchre to be secured until that time, so that the last error might be worse than the first. This account by Matthew contradicts all that he has said before about the fulfillment of prophecies. To be consistent all the way through he ought to have said that the chief priests and Pharisees rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, that the prophecies might be fulfilled, which said, "After three days I shall arise again."

These Jews according to the gospel by St. Matthew must have been a very queer people ; at one time they would endeavor to fulfill prophecies and at another they would try to prevent their fulfillment.

If the Jews had any idea that there was any prophecy of the person called Christ, and that his garments were to be parted among them and lots cast for his vesture, that the prophecy might be fulfilled ; and at the same time despising him the way they did, all that they would have to do, to make the prophecy a false one, would be, to let his garments and vesture alone. Those chief priests no doubt were as conversant with the Bible as Matthew, or Christ, and had there been any prophecy about parting garments, and casting lots for vesture, they would have known it as well as Christ, or Matthew. To make such a great ado about a man's old clothes, and saying nothing about the dead coming up out of their graves is like straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel.

If there was darkness over all the land, from the sixth hour unto the ninth hour, it must have been over Greece and Rome as well as Judea, but no historian gives any account of it. If the dead came up out of their graves it would have been an important subject for the pen of the historian ; and all the circumstances would have been detailed to us. The historian would have told how many arose, and the length of time that some of them had been buried. He would have given us a few names of the most important ones. He would have told us whether they resumed their usual business, or went back to their graves again. He would have told us what effect these ghostly figures, stalking through the streets of Jerusalem, had on the minds of the citizens who had never undergone such a metamorphosis. He would have told us whether they contended for their original property, &c. But strange as it may appear

not a word of this remarkable affair is given by any historian. Had the dead arose out of their graves over all the land, and gone into Washington City on the night that Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, it appears to me that some mention would be made of such an important matter in the New York Tribune, and Bancroft, as the historian of this country would be derelict in duty, if he did not note the fact. If some religious fanatic a few hundred years hence should publish to the world that such an event did take place, would not Bancroft's history be referred to, to substantiate the matter? but if Bancroft gave no account of such things having happened, the people would have good reasons to doubt the statement, for Bancroft lived at the time this event was said to have taken place, and his silence about the matter is good evidence that no such thing ever happened. I believe that every historian intends to mention all the important events of the country, and the age about which, and in which he writes, and such being the case how could the historian that lived in the time of Christ neglect to mention such remarkable events, as darkness over all the land for three hours, when it should have been broad daylight? How could he fail to tell us all about the dead coming up out of their graves. If such things did take place the only excuse they can give for the neglect, is to say that they forgot it.

But the greatest argument of all against these miracles of the Lord's gospel (!) according to Saint Matthew is, that such events are at variance with the laws of nature. It is no miracle for a man to tell a lie, for such a thing as lying is common, but it is a miracle for the dead to arise out of their graves and go to town. The easiest and the most natural way to settle this thing is to regard Matthew as an impostor and a liar, then there is no miracle about it. Reader, if some very pious man should tell you that his apples had turned into inkstands and his watermelons into rattlesnakes, would you believe it? If five hundred or even a thousand men tell you so, would you believe it? If you are not a fit subject for the insane asylum you would say it was all a lie or a deception. Now right here in the face of these facts, let me ask you in the name of common sense, why do you believe a story equally miraculous, told by a single person, whom no one knows anything about, and told several hundred years ago? Pause and reflect upon these things before you go any further. But, say you, Matthew was divinely inspired. Who told you so? Was it God Almighty that told you so? No. Was it reason? No. Was it the clergy? Yes, they told you so. Who told the clergy so? Other clergy told them so. Their information is just like yours and not a whit better. You may say that Matthew told you so. What! one man tell the others that he is divinely inspired! This would smack too much with egotism and braggadocio for me to believe it; I would begin to call in question his sanity or his integrity. It would be like Moses calling himself the meekest of all mankind. Why don't you believe in table tipping by spirits? Your friends have honestly told you that they have seen such things, and that they know it is so, but still you don't believe them; and why? Because such things are contrary to the laws of nature. But it is no trouble for you to believe that things took place

contrary to the laws of nature eighteen hundred years ago, when it is told by a person that no one knows anything about. Of all people existing on this mundane sphere, believing Christians should be the last ones to abuse spiritualism. Such abuse does come with exceeding ill grace from such a source. Their own comes among them and they receive him not. If a traveler from Hongkong in China says, the citizens walk on their heads the Christians ought to believe it. If it is said that God was playing "hide and hoop" with Adam, the Christians ought to believe it, for God says, "Adam, where art thou?" that is to say, "Adam, where have you gone to by this time?"

Christians ought to have joined the Mormons because Joe. Smith said he was divinely inspired. Some Christians can believe that Jonah swallowed a whale because they think it is in the Bible, but not one of them can believe that a cow can swallow a dog. Surely, this is straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel.

This is a digression but we have been led into it by the wild, ranting style of Matthew. We will quit him for the present and pass on to the prophecies of Mark; chap. i, ver. 1. "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the son of God—As it is written in the prophets, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare the way before thee." Malachi, chap. iii, ver. 1.

At the head of this third chapter of Malachi we find language like this: "Of the messenger, majesty and grace of Christ." I suppose this is put in for the benefit of the casual reader whom the priest well knew would never suspect that this chapter had the least allusion to Christ or John the Baptist. The verse first quoted is contorted in some mysterious way to mean John the Baptist, who was to be the harbinger of Jesus Christ whose coming is foreshadowed in the 2d verse, "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth, for he is like the refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap." The birth of Jesus Christ is always spoken of as a time of joy and glad tidings; but this other scene is one of terror, consternation and vengeance; so that it can have no allusion to either Christ, or John.

Malachi explains the scene of which he is now speaking in the next chapter and tells who the messenger is. Hear him: "Behold the day cometh that shall burn like an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day cometh that shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

Ver. 5. "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." If all this means the day of judgment, how in the name of reason can it mean the birthday of Christ? Can a great and dreadful day be a day of glad tidings, and great joy? This last scene is a continuation of the same description, already quoted: "And who shall stand when he appeareth;" meaning Christ, who was to follow John the Baptist, who was the messenger spoken of. But Malachi says this messenger was Elijah the prophet who was to precede that great and dreadful day of the Lord. If Malachi

did not know whom he meant by the messenger, how could Mark or any of our modern commentators know any more about the matter.

Having shown that Malachi made no reference whatever to either John, or Christ, it is enough about that matter, so we will pass on to the next prophecy. No; I am too fast; for what I expected to be a prophecy concerning Christ and the Ass colt going into Jerusalem, as per Matthew, turns out to be not a prophecy but a miracle, or if not quite so much as a miracle it is, to say the least, a great feat of horsemanship, or more correctly speaking jackassmanship, for I defy all the clergy in Christendom to produce a passage anywhere within the lids of the Bible, where it says that the colt kicked Jesus Christ off. Mark says it was a "colt whereon man never sat." That is, everybody else was afraid to ride him. It is evident to my mind that Mark thought that so much religion put on his back at one time, inspired him into good manners, and this is the reason that it was a miracle. Historians tell us that Alexander the Great, when a boy, rode a fractious horse whereon man had never sat, but they do not pretend that it was any miracle. I believe that I have been the first person to mount the backs of some colts, and "sat whereon man never sat," but I little thought at the time that I was performing a miracle. Now, reader, having stripped this religious account of its sanctimonious husks which covered it, you now see it in all of its ridiculous folly. It has been said that there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, but now I am prepared to say there is but one step from the religious to the ridiculous. Religion is a mask. The mask is a white cravat, white hat covered with long hair—which like old wine improves by age—rounded coat tails, hollow eyes, sunken cheeks, deep sighs and long groans, sprinkled with frequent religious ejaculations, long prayers, loud preaching, interlarded with considerable rapping, frothing and kicking, storming against the blue lights of reason, and "Tom Paine." Such is the mask of religion; and the story of Jesus Christ and the jackass having such a formidable shield as this, no wonder that it is a serious subject for contemplation; yes, even a miracle; but when I tear off the mask of religion so that you can look right into it, you laugh at it. If you are a pious reader, you will commence patching the mask over it again with sighs and groans, interlarded with "blasphemy," "infidel," "reason I hate you," "faith I love more than ever." It is like a pistol shot into a hornet's nest, and like the hornets you are now so mad that you pounce on to everything that comes in your way. Well, it makes but little difference to me, you are joined to your idols and your case is as hopeless as the Presbyterian deacon with whom I was once talking on the subject of religion. I thought before I got through with him, that if he had no more sense on other subjects than he had on that of religion, that he would be sent to the Insane Asylum and chained down in his cell. He said he wanted nothing to do with reason in religious matters; that faith was enough for him. I asked him this question: "If the Bible said that Jonah swallowed the whale, would you believe it?" He said he would believe it readily. He would believe all that might be in the Bible. If the Bible said the moon was made of

green cheese he would believe it. Of course I did not convert him. But how in the name of humanity are we going to reach such cases? If they will neither reason themselves nor hear to reason I know no other way to convert them. The only way I know to do in such cases, is to treat them as Owen Lovejoy said he did the Dred Scott decision. He said it was the law of the land just as much as any other law, therefore he would submit to it, but he could not see any great wrong in his praying that old Judge Taney's earthly crown might be exchanged for a heavenly crown, and when the prayer was answered, Uncle Abe would put a better man in his place, then we would have that decision reversed. The application of this anecdote is that more reasonable beings will take the place of these old fogies when they inherit their heavenly crown which has been so long awaiting them, and this is the way to bring about the change.

Mark says Christ was crucified between two thieves, that the scriptures might be fulfilled, which saith, and "he was numbered with the transgressors." If this language applies to something which was to happen seven hundred years after Isaiah wrote it, why should he speak of it as something that had already happened? It is in the past tense. This probably had reference to Jeremiah, but it is such a common occurrence for the innocent to be numbered with the guilty that I should never think of making any note of it. This is as much notice as this so-called prophecy deserves, so I pass on.

This is all Mark has to say about prophecies unless the 17th and 18th verses of the last chapter can be construed into prophecies. This is language spoken by Christ eighteen hundred years ago, and the reader can now judge for himself whether these things have come true or not: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned. 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; and they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." I imagine the reader is ready to exclaim at once that this is a good test to know whether people are Christians or not. I say you are right sir; there could not be a better test. I believe I anticipate an inquiry of the reader's; and while I have this question under consideration it will be as well for me to dispose of it here as anywhere else. "Here is an unequivocal declaration of Christ himself, but how do believers get round it?" This is the way it is done. They say it is language addressed to the Apostles and applies to them only. But if this is true the 16th verse applies to the Apostles only, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved: but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Well if this meant nobody but the Apostles in those days, why is it preached now-a-days? But it suits the purpose of the clergy better to say that the language applies to every one. Well be it so; and I will leave it to any grammarian in America to say whether the persons spoken of in the two following verses who are to work

miracles, do not mean the same persons referred to in verse 16. Christ in speaking to the Apostles said "Go *ye*, &c.," and if he meant the Apostles in verse 17, why did he not say, "*Ye* shall speak with new tongues; *ye* shall take up serpents; and if *ye* drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt *you*; *ye* shall lay hands on the sick, &c." The language is in the third person and does *not* mean the Apostles, but the persons whom the Apostles converted. If this is not the true meaning of what Christ says, I want nothing more to do with the English language, for it is unfit to convey the sense or meaning of anything. But if the English language is worth anything, I ask every believer to stick a meg right here. I do not ask them to go into a drug store and commence drinking down poison; I do not ask them to fondle with rattlesnakes; this would be asking too much, for I well know that I am as careful about giving a Christian lady or gentleman an overdose of arsenic or prussic acid as I am any other person, but I do ask you to pause and reflect a little on your condition. Practically you are no more of a Christian than I am. Your belief, and your baptism, renders you no more safe from the bite of a rattlesnake, or the effects of a deadly poison, than my unbelief, or want of baptism does me. You can cast out devils about as well as I can; I can heal the sick by the laying on of hands about as well as you can; but I never try to cure the sick by any such a method, and if I did, you believers would call me a fool for doing so. The Mormons and Spiritualists attempt to put these things into practice, but the believing Christians are the first ones to cry "Humbug," thereby ridiculing their own practical belief, and the declarations of Christ. Is this not so? You will feel better for having owned to your convictions. "An open confession is good for the soul." But you will see your Preacher first and see if he cannot throw some new light upon this question. That is well enough, but before you see the person that thinks for you, ask yourself this question: "Why did the Almighty undertake to write a book, if he could not make himself as well understood to me as to him? I understand God's works in nature just as plainly as he does; I don't ask him when the sun shines or when it rains; I don't ask him whether I feel pain or not; then why should he arrogate to himself the explanation of any particular part of God's works?"

Next in order of prophecies is Luke, but he adds so little to what has been given by Matthew, that we pass him over, only observing that he speaks of Christ riding the colt. He produces no prophecy about this affair, but like Mark, he considers Christ a pretty good rider, for he tells us the colt had never been backed by any one until Christ mounted him.

We come next in order to John, and like Luke, he can be dispatched with a very brief notice and for the same reason. John speaks about the young ass, and like Matthew refers to the same prophecy, but he does not say that Christ sent any one for him or that he was tied up to a fence, but he says Christ found him.

It may be thought that I am giving this affair of Christ and the young ass more attention than the subject deserves, but since all scripture is profitable, I suppose we can give no part of it too much attention, and to

understand this affair thoroughly is just as much essential to salvation as any other portion of scripture or else all the Evangelists would not have given the matter such a particular notice. When they all speak of a thing it must be a thing of some importance, and therefore the more necessary that we get a correct idea of it. If we should gain the impression that some one else rode the young ass before Christ did, and if such was not the case, it would jeopardise our chances for salvation.

John makes Christ to say, chapter fifth, verse forty-sixth, "For had ye believed Moses ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me." Well if Moses wrote of Christ it must be that we can find it as we have his writings before us; but if we cannot find it I shall not believe it. I will investigate this thing by tracing out the references. The first reference is Gen. chap iii, ver 15. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." I do not see how this can be contorted into a prophecy of any one. The next reference is Deut. xviii, 15, 18. "The Lord thy God, will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. I will raise up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee and I will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I command him." In this verse first quoted we have the words of Moses addressed to his people—the Israelites over whom he had command; and the occasion of the speech was that Moses was getting old and coming near the close of his reign. His successor was to be selected, and this person was Joshua. He was raised up from among those people to whom Moses was talking, and he was like unto himself, and he was the person or prophet whom Moses' people were to hearken to in all things. Without springing the question whether Christ was like Moses or not, I merely inquire how could a person reign over the people whom Moses was addressing, that was not born until 1400 years had passed away? How could we Americans hear a person that is to reign over us 1400 years hence? It is altogether more probable that Moses and his people would be more concerned about who should be their next ruler after Moses, than they would be about things to happen 1400 years afterwards. If Moses does not mean Joshua when he is speaking in reference to his successor, the people never knew who was to next reign over them until Joshua's reign had actually commenced, for they never thought enough about the matter to inquire into it, but their minds were continually engrossed about things that were to happen several hundred years afterwards.

I shall still contend—John and the clergy to the contrary notwithstanding—that the Jews took some little interest in their own affairs; and as direct reference is made to this same successor of Moses, or Christ if you will have it so, in the twenty-seventh chapter of Numbers, I quote it: "And the Lord said unto Moses, get thee up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel—and when thou hast seen it, thou also shall be gathered unto thy people as Aaron thy brother is gathered. And Moses spake unto the Lord, saying,

Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord may not be as sheep that have no shepherd. And the Lord said unto Moses, take thee *Joshua*, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him, and set him before Eleazer, the priest, and before all the congregation, and give him a charge in their sight; and thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, then all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And Moses did as the Lord commanded, and he took Joshua (not Christ) and set him before Eleazer the priest, and before all the congregation; and he laid hands upon him, and gave him charge as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses."

If language is good for anything this surely settles the question about whom Moses wrote of; it was Joshua and not Christ. Now can people look through such transparent impositions and still believe that Moses wrote of Christ? They have been imposed upon long enough, it is time they were arising in the majesty of their might, and saying to the clergy, "We will read and think for ourselves."

We have now gone through all the prophecies of the evangelists but one, and this one may be regarded as the cap sheaf of the whole concern. Everybody is familiar with it: "And when they came to Jesus and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs—for these things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, a bone of him shall not be broken." What was the use of breaking his bones when he was dead? The passage referred to is in the twelfth chapter of Exodus and is an old Jewish ceremony. "In one house shall it be eaten, thou shalt not carry forth aught of the flesh abroad out of the house, neither shall ye break a bone thereof. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it." This, is a roast lamb gotten up in regular barbacue style, and not Christ. There is about as much similarity existing between the two passages as there is between an oyster and a horse, and that is, neither one can climb a tree. Had Christ fell among cannibals and been roasted and eaten up, this passage could with a little better grace have been referred to as a prophecy. Then every evangelist would have said this was done that the prophecies might be fulfilled which says "In one house shall it be eaten." This shows what frail conceptions Christians have of the omnipotence, wisdom and power of God; that is, to believe that he would prophecy about such trivial affairs. It may be a little foreign to the subject, but while I am on the book of John I am tempted to give his last words a passing notice. "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself, could not contain the books that should be written." I suppose he means this would be the case if the letters were made about as big as the state of Missouri.

This kind of a historian must be so prepossessed in favor of his hero, that he cannot be considered capable of writing an impartial account of anything; but it is to be supposed that the items which he condensed into

so few words from such a voluminous book, must be very important ones; that he would not exclude important matters for trivial things. The reader is now enabled to clearly perceive that I have not attached too much importance to the ass colt, for out of more than a world full of books as he "supposes," he selects this account of the jackass as being of more importance than anything else. He intends that this affair should not be overlooked. John has abridged the life of Christ most wonderfully, for I can stick his writings away into my vest pocket and not feel that they were there. If any historian of the present age were to append such a paragraph as this to his book, no one would believe what he had written, for such a big lie at the conclusion would condemn all the rest.

We have gone through with all the so-called prophecies of Jesus Christ, and it is a remarkable fact that every one of them are circumstances, common to the lot of men, and any one of them could happen to any other man as well as Christ and they are circumstances so trivial in their character as to be unfit subjects for the prophecy of a God who speaks worlds into existence. It is equally a remarkable fact that there are no prophecies about those incidents of Christ which were not common to the lot of men. There is no prophecy about Christ rising from the dead and his ascent into heaven. These are things of more importance than parting garments, breaking bones, and riding unbroken jackasses, and are better qualified subjects for prophecies. What do you think now, reader, about the divinity of Christ being based on the prophecies of the Old Testament? All religions have their prophecies, but when we compare the prophecies of Christ with those of the other religions, they dwindle into insignificance. By way of illustrating that such is the fact, I propose giving a few examples and show that such prophecies are better substantiated than the Christian prophecies; but I know at the same time that the Christians will pay no attention to it. They cannot understand how a young girl sitting on a three legged stool in a cave can read future events; but they can understand perfectly well how a winged spirit can steal into a man's chamber at the dead hour of night, when he is sleeping, and tell him of things to happen in a thousand years. It does seem to me that there is no other animal so inconsistent as man.

When Cambyses, king of Persia was in Egypt he consulted the oracle of Buto, which was famous in that country; he was told that he should die at Ecbatana, but understanding this to mean Ecbatana in Media, he resolved to preserve his life by never going thither, but what he thought to avoid in Media, he found in Syria. In Ecbatana in Syria he lay sick and died "that the prophecy of the oracle might be fulfilled."

Here is another instance of the superhuman knowledge of the oracles: Cræsus, king of Lydia, being a very religious man and anxious to put a stop to the growing power of the Persians, had recourse to the oracles before commencing the enterprise. But that he might not act blindly, and in order to be able to form a certain judgment on the answers he should receive, he was willing to assure himself beforehand of the truth of the oracles. For which purpose he sent messengers to all the most celebrated oracles, both of Greece, and Africa, with orders to in-

quire, every one at his respective oracle, what Cræsus was doing on such a day, and such an hour, before agreed on. His orders were punctually observed, and of all the oracles none gave a true answer but that of Delphi. The answer was in substance as follows: "I know the number of grains of sand on the seashore, and the measure of the ocean's vast extent. I can hear the dumb and him that has not yet learned to speak. A strong smell of a tortoise boiled in brass, together with sheep's flesh, has reached my nostrils; brass beneath, brass above." And indeed the king, thinking to invent something that could not possibly be guessed at, had employed himself on the day and hour set down, in boiling a tortoise and a lamb in a brass pot, which had a brass cover. This assured Cræsus of the veracity of the God; but the Christian has too little faith to pay any attention to it. Cræsus then believed in the God so firmly that he offered 3000 victims to his honor. This is either true or false, and is just as much a thing of history as the existence of kings Cræsus or Cyrus. St. Austin admits it, but ascribes the answer to the devil.

The emperor Trajan made a like proof upon this oracle, at Heliopolas, by sending him a letter sealed up, to which he demanded an answer. The oracle made no other return, than to command a blank paper, well folded and sealed, to be delivered to him. Trajan upon the receipt of it was struck with amazement to see an answer so correspondent with his own letter, in which he knew he had written nothing. Since this oracle of Delphi cuts such an important figure in Grecian religion—on account of its sacredness—and in Grecian history on account of its pretended infallibility, and at the same time being so similar in character to modern spiritual manifestations, as well as Christian dreaming and Bible prophecies, I deem it not amiss to give the reader a brief history of this oracle and its workings, then he can indulge his own reflections.

Diodorus says there was a cavity upon Parnassus, from whence an exhalation arose, which made the goats dance and skip about, and intoxicated the brain. A shepherd having approached it out of a desire to know the cause of so extraordinary an effect, was immediately seized with violent agitations of body, and pronounced words, which without doubt he did not understand himself; however, they foretold futurity. Others made the same experiment, and soon it was rumored through the neighboring countries. The cave was no longer approached without reverence. The exhalation was concluded to have something divine in it. A priestess was appointed for the reception of its effects, and a tripod placed upon the vent, called by the Latins "Cortina," perhaps from the skin that covered it. This priestess or young girl was called Pythia. From thence she gave her oracles. The city of Delphos rose insensibly round about the cave, where a temple was erected, which at length became very magnificent. The reputation of this oracle exceeded all others.

At first a single Pythia sufficed to answer those who came to consult the oracle, not yet amounting to any great number; but in process of time when it grew into universal repute, a second was appointed to mount the tripod alternately with the first, and a third chosen to succeed in case of death or disease. There were other assistants besides those to attend

the Pythia in the sanctuary, of whom the most considerable were prophets; it was their business to take care of the sacrifices and to make inspection into them. To these the demands of the inquirers were delivered either by word of mouth or by writing, and they returned the answers. (A similar business of the clergy of our time.)

The Pythia could not prophecy till she was intoxicated by the exhalation from the sanctuary. This miraculous vapor had not the effect at all times and upon all occasions. The God was not always in the inspiring humor. At first he imparted himself only once a year, but at length he was prevailed upon to visit the Pythia every month. All days were not proper and upon some it was not permitted to consult the oracle. These unfortunate days occasioned an oracle being given to Alexander the Great, worthy of remark. He was at Delphos to consult the God at a time when it was pretended she forbid any questions being asked. Alexander took hold of her arm to force her into the temple (or church) when she cried out, "My son, you are invincible." This was oracle enough for him and his subsequent career fully confirmed its correctness. The Pythia, before she ascended the tripod was a long time prepared for it by sacrifices, purifications, and many other ceremonies. The God denoted his approach by moving a laurel that stood before the gates of the temple, which shook also to its very foundations. As soon as the divine vapor, like a penetrating fire had diffused itself through the entrails of the priestess, her hair stood upright on her head, her looks grew wild and furious, she foamed at the mouth, a sudden and violent trembling seized her whole body with all the symptoms of distraction and frenzy. (This beats our modern camp meetings.) She uttered at intervals some words almost inarticulate, which the prophets (clergy) carefully collected. After she had been a certain time on the tripod she was reconducted to her cell, where she generally continued many days to recover from her fatigue, and sometimes death terminated the scene. Plutarch informs us that God inflamed the Pythia's imagination and kindled in her soul that living light which unveiled all futurity to her. The words she uttered in the heat of her imagination, having neither method or connection, and coming only by starts, from the bottom of the stomach or belly, were collected with care by the prophets (clergy) who gave them afterwards to the poets to be turned into verse.

Such was the prevailing religion of a country which was the mistress of the world. A girl sitting on a stool at the mouth of a cave had this country and many others at her feet for two thousand years. Yet at this time and under the influence of such a religion lived, the "seven wise men of Greece," and Homer, Xenophen, Demosthenes, Aristotle, Aristides, Sophocles, Herodotus, Diodorus, Euclid, Archimides, Alexander the Great, Epaminondas, &c. But these men cannot owe their greatness to the influence of such a religion any more than Bonaparte, or Voltaire, or Dickens, or Cromwell, or Washington, or Jefferson, or Franklin, or Lincoln owe their greatness to the influence of the Christian religion. The religious Jeff. Davis with his Bible on the table and praying to God in his cell at Fortress Monroe, is not a whit better than the Grecian girl

on a stool telling the messenger of Cræsus, what he was doing at that precise hour. The religion of the Greeks as well as all other countries has always been a mighty weight on the people, weighing them down like the shell on the back of the tortoise, and whatever has been done, has been accomplished in spite of this mighty load, and for writing this book I expect to come in for my share of the burden. Wendell Phillips, by almost superhuman exertions on his part, has thrown off a part of this burden, and now his gait is much more steady and his breathing more natural. We will show up the divinity of the oracle by the following examples.

Xerxes had sent off a considerable detachment of his army to plunder the temple of Delphi, in which he knew there were immense treasures, being resolved to treat Apollo with no more favor than the other gods, whose temples he had pillaged. If we may believe Herodotus, who was cotemporary with Xerxes and Diodorus Siculus, as soon as ever this detachment advanced near the temple of Minerva, surnamed the "Provident," the atmosphere grew dark on a sudden, and a violent tempest arose, accompanied with impetuous winds, thunder and lightning; and two huge rocks having severed themselves from the mountain, fell upon the Persian troops and crushed the greater part of them.

The counterpart of this account is found in Matthew. "Now from the sixth hour until the ninth there was darkness over all the land—and behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from bottom to top; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent." The account of the profanation of the oracle is better substantiated than the circumstances attending the crucifixion of Christ, as per Matthew; yet I presume Christians will not believe it. When I tell them I doubt Matthew's story, they ask me how do I know there was such a man as Julius Cæsar? Well I propose putting this very same question to them, if they cannot believe the account of the oracle as given by those historians. I consider such a question as a very silly one, in the first place; but as they choose to attach some importance to it, I am willing that they derive all the comfort from it, that it is capable of imparting. I reject both accounts, however, for the simple and very obvious reason, that such circumstances are contrary to the immutable laws of nature. The Christian may complain about my lack of faith, but I can assure him that on some subjects I have more faith than he has, and here is a case in point. I have too much faith in the unvaried laws of nature to believe that they would be abrogated or waived to humor the whims of anybody. About 200 years after the sacrilege of the temple of Delphi by Xerxes, historians tell us a similar event took place attended by similar circumstances. Brenus the Gaul, coveting the riches of the temple, and not having the fear of the Lord before his eyes, presumed to go in and help himself. He said his men had more use for such things than the god, and that they would put them to a better purpose. I suppose all Christians of to-day think that Brenus spoke the truth, but they are so inconsistent they will not throw open the doors of the church to a school meeting. If a modern Brenus were to commence carrying off crucifixes, crosses, gowns, pulpits, &c.,

there is no doubt but they would demur to such proceedings. When Brenus approached the temple the skies were blackened with a dreadful tempest, and great numbers of his men were destroyed by hail and lightning. To which the historians add that this storm was attended by an earthquake that rent the mountains, and threw down vast fragments of rocks, which crushed the Gauls by hundreds at a time; and that the remaining troops were seized with such a panic the ensuing night, as caused them to mistake their own men for enemies, in consequence of which, they destroyed one another in such a manner, that before the day grew light enough for them to distinguish each other, above half the army perished by that means.

It is very probable that Matthew's account of the miraculous circumstances, consequent on the death of Christ, was borrowed from this affair, because of the likeness to it. He gets Christ into the world in a miraculous manner and of course must get him out the same way. This account of the historian's is just as miraculous as the account of Matthew's, yet the clergy never say anything about it. It seems by these accounts that in those days God was capable of taking care of his own property; he was his own lightning rod and insurance company.

It is as well authenticated as any ancient history that the wife of Julius Cæsar had a dream wherein she was forewarned of the death of her husband, in the manner, place and time, precisely as it happened. She told him in the morning, that he was to be stabbed at twelve o'clock in the Senate Chamber, and urged him to not go there. "It is now half-past eleven," replied he, "and when I get there the time of danger must be over." Cæsar went there and was killed at twelve o'clock precisely.

The manner of Cicero's death had been foretold him. It was predicted to Ulysses, that he should be killed by his own son, and although he took every precaution to avoid such a fate it finally overtook him.

In these accounts of the fore-knowledge of events I have given the reader something tangible and definite; things expected before the occurrences; as a sign of rain would be before the shower. But the Bible prophecies are so obscure, that instead of the sign preceding the thing signified, it is made to succeed it. The minds of some Christians are so fertile in imagination that they trump up prophecies for most all occurrences of any importance, but the prophecies are never found until after the events. Some worthy Christians find prophecies for this present rebellion, but such prophecies were never found by any one before the rebellion took place. Bonaparte had been prophecied in the same way; so had Jesus Christ. But what do such prophecies amount to, when the sign comes after the occurrence. No one ever knew anything about Christ or Bonaparte until they came into the world. I open my Bible at the 53d chapter of Isaiah, and here is the language I find at the head: "The prophet complaineth of the want of faith. The sufferings of Christ, &c." This language formed no part of the chapter at the time it was written, which is said to have been 700 years before the time of Christ. Isaiah did not put it there, nor did the Jews, the people who had the Book under their particular charge: and not only this, they say

it has no business there, and Isaiah being a Jew, no doubt would say the same thing, if he were alive now. Then the question arises who put it there, and by what authority? The Christians know as well as I do that all these expressions about Christ, at the heads of chapters, in the Old Testament, have been lugged in there by somebody since the time of the advent of Christ; and if such language had no business there before the time of Christ it has no business there now. It would not surprise me to see in a few years this 53d chapter of Isaiah dubbed at the head with the name of Abraham Lincoln, for it applies with a great deal more force to him, than it does to Jesus Christ. I hope every penitent Copperhead will read it, for he will see not only a true picture of his own case, but also the life and character of the assassinated President, written out twenty-five hundred years ago! I attach no more importance, however, to the matter than that of mere curiosity. I don't suppose that Isaiah had any reference to Mr. Lincoln, but that, his description as applying to him is purely accidental. But when it is made to apply to Christ, it can be neither accidental nor intentional, as has already been shown. It may be put down as a fixed fact that the only knowledge we can have of the future is derived from the experience of the past, and this is the key to the apparent fulfillment of Bible prophecies in regard to the destruction of cities and the downfall of nations. But if such is not the case, and if in the course of time and by the force of circumstances Paris and London should become as Palmyra and Babec of to-day, then the spirit of prophecy should be accorded to Volney, the French traveler, for such are his predictions. But to the credit of the traveler and to the discredit of prophecy I must say that these predictions are only conclusions drawn from the history of the past. His style is so excellent, and the manner so captivating, and the conclusions so natural, that I will give the reader his own words. They are his reflections when traveling through those countries of the old world now in waste, and looking upon her ancient cities now in ruins.

"Every day," says he, "I visited some of the monuments which covered the plain; and one evening absorbed in reflection, I had advanced to the valley of sepulchres. I ascended the hights which surround it, and whence the eye commands the whole group of ruins, and the immensity of the desert. The sun had just sunk below the horizon; a red border of light still marked his track behind the distant mountains of Syria; the full moon was rising in the east on a blue ground over the plains of the Euphrates; the sky was clear, the air calm and serene; the dying lamp of day still softened the approaching horrors of darkness; the refreshing breeze of night attempered the sultry emanations of heated earth; the herdsmen had led the camels to their stalls; the eye perceived no motion in the dusky uniform plain; profound silence rested on the desert; the howlings of the jackal and the solemn notes of the bird of night, were heard at distant intervals. Darkness now increased, and already through the dusk, I could distinguish nothing but the pale fantasies of the walls and columns. The solitude of the place, and the tranquillity of the hour; the majesty of the scene, impressed on my mind a

religious pensiveness. The aspect of a great city deserted, the memory of times past, compared with its present state, all elevated my mind to high contemplations. I sat on the shaft of a column; and there my elbow reposing on my knee, and head reclining on my hand, my eyes fixed, sometimes on the desert, sometimes on the ruins, I fell into a profound reverie.

“Here, said I, here once flourished an opulent city; here was the seat of a powerful empire. Yes! these places now so desert, were once animated by a living multitude—a busy crowd circulated in these streets now so solitary. Within these walls, where a mournful silence reigns, the noise of arts and shouts of joy and festivity incessantly resounded; these piles of marble were regular palaces; these prostrate pillars adorned the majesty of temples; these ruined galleries surrounded public places. Here a numerous people assembled for the sacred duties of religion, or the anxious cares of their subsistence; here industry, parent of enjoyments, collected the riches of all climates, and the purple of Tyre was exchanged for the precious thread of Serica; the soft tissues of Cashmere for the sumptuous tapestry of Lydia; the amber of the Baltic for the pearls and perfumes of Arabia; the gold of Ophir for the tin of Thule.

“And now a mournful skeleton is all that subsists of this powerful city; naught remains of its dominions but a doubtful and empty remembrance! To the tumultuous throng which crowded under these porticoes, has succeeded the solitude of death. The silence of the tomb is substituted for the bustle of public places. The opulence of a commercial city is changed into hideous poverty. The palaces of kings are become a den of wild beasts; flocks fold on the area of the temple and unclean reptiles inhabit the sanctuary of the gods! Ah! how has so much glory been eclipsed? How have so many labors been annihilated?

“Thus perish the works of men, and thus do empires and nations disappear! And the history of former times revived in my mind, I recollected those distant ages when many illustrious nations inhabited these countries. I figured to myself the Assyrian on the banks of the Tigris, the Chaldean on those of the Euphrates, the Persian reigning from the Indus to the Mediterranean; I enumerated the kingdoms of Damascus and Idumea, of Jerusalem and Samaria, the warlike states of the Philistines, and the commercial republics of Phœnicia. This Syria, said I, now so depopulated, then contained a hundred flourishing cities, and abounded with towns, villages and hamlets. Everywhere were seen cultivated fields, frequented roads and crowded habitations. Ah! what are become of those ages of abundance and of life? How have so many brilliant creations of human industry vanished? Where are the ramparts of Ninevah, those walls of Babylon, those palaces of Persepolis, those temples of Balbec and of Jerusalem? Where are those fleets of Tyre, those dock-yards of Arad, those workshops of Lydia, and the multitude of sailors, of pilots, of merchants and of soldiers? Where those husbandmen, those harvests, those flocks, and all the creation of living beings in which the face of the earth rejoiced? Alas! I have passed over this des-

olate land! I have visited the palaces, once the theater of so much splendor, and I beheld nothing but solitude and desolation. I sought the ancient inhabitants and their works, and could find only a faint trace, like that of the foot of a traveler over the sand. The temples are fallen, the palaces overthrown, the ports filled up, the cities destroyed, and the earth stripped of its inhabitants, seems a dreary burying place. Great God! whence proceed such fatal revolutions? What causes have so altered the fortunes of these countries? Why are so many cities destroyed? Why has not this ancient population been reproduced and perpetuated?

“Thus absorbed in contemplation, a crowd of new reflections continually poured into my mind. Everything, continued I, confounds my reason, and fills my heart with trouble and uncertainty. When these countries enjoyed what constitutes the glory and happiness of man, they were inhabited by an infidel people; it was the Phœnician, that homicide sacrificer to Moloch, who gathered into his stores the riches of all climates; it was the Chaldean, prostrate before a serpent, who subjugated opulent cities, and despoiled the palaces of kings, and the temples of the gods; it was the Persian, adorer of fire, who received the tribute of a hundred nations; it was the inhabitant of this very city, worshipper of the sun and stars, who erected so many monuments of prosperity and luxury; Numerous flocks, fertile fields and abundant harvests, whatsoever should be the reward of piety, was in the hands of these idolaters; and now when a people of saints and believers occupy these fields, all is become sterility and solitude. The earth under these holy hands produces only thorns and briars. Man sows in anguish and reaps only vexation and tears; war, famine, pestilence, assail him in turn. Yet are not these the children of the prophets?—the Christian, Jew, Mussulman—are they not the elect children of God, loaded with favors and miracles? Why then do these privileged races no longer enjoy the same advantages? Why are these fields sanctified by the blood of martyrs, deprived of their ancient benefits? Why have those blessings been banished hence, and transferred for so many ages to other countries and different climes? At these words revolving in my mind the course of vicissitudes which have transmitted the sceptre of the world successively to people so different in religion, and manners, from those of ancient Asia, to the most recent of Europe, this name of a natal land revived in me the sentiment of my country; and turning my eyes towards her, I began to reflect on the situation in which I left her. (In 1782, at the close of the American war.

“I called to mind her fields so richly cultivated, her roads so sumptuously constructed, her cities inhabited by a countless people, her fleets spread over every sea, her ports filled with the produce of either India; and comparing with the activity of her commerce, the extent of her navigation, the magnificence of her monuments, the arts and industry of her inhabitants, what Egypt and Syria had once possessed, I was gratified to find in modern Europe the departed splendor of Asia; but the charm of my revery was soon dissolved by a last term of comparison. Reflecting that such had once been the activity of places I was then contemplating

—Who knows, says I, that such may one day be the abandonment of our countries? Who knows if, on the banks of the Seine the Thames or the Zuyder-zee, where now in the tumult of so many enjoyments, the heart and the eye suffice not for the multitude of sensations—who knows if some traveler, like myself, shall not one day sit on their silent ruins, and weep in solitude over the ashes of their inhabitants and the memory of their greatness?

“At these words my eyes filled with tears; and covering my head with the fold of my garment, I sunk into gloomy meditation on human affairs. Ah! hapless man, said I in my grief, a blind fatality sports with thy destiny.”

Without pretending to be a prophet or the son of a prophet, I predict that when the sceptre of reason supplants the cross and the crescent, those oriental countries will be themselves again. When, instead of the Christians kissing the great toe of the Christian pope of Rome, the infidel boots his holiness out of the “eternal city” into the Tiber, then, and not till then will those lights which used to grace the “seven hills” be again relumed in all their pristine splendor. Let the spirit of liberty be breathed upon the crumbling walls of Athens, and that city will be awakened from her sleep of two thousand years. Rekindle the fires of reason and the love of liberty along the shores of the Mediterranean, then will the shining houses, and the scenes of busy life, in the cities of Alexandria and Carthage, greet the eye of the homeward bound merchantman; the sound of the anvil and the cadence of the spindle will fall upon his ear. Touch with the magic wand of reason the moss covered stones and prostrate columns of Palmyra, and she is Palmyra again. This is no colored painting, nor sketch from the effervescence of a heated imagination. Carthage has the same natural advantages as in the days of Hannibal. Rome has the same climate, soil, and position to-day, as when her Senate dictated terms to all nations of the world. The peninsula of Greece has to-day the same facilities to make Solons and Homers that she had two thousand years ago, except for her religion and government.

Before dismissing the subject under consideration, and as being immediately connected with it, I will now proceed to investigate the prophecies concerning

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND THE END OF THE WORLD.

I intend to prove from scripture that the world came to an end just 1795 years ago, or else Jerusalem was not destroyed as predicted. This is a dilemma into which the believing Christian is thrown, but I give him the privilege of taking either horn he pleases. In the consideration of this question I will give the Christian a “Thus saith the Lord” for every statement I make, and if he has any confidence in such testimony, I will be able to convince him of the truth of my position beyond the shadow of a doubt; and if there are any invincible positions in this work, I intend that this shall be one of them.

Since the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew has direct reference to the

subject in question, I hope the reader will bear with me if I quote the greater portion of it. This chapter is the language of Christ and the whole burden of the discourse is to show that his coming, and the end of the world, was to be in his own generation, and this was the impression of Paul, and all the apostles: Verse 1. "And Jesus went out and departed from the temple; and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said see ye not all these things; verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately. Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world." The reader will perceive, as we continue, that the sign of his coming, and the end of the world, were to immediately follow the destruction of the temple. "And Jesus answered and said unto them, take heed that no man deceive you; for many shall come in my name, saying that I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, see that ye be not troubled, for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet; for nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers of places."

I will here remark that such things, though not unusual in the course of events, were to take place before the destruction of the temple, or Jerusalem, as believers are pleased to have it. Was such the case? The reader will still observe that Christ is not yet going beyond the lifetime of those disciples to whom he is addressing.

Christ continues: "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." This was true when these words were spoken, but now the boot is on the other leg, and it can have no reference to this age, or any age coming after this, if there is any truth in the story of the stone hewn out of the mountain.

Christ continues: "And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many, but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." Well, to know when the end of the world was, we are to learn when the gospel was preached in all the world to every creature. Is not this a fair test? Every one who regards truth and fairness will say, yes.

Colossians, chap. i, ver. 23. "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which WAS PREACHED to every creature under heaven," &c. This a "thus sayeth the Lord," by the mouth of Paul to the Colossians. Again, in the same chapter, Paul tells the same people that the gospel which came unto them "is in all the world." Paul thought he had been over all the world and had preached the gospel to every creature. I do not know whether the Christians believe this statement of Paul's or not, but if they cannot believe him in one place, how can they in another? Well, then, the gospel was preached to every

creature under heaven, but did the world cease to be? Here is another dilemma for believers. Christ prophecied falsely, Paul lied, or the world has come to an end, and we have no existence.

This language of Paul was written about thirty years after the prediction of Christ, and he must have got round pretty lively to have preached the gospel to so many in such a short time. But his impression being so strong that the destruction of the world was to be in his own time, accounts for his great zeal in the immediate conversion of the world, and it is also the clew to his numerous and long journeys to remote and distant cities. He could not afford to waste his time by settling down and preaching in a single city like our local preachers do now-a-days, when the people were so soon to be cut off in their sins if not converted. When Christ told his apostles to "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," they understood this command to be given to themselves and no one else; and they acted in accordance with that impression, for the travels of Paul after receiving this instruction from Christ clearly proves it. He preached all the way along the northern shores of the Mediterranean from Jerusalem to the city of Rome, a distance of 1500 miles. He preached this same gospel in the cities of Italy, Sicily, Macedonia, Greece, Asia Minor, Crete, Cyprus, Palestine, and Syria. And now after so much traveling and so much preaching, and a short time before his death, when he was an old man, he declares to the Colossians that this gospel was preached to every creature under heaven. There can be nothing more done; the work is finished. Paul is ready to receive his crown and await the end of all things. Is not this a true history of the case? Paul, Christ, and the rest of the apostles had no knowledge of astronomy, and but very little knowledge of geography. They supposed the earth was flat like a trencher, and that the countries bordering on the Mediterranean sea, were the whole world, and that vessels sailing on that sea would go to the uttermost ends of the earth, without going through the straits of Gibraltar. These persons having no better knowledge of the extent of the earth and its inhabitants, presumed it no great undertaking to preach the gospel to every creature, and as one discourse to the same person was considered sufficient for conversion, it might have been done according to their understanding. Their world did not take in Africa, nor America; northern nor western Europe. It comprised but a small portion of Asia and Europe. Paul knew nothing of any such people as the Hindoos, or Chinese. When Paul said the gospel was preached to every creature under heaven, there was a population in the Chinese Empire so great that if its people were laid down and joined head to feet, it would be a string long enough to lap round this earth eighteen times, like a string coiled round the top, or if they were walking single file and six feet apart, it would take them thirty years to pass a given point! This fact alone leads me to conclude that the Lord's gospel according to Saint Paul must be mistaken. The reader will please observe that there is no other agency spoken of for the spread of the gospel than preaching. Faith was to come by hearing, and not by reading, or any other means. The people cannot believe

unless they hear. Well, just imagine such a continuous stream of Chinamen pouring into hell! just because Paul knew nothing about them and neglected to preach to them!

I resume the chapter. Christ continues: "Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." Having reference to that time in which the language was written it had some meaning to it; but who cares anything about Judea now-a-days. France or England would be of more importance.

"Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of the house." Of course not, for he would have no use for it if the world was coming to an end. It would be nonsense to talk about people on housetops now-a-days. "Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." That is, he would not be in the desert or secret places, but would come like a flourish of trumpets, and nobody could be mistaken about the matter. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." We are told the tribulation spoken of means the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army, A. D., 70. Then the sun was to be darkened, and the stars fall from heaven immediately after the fall of Jerusalem. Josephus nor any other historian records any such things as taking place. I said before that Christ knew nothing about astronomy. It is now confirmed. How could the stars fall to the earth, when there is not one of them but what is a thousand times larger than the earth. This would be like the mountain going to Mahomet. The earth might fall to the stars but the stars could never fall to the earth; but if they did it would surely disarrange earthly things. If such things occurred I do not see how Josephus overlooked it. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven—and he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Here were some wonders that were right on the heels of the destruction of Jerusalem; but although Josephus witnessed the downfall of Jerusalem, he did not see any such a sign in heaven nor hear any angels' trumpets. He says nothing about the elect coming from the four winds either. "Now learn a parable of the figtree: When his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things know that it is near, even at the doors."

If heaven and earth were not to pass away, nor the coming of the Son of Man to be until more than eighteen hundred years after the tribulation, that is, the fall of Jerusalem, we learn nothing by the parable, and Christ had better left it out. The Christians are making a pretty long summer of this thing.

"*Verily I say this generation shall not pass away until these things be fulfilled.*" Well, this is just what I have been contending for. Now, Christians, do you believe it? Now don't you doubt your own existence?

Now don't you believe that heaven and earth passed away 1795 years ago? In continuation: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away," This is the Pope's bull against the comet. How positive and how wofully mistaken! I know that it is unscriptural to say that the earth has not passed away, but for all that I believe it is no less a truth. Were Christ living at this time he could say truly: "Heaven and earth have not passed away, but my words have passed away."

Christ continues: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." This was narrowing the time down to a small point; he was to be daily, yea, hourly expected—and not yearly or centurily. If you read in a New York paper that a certain steamer from Liverpool is daily, yes hourly expected into that port, you do not expect her to be thousands of years making the trip; and if Christ meant it was to be thousands of years before the earth passed away, he would have said, "No man knoweth the year or century when heaven and earth shall pass away."

Christ continues: "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." Well, how were the days of Noe? In those days nearly every living being was destroyed; but Josephus nor any other historian gives any account of such a state of affairs immediately following the tribulation of those days; which believers tell us was the destruction of Jerusalem.

Christ continues: "For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark—and knew not until the flood came and took them away; so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

Who is it that is commanded to "Watch, therefore," and to "therefore, be ye also ready?" The answer is plain and definite. It was the disciples who came unto him privately, saying, "Tell us when shall these things be." But if Christ meant that these things were not to be for hundreds or thousands of years, what nonsense it was for him to say, "Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord will come." Now, believing Christians, do you still look for the coming of Christ? If you do, you contradict his own words; and you are like the man who stood on the banks of the Mississippi, watching for all the water to pass by, in order that he might cross to the other side. The present habitation of Jerusalem; the shining of the sun; the position of the stars; your own existence, and the existence of the earth, are all living witnesses against Christ's own words. I believe this case is so plain as not to tolerate a quibble, even, unless it is possible to make black appear white, and white, black. Had you lived in the days of the apostles, Christian reader, and immediately after the destruction of the temple, you heard the blast of trumpets, and upon looking up you see Christ coming through the clouds in great glory, and the elect gathering from every direction, and the light of the sun going out, and the north star

and the constellation of the Great Bear falling towards you, and that you felt the earth slipping from under your feet, and as it receded from you to the distance of thousands of miles it looked like a huge turpentine ball set on fire; then you would have said, and said correctly, that the prophecies were being fulfilled. Would not this have been the case? So much for prophecy; now I pass on to notice its twin brother

MIRACLE.

This was another means of Christ to convince the people of his divinity, but neither he, or his Father were so presumptuous on their credulity, as to assume that they would believe such things, except they were themselves witnesses.

It appears from the Bible that when Moses was in the land of Midian keeping Jethro's flocks, that the Lord appeared to him in a burning bush, and the bush was not consumed. When Moses drew nigh unto the bush, the Lord told him it was he, and that he had come to deliver his people from the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them unto a good land, a land that flowed with milk and honey.

The Lord gave Moses the commission to go and bring his people forth unto that good land. But Moses was not such a blockhead as to presume too much on their credulity. What he had seen and heard was evidence enough for him, but he had sense enough to know that nobody would take his word for it. Yet such is the only evidence we have of the matter, and neither the Lord nor Moses expects us to believe it, as the sequel will show. To bring this matter still clearer before the mind of the reader, let us suppose that when James Buchanan was taking a walk through his wheat field in Lancaster county, the Lord appeared to him in a burning shock of wheat, and the shock was not consumed. And that a voice came out of the shock, telling the Old Functionary to head a procession of old bachelors and old maids and lead them forth unto Salt Lake City. Would any of that class of persons be such egregious fools as to believe him? He might persuade some of them to go with him, but none of them would believe for one moment that he possessed any such divine commission. My impression is that in such a case, Uncle Jemie would be actuated to do just as Moses did. Moses said: "They will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." The Lord then turned the rod of Moses into a serpent, and the serpent back into a rod again. But in case this would not be enough to convince them, he gave him another miracle. Moses put his hand into his bosom and it came out as leprous as snow. He put it in again and it became as his other flesh. These were signs the Lord gave Moses to show unto his people to make them believe. This would be pretty strong evidence, but the Lord still doubted whether they would believe or not. Hear what he says: "And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shall take of the water of the river, and pour it upon dry land, and the water which thou takest out of the river shall be-

come blood upon the dry land." God had great patience with that sceptical people, but he considered this last miracle as enough to convince them. The Lord did not expect any one to believe Moses, until he had produced one or all of these signs. Neither did Jesus Christ presume any more than this, in his instruction to the apostles to preach everywhere. They were to accompany the preaching with the signs, "For," says he, "the things which I do ye shall also do." When our modern clergy accompany their preaching with the "signs," then, and not till then, will I be better prepared to believe their preaching; for as it is, it is all hearsay, like it would have been in the case of Moses, had not the Lord given him the "signs," or in the case of the apostles, had not Christ given them the "signs." Had James Buchanan received such commissions as these he could have raised a regiment of those people, in twenty-four hours. But no other persons would believe him only those to whom he showed the signs. These are the very grounds that I claim my privilege of unbelief upon, in regard to the Bible stories about miracles. A hundred persons of truth and good character might tell me that they saw old Jemie Buchanan throw his walking stick on the ground and it became a rattlesnake, and that when he touched it by the tail it became a walking stick again, I could not believe it. Could you, reader? I should suspect that the old Fox was possessed of some trick by which he managed to pull the wool over their eyes.

Moses and Aaron went and did the "signs" in the sight of the people, and they believed; but the belief came after the "signs" were done. Suppose that when Moses told the Lord that his people would not believe him, that, instead of the Lord giving him signs to convince them, he had told Moses that a people living seven thousand miles away, and three thousand years after that time, would believe the story without the use of "signs"! would not Moses have been more astonished than when he saw the burning bush that was not consumed? To say the least of it, he must have thought that would be a remarkably credulous people. But this is all the evidence we have of the matter, no one else gives any account of it but Moses, and he is the person who writes the history of his own death and burial; a thing which no other historian has ever done but himself; not even Saint Matthew could do such a thing. This is the same person who states upon his own authority that he was the most meek of all mankind. This is the person who gives us history which dates three thousand years before his birth, and five hundred years after his death, for he speaks of the kings of Israel, and Israel had no kings till five hundred years after his own time. We not only have no "signs" that God appeared to Moses, but it even amounts to extremely doubtful authority, even as a matter of history; and so far as his veracity is concerned, it does not seem to be any better than James Buchanan's, for with all his faults I have yet to learn that he boasted of his meekness. In the face of these facts how is it possible for me to believe that God revealed himself to a person called Moses? Yet if such unbelief damns me to all eternity, (and the pious clergy say it will,) I must say it is extremely unfortunate for me that I have any regard for truth, or respect for reason.

We will trace Moses' miraculous course a little further. The Lord having full confidence in his "signs," told Moses and Aaron to show them before Pharaoh. But lo! to the surprise of the Lord and Moses, Pharaoh's magicians did the same things. The Lord now enters the contest with the magicians of Pharaoh to try to beat him, which runs along about even handed for some time, until the Lord converted the dust into lice. The magicians tried this trick but failed; so this lousy miracle proclaimed to the Lord the victory. So after all it turns out that miracles are not evidences of divinity; for when the magicians did the miracles that Moses did he regarded it as tricks of sorcerers, and he knew that when he turned his rod into a serpent before his people that he was humbugging them, for Pharaoh's men could do the same thing, and they had no credentials from the Lord. But why it should be a greater miracle to turn dust into lice than a walking stick into a serpent, I cannot tell. As no religion can exist without having miracles connected with it, of course it was necessary to get them in some place. If they cannot be proven, still it is all important to the cause of religion to have miracles. If they can be of no possible benefit to anybody or to any thing, still there must be miracles. A miracle, in a religious sense, means the abrogation of the laws of nature; such as turning walking sticks into snakes; the raising of the dead from their graves, by coming to life again; the blowing out the light of the sun; men swallowing whales; walls falling down at the sound of a ram's horn, &c. To believe such stories is a species of atheism; it implies a want of confidence in God, and the unchangeable nature of his immutable laws. It is as much as to say the machinery of nature has no system or order, and runs or stops independent of any government. It may do one thing to-day and by chance may do something else to-morrow; if we hear a rap on our door it is as likely to be a friend coming to see us who died ten years ago, as the person with whom we were conversing last night.

The farmer may sow wheat in April to see a crop of gourds in August. You may complete your palace to-day, and to-morrow a few blasts from a ram's horn may lay it in ruins. By such a doctrine there is no fixedness of purpose about anything, but all is left to blind chance. I believe firmly in the unchangeable principle of nature's laws; but the religionist does not believe this if he believes in miracles, therefore he is guilty of the sin of unbelief. I believe as much as he disbelieves, and he disbelieves as much as I believe. I believe as much as he does and he disbelieves as much as I do. This may be illustrated by a pair of scales; one end goes up in proportion as the other goes down, and *vice versa*. If he believes that God was so cruel as to command the Israelites to dash out the brains of suckling babes against stone walls, I do not believe it; but this unbelief offsets his belief by my believing that God is too good to command any such cruelty. And in every case his belief in the one, is balanced by my belief in something else. When I hear of a miracle and do not believe it, where is my belief? It is this: I believe not only that the laws of nature cannot be waived, but I believe there is a lie on the face of it, or else some one has been practising deceit. This is the

much smaller horn of the dilemma for me to take hold of than the other. Anybody can tell a lie and a great many can deceive. There is no miracle about telling a lie, and therefore it is easier for me to believe that one man has told a lie than to believe that another has worked a miracle. I have now given the subject of miracles all the attention it required and perhaps more than it deserved, but my desire to leave nothing of this abominable delusion, is my apology for the time given it.

I will now pass on to notice another member of this same family, which is as necessary a prop to religion as either prophecy, or miracle, and no religion of any kind can live without it. Its name is

REVELATION.

With a view to a correct understanding of the subject, we will inquire what revelation means when applied to religion. Revelation in this sense means "something communicated immediately from God to man." I suppose no religionist will have any trouble in receiving this kind of a definition. Well, reader have you ever had any revelation from God? Have you ever had any immediate communication with him face to face? Your answer is most certainly, no. Well then, have you had any revelation? Your answer must again be, no. But you say Moses had a revelation. Well without disputing this point with you, for the present purpose I will admit that Moses had a revelation from God; but is that any revelation to you? It was Moses who had the revelation and not you. And when Moses tells his revelation to other persons it ceases to be revelation to those persons, and is nothing but hearsay. Although it may have been a revelation to Moses. For this reason, there is not a single passage in scripture that is revelation to you or any one else of our day. Now you can understand, reader, how revelation has ceased to be revelation, and that there is no such thing as revelation. Although this idea is not original with myself, it does not lessen its weight as an argument, but since it has been given out to the world years ago, we are now the better enabled to understand its force. I can say to the reader without fear of contradiction from any source, that although the religious world has had ample time to reply to it and to refute it, it not only has not been refuted but no attempt to reply has been made. I put this statement upon the record and again renew the challenge which had been given by others. I once gave a clergyman a light tap with this sort of weapon, and as I knew it would be touching him in a tender spot I was scrupulous about inflicting too severe a wound. He took his best weapon to parry the blow, however; but it was like trying to stop a locomotive under full headway with a broom-straw. As Paul says, "It is hard to kick against the pricks." He said it was "Tom Paine's" argument. And this was all the reply he could make. He was like the preacher who had a great deal to say about God's truth; as though some truth was God's truth while other truth was not. He knew too well that the argument was Paine's truth but was a little dubious whether it was God's truth. I believe the Christian's claim, that there is no part of the Bible but what

is revelation. St. Paul says, "All scripture is given by inspiration." Well what is scripture? Scripture is the Old and New Testaments. Then all the Old and New Testament comes by inspiration. Here is a part of scripture: "Only Luke is with me, take Mark and bring him with thee." This language comes by inspiration to Paul. He could not tell whether Luke was with him or not until he was inspired to that effect. When Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem he did not know it until he was inspired about the matter. He took the twelve disciples apart on the way, but he would not have believed that he had done so if he had not had inspiration telling him that such was the case. But such stuff is the true meaning of all scripture coming by divine inspiration. I take it that the main object of revelation was the conversion of the world, that is, conversion is the end and revelation the means. To accomplish anything it is important to use means adequate to that purpose or else we fail and expose ourselves to ridicule as well as discomfiture. We will apply this test to revelation. Is all the world converted? It has been over three thousand years since the first revelation, and yet three-quarters of mankind have never heard the Gospel, and not all believe it by any means who have heard it. If this is finally to be an effectual means, every one must admit at least that it is a very slow process for bringing about an end which could spare no loss of time whatever. Put your watch to your ear and listen to it tick. The strokes follow one another so rapidly that you can hardly count them; yet this is about the rate that mankind, one by one, are pitching into an endless hell, to rise no more. This certainly requires more speed than the creation of the world, yet that was accomplished in six days. These means are insufficient for such ends, therefore God did not use them; but had such a thing been his object he could have devised means for the conversion of the whole world in twenty-four hours. Beings whom God repented that he ever made would hardly be considered by him as fit agents for the accomplishment of anything, and he would not dare trust them with such important business. He could have carried out his purposes better and quicker by inscribing in letters of fire all over the skies, the words: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He could have put his words on the robes of night, or upon every leaf that trembles in the breeze. He could have put every bird to preaching the gospel, and the modern representatives of that Bible animal which Balaam once bestrode might again lift up their voices and warn man to flee the wrath to come. (For fear that the pious clergy may think that this last expression is intended for their especial benefit, I take this occasion, while passing, to disabuse their minds of any such impression.) To employ any means, not saying anything about such flimsy means as believers make God use, for the accomplishment of any of his purposes, is derogatory to his character and an insult to his majesty. Man can accomplish nothing without means, God accomplishes everything without means. Man uses means for the purpose of perpetuating life, God lives without means. The Bible tells us he created the earth without means. He used no means for bringing into existence the stars, or moon, or anything on the earth. He said, "Let

there be light, and there was light." Man can lift a weight of a thousand pounds by means of a lever, but God wants no lever to lift the sun.

God wants no means to convert the world, it is only man that has to use means for such a purpose. He could just as easily say repent every one, and every one would repent, as to say, "Let there be light, and there was light."

We will now pass from revelation to another important adjunct of religion, and that is

DREAMING.

Dreaming is all confusion of mind; it has neither order, system or sense, about it, but it is for this very reason that it is so well adapted for religious purposes, and it is of such material that all religious props are made. The more mystery and the less plainness; the more prophecy and the less fulfillment; the more miracle and the less nature; the more revelation and the less judgment; the more dreaming and the less wakefulness; the more inconsistency and the less reason; the more faith and the less evidence, which anything contains, so much the more religious is it, and so much better is it adapted to the purposes of priestcraft. Such being the facts of the case, is it at all strange that the element of religion, known as Christianity, should originate in a dream?

In order to show how little reliance can be placed in a dream, we will attempt a short explanation of its nature. It is now considered as an established fact by every one except old fogies, that the brain is the organ of thought, the same as the eye is the organ of sight, or the ear the organ of hearing. The mind, as a whole, is made up of parts called faculties, each one of which has its respective organ in the brain. Again, the brain has organs for each and every faculty of the mind. When all these organs are in a profound sleep, there is a state of complete unconsciousness, or in other words, a total suspension of mental activity. There is no dreaming when in a state of profound sleep; then every organ is asleep and there is no consciousness manifested by any faculty. When one or more organs of the brain are awake, then we have a disturbed slumber characterized by dreaming. When this is the case, if there are none of the higher faculties awake to give shape to the current of thought, it flows on in an incoherent order. The school-master has gone out and the school is in an uproar. And it has been well remarked that nothing surprises us in dreams. All probabilities of time, circumstance and place are violated; the dead pass before us as if alive and well; even the sages of antiquity hold personal converse with us; our friends upon the antipodes are brought upon the scene, or we ourselves are conveyed thither, without the least perception of intervening distance; and occurrences such as in our waking state would excite the strongest emotions, may be contemplated without the slightest feeling of a painful or pleasurable nature. When the organs of the higher and better faculties awake up, the school-master has returned, order succeeds confusion, and reason puts on his authority. To be wide awake, is to have the full use of all the faculties. I have now said enough to show that there is no

reason or certainty connected with this state of partial wakefulness known as dreaming. But it is this state of mind that the Christian church has seized upon to lay its corner stone. Here is the ground work, yes, the very conception of Christianity:—"The angel of the Lord appeared unto him (Joseph) in a *dream*, saying: Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."

I do not ask the clergy why this angel of the Lord did not appear to Joseph when he was wide awake, and had the right use of his reason, because what I said at the commencement of this present subject would preclude the necessity for the answer.

I will give dreamers a parting shot from Solomon, and then pass on: "The hopes of a man void of understanding are vain and false, and dreams lift up fools. Whoso regardeth dreams, is like him that catcheth at a shadow and followeth after the wind."

Let us admit that Joseph dreamed truly, then it follows that the wife of Joseph contained her own creator within her own womb!

I will now pass over witchcraft, baptism and other means of grace to notice that of

ATONEMENT.

An early settler in the western frontier is continually harassed by Indian depredations. The native tribes destroy his crops, run off his stock, and so deprive him of the necessary means of subsistence, that his wrath is kindled against them, and he threatens them with destruction. And now when his cup of wrath is about full, he learns that they have in cold blood murdered his only son. Mark the effect upon the father. He does not clutch up the gun, and Bowie-knife, to rush forth on the red skins to inaugurate an indiscriminate slaughter, as would be most natural under such circumstances, but his wrath suddenly cools down, and the smiles of satisfaction resting upon his countenance, he speaks the words of joy, "Atonement! atonement!! the satisfaction is complete—I now freely forgive you." This is the doctrine of the atonement given in just as few words as I am able to express it. God, the Father, becomes angry with the world a second time, and again threatens it with destruction; but as soon as the people put to death God, the Son, he becomes reconciled to them again. He says, "Atonement! atonement!! You have given me good satisfaction, and I am pleased to let you run on a while longer."

GOD IS NOT THE AUTHOR OF THE BIBLE.

When we have disposed of this question, then we will be the more able to show what God is.

I commence this inquiry from the following postulates:

Anything which God does man cannot do.

Anything which man can do God does not do. For example: God makes a plant bearing flowers, then seeds; this is what man cannot do.

Man makes a watch, man writes a book, man can say God wrote it; this is what man can do and what God does not do. Taking this postulate for our guide we will have no trouble in distinguishing the works of the one from the works of the other. I intend these declarations to be universal and sweeping; but if any one can show a single thing which God does that man can do, then I concede the point; or on the other hand, if any one can show a single thing which man can do that God ever does do, again I concede the point; but if no one can do this then I claim the truth of my propositions. And if, upon inquiry, we find there is nothing written in the Bible but what man can write, and nothing contained in it but what man can do, then I ask the Christian and Jew to concede that God had nothing to do with it. In connection with what I have before stated on this subject I now proceed with the inquiry.

I imagine, reader, that you have a document put into your hands purporting to be a letter written and signed by Wm. H. Seward, the Secretary of State. You look at it, the spelling is bad; the composition is no better, and the signature looks like hens' tracks. You read it and find that it advocates human slavery, the re-opening of the African slave trade, and the recognition of the independence of the Southern Confederacy. You at once declare it a forgery, and say that Seward had nothing to do with the document whatever. It is much more rational for you to believe that the signature is counterfeit than to believe that it is genuine. There is not a thing about it worthy of the man. Seward is a philanthropist, statesman and scholar. This paper is the work of an ignorant blockhead, and a consummate scoundrel. Mr. Seward would be gratified to learn that you had thus openly and boldly denounced such a spurious document.

Well, reader, I have on the table before me a document which purports to have the signature of God Almighty. I will clip an extract from it and see what you think of it. It seems that the Lord came to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, in the heat of the day. Abraham gave him his dinner, and "after they did eat," they had a considerable conversation about Abraham's wife, Sarah, which amused her much, for she was eavesdropping. Before the Lord goes on his way, however, he tells Abraham where he is going and what he intends to do, in these words: "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not I will know—And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham; and Abraham returned unto his place." (Genesis chap. xviii.)

Plutarch once said he would rather have men believe that he had never existed, than have them say that he was like Saturn, who devoured his children as soon as they were born. It would be better to believe in no God whatever, than to believe the stuff contained in the document just noticed.

Let us examine some things which we know to be the works of God, and then compare notes. Reader, you have chiseled out in the front

part of your head, a socket, well cushioned with adipose tissue, for the reception of a delicate little ball, which gives beauty to the countenance, and expression to the soul. We can move this little organ in any direction we please without putting our hands to it. It revolves inwards, outwards, upwards and downwards by means of the four recti-muscles adapted for this purpose. These muscles are able to revolve the eye but not to rotate it, but for this purpose two more muscles are introduced, called the oblique muscles. One of these muscles is a very ingenious contrivance; it has its origin from the same point that the recti-muscles have, and if carried directly to the eye it would perform the same function that they perform, but this is not its purpose, and it must have a different contrivance. It is arranged just like the rope and pulley of a derrick for raising rock upon buildings. This muscle passes through a loop connected to the upper part of the orbit of the skull; it then makes a turn backwards and sideways and is then joined to the side of the ball of the eye; and it is by the use of this pulley apparatus, that this other motion of the eye is accomplished. Now connect this little ball with the fountain of thought, the brain, by means of the optic nerve, and it becomes a camera; we can tell the distance, the size, the shape, the color, &c., of objects, without the aid of the other senses. Man can imitate the little globes, but he can never make them see; therefore, according to our postulate this must be the work of God. Now, reader, do you suppose that the Architect who could invent such a skillful contrivance as all this, could not tell what the people were doing in Sodom and Gomorrah, until he went down and saw for himself? The Being who made the country all the way to Sodom and Gomorrah, and all the people in those cities, not know how many righteous men there were there! This Being who made Sarah, asking of Abraham where she was!! What! this Being who sets his bow in the heavens, causes the sun to shine, the rains to fall, and vegetation to grow in the dry places; saying, "if these things were not so, he would know when he got there!" There is nothing written here but what man could write; there is nothing in the story that man cannot do; and I come to the conclusion that God has had nothing to do with this story, and furthermore, I believe he would not censure me for thus clutching him from the claws of the clergy, who are unmercifully tearing him to pieces. He could well afford to address the priestcraft in the language of Plutarch, as just quoted. Having once read this, I defy any one to forget it. He will ever remember this and think it very strange that an omnipresent being should not know what was going on at one place just as well as another. He will think it very strange that the Lord should get lost from Adam, when he was just as much where Adam was as in any other place; yes, when he made Adam and the clump of bushes behind which he was screened. He will ever think it very strange that two inspired writers should so differ in their historical accounts, namely: Matthew and Luke. Matthew making twenty-nine generations from David to Christ, while Luke says there were forty generations from David to Christ. It is presuming none too much on the immutability of the laws of nature as shown forth in the

regularity of the planetary system to calculate an eclipse to the very second of time a thousand years hence. This is a nice point, yet such is the regularity, order and harmony of God's works. Can it be that such a God as this could not trace the history of a thousand years, without making a blunder of fifteen generations which is at least four hundred years! Here is something that man can do, but which God does not do. Can it be that this self same God could do anything that he would repent of having done? Yet such is Bible doctrine. God repented for having made man, and then destroyed him from the face of the earth! That is, he undertook to make something but found he had made a failure, was sorry for it, got mad at it, and got it out of his sight as quick as he could by drowning it! This is no uncommon thing with unskillful mechanics, and bad artisans. You do not see any failures in the works of nature; everything answers the purpose for which it was created. Then why should it be that the Almighty made a failure in that particular instance? I contend that the Author of nature never did make a failure, and further, that he never will make a failure in anything he pleases to undertake. What need has he to feel sorry for anything which he has done? When I am told that the signature of the Author of nature is put to any such a "comedy of errors," I brand it as a libel and forgery, and by the help of reason and common sense I intend to expose it. Man can make failures but God never can nor does.

When the unheard of cruelties of the Israelites as sanctioned by the Bible God are brought before the notice of Bishop Watson; he does not condemn such proceedings at all, but goes at once to get up an apology for such diabolical crimes. He says: "Why do you not maintain it to be repugnant to his moral justice, that he should suffer crying or smiling infants to be swallowed up by an earthquake, drowned by an inundation, consumed by fire, starved by famine, or destroyed by pestilence? The word of God is in perfect harmony with his work; crying or smiling infants are subjected to death in both. When Catania, Lima, and Lisbon, were severally destroyed by earthquakes, men, with their wives, their sons, and their little ones were swallowed up alive—why do you not spurn as spurious the book of nature, in which this fact is certainly written, and from the perusal of which you infer the moral justice of God?"

You will probably reply that the evils which the Caananites suffered from the express command of God, were different from those which were brought on mankind by the operation of the laws of nature. Different in what? Not in the magnitude of the evil—not in the subjects of sufferance—not in the author of it." Any band of cut-throats could justify their proceedings by this same argument. They could slaughter a few hundred innocent people, and then say, "Why nature has done worse than this, she has destroyed whole cities, and nobody blamed her." I will expose such miserable sophistry. Bishop Watson must know as well as any one else, that it is the intention that constitutes the crime. Suppose the late President had been shot accidentally; "the magnitude of the evil" would be the same; "the subjects of sufferance" would be the

same; "the author of it" might be the same; but then there is no crime connected with the matter, because there was no intention to commit a crime. The Author of nature no more intends earthquakes to destroy human beings, than we intend the crushing of insects beneath our feet when we take a morning walk. But those crimes of the Israelites were intentional and premeditated, yes, it was commanded. Such, reader, are the miserable subterfuges to which religionists have to resort to maintain their dying cause.

I will now show that the 1st chapter of Genesis is a spurious document. "In the beginning God created the heaven and earth." Here is something assumed as a basis to commence the work of something else upon; that is, some things have beginnings and other things have no beginnings. I will admit this for the present in order to show up its absurdity. Then this beginning of all things except God, took place 4004 years before the birth of Christ, and 4005 years God was alone, not in the world, but out of the world, and as he had no one to commune with, we can imagine him soliloquizing in this kind of a strain: "No earth, with its land and sea; no forests, with green verdure and singing birds; no sun; no moon; no stars; all is eternal darkness; not so much as devils to kill this dull monotony. I have been idle and alone from eternity; this horrible ennui is devouring me; I must do something, I have lived in idleness as long as I can afford to. Yes! now I have it! I will light up this infinite space and people it with worlds and inhabitants. I might have had this arrangement millions of years ago had I only thought of it sooner. Well, let me see, how long will this job take me? I believe I can do it in six days, notwithstanding there will be no time, nor days until the fourth day, when I will make the sun and he will make the day." So the mighty work of creation is commenced; and the first in order on the docket was the making of heaven and earth, but the earth being enveloped in darkness, God says, "Let there be light, and there was light." Yes, light was very necessary at this juncture of affairs, but whence comes this light producing day and night, three days before there was any sun created to make the light from?

"And God saw the light that it was good." And no wonder. This would be the expression of any one on being suddenly released from eternal darkness. Every philanthropist or rather philotheist should feel to rejoice with him on his liberation from the dark dungeon in which he had been imprisoned from eternity, and they should also congratulate him on his first and most wonderful success. The third day God created vegetation and he pronounced this a decided success; but still there was no sun as yet to warm and light up the earth. Those plants, however, flowered out just as well without light and heat as they do now with it. On the fourth day God created the sun, moon and stars. This was decidedly the biggest day's work of all the rest. There are million times millions of stars, every one of which are worlds larger than ours; and some of these are so remote that it takes light sixty thousand years to reach our earth emanating from those bodies! Yet that light is here and has been sixty thousand years in getting here, and still the earth came into existence

before these stars. Light could not start from a star before that star had an existence, yet the light has been in existence 60,000 years, and if according to Bible history the earth is older than the light or the stars from which the light emanates, as a matter of course it must be over 60,000 years old. Now the conclusion of all this is, that either the Bible or the astronomers must be mistaken. One reason which leads me to conclude that the astronomers are not mistaken, is that if they extend their calculations far enough, they can foretell an eclipse a thousand years ahead, as correctly as I can tell by means of an almanac what time the sun will rise to-morrow morning. But if astronomers are right, then those ancient Jews knew nothing more about astronomy, than the Digger Indians of California.

“And God said let us make man in our image.” Here seems to be a company concern. Will some clergyman be so good as to explain who this company is? It could not mean the Holy Ghost or Christ, for they had no existence till 4004 years after this time, and as I have before said, they owe their introduction to Saint Matthew. It could not mean the Devil for God would have no use for his council.

“So God created man in his own image.”

How much more correct would it have been had it said, “Man created God in his own image.” All the knowledge of astronomy as given by any Bible writer is nothing better and nothing higher than the ideas of a six year old boy, but their ideas and his are precisely the same. I here boldly defy any one to take the Bible and prove the contrary; then if you cannot do it, and have any regard for the truth, do not blame me for making so bold a statement. The youth supposes the earth of all things to be the most important; the sun is the next greatest thing in his mind, and the moon comes next, and lastly the stars engage but little of his attention, and all the consideration they get from him is, that they give a little light when the moon has gone down; and had he no better light than the Bible upon this subject he would continue a six year old boy all his days. Those old Jews were not only ignorant about scientific matters, but they were not able to get up a system of religion until they borrowed it from the Persians; and this was done when they were captives in their hands.

Any person who reads the system of the Persian religion as detailed to us in ancient history, is so reminded of the similarity which it bears to the religion of the Bible, that he is led to infer that these religions have a common origin; that is, that the Jews got their religion from the Persians or else the Persians got their religion from the Jews.

The Persian system of religion is said to have been founded by Zoroaster eleven hundred years before Christ, and this was their same religion when the Jews were carried captives among them about five hundred years afterwards. Then how could the Persians get a religion from the Jews several hundred years before they ever saw any such a people? besides it would be very strange that the proud and haughty Persians would embrace the religion of their captives.

This is my position; that the Jews got their cosmogony and their system of religion from the Persians, and that the book of Genesis was not

written till the Jews returned to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity; but this subject requires more time and space for its investigation than I am at present able to devote to it, and I am aware that in thus skimming it over so superficially that I am leaving some bars down, but if an attack is made in this direction I will return to the breach and fortify it. It is right and proper to hold me accountable for every statement I make and every position I assume, and as truth is my aim and reason my weapon, I believe that I can conscientiously and truly say, that so far, I have not perverted the meaning of a single word in the Bible or made a single misstatement in history.

I am willing to let the religionist have all the benefit of his quibble concerning this Mosaic account of the creation. He may say it was six thousand years ago that God brought order out of chaos; that it was then that he gave shape to the earth, and peopled it. He may say the "days" means a million years if he pleases; I will give him all that time and as much more as he wants, but still that does not release the eternal God from his dark prison house, the time which he existed before creation, when he had an eternity of idleness on his hands. The only way the religionist can get out of this dilemma is for him to admit that all things are co-eternal with God.

Having shown that God is not the author of the Bible, but it is man, we now proceed to inquire

WHAT IS GOD ?

Believers always assume the existence of a God, but beyond this assumption, inquiry is cut short off. They fortify the assumption by such words as "scoffing" and "blasphemy." These are religious words, and intended to frighten the souls of fearful adversaries away. These are words brought to the rescue, when argument fails. They are words applied to no other subject than religion. An astronomer may be beaten in some of his astronomical theories, but he never uses the words "blasphemy" or "scoffing" against you. You may show the farmer the fallacy of some agricultural notion, but he never resorts to "blasphemy" or "scoffing." These talismanic words never shut off any physiological investigation, or chemical research. They are never used against medical inquiry or surgical theory. They are words not used in any of the business affairs of life. They are words used only to guard an assumption that will not bear investigation. These are the two sentinels standing guard at the doors of the church. They keep out truth, reason, liberty, and common sense, and let in nothing but ignorance, bigotry and faith. These sentinels appear pretty formidable when viewed from the distance, but as you approach them with a steady step with the banners of reason and liberty unfurled, they fly as chaff before the wind. I believe I have said enough to frighten away these bugbears, and now we are prepared to prosecute this inquiry.

I have before intimated that Christianity was partial Atheism, but I believe I will be able to prove that it is altogether Atheism. But for all that, they have as much right to such a position as I have to the directly

opposite position. It is evident that the Christian gets along with less God than I do. I tell him that God is the soul or mind of the Universe, and that God bears about the same relation to the Universe and to matter generally, that the human mind bears to the body to which it belongs, and which it represents. He does not believe it because this is getting in too much God; it is more than he is willing to subscribe to. Well this proves most conclusively that if I believe in more God than he does I am further removed from an Atheist than he is. Well, having denied my position as stated, I intend he shall not fall back upon it, if I drive him to the wall in this controversy. Regarding my cause as being strong enough to justify me in taking the tangible and definite position which I have done, he has no right to dispute it until he takes a position equally tangible, and definite, and this is what I demand from him. If I succeed in showing him that such Gods as he sets up for Gods, are not Gods at all, then he will have no God left him, and he can seek his company with the Atheists. His Bible God having failed him and turned to be more of a Devil than anything else I will press the inquiry by following him in some other direction. He says, God is a spirit. Well, what is a spirit? A spirit is an immaterial substance. Here is a definition which contradicts itself in positive terms. Substance means matter; immaterial means, not consisting of matter. Now we have the full definition of spirit; it is this: matter not consisting of matter. God is a spirit, therefore God is matter that is not matter! This is not only language that is neither tangible nor definite, but I call it nonsense, for it means nothing. He is forced to abandon this position; now he takes another tack. God is the Supreme Being, he says. Very well. Supreme means the highest. Being, means, existence. Now we have it this way: God is the highest existence. Another definition of the word Supreme is, the highest and the greatest Being, God. This is making things as clear as mud. It is like the clown's definition of Ingurn, "Ingurn is ingurn because it is ingurn!"

God is God. God, is the highest existence. Well, what is the highest existence? It is God. This is getting things into such a circle that I cannot make anything tangible out of it. I once heard of a snake that commenced swallowing its tail, and continued to swallow till there was nothing left of the snake. I once heard of a man that dreamed that all dreams were true. He got himself into a snarl about it, but was never able to unravel it. He gave it up and said it was like a dog running round after his own tail.

To show the Christian that I am taking no advantage of him I will inform him that I take these definitions from Webster's dictionary. Finding these positions untenable, now what will you do. It is not so much that the position is untrue as it is that there is no sense to it. It is a mere jargon of words that conveys no ideas. I can say to the Christian that I believe I know just what he would now do were he conversing with me. You would like to ask me a few questions before going any further. Is not this so? Yes, you want to hold me accountable for that which you are not able to account for; and any position I take you

hold me responsible for it; my language must be clear and definite; a mere jargon of words or play on terms will not do you. This is right that you should thus hold me to the mark, but am I not right in demanding the same thing from you? I intend to make my position clear after I have traced you out in your meanderings. Don't you feel that you are going to the wall? Well, you next say God is a personal Being, because he went down to Sodom like other men would have done, and that he got lost from Adam, the same as any other man would. Very well, I ask you where has he gone to? You suppose he is in heaven. Well, where is heaven? You know about as much where your heaven is, as you know what your God is. If you say heaven is above, above means nothing but from the centre of the earth. The above to the antipodes would be down to us, and *vice versa*. As far as the telescope has ever penetrated into space, it has discovered nothing but stars; no heaven, or hell, God, or Devil, has ever been discovered by such means. You are driven against the wall; your God is nothing real; it is a mere fantasy of the imagination. You have no God left you, now you can seek your company among the Atheists. This is what your mysteries, your miracles, your revelations, your prophecies, your dreams bring you to. Christ tells you you are not Christians because you cannot do the things which he did. You were to take up serpents, and drink deadly things; but the bite of a rattlesnake or a dose of arsenious acid would kill you just as quickly as it would the greatest heretic in the world. But the great trouble with you is to get a starting point. You know that the world exists and that it could not make itself, nor could it come by chance, because there is too much order in its regulation. You are correct so far. You find a watch by the side of a plant. You know the watch did not make itself any more than the plant did. Very correct. You may believe that God made the plant but you do not believe that God made the watch. And why? Because the watch is a work that man can do, but the plant is a work that man cannot do; therefore man made the watch, but not the plant. Very correct. Our opinions are running along just like two parallel lines, but if we continue the inquiry, we will soon come to the point of divergence. There is manifestly a great difference between the plant and the watch; but in what does this difference consist? I contend it is in the application of principles; principles as eternal as God is eternal. The principles upon which the plant owes its existence is first a germ cell contained in the seed, then soil, moisture, light, heat and air, properly regulated. With such conditions, and the proper application of these principles, the plant is just as naturally the result, as the existence of the principles which regulate its growth; and further, no power in existence is able to prevent it. It cannot be that these principles are created every time a new plant comes into existence, for they are eternal as matter itself, which I intend to show is co-eternal with God; and consequently were never created, and if I show that a principle is eternal it is just as much impossible for it to be created as it is for God to be created.

The man who made the watch, did not any more make the principles which regulate it, than did Columbus make America by discovering it.

He has done nothing more than make the proper application of principles for telling the time of day. Our books on natural philosophy teach us there are six mechanical powers, and I believe the watch combines all these principles. It can include no more, notwithstanding the complexity of its arrangement. The main principle by which it is governed is the lever. A lever consists of the weight, the fulcrum, and the power. But here is a principle involved of which these things are only means for carrying into effect. The weight, the fulcrum, and the power may pass away, but the eternal principle which these things represented will never pass away. A watch in Boston and a watch in China or in the moon; a saw mill in Oregon, and a cotton gin in New Orleans, are all regulated by the same eternal principles; none have any more nor any less nor any different principles than the others. I say these principles are eternal because they could not be created. Can the mind conceive a time so far back that these principles were not in existence? Can he conceive a time when one pound could not be made to balance ten pounds by means of a lever? I take it there never was such a time, and if this is true these principles had no creator because they were not created. These principles did not create themselves nor were they created in any way, being only manifestations of God, the same as my thinking is the manifestations of my mind. Now, reader, if you are not afraid of truth, come with me and we will carry the inquiry still further. It is a principle of geometry that parallel lines never diverge nor converge so much as a hair's breadth, though they continue in distance to points beyond what is in the power of the mind to conceive. Now is it in the power of any God, no matter how great, to change this principle? Could he create it, or can he efface it? Can the mind conceive when parallel lines were not parallel lines? Can the mind conceive the possibility of destroying this principle? But if it can be done, then parallel lines are not parallel lines, and this would be like causing anything to be and not to be at the same time. It is also a principle of geometry that opposite angles are always equal. That is, opposite angles are eternally equal. This is either true or false. If the religionist is correct there was a time when opposite angles were not equal, and it only became so six thousand years ago, and as soon as this world burns up this principle stops. If this is correct, and you are sending children to school, you better tell them to never take up a work on geometry, for it is an infidel book. The earth, the planets, the stars, the sun and moon, might be burned up and everything struck out of existence, still this everlasting principle would hold on. It has been said that all things are possible with God; then let him create this principle; let him cause opposite angles to be unequal; let him cause anything to be and not to be at the same time. You may trace these principles back in order to find a creation for them, but you find they exist independent of time and space. You get no nearer their source by going back ten million years than you do in going back a day. It is like undertaking to fathom the depths of eternity. You will not find a principle in geometry but what is just as eternal as the one mentioned, that is as eternal as God is eternal. I told the religion-

ist a short time ago that I felt certain he would like to ask me a few questions when I denied that there was any creation. I knew that he wanted to ask me how I accounted for the existence of any thing. I will now inform him that I have commenced to gratify his curiosity, and I will leave it to him to say whether I am rendering a good account of myself. I go still further. It is a principle of arithmetic that three and two make five. The religionist says it is true, but that it has been a truth only six thousand years. I disagree with him and say it has been a truth from all eternity and to eternity will continue to exist. "Truth is eternal and will never die," the religionist to the contrary notwithstanding. I defy all the powers that be, to create, to change, or to efface this principle. Arithmetic teaches nothing but just such eternal principles. The religionist had better rule this "infidel" book out of the schools and destroy it, if he intends to maintain his doctrine. Likewise all the principles of chemistry are eternal principles or laws, so this is another "infidel" book worthy of being suppressed. In short, I know of no principle or law of nature but what is eternal. These laws or principles are every one of them independent of time, or space, and to undertake to look up a creator for them is like looking up a creator for God. Wherever God exists these principles exist, and so long as God continues to exist will these principles exist. These laws or principles are so much of God, of which God is the head. I cut off from God all religion and everything of a religious character. It is not a religious God, but thoroughly secular. In divesting God of religion, I divest it of mystery, miracle, revelation, dreams, witchcraft, ghosts, hobgoblins and everything of a mysterious or supernatural character. Who can think of religion without associating the mind with such things as these? Here we have a practical, secular God, disrobed of all religious paraphernalia, and mysterious spiritual performances; God, the eternal principle of principles, that can be understood by everybody without getting down on their knees, or reading musty books. This eternal principle, which is God, is put beyond the reach of "blasphemy" or "scoffing." You can talk with as much sense about "blaspheming" the Rocky mountains, or "scoffing" at the laws of nature. The Mormons have taken advantage of this religious twaddle, to introduce a relic of the barbarous ages among us. They made polygamy their religion, then they had a perfect right to it. They make it "blasphemy" to say anything against it, so you cannot reason with them about the matter. Fifteen years ago, it was the next door to "blasphemy" to say anything against slavery and for no other reason than that it was getting to be a religious institution. It was even more tolerable for the heretic than the abolitionist. This is the way that the clergy blind us; they have got us into such a religious fog by means of their mystery, prophecy, miracle, heaven, hell, devil, damnation, and such religious twaddle; that we build them meeting houses and support them in idleness, to have them show us the way out of the darkness, which they have thrown around us. I know how hard it is to shake off early prejudices. Some people grope their way in religious darkness all their lives. Jefferson, Humboldt, and Shelly, and Burns

got fairly out of this religious fog, (for every person is born in it) but I regret to say that Paine never did; he got only so far as the outskirts of it, and always retained a little of that mist before his eyes. He says, "the world is my country, to do good is my religion." He was mistaken; he ought to have said, "to do good is my principle." It is no man's religion to do good; and I do not know that it is any man's religion to do harm. If he does good he does it from principle; if he does harm he does it from principle or rather the want of principle, and religion has nothing to do with the matter. When Christ says, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you," he is inculcating a principle, and not a religion. Christ borrowed this from others not as a religion, but as a principle. Confucius, the Chinaman, gave expression to this thought 600 years before Christ; but he was a Pagan; and if Christ used it in a religious sense, then he was teaching the Pagan religion. Christ says, also, "Wo unto you scribes, pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Wo unto you, scribes, pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made ye make him ten fold more the child of hell than yourselves." This is good morality but poor religion. In fact there is no religion about it; the preachers know it and they never preach it. Here is nothing about belief, faith, or baptism; here is nothing about the mysteries of miracle, prophecy, witchcraft, sacrament, predestination, hiring priest, nor any of the religious paraphernalia whatever; hence there is no religion about it. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead and had scarcely any religion, but Christ passes them over to denounce a very religious sect, the Pharisees. Paine believed in the creation and the doctrine of future rewards and punishments. His God was altogether wiser and much more humane than the Bible God, but I do not know as he differed much from him in any other particular. He had correct notions about the principles of governments and the rights of man, and about religious matters also, so far as he went, but he did not get far enough. However, he has accomplished his mission and done it well, and we are greatly indebted to his pen for our present free government.

But I digress. It may be urged by the religionist, that if the principles of nature are eternal, that, matter by which, and through which these principles manifest themselves is not eternal. This I would suppose would be evidence enough that matter was eternal also. These principles are for no purpose except for application. Laws and principles not of use would be dead letters. They pre-suppose something to act upon. This would be much like the existence of a God an eternity before creation; in which case he would be idle and to all purposes a dead letter; but in nature there is no dead letter; everything is for some purpose and is ever changing; taking on different forms and undergoing different states of existences. Watch the course of a particle of matter, and you find it is not idle, or a thing to be despised. This year it exists in the soil; next year it lives in the fragrant rose; and the following year it is borne over the wild prairies in the deer; and the next year it adorns the cheek of the beautiful lady, and finally it returns back to its

mother earth again, to await another stage of existence. Yet it has been the same particle of soil through all these stages; it took on different forms, that is all. Well, how did it take on these different forms? It was the laws of nature acting upon it; that is, God fashioned it as the potter does the clay.

I will give another principle in proof of what I have already said. It is a law of nature that matter cannot be annihilated nor increased, that is, the earth has not increased or decreased one atom in weight for a thousand years, and that this principle is so established that it is impossible to make it otherwise. Matter can take on any change of form but always maintains itself as just so much substance. This is an eternal principle of matter; then how could it have any beginning or any end? In addition to what has already been said, I will give another argument in proof of the eternity of matter, which I regard as the most forcible of all. Can the mind conceive a time when matter was not? If so, then the mind conceives a time when there was no time. It is more difficult for the mind to conceive an eternal, endless space than it is to conceive something. Matter and space are two opposite terms, just as something and nothing are the opposites of each other, and I cannot conceive of the one without the other in conjunction with it, and I believe it is utterly impossible for these to be either all of the one or all of the other at the same time. Matter gives us the idea of space, and space gives us the idea of matter, and without the existence of both we have no idea of either. If space is eternal, and exists independent of a creator, then matter, its opposite, must be co-eternal with it. It is impossible to rob space of matter, or to rob matter of space. Matter is the absence of space, and space is the absence of matter. When we say the sun is 95,000,000 of miles from the earth, we mean that is the extent of space between these two bodies. When we say the earth is 8000 miles in diameter, we mean the extent of the matter composing this body measures 8000 miles. The severest blow which the religionist gives the Universalist is this argument of the opposites. He can have no knowledge of heaven without hell in connection with it. This is correct reasoning; but when I apply the analogy to his darling theory of the creation of matter, as compared with space, he drops the analogy as soon as he sees the drift of the argument, for now it not only ceases to subserve his purposes, but is a weapon turned against him.

The Christian and Jewish theory is that nothing existed six thousand years ago but God; and I was going to say that like Robinson Crusoe, he was then monarch of all he surveyed, but that would be a mistake for he had nothing to survey. The best telescope ever made would have been of no use in those days, even with the assistance of light; for it could not detect a single star nor a particle of matter anywhere in its vast range. Things were then in the condition of the woodchuck's hole which I once heard of. Some boys one day chased a woodchuck into his hole in the bank of a river; but all their subsequent vigilance and tact failed to capture him, until one night there came a great freshet, and that portion of the bank where the woodchuck's quarters were, was en-

tirely carried away. The boys, seeing this condition of things the following morning, went back to their father and told him that the bank had been washed away, and that the woodchuck's hole was left sticking about ten feet right over the river! When this theory of creation is investigated it runs into silly nonsense and laughable derision. The mind of the religious theorist is overburdened with causes. If there was no creation he would want a cause for it. He would then want to know how it came to be all space and no matter. He says God sustains the light of the sun to give us day, but if that luminary were to be extinguished, he would want to know the cause of it. He says God is the cause of crops growing, but if they would not grow he would want to know the cause of it. God gives him power to raise his hand to his head, but if he could not raise his hand, he would see the doctor to learn the cause of it. The hand of God holds the moon in its place, yet if it gets out of its place he must know the cause of it. Strange philosophy! Everything owes its existence and order to the power of God; yet, if anything goes out of existence or gets out of order, there must be a cause for it! a cause for the existence, and a cause for the non-existence. A cause for the order, and a cause for the disorder! It is a wonder that he does not want a cause for a God! But he gets around this by making it the exception. He says, every effect must have a cause, except one, and that is "the Great First Cause." I make no exception to the rule, but say sweepingly that every effect must have a cause. I will ask him what business he has in making the exception? When he commences making exceptions, that gives other theorists the right to make exceptions, and let me ask him, where is this thing going to stop? If I were advocating a weak theory I could with equal right claim that the earth was also an exception; that it was an effect but has no cause. Here is a nice point of distinction which I want the reader to carefully note, for it is the alphabet of my theory, and once understood all the rest will be plain to him. In order to make myself understood, I assume for the time to be a teacher, teaching my own theory and not yours, (for you understand your theory already,) and like your school-master who taught you to read slowly but surely, so can I just as surely bring you to my conclusions if you will follow me step by step; but you must not expect to arrive there at a single bound any more than you would expect to master algebra in an hour, having had no previous knowledge of the elements of that branch of study. A scoundrel and a murderer may be converted into a good Christian in twenty minutes by the watch, but to be a Pantheist takes some thinking, the same as it does to acquire any kind of knowledge.

When I say that every effect has a cause, without any exception, it may seem paradoxical to you when I say with the same breath that nothing is created; but we will inquire into this thing. What is an effect? It is a result, or something produced. Then this pre-supposes something antecedent—a doer of that which is done. You say this is correct. Very well; now for the application. The watch is an effect; the cause is the watchmaker. The house is the effect of the carpenter; the paper is the effect of the paper maker; the ink is the effect of the ink maker; the

pen is the effect of the pen maker, &c. The earth is the effect of God—no, not quite so fast, here is something assumed. The earth is not an effect, unless it has been thrown off from the sun, which is quite likely to have been the case; then we can look for the cause of which this is the effect; but then it requires no creation to explain the origin of the earth if it comes from the sun. Now you say the sun must have a creator, for where did it come from? I answer that if it did not originate from some other body larger than itself, there is no “come” in the question. The matter of which it is composed is not an effect, but is something eternal, and is impossible to be created. Space is not an effect, therefore space is eternal, and did not require any antecedent or creator. If it is true that every effect has a cause, it must also be true that no effects have no causes. The laws of nature are not effects, but are eternal, therefore they cannot have causes. The stalk of corn which I now see before my office door, was not there two months ago; it is something produced—it is an effect, therefore it has a cause. A seed containing a germ cell, by being supplied with soil, moisture, heat, air and light, has developed itself into the form which I now see it. Every change of form is an effect, which must have causes. But whence that germ which produced the stalk of corn? It came from some other stalk of corn, and that again from the stalk which preceded it, &c., *ad infinitum*. That power or that property which the germ of the seed has to produce things in the exact likeness of its antecedents is not an effect, but is an eternal principle. I can find two little bodies about as big as a grain of mustard seed; they resemble each other in size, weight, form, color, and in everything. I put one of these little bodies into the ground—it produces a plant; I put the other into the water—it produces a fish! Why is it that these little bodies did not both produce plants, or both produce fish? or why did they produce anything? What was it locked up in the narrow confines of these insignificant bodies that mapped out such a destiny? It was an eternal principle which we read in these different manifestations. There is nothing strange about it, because it is natural; it was matter acting in obedience to natural laws. It is our ignorance that is strange, that is all. It would have been very strange to nature, however, had the fish egg produced a plant as well as the seed. This principle is God; it is the mind of the universe. It can have no creator unless God created God. God acts independently of time or place. A grain of wheat which had been put away with a mummy 2000 years ago was taken out, and when given the conditions necessary to manifest itself, it produced wheat exactly resembling itself of 2000 years ago.

A flower of the same kind in China resembles the one in England, having the same number of anthers, petals, pistils, stamens, &c. To say that God made man, that God made the plant, that God made the bee, &c., is a good way and a short cut to screen ignorance; it will do well enough for the Sabbath school and the clergyman, but it is a poor explanation for physiology, and no satisfaction to the man of scientific research. To understand how man came into existence, and to understand how that existence is perpetuated and finally cut off, is a subject for physiological

inquiry. If we would do away with the miserable dogma that "God made man," and that "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away," and study into the laws which regulate our existence, with a view to the promotion of health and longevity, we would be a healthier, a wiser, and a longer lived people.

It is conceded by the Christian theorist that no new animal, or insect, or plant of any kind, has come into existence since all things were created, that is, about six thousand years ago, and he dates the creation of the animal world coeval with the creation of matter. Well, we agree as to their co-existence, and therefore if matter is eternal, the animal creation must be eternal also, and that principle that now perpetuates the existence of plants and animals which we call the germ cell, must have existed from eternity, and I cannot conceive it otherwise. I cannot conceive that a body as large as our earth, suspended in space and covered with soil and water, and surrounded with air, being so well adapted to sustain life in some form, should be entirely destitute of such an important property. This analogy leads me to infer that all those luminous bodies which deck the robes of night are peopled by living beings in some shape, either alike or unlike ourselves. It is my opinion, and it is an opinion only, that those beings are precisely like ourselves and governed by the same natural laws, having their cities, their roads and their farms, the same as we have, and actuated by the same passions, as love, hate, envy, &c., the same as we are. The explorations of the telescope discontents us with the insignificance of our little earth, and its want of diversity, but when we turn to the microscope and learn that a million living beings can, and do inhabit a drop of water, we become better reconciled to our condition, but only more convinced of our ignorance and unworthiness, when compared with the great principle, the eternal God that regulates all these things. This eternal principle wants no homage, sacrifices, nor prayers; we cannot exalt, reconcile or change the mind of the universe. All we can do in this direction is to study the laws of nature that we may be the more able to conform to them. If any one runs counter and contrary to these immutable laws, he is held to answer for the transgression, and there is no forgiveness; the penalty will sooner or later overtake him. This is the sin against God, and it is the only sin which can be committed against God. It is appalling when we reflect that man by his ignorance of the knowledge of these laws of nature, has shortened his allotted existence considerably more than one half, and even that short life is often times ill health, degradation and misery. The preacher says "the Lord hath taken away" in every funeral sermon he preaches. If the subject has died with ripe old age he speaks truly, but if it is a child, or a young man or woman, he speaks falsely, for it is not the Lord but some other agency that has taken the subject away. It may be the "doctor," but it is more generally his own indiscretion or that of his parents before him who have entailed disease upon him that he is not able to shake off. I would like to deal longer on this topic, and point out to the reader the breakers which beset his frail bark on its course down the stream of time; it would make him a better Pantheist, a bet-

ter citizen and healthier man; but I must hasten on. A few more words and I am done with this part of the subject. I will give the reader a sentence from Silliman's chemistry. "The universe of matter is made up of facts, which observed, traced out, and arranged, lead us to the knowledge of certain laws and forces which proceed directly from the mind of God. These are the 'laws of nature.'" This expression—the "mind of God"—places him outside of matter and disconnects him with the universe just as much as man is disconnected with it. By this expression the Universe cannot mean God, neither are its laws God, but it is some kind of a being that has a mind, and that mind governs the "laws of nature." Had this writer said "from the mind of the Universe," or "from God," his language would be intelligible, but as it stands it means nothing; it is like saying the "mind of the mind."

I have here in a few words given the reader a system of nature—its origin—its laws, &c., divested of all religion, with its mystery, miracle, faith, revelation, big fish stories; and also leaving out the mythical or personal spirit of God existing beyond the bounds of time and space, but I do not expect every one who reads it to receive it, for the minds of some people are so steeped in religion, and their ideas of a spiritual God sitting up on some kind of a high throne somewhere in space, is so deeply rooted, that they cannot live twenty-four hours without something to get down on their knees to. They are joined to their idols, so let them alone. Were they suddenly deprived the privilege of worshipping this kind of a God, they would idolize the first thing that came in their way; and if some one should laugh at the ridiculous devotion, they would call it "blasphemy and scoffing." We will now pass from the mind of matter to the

MIND OF MAN,

The religionist says the *soul* is the immortal spirit of man. This is another invention of his morbid imagination, without sense or meaning, a something, or rather a nothing thrown outside of the body and disconnected with it, the same as God has been separated and standing apart from matter and the universe. He makes the mind of man to be a "spirit," as well as the mind of matter, and consequently the "soul" of man and God is the same thing. This makes a mystery, and a fog of everything, and constitutes good religion, but makes very poor philosophy. I have already shown that "spirit" means nothing, and is nothing, and now I intend to bury the "soul"—the phantom of religion—in the same grave with it. If any one is afraid of truth, and thinks there is danger of the inquiry being pressed too far in this direction, he had better not follow me any further with my investigations; but as for me—although it may be a weakness on my part—I have no fear of the consequences, so long as I feel assured that I have truth with me. Error may for a time wear the cloak of justice, and be admitted into the palaces of the rich; it may receive the plaudits of the multitude, and crush truth to earth under its triumphant car, but I can never be so dishonest to my own mind, or so treacherous to my convictions, as to ever court its favor, or bow to its behests.

Well, what is the mind of man? I intend to show that it is a result, or an effect proceeding from organization, and depends on that organization, as light is the result of fire. It is good orthodox doctrine—because it is taught everywhere in the Bible, wherever it teaches this question—to believe that the heart is the organ of thought; but so far from this being the case, it is not even the seat of the mental emotions. The heart is nothing more than a big muscle, and differs from most other muscles in no other particular than that its contractions are not under the influence of the will, and this is the case with the diaphragm, another broad and thin muscle which separates the heart and lungs from the intestines. The heart has no more connection with the mind than the diaphragm or the muscles of the foot; its only functions are, by its contractions, to force the blood into every part of the system, the clergy to the contrary notwithstanding. There is no organ in the animal system of life taxed with any more labor than its fellows; it has but the one job of work to do, that is, it has only one function to perform. The salivary glands do nothing but make saliva; the liver does nothing but make bile, and there is no movement made in any direction by any part of the system, but what there is a particular muscle adapted for that particular purpose. Now if the heart attends to his business and performs his part well, we have no right to impose any more labor on him. The animal system may be compared to a well regulated community of persons, having their farmers, and their mechanics, their tradesmen, their lawyers, and their doctors; (I do not include preachers—the drones of the community of the beehive, because I could not carry out the simile), and to put the work of the lawyer upon the farmer, would be like making the heart do the work of the brain; it is giving the heart too much to do, and the brain nothing to do. This kind of a misguided government would be disorder and trouble to a community, and disease to the animal frame; the heart would rebel—cease to any longer do his work, and the result would be the cessation of life. This idea, that the heart is the seat of thought no doubt took its origin among the ancients, from the fact, that during mental agitation they experienced a peculiar emotion in the breast situated in the region of the heart, and they referred it to the heart, as being the organ of those sensations, and the source of those peculiar emotions. But how could these emotions be the cause of the thought when the truth is, the thought was the cause of the emotions? This is, to say the most of it, nothing but a feeling, and has no connection with the intelligence. Even these feelings are not located in the heart; it is an excitement produced on the solar plexus of nerves, belonging to the sympathetic system, conveyed to it by impressions received upon the brain. The effect of mental agitation may be to increase the beats of heart or to color the cheek, but that does no more make the heart and the cheek the cause of the thoughts or emotions than the motions of my fingers in writing are the cause of what I am thinking. Having shown that the mind is not localized in the heart, I now propose showing that the brain is its throne; but if it is not the function of the brain to generate thought, then I know of no use for it, and its purposeless existence may be com-

pared to the priests of community and the drones of the beehive. Everything connected with the economy of the human system has some mission of labor to perform, and those parts which are entrusted with the higher and more important functions are the better guarded and protected from external injuries. The heart, the source of the arteries, is placed in the centre of the body, and the feet and hands are the outside sentinels to guard it. The important arteries and nerves are placed in the flexures of joints and deeply imbedded in muscle with a view to their better protection. The eye is protected on all sides by solid bone except the front, but here it has the means to protect itself, by means of the eyelids and lashes. The king of sound takes up his residence in a room cut out of solid bone, and having communication with the external world only by means of a small door. Notwithstanding the organs of the body are protected and cared for in proportion to their importance, and no matter what their function may be, they are all subservient to an organ better protected and provided for, than all these, and in comparison with which they are merely stalk and husks compared to the grain, and they are handmaids which do his bidding. At the summit of the column this king of the whole fabrication has erected his palace and made his throne. The palace is the head, the throne is the brain, and reason is the name of the king. This brain is first protected by three distinct coats, the outer one is denser and stronger than buckskin; then comes two plates of bone, separated by diple; this is next covered over by the scalp, which is still protected by hair, which gives an exterior appearance of grace and elegance. Can it be that this pulpy substance called brain, so well situated and so strongly encased for protection, means nothing! that it has no function to perform! As well say the Czar of Russia, sitting on his throne and protected by his military guards, has nothing to do with the government of his subjects! Every part of the animal organism is concerned and interested in the protection and preservation of this throne of reason. The bones are the frame work upon which the brain rests; the nerves, by their sense of pain, warn him of danger, and he calls on the muscles to carry him out of the way of that danger; the digestive apparatus makes the material for the maintenance of his existence. He looks out on the external world through his windows, the eyes, and takes cognizance of sound by means of the auditory nerve.

No part of the animal organism has any sense of pain except the nerves, and all these originate in the brain, yet itself never feels any pain. This is somewhat remarkable when we reflect that the nerves are a mere continuation of brain substance. A wound or disease of the brain substance is attended with mental disturbance and always in proportion to the amount and extent of the injury or disease, and it may be truly said that a disease or injury of the brain is a disease or injury of the mind, and *vice versa*. An animal may exist for weeks and months after the cerebrum has been removed, (if its physical wants are supplied,) but exhibits no sensations of consciousness or pain, and exists as in a state of profound sleep. Every physician who has a case of disordered mind to treat, does not look to the heart or any other muscle for the source of the

disorder, but he looks to the brain and directs his treatment accordingly. A man may lose any of his limbs or receive any extent of bodily injury, still the mind remains clear so long as the brain is untouched. It is a fact now so far conceded by all thinkers and persons pretending to scientific research, that the cerebrum is the organ of intelligence, the same as the eye is the organ of sight, and the ear the organ of hearing; that it requires no further investigation from me in this direction. Then the brain of man is an organization, and the mind is the result of that organization, and its strength and volume is dependent on the age, size, and strength of the organization. The mind "grows with our growth and strengthens with our strength." Manhood is a bound from the cradle, and old age is a bound back to it again. Mythology tells us that Minerva sprung full grown from the brain of Jupiter. This is correct in regard to the birth of the "soul" of man, if the theory of the religionist is true. He says the "soul" is the spirit of man and not dependent on the organism for its manifestations; then of course, like Minerva, it must be born into the world full sized when man is born, and continues without decrease or increase in size or vigor throughout man's whole existence; for we cannot speak of a strong spirit or well informed spirit, or a little spirit or great spirit, as we do of a strong mind or great mind. There are no degrees of "spirits;" if spirit is spirit, it is spirit, and cannot be anything more or less than spirit, and the spirit of a Hottentot is as much a spirit as the spirit of Victor Hugo. It is a something, or rather a nothing which entitles him to eternity just as much as Victor Hugo, and a great deal more so than Benjamin Franklin, who made no pretensions to be religious. The mind of a Digger Indian may differ from the mind of Charles Sumner, but their "souls" are precisely alike! and destined to eternity alike, and the same seat in heaven! No, the religionist does not mean the mind of man when he speaks of the "soul" of man; he means a something or a nothing, whichever you please, existing outside of, separate from, and independent of man. He traces the chain of connection—link by link—in the scale of animal being, from the Zoophyte, or the point where the vegetable and animal worlds mingle, up to the Caucasian branch of the human family, but the soul does not crop out until he comes to the native African, living in caves and subsisting on insects; and it is at this point that the "soul" first springs up full sized, and continues just the same through all subsequent grades, until we arrive at a Napoleon, a Washington and a Humboldt! He sees no difference in the "soul" of the beastly Congo and the "soul" of a Shakspeare! This may be true in regard to the "soul," but I am bold to assert that there is a difference in the minds of the two. Yes, as much difference as there is between the native African and the insects upon which he subsists. I contend that the characteristic differences of intelligences in the animal world, is determined by the relative size and force of the brain and nervous matter, and is dependent on nothing else. The Caucasian, who stands at the uppermost notch in the scale of animal being, has a larger brain than any other animal in proportion to his size, while the brain of the idiot is so small that his

movements are merely automatic. Even a religionist looking upon a Douglas and a Digger Indian could not mistake their relative intellectual capacities. It has been my object to show that these religionists make a difference in the meaning of "soul" and mind, and in corroboration of what I have said on this subject, I will now quote Webster:

"Mind, the intelligent power in man."

"Soul, the immortal spirit of man."

I have shown that the brain is the organ of the mind; will some Christian or Mohammedan please tell me what, and where is the organ of the "soul?" The mind is all that is necessary in this life to direct our actions and shape our conduct; then for what purpose in this life is this extraneous, outside "soul?" It accompanies us through life, but its service commences only when life ceases! Strange philosophy! Better not give us a soul until we have use for it, and that would be at the end of life.

We will now dismiss this "soul," the creation of the religionist, this something or this nothing, about which we can gather no knowledge whatever, and turn our thoughts once more to something more tangible and more easily understood; I mean the mind of man, or as Webster has it, "The intelligent power in man."

Is this "intelligent power in man" eternal? is it immortal? The Christian and the Mohammedan answer, no! They say the mind perishes with the body, and according to their theory it cannot be otherwise, unless there are two immortal somethings growing out of the same body! They have created an immortal "soul" for each body, and now they must not have that conflict with the mind; either the one or the other must perish, and in this singular dilemma of affairs, they have preferred to let the mind go out with the body, and save the "soul!" This soul, this creation of their imagination, has been made so independent of the body, that death can have no effect on it! It has been a popular doctrine with the Christian Church, that the body was to be resurrected after death, but that notion is so ridiculous and absurd, that it is now abandoned by the more enlightened Christians. They found they were about to get two or three immortalities on their hands, all arising from the same individual, namely: the soul, the mind and the body. In this dilemma they immortalize the "soul," and consign the others to oblivion; and to effect even this much they had to coin a new word, which is "immortality." This is intended to mean just half as much as eternity does; it is blocked as it were, out of eternity. Eternity has no beginning nor end, but immortality has a beginning but no end! "That which has a beginning must have an end," is a universal rule; but this exception is created to suit the purposes of religion. The soul came into existence the same time the body did, and therefore had a beginning, but in order to cheat it out of its destiny it is clothed with "immortality." This is the miserable strait to which they are reduced in order to dispose of their created phantoms. Now if it turns out to be proven beyond all question, that there is nothing more of man than body and mind, he is entirely cut off from immortality, and resurrection, by the Christian doc-

trine; and in their own language they make him to "perish as the beasts of the field."

I believe that I hazard nothing in saying that all philosophers, and all wise men, have always agreed that when man dies his body returns back again to its native elements, but it has been a mooted question with them, as it is in the present age, whether the mind, the intelligent power of man, continues to exist after the death of the body? I reason this out by bringing the application of the old rule to bear on this question. "Every effect must have a cause and that which is not an effect cannot have a cause."

We have already shown that effects are not eternal and that the eternal is not an effect. I think we have also shown that the mind is an effect, the effect of organization, and if this is the case the mind is not eternal, but as an effect it ceases with the organization, which is the cause of the effect. Light is the effect of fire; heat is the effect of fire. These effects cease when the fire dies out, that is when the cause is removed. It is still further evident that the mind is an effect because it had a commencement; we had no knowledge of ourselves before we were born, and even not until some time after we were born, then how is it possible for us to have any knowledge of ourselves after we are dead? Everything which has a beginning must have an end, and the end leaves it just at the place of beginning. If we live out our allotted days, our old age is the second edition of childhood. We climb the steps of life in the morning and return the same way in the evening, and when our sun has set, we are as we were before morning. We have thus played our part on the stage of life, we make our exits, and the rising generation takes our places to perform the same part over after us, and such is the circle of life and death.

Paul uses this as a simile to prove the doctrine of the resurrection, and he is very dogmatical in the enforcement of his argument. "Thou fool," he says, "That which thou sowest is not quickened (made alive) except it die." This was Paul's method of explanation; first of all, call a man a "fool," and then try on argument. But I think so far as the matter of "fool" is concerned, that I can show that the boot is on the other foot, although this is not my mode of explanation. When a grain of wheat is put into the ground the germ of that grain reproduces itself in the form of another stalk just like the old one which went before it the last year; but the substance of the seed which encased the germ perishes. Paul was certain that this proved the doctrine of the resurrection; well, so it does prove it as clear as mud, and no clearer. Here is where Paul mistook succession for resurrection. As one crop of grain passes away, the following year another crop is produced just like it; even so one generation passes away and another generation succeeds it just like the former one. But if Paul's argument is worth anything the resurrection is, our children who come after us! The only simile on the subject that is worthy of any notice, is the transmigration of the worm into the flying insect; but this is no more than apparent, and is no simile when investigated. The caterpillar is a creeping worm chained down to earth; he weaves a web around himself, when he sickens and dies; but

this is not the last of him; he comes out of his white shroud in a more splendid edition, revised and enlarged. The chains which bound him to earth have been severed; he has now taken to himself wings, and we see him flying over the meadows, and the little boys chasing him from flower to flower, himself the fairest of all. But he does not live always; he sometimes passes away in a few days. His life is a circle, the same as everything else. He deposits the egg, which is to reproduce himself again, in the form of the worm, and the butterfly. This is also succession and not resurrection. I will finish this part of the subject by quoting Solomon: "For what befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth so dieth the other, yea, they have all one breath, so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? Wherefore I perceive there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him? For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love and their hatred, and their envy is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun. Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God now accepts thy works. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest."

We are now led to the consideration of man's claims to immortality. Are these claims based upon the fact that he is endowed with a superior intelligence?

Vain presumption! All human knowledge pertains to earthly things and cannot go beyond it. A man's degree of intelligence is told by the amount of knowledge he has acquired and the capacity of his reasoning powers, all of which is useful to his earthly state of existence; it enables him to provide for the wants of the body and to some extent gratify the cravings of the mind, and gain an ascendancy over his neighbor, (for knowledge is power,) but let me ask what use would all his knowledge of earthly things, even if retained, and his earthly authority be to him beyond the grave? Daniel Webster had a world-renowned reputation for making great speeches, and it served him a good purpose while living, but since speeches of no kind are required in heaven, he is no more entitled to immortality beyond the grave than the Esquimaux Indian, for as Solomon says, in the grave whither thou goest there is no knowledge. The one could see no further beyond the grave than the other. A philosopher has no claim to heaven on account of his great wisdom, for heaven cannot need his philosophy. The physician's knowledge is buried with him, for such knowledge can be of no possible use in a heavenly sphere, for we are told there is no sickness there; then he has no claim

to immortality. The lawyer, however eminent in his profession, can have no claims to immortality, because of his superior knowledge, for such knowledge would serve him no purpose whatever beyond the grave, unless the future life should be similar to the present one. The farmer's knowledge is all "earthly," and he, too, has no rights beyond an earthly sphere, for his knowledge of the soils could be of no further use to him in a country where there is no soil nor crops. A mathematician's knowledge cannot accompany him beyond the grave, for when cut loose from earth he leaves his knowledge behind, for he has quit the sphere intended for its usefulness. The watchmaker can make a watch; the carpenter can build a house or construct a ship; the painter can enliven the imagination with the magic brush, but immortality knows no time-keepers, no houses or ships, and no paintings; all such knowledge can exist in none other than an earthly sphere. In short, no knowledge, or wisdom, or power, can qualify a man for heaven or entitle him to immortality, as I have clearly shown; then what is immortality? and what qualifies man for that immortality? Some tribes of North American Indians answer the former question, but the Christians laugh at the absurdity, but evade giving any answer of their own. The Indian, true to his natural instincts, expects to find in heaven good hunting grounds, abounding in plenty of game, grass and water, and this is what he calls mortality putting on immortality. Of course this is laughable, but it is definite and is coming up to the issue fairly and squarely, and if it does not suit the Christian, I ask him for a better definition. We deny immortality to the lower orders of animal life, yet the intelligence which they display in the means for their subsistence, and their knowledge of the laws for their propagation, and the regulation of their well being, surpasses the skill of man in the accomplishment of their purposes when directed to the same end. Their knowledge amounts almost to infallibility. Without any process of reasoning, and without the means of tools, but with a view to convenience, strength, and symmetry, the bee invariably constructs the cells of the honey-comb in a hexagonal shape, and they are more perfect in figure than the carpenter could map them off with square and compass. Is this intelligence on the part of the honey bee, or is it instinct? If it is intelligence then it is the kind of intelligence that exceeds that of man in accuracy and degree; but if it is instinct then instinct is superior to intelligence. The little birds which build their nests in the bushes commence their construction with rude material, such as coarse sticks and mud, but as they proceed with the work, they give it shape and beauty, and when it is finished it is a soft cushioned bed lodged in a strong frame, exactly such a contrivance as is required for the rearing of their young. I do not challenge man to make a bird's nest, but I do challenge him to construct perfect houses with less failures. The habitations of the white ant are built with more perfectness than the palaces of kings; and the dam of the beaver, in architectural skill, exceeds the ingenuity of the most experienced workman. But an animal cannot kindle a fire, make a boot, or construct a ship. Well, as he has no use for such things, he is not concerned about such matters;

but about matters with which he is concerned, he never fails in the accomplishment of his object, any more than the elm tree fails to produce leaves of exactly the same shape, independent of time or place; but no one supposes that such unerring knowledge and perfect intelligence entitles the animal to another sphere of existence beyond that which he now enjoys, because all this can serve him no purpose beyond his present life. Then what vain presumption in man, whose works and enterprises are a succession of failures, to suppose that such inferior knowledge and limited intelligence is to go beyond the grave and subserve his purposes in another and a higher sphere of existence!

There may be a higher sphere of existence beyond that which we now enjoy, but it can only be for such beings as are adapted to, and qualified for such a peculiar existence. Man has not a single qualification adapted for another state of existence; even all the knowledge which he has acquired and all the passions which he has inherited could be of no possible service to a life of immortality, but if he takes on immortality it must be the free gift of God, with the creation of other endowments than those which we now possess. Even "hope," the strong argument for immortality must cease when its opposite, "despair," ceases, for if man attained to the realization of his hopes what could he longer hope for? Hope having now nothing to feed upon, would become a dead letter and had better be taken out of the post-office. It is impossible for one state of existence to qualify itself for another state of existence beyond itself. We did not qualify ourselves for this present state of existence before we were born, nor could we have any previous knowledge of any such existence. If we had any knowledge of ourselves before we were born we would have some data on which to speculate in regard to a future state of existence, and this we could reason about from analogy, but since we owe nothing to an existence of any kind previous to ourselves, the inference is very clear that a future life can owe nothing to us in anything whatever. It would be just as easy to prove that we had an existence before birth, as it is to prove that we will have an existence after death. But if I did have a previous existence, what was that existence to me, when I was not conscious of it?

The reader will please bear in mind that I am now searching after the truth, and although truths are sometimes stubborn things, I never was afraid nor ashamed of them, and if it is a truth that "truth will prevail," I am ever ready for it, and the sooner we come squarely up to the mark, so much the better, and then the sooner will we be reconciled to it. If I set forth any truths in this work it is useless to rebel against them, but if I err, the error can be detected; so in this way we can have the issue fairly made out between us. I know that these questions have been evaded, and kept in the background as much as possible, but they are vital questions, concerning you and me, and all beings who can reason and reflect, and it is impossible for them to escape the consideration of the thinking mind.

The mind owes everything to organization and development, and as before stated, it "grows with our growth and strengthens with our

strength;" and is it not equally true that it decays with our decay and dies with our death? If the mind grows with our growth it most certainly derives that growth from the development of the body, but the reader may be puzzled to know what becomes of the mind when the body is dead. Well, what has become of the minds of those aged persons who were once characterized for eminence in the intellectual world? Where has that vigorous mind gone to, that General Scott had forty years ago? It either exists or does not exist; but if it does exist I again put the question, where is it? It has gone out of the General's possession, and consequently it cannot die or live with him. The mind of Buchanan to-day is a mere pigmy compared with what it was forty years ago; the greater portion of his mind is gone; but where has it gone to? Has that part of it which has gone, ceased to exist? It certainly has; and as we find him nearing second childhood we see that his circle of life is nearly completed, and when his spark of life goes out he has no mind left to dispose of. His mind has been going out for at least thirty years and the last vestige of it terminates with the death of the organization from which it all along has been a result.

The light goes out when the oil is consumed, of which it is an effect, but would it not be nonsense in me to inquire where that light had gone to or what had become of it? It has simply ceased to exist and that is all there is about it. The light is dependent on the oil, then is not the mind dependent on the organization of the body? and to it does it not owe its conditions of birth, growth, maturity, decline, and death? But some are ready to say that if the doctrine of the immortality of the mind is a delusion, they prefer the delusion to the truth of annihilation; that is, they rather believe a lie than the truth, if that lie is more in harmony with their feelings. Then why do they believe in such things as disease and death? Why do they believe that old age with its decrepitude will finally overtake them, and their stout, manly voice turning again to childish treble, will pipe and whistle in its sound? yet such is the destiny which the laws of nature has mapped out for all of us, and disbelieve these truths as we may, God will never revoke one of them, nor accommodate his laws to our feelings. But if belief is to be regulated in this manner, then I say, give me the doctrine of universal salvation, for this is the best delusion I ever heard of; it is the rose without thorn, the sweet without the bitter, and reward without merit. Who can have any objection against such a belief except malicious persons who harbor grudges against their neighbors which they are not able to satisfy in this life? Yet I am not a Universalist; but why? Just because my belief is something which depends on evidence, and is not subject to the will. If the orthodox Christian has no other objections to the doctrine of universal salvation than that it is not in harmony with his feeling, his feelings are those of selfishness and his belief comes from narrow minded bigotry. I cannot believe a delusion, because that which I know to be a delusion, it is impossible for me to believe, besides I cannot discover any good result from trying to believe a delusion, that is, no good can result to the persons who are thus deluded. Delusions have numbered martyrs

by the thousands, but that was no profit to them, when it cost them their lives. A delusion contents the ignorant slave to the lash of the whip, and the galling yoke of bondage. The master makes him believe that his light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Hence the slaves are all very religious, and resigned to their fate. They are told that the powers which be, are ordained of God, but the Declaration of Independence is scrupulously withheld from them. Although the Christian has a system of religion of his own, yet he believes all other religions to be delusions but his, yet he cannot see that the practice of such delusions is attended with any good results. It would be unnecessary for me to undertake to make a plea for the cause of truth in this book, for those who care nothing for truth would never read it, and for such persons this book is not written.

IS THE TENDENCY OF A DISBELIEF IN THE DOCTRINE OF REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS BEYOND THE GRAVE, FOR GOOD OR EVIL?

I have been laboring to show that the practical working of such a doctrine has been for evil. It has been an experiment extending over thousands of years, and is to-day pronounced by the unprejudiced mind to be a failure, and in countries where disbelief has no hold, those people are still as much debased as in any former period of their history, and even in the most enlightened countries where disbelief is most tolerated and where it crops out the most, there is found the brains of those countries. Boston to-day is the brain of America; but certainly not because of her religious intolerance as in the days of her Puritan bigotry and religious superstition; but her advancement has been marked by the progress of rationalism and religious toleration. A long train of failures, and nothing but failures in any one thing for hundreds of years, ought to be reason enough for the trial of something else. Well, such a trial is being made as we have already shown, in the United States, France, England, and Germany, and is found to be exceeding the most sanguine expectations of any of its projectors. This is a good lesson, for it is learned from experience, but I now propose to reason it from principle.

Our care and attention of anything is measured by the interest which we have in it, and vice versa. This will be conceded by everybody, but a mere tacit acquiescence is not sufficient; I desire to impress it on the mind so that it will not be soon forgotten. What caused the Southern States to rebel against the national government? Was it not sectional interest and ownership in slave property? Why was the call of the President for volunteers answered so promptly throughout the loyal North? Was it not because of the interest the people had in an inheritance which had been given them by their forefathers? Does not the owner of a house give it more care and attention than the renter, who has no interest beyond a year's time? I once knew a beautiful little town of much godliness, which could boast of three churches and one old rickety school-house, which was planted in the midst. During school session,

the school boys were careful to not defile anything which would mar its appearance, or to destroy anything about it that would conflict with their comfort or happiness. The boys had an interest then in the old building and they kept it in as good repair as they could to protect themselves from the chilling blasts of winter. But mark the change when all interest had been given up in the old concern. One month after dismissal it looked like the ruins of Palmyra or Balbec. Now every boy has a fling at the old school-house; every door is battered down, and every window is knocked out. But when that work of demolition was going on, had the foremost of that little band of destructionists been put in possession of the building he would have immediately stopped the assault against its old battered walls and commanded the siege to be raised. This shows what interest will do and what a want of interest will do. The one is to take care of a thing and the other is to destroy it. God is our schoolmaster and the earth is our school-house, and so long as we believe this we will heed the instruction of the one, and give the other our care and attention with a view to our earthly happiness, for self interest commands us to do so. If we are not to expect a future heaven beyond the clouds all our interest must be in this earth, and then we would endeavor to make heaven a reality by bringing it down among us, and then we could have heaven on earth, and this would prompt us to take good care of our bodies, improve the mind and cultivate the more social feelings of our nature; but if this earth is nothing but a "howling wilderness," and "a vain show to man's illusion given," and if "we are nothing but bruises and putrified sores from the crown of our heads to the soles of our feet," and still have the promise of another and a better world than this—one of eternal happiness—immediately after quitting this "howling wilderness" and this old carcass of "bruises and putrified sores," we would lose all interest in ourselves and our habitation, and if we did not commit suicide we would at least pray that the King of Terrors might visit us as soon as possible and hasten the day for us to exchange worlds. To live would be to suffer, to die would be to gain everything. Then what is the use of health if it promotes longevity? Old age is only cheating you out of the greater amount of happiness. Wars, famines, pestilence, plagues, epidemics, diseases and sickness of every kind, or anything which will cut short man's days is a blessing, for it brings him to a realization of eternal reward so much the sooner. He takes no more interest in the old school-house, so the sooner it is battered down and taken out of the way so much the better; he has no further regard for the schoolmaster, nor pays any respect to his laws. The body is a clog and fetter to the soul and the prison house which locks up his mind in darkness. He sees no beauty or good in such an arrangement and his main desire is to free himself of his prison-house of clay and of those fetters which bind him to earth, and to take to himself wings like the butterfly and fly away in the unexplored regions of space; but convince him that such dreams are all hallucinations, then he will quit his grumbling and come down to the realities of things and be better contented with his lot, and try and do something for himself and for others. Convince him

that the tenement which his mind now inhabits, is his by right of inheritance, and it is the only one which he can be allowed to have, then upon the ground of interest he will bestow upon it all his care and attention, and he will learn that the proper study for man, is man, and he will feel the force of the language of Solomon, that "a living dog is better than a dead lion." He will then improve the gifts which God has given him, and as he studies the works of nature and the laws which regulate material things, he will begin to realize the fact, that "truth is stranger than fiction." The best crown to lay up for old age is a mind well stored with useful information, a body preserved intact from the taint of disease, and a life spent in doing good. This would be the storehouse from which the mind could draw its supplies, when no longer able to engage in the active duties of life. In early life the mind is always directed to manhood, and it may be said at this period that we live in the future, and in the evening of our day when we are descending the steps of life, the mind is directed behind us, our life is now made up of a review, and it may be said that we are still living in the past, and when we come to look back upon this picture drawn with our own hands and see much in it to admire and feel that we have not lived in vain, it is a pleasant scene for contemplation; but if this picture is one of folly and crime, it can never be effaced, and the sight of it will be a perpetual punishment even to the end of life. Solomon was a wise king, and we find much in him to admire, but we find more to censure, and it is his own confession that he drank so deep at the fount of pleasure that he stirred up the dregs, for when he came to look upon the picture of his past life he says, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." He did not view life from the proper stand-point; he gave himself over to licentiousness and transient pleasures, and did not engage in those studies and pursuits which would have been a blessing to him; but he pronounced his life to be a failure, which no doubt was the case. How different was the life of Professor Dick, of Franklin and of Humboldt. Their last days were their best days, and the reason of this, to the intelligent reader, is so obvious that it requires no further comment. The man who lives the life of such men as these secures all there is of this world, and it certainly cannot disparage his chances for another one.

Lincoln said that one war at a time was enough, and it is equally true that one world at a time is enough.

There are as many partition walls between the different sects of religion as there are sects, and every new religion begins by erecting a wall between itself and the rest of mankind. This life of exclusiveness can be broken up only when these walls which separate man from his fellow man, are broken down; then, and not till then, will the dawn of the millennium day be ushered in, and mankind can look upon each other as a universal brotherhood.







