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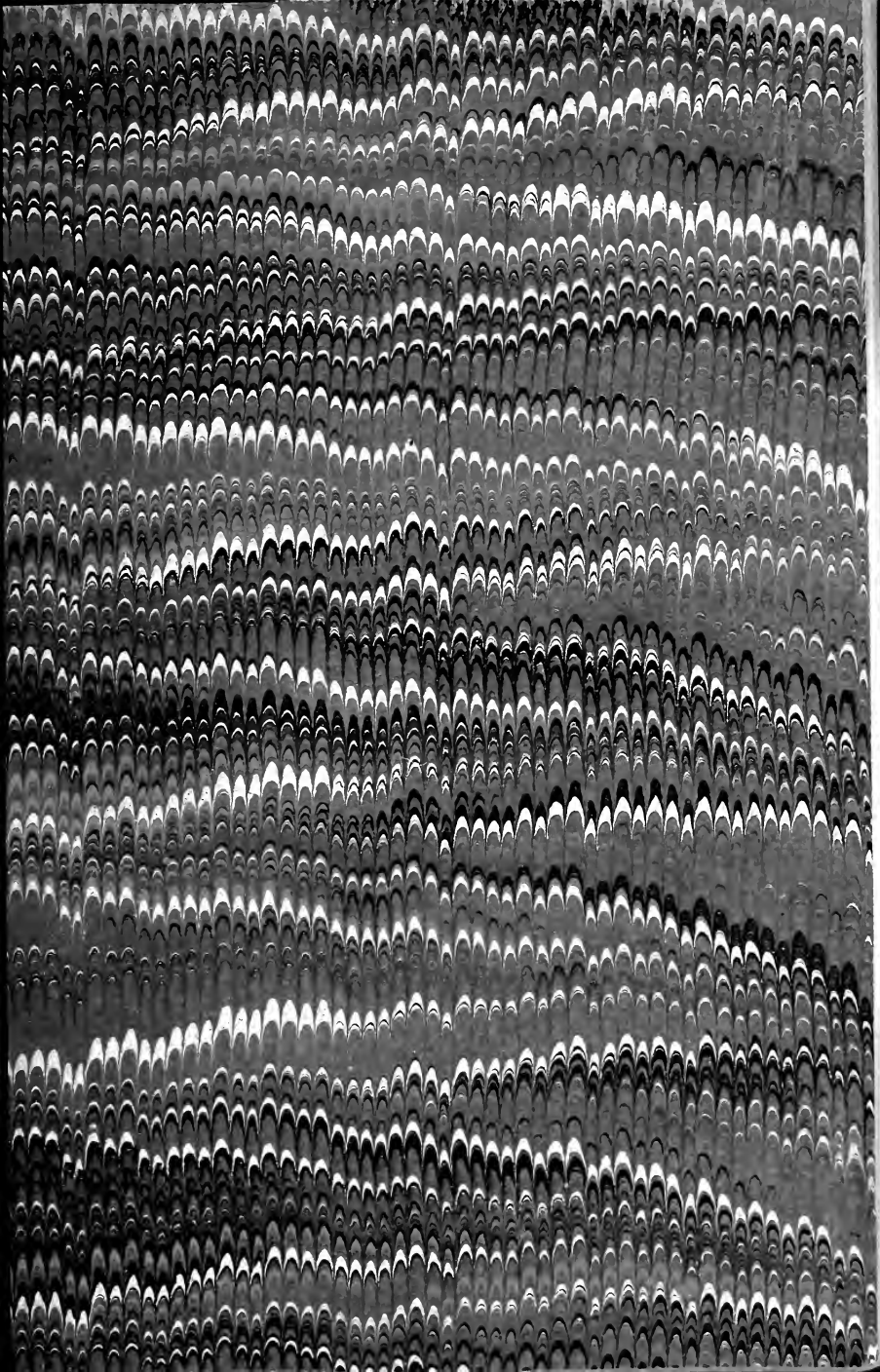
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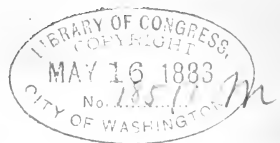
THE

# REAL BLASPHEMERS.

BY

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REAL BLASPHEMERS

BT

JOHN R. KELSO A.M.

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF JOHN R. KELSO  
DECEASED  
BY WILLIAM H. KELSO, Executor  
vs.  
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
Plaintiff

# THE REAL BLASPHEMERS.

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## LECTURE FIRST.

On the part of the priesthood, and of churchmen generally, it has always been a favorite habit to charge Infidels and other advocates of Freethought, especially those who have advanced the most utterly unanswerable arguments, with being blasphemers. I propose, however, in this short course of lectures, to demonstrate that this charge is entirely without foundation. I propose to demonstrate further that the very parties who prefer this charge are themselves the real blasphemers.

According to Webster and other standard lexicographers, blasphemy consists in any indignity offered to God in words either spoken or written, in attributing to him anything that is contrary to his nature, in charging him with doing anything that he never does, and especially anything that would derogate from his glory if he should do. In short, our highest authorities on the subject make anything blasphemy, if spoken or written against God, that would constitute slander, if spoken or written against an innocent man. From this definition, it is clear that if there be no

such person as God there cannot really be any such crime as blasphemy. It is also clear that since a crime of any kind consists in the intent and not in the act itself, and since no one can intend any indignity toward a person that he does not believe has any existence, it is clear, I repeat, that in view of these things, a thorough Infidel cannot be guilty of the offense of blasphemy. Since he does not intend any indignity to any intelligent being, his words, no matter what they may be, cannot constitute blasphemy, when used concerning Jehovah, any more than when used concerning Joss, Juggernaut, etc., or even concerning the apes, serpents, onions, stones, and other lesser gods of other nations. It is evident, therefore, that the real blasphemers must be looked for among the real believers in some god; and since, in this country, the only real god-believers are those who worship the God of the Bible, it is evident that among these are to be found all of our real blasphemers. In order, then, to discuss the question before us, we must first assume that there actually is such a person, power, or intelligence as God, and that he possesses certain attributes which distinguish him from all other persons, powers, or intelligences. Instead, however, of taking the trouble ourselves to assume a God, and to endow him with attributes of our own invention, we propose in this discussion to simply take up, as we now find him, the God that the champions of the Bible have already assumed, and that they have already endowed with various attributes all entirely of their own invention.

As we now find him, this God is a pure spirit, infinite in the extent of his presence, infinite in his knowl-

edge, infinite in his power, infinite in his goodness; in short, infinite in all his attributes, all of which are good and good only. Who first assumed the existence of this God, and upon what grounds they made this assumption, we will not now stop to consider; neither will we now stop to consider who first endowed him with his present attributes, and the grounds upon which these endowments were made. Taking him as we now find him, already endowed with all the infinite attributes in question, and assumed to be the only true God—the maker and sustainer of all things—I propose to prove that all the champions of the Bible are real blasphemers, because they attribute to him many personal qualities that are contrary to his nature, as here found, and because they charge him with doing many things which he does not do, and which would greatly derogate from his glory if he should do.

Before proceeding, however, to adduce the promised proofs, I wish to say, once for all, that in charging all the champions of the Bible with being blasphemers, I do not mean any personal disrespect or unkindness to any individual, and especially to any individual now present, who may regard the contents of the Bible as all absolutely true, and as being indeed the inspired word of God. As a public teacher, as a minister of the gospel of truth, of reason, science, and common sense, I hold it to be my duty to attack any man's and every man's errors, whenever and wherever I may discover them, and this duty I will faithfully and fearlessly perform. I will not, however, attack any man himself, no matter into how many errors he may have fallen. On the other hand, if I have fallen into

any errors, I invite attack upon those errors, for I want to know them and to abandon them. I claim, however, a right to exemption from the personal attacks, the personal proscriptions and persecutions which, because of the expression of my honest convictions, because of the unanswerable arguments that I have advanced, I have long borne at the hands of those who claim to be true believers in the inspiration of the Bible, and faithful followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. Persecutions can never convince me that I am in the wrong, or that my persecutors are in the right. Quit persecuting me, therefore, quit proscribing me in my profession, quit calling me by ugly names. You have long tried all of these things in vain. By them you have succeeded only in driving me farther from you, farther into what you regard as an erroneous way. Would it not, then, be better to try upon me the effect of kind and just treatment; to point out to me the fatal errors into which you hold that I have fallen? As I proceed, do not ask yourselves whether my teachings do or do not tend to overthrow the creeds which, before you were old enough to reason, were instilled into your minds, but ask yourselves whether I do or do not fully and fairly prove the truth of all that I teach. If I do not give this proof, please point out wherein I fail to give it. If, on the contrary, I do give it, if I do fully and fairly demonstrate the truth of my teachings and the error of yours, have I not done you a great good? Is not the truth which I give you worth far more than is the error which I take from you? And should you persecute me for thus doing you a great good?

“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night: and the evening and the morning were the first day” (Gen. i, 3-5). “Thou hast prepared the light and the sun” (Ps. lxxiv, 16). “While the sun, or the light or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain” (Eccl. xii, 2). “I form the light and create darkness” (Is. xlv, 7).

In all of these passages, and in a vast number of other similar passages, God is represented as believing that light was a substance, or body, entirely independent of, and distinct from, the sun, the moon, the stars, or any other source of light; as believing that it was something that he had formed or given shape to; as believing that it was something that was capable of existing either commingled with, or “divided from,” darkness, which he believed to be another similar substance or body of a different color; as believing that it was something that was capable of being “darkened” without being destroyed. He is represented as believing that day could and did exist, with its evening and morning, before there was any sun to produce day. He is represented as believing that darkness was something that he had created—as something that had once been utterly absent from the universe, and at the same time, too, that light was also absent. He is also represented as declaring that he himself had made all these things just as they are here described.

We now know, however, that all the views which he is here represented as entertaining concerning these

things are erroneous. We now know that light is simply a property of, or an emanation from, some luminous body, and that it is not itself a body that can exist independent of any other body, or that could continue to exist, as the sun could, without any change in its shape or its material, after it had been entirely "darkened." We now know that darkness is simply the absence of light, and that it is not a substance or body that ever could have been, or ever was, created. We now know that light and its own absence could not both have been ever, at the same time, wanting in the universe; that so long as light was not present anywhere in the universe, its absence, darkness, must, of absolute necessity, have been everywhere present. We now know that light never could have been, and hence never was, so commingled with its own absence, darkness, that the two had to be "divided" or separated from each other. We now know that day never could have existed, and hence never did exist, before there was any sun to produce day. We now know that no effect can exist before its cause. And, knowing all these things, we cannot help knowing, too, that God never could have made, and hence never did make, all of these things, or any of them, as they are represented in the passages above quoted. In contending, therefore, as they do, that these passages are the inspired word of God, the champions of the Bible represent him as a very ignorant person, as entertaining false notions concerning all these things. They also represent him as a very untruthful person, as asserting that he himself had made all these things just as they are here described, when, in fact, he had never



made them at all. In doing this they give a representation of him which is entirely contrary to the nature of his attributes of infinite knowledge and infinite truthfulness. This representation, being very derogatory to God's character, undeniably constitutes blasphemy, and those who give it are undeniably real blasphemers

“And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters: and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament heaven” (Gen. i, 6-8). In contending that these passages are the inspired word of God, the champions of the Bible blasphemously represent him as asserting things which we now know to be utterly false; as asserting that he had made and placed directly over the earth a “firmament,” or solid structure, and had placed on the upper side of it a large portion of the waters of the universe. The word firmament is simply an anglicized form of the Latin *firmamentum*, which means a solid foundation or support—something designed to render firm or stable whatever might be placed upon it. The word is used as the translation of the Hebrew “rakia,” which, in addition to the idea of firmness or solidity always involved in the term, also always involves the idea of thinness or flatness, as of sheet metal, produced by hammering or beating. The corresponding English terms are “the sky, the heaven,” etc. The term heaven, as you doubtless all know, is simply an old and now obsolete form of the past tense of the verb

heave, to lift up, to bulge, etc., the word having formerly been written with a final *en* instead of a final *ed*, as at present. The meaning of the word then was and still is the heave-en, that is, the thing heaved or bulged up—the sky, which was formerly believed to be a solid structure, and which does seem to be heaved up, like an inverted bowl over the earth, just as the crystal of a watch is heaved or bulged up from the face of the watch. The earth over which this “firmament” or solid sky was thus heav-en (heaved) or bulged up, was once universally believed to be flat and stationary, and every reference made to it in the Bible involves these ideas. On the upper side of the “firmament” were believed to be vast bodies of water, placed there at the time of the creation. This idea of the “firmament,” or solid concavo-convex heaven, is more clearly expressed in the following passage: “Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking-glass” (Job xxxvii, 18). We now know, however, that there is not and that there never was any such solid sky or “firmament” standing thus over a flat and stationary earth, and supporting vast bodies of water. In representing God, then, as entertaining so many erroneous opinions, and as making so many false assertions concerning these things, are not my opponents all guilty of blasphemy?

“In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.  
: : : And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth: and all the high hills that were under the

whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail: and the mountains were covered" (Gen. vii, 11, 19, 20). "The fountains also of the deep, and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven [not from the clouds, the waters had risen several miles above, where rain-clouds exist] was restrained" (Gen. viii, 2). My opponents represent God as here asserting that, through "fountains of the great deep"—a "great deep" which we now know never could have existed, and which, consequently, never did exist beneath the earth's surface, and through "windows of heaven," holes in a firmament or solid sky, which we now know never could have rested, and which, consequently, never did rest above the earth—water enough was procured to produce a general deluge, to cover the tops of the highest mountains, to form a solid body of water over five miles deep over the face of the whole earth. In representing him as making these assertions so utterly false and absurd, do they not defame his character for knowledge and veracity? And are they not, then, guilty of blasphemy?

"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament [or solid substance] of the heaven [or heaved-up thing], to divide [not to produce day, which already existed, without anything to produce it] the day from the night [previous to this time day and night seem to have been sadly intermingled with each other]. . . . And God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day [to rule it how?], and the lesser light [the moon is not any more a light than is the earth] to rule the night; he made the stars also. And God set them

[stuck them like nails] in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day, and over the night, and to divide the light [which already existed without any luminous body in the universe] from the darkness. . . . And the evening and the morning were the fourth day" (Gen. i, 14, 16-19). Here God is represented as asserting that he had made the sun, the moon, and the stars as mere adjuncts to the earth, and that he had made them all three days after the making of the earth. We now know, however, that this assertion is false, that the earth never could have existed, and hence never did exist, and enjoy day and night, before there was any sun to produce either the earth herself or her day, and before there were any other bodies in the universe. He is also represented as falsely and absurdly asserting that the sun was made not to produce day, which already existed, without anything to produce it, but to "divide" the already existing day from the already existing night; "to divide the light," which already existed without anything to produce it, "from the darkness," from its own absence, with which it seems to have previously been commingled. He is still further represented as falsely and foolishly asserting that he made the sun, the moon, and the stars all at one job, and in far less time than he had spent in the making of the earth alone. He is finally represented as asserting that to keep them from falling he had "set" or stuck all these bodies, like so many nails, all at an equal distance from the earth, into the solid substance of the "firmament," and hence, of necessity, a little lower or nearer the earth than were the "waters

which were above the firmament." In representing God as making such assertions as these, are not my opponents undeniably guilty of blasphemy?

"And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven [the solid sky into which the stars had been "set"] departed as a scroll when it is rolled together" (Rev. vi, 13, 14). "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. . . . Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (2 Pet. iii, 10, 12). Here God is represented as still believing, after a lapse of some 4,000 years, during which he should have learned better, that the sky or heaven was a solid substance which was capable of being "rolled together" like a "scroll," and taken away, which was capable of producing a "great noise" when it was moved, and which was capable of being "melted" or "dissolved" by a great heat. He is also represented as being so ignorant that he believed the stars to be small objects set as mere ornaments in the firmament, and capable of being shaken out of it, and made to come rattling down like so many figs upon the earth. And can any but blasphemers make, concerning God, representations so derogatory to his character for infinite knowledge?

"For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he

hath set the world upon them" (1 Sam. ii, 9). "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . Who hath laid the measure thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the corner-stone thereof" (Job xxxviii, 4-6)? "Who laid the foundations of the earth that it should not be removed forever" (Ps. civ, 5)? "Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble" (Job ix, 6). "Mine hand also hath laid the foundations of the earth" (Is. xlviii, 13). "The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved; I bear up the pillars of it" (Ps. lxxv, 3.) "Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth" (Mic. vi, 2). "For the windows from on high are open and the foundations of the earth do shake. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage" (Is. xxiv, 18-20). "The world also is established that it cannot be moved" (Ps. xciii, 1). "And the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were discovered" (2 Sam. xxii, 16). "Which . . . layeth the foundations of the earth" (Zech. xii, 1) "And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth" (Heb. i, 10). "For the earth is the Lord's . . . he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods" (Ps. xxiv, 1, 2). "To him that stretched out the earth above the waters" (Ps. cxxxvi, 6).

In all of these passages, and in a vast number of others that might be given, the earth is clearly represented as a stationary body, firmly fixed upon pillars,

spread out like a floating island upon the waters of the "great deep;" or resting upon some other material foundation. Indeed, there is not in the entire Bible a single passage which, even remotely, involves the idea of a globular earth, revolving in space. That the writers of the Bible regarded the earth as a flat as well as a stationary body is made still more clear by the following passages: "Thus saith God the Lord . . . he that spread forth the earth" (Is. xlii, 5). Is a globular earth a thing that is thus "spread forth?" "I am the Lord . . . that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself" (Is. xlv, 24). Could any other than a flat earth be thus "spread abroad?" "And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish; . . . and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up" (Heb. i, 10-12). Could any other than a flat earth be thus, like a "vesture," folded up? And could any other heaven than one material and flat, like sheet metal, be thus also folded up like a "vesture?" In contending that all of these passages are the inspired word of God, do not my opponents represent God as ignorantly believing that the earth was thus flat and stationary, and the heaven or sky as thus consisting of a solid substance, like sheet metal? Do they not also represent him as mendaciously declaring that he himself had made the earth thus flat and stationary, and the sky thus a solid substance? And does not the act of making representations of God so derogatory to his character constitute my opponents blasphemers?

In the following passages the earth is represented

as the principal body in the universe; as being, indeed, itself the entire universe, all the other bodies being simply its complements or ornaments. It is represented as affording a plenty of room on its surface for all the heavenly bodies and all the heavenly devils to fall upon, and as being so spread out under these heavenly bodies and heavenly devils that they all do inevitably strike it whenever they do fall. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning" (Is. xiv, 12). "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 off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree" (Is. xxxiv, 4). The "heavens" mentioned here is evidently nothing more nor less than the plural of heaven, which, as we have already seen, was the firmament or solid sky which, on the second day of creation, God placed, like a vast inverted bowl, over the earth as a support for the vast bodies of water which he stored up above the earth, and for the stars and the other heavenly bodies which he set into it. These heavenly bodies, the "hosts of heaven," are here represented as being shaken out of their settings in the firmament, and made to come rattling down, like so many figs upon the earth. We know, however, that this representation is false, since the stars, so far from being small bodies like figs, as they were formerly supposed to be, are now known to be themselves vast worlds, many of them millions of times larger than the earth upon which they are thus represented as falling. The firmament or "heavens," from which the "hosts" of heavenly bodies have been shaken, is also



represented here as being "rolled together as a scroll," and this could not be done to anything but a material body, thin and flat like sheet metal. We now know, however, that this representation is also false, since there never was any such material "heavens" or solid sky to be thus "rolled together." The following passage is also equally false: "And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought, against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, . . . he was cast out into the earth; and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. xii, 7-9). To say nothing about the devils of heaven, do my opponents really believe that all the stars of heaven ever did or ever will come rattling down thus, like so many figs, upon the earth? If they do not themselves believe it, are they not guilty of willful blasphemy when they thus represent God as the author of these and a thousand other passages equally absurd and false? Can they, without blasphemy, represent him thus as more ignorant than themselves? Can they, without blasphemy, represent him as believing and teaching doctrines which their own intelligence renders themselves incapable of believing, and which their own self-respect, if not their sense of honor, prevents themselves from ever teaching on their own responsibility?

In the following passages the firmament or heaven—the solid sky, which we now know never did exist—is represented as having solid foundations, resting, like the edge or rim of an inverted bowl, upon the earth, or in the waters, upon which the earth is represented

as being, like a great floating island, "stretched out." "The pillars of heaven tremble" (Job xxvi, 11). "The foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was wroth" (2 Sam. xxii, 8). "Thus saith the Lord, 'The heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool'" (Is. lxvi, 1). "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, . . . that stretcheth out the heavens [not as mere boundless space, as many of my opponents would fain have us believe, but as something material] as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in" (Is. xl, 22). "Who . . . stretchest out the heavens like a curtain. Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters. He watereth the hills from his chambers (Ps. civ, 2, 3, 13)." As here described, the "heavens," spread out "as a curtain," or "as a tent to dwell in," corresponds exactly with what we call the sky, as it appears to our unaided vision, and evidently means nothing else. We now know, however, that the sky—the "heavens" in question—is nothing more than the color of the atmosphere which surrounds us, and through which we look outward from the earth in all directions into boundless space. Since God was supposed to sit upon the "heavens" or sky, and since the "heavens" or sky, thus used by him for a seat or "throne," was supposed to rest with its circular edge, like the edge of an inverted bowl, upon the surface of the earth, the author very consistently speaks of him as sitting "upon the circle of the earth." This "circle of the earth" can be nothing else than the visible horizon—the circle formed by God's seat, the sky, where it seems to rest upon the earth. That portion of the circular edge of

the sky or "heavens," which extended out beyond the land into the water, was supposed to rest upon beams or upon something else more substantial than water. With this prevailing idea in his mind, therefore, the author very consistently speaks of God as laying "the beams of his chambers in the waters;" and, in view of the then prevailing belief that there were vast bodies of water "above the firmament"—right in God's "chambers," placed for the benefit of the earth—he also speaks very consistently when he says of God, "He watereth the hills from his chambers." When we consider the true standpoint of belief occupied by the author while writing the above passages their meaning becomes very plain and very consistent. When considered from any other possible standpoint, they have no meaning, no consistency at all. But do my opponents occupy the same standpoint that was occupied by the author of these passages? Do they really believe that there is, or that there ever was, any such heaven or solid sky—any such vast inverted bowl, resting with its circular edge upon the earth, thus forming what the author calls "the circle of the earth," or upon beams laid in the waters? If not, if they are themselves too intelligent to believe this long since exploded doctrine, how dare they thus blasphemously charge God with being ignorant enough to believe it?

By contending that the Bible is his inspired word, my opponents have thus far constantly represented God as a very ignorant person—as entertaining all the erroneous opinions that prevailed among the barbarous people of the dark ages in which the Bible was

written. They have constantly represented him merely as a fair exponent, reflection, or specimen of the people of those countries and of those times in which the writers of the Bible lived. They have constantly represented him as exhibiting, in regard to all scientific matters, a degree of ignorance that would at the present time be a disgrace to a school-boy of fifteen years. They have constantly represented him as ostentatiously and mendaciously declaring that he had himself done many things which we now know that he never could have done, and which, consequently, he never did do; things, too, which it would have been a great disgrace to him if he ever had done. Have I not, then, made out against them several clear cases of blasphemy?

“And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking [Which was walking, the voice or the Lord God?] in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?” (Gen. iii, 8, 9). This is a plain historical statement, in which figurative language would be entirely inadmissible. The entire statement, therefore, is bound to be either literally true or literally false. If it be literally true—and my opponents will hardly contend that it is literally false—then, since God had a voice audible to the natural or physical sense of hearing, he must, of necessity, have possessed natural or physical organs of speech. Since he was walking (it could hardly have been the voice alone that was walking), he must, of necessity, have possessed feet

and legs to walk with, and a body to support those organs. In short, we have him here, like a man, possessed of a complete material body. And since, for his walk, he purposely chose "the cool of the day," it is evident that he wished to avoid the heat of the day as too oppressive. In this matter, then, he clearly exhibited a human, or, at least, a physical weakness. Since he was walking about inside of the garden, he must, of necessity, have been less in size than was the garden. Since Adam alone was expected to dress this entire garden and keep it in order, it could not have been a very large one; and since, even inside of this small garden, there was room enough not occupied by God for Adam and his wife to hide themselves in from his "presence," he could not have been much larger than a man, certainly not larger than one of the giants described by Sin Bad the Sailor. He and Sin Bad's giants doubtless all belonged to the same order of beings. All that portion of the universe, then, not occupied by this his comparatively small body, was destitute of God's presence. He was certainly not omnipresent. In the extent of his presence, he was certainly a finite being, as much so as am I myself; and he never changes, and since no finite thing can ever possibly become infinite, he is bound to be a finite being to-day if he has any existence at all. Such a being, however, traveling during all the ages of eternity, with a million times the speed of light, could never reach the boundary of the infinite universe, even in one single direction. Much less could he ever, and especially in "six days," have passed throughout all portions of it to create the infinitude of mighty worlds and systems of

worlds contained therein. By contending, therefore, that this incredible story is his inspired word, and that it is absolutely true, my opponents undeniably make God a total failure. They entirely ungod him. Are they not, then, guilty of blasphemy?

Besides all this, since "Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God," and since, in order to find them, he was under the necessity of calling to them, he must, of necessity, have been ignorant of the place of their concealment, as well as absent from that place. Had he been present where they then were, they would not have been hidden "from" his "presence;" and had he known where they were, they would not have been hidden from him at all. It is not said that they tried to hide from him, but that they actually did hide. Here, then, my opponents blasphemously make God finite in the extent of his knowledge as well as in the extent of his presence.

In Ex. xxxi, 17, we read: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed." Had he not been weary, he could not possibly have thus "rested" and been "refreshed." Here, then, if this be the inspired word of God, we again have proof positive that, like men and other animals, he was once subject to a physical want or infirmity, weariness; and that, like men and other animals, he required physical rest and refreshment. And dare my opponents contend that a person thus possessed of a material body, thus subject to physical infirmities, thus liable to be worn out and destroyed, thus limited in his presence, his knowledge, and his power, can be and is the infinite being or

power that rules the infinite universe? If not, if by contending that these descriptions of him are given by inspiration from himself, they degrade God and render him, in any respect, inferior to the infinite power in question, do they not ungod him entirely? And can they do this without being real blasphemers?

“And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake” (Gen. viii, 20, 21). From the fact that God said certain things in his “heart,” we learn that he certainly had a “heart,” and that he certainly must have had a body to contain the “heart.” From the fact that he “smelled a sweet savor”—the material odors of roast meats—we learn that he certainly had a nose, which was acted upon by the same agencies that act upon the noses of men and the lower animals, and that he certainly must have had a body to sustain the nose. From the fact that he was pleased and rendered more gracious by the smell of the “sweet savor” in question—by the smell of that which constituted his food—we learn that in his nature, his appetites, his passions, etc., he was just like men and the lower animals, that are always more kindly disposed after a “good square meal” than they are when ravenous from hunger. Indeed, the Bible everywhere teaches that the design, and the only design, of the roast meats formerly offered to God was, by sending up to his place of abode a “sweet savor,” to gratify his sense of smell, and to thus put him into a suffi-

ciently good humor to pardon the sins of the people, and to do their bidding generally. In other words, by means of their roast meats, of which they supposed he was exceedingly fond, they then bribed or bamboozled him into serving them, just as we now, by means of our extravagant "blarney," of which we suppose him to be exceedingly fond, bribe or bamboozle him into serving us.

In the thirty-second chapter of Genesis we learn that God, in a material body like that of a man, had a "rough-and-tumble" wrestling match with Jacob, who, notwithstanding the fact that he was then over a hundred years of age, was more than a match for this materialized God. From this, again, we learn that God had a body, and a very weak one at that. From the fact that he did not know who Jacob was until he had inquired and Jacob had told him, we learn that, in intelligence, he was not superior to a man; and from the fact that after his defeat he wished to go away from Jacob, we learn that, at that time, he was not away from Jacob; that is, we learn that he was not then present in any other part of the universe. How, then, did the universe get on without him, while he was thus absent from it tussling with Jacob? Was not such tussling with a man a very undignified amusement for a God to engage in? Do not my opponents slander God when they thus represent him as engaging in this low kind of sport? Are they not, then, real blasphemers?

"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" (Gen. xviii,



21). Here, again, God is represented as being very limited both in his power and his presence as well as in his knowledge. From the fact that he had to "go down" to Sodom, in order to "see" what the Sodomites were doing, we learn that he could not "see" those things from where he then was. From the fact that in order to be at Sodom he first had to "go down" thither, we learn that he was not yet at Sodom; that he was not omnipresent. From the fact that he did not yet know what the Sodomites were doing, and could not know this until he reached their city, we learn that he was neither omniscient nor omnipotent. Indeed, this story robs him of all the attributes that render him a deity at all—of all the attributes that render him superior to man. Since a man could have done all that he is here represented as doing, this representation of him certainly degrades him to the level of a man. Indeed, in the preceding portion of this same chapter, he is represented as having a body so exactly like the body of a man that he was mistaken for a man. He is represented as having walked and talked exactly like a man; as having grown weary like a man; as having rested in the shade of a tree like a man; as having had dirty feet like a man; as having washed his feet like a man; as having been hungry like a man; as having eaten heartily of bread, meat, and milk like a man; as having been, in short, in every respect, like a man. In what respect, then, was he not a man? In what respect was he superior to a man? What was the nature of his body? Was it, like the body of a man, composed of flesh, blood, bones, and other forms of matter? If not, of what

was it composed, and how was it capable of containing and digesting the material food which he then ate? What became of that food? Did it undergo the same processes in his body that it would have undergone had it been eaten by a man? If not, then, when he changed himself back into an invisible spirit—if, indeed, he did undergo any such change—did that food all drop down from his vanished stomach, in a mass, upon the ground, just as he had eaten it, and thus go to waste; or was it, also, like himself, changed into invisible spirit? Finally, dare my opponents charge the true God, the infinite power that rules the universe, with ever having thus possessed a body like the body of a man; with ever having thus been weary from walking, like a man; with ever having thus rested in the shade of a tree, like a man; with ever having thus had dirty feet, like a man; with ever having thus washed its feet, like a man; with ever having thus, at a man's table, filled its stomach with material food, like a man; with ever having thus been limited in its presence and its power; with ever having been, in short, thus a mere man? And, in giving this degrading description of their own God, a myth though he be, are they not again guilty of blasphemy?

“And the Lord was with Judah; and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountains; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron” (Jud. i, 19). Are not my opponents again guilty of great blasphemy in thus charging God with being unable to overcome a few “chariots of iron?”

In the last six verses of the thirty-third chapter of Exodus, we have, between God and his chief favorite,

Moses, a very unique dialogue, in which Moses asks to see God's glory, expecting, no doubt, that God would graciously show his face, in which his glory was supposed to lie. In this expectation, however, Moses was sadly disappointed. God informed him that his (God's) face could not be seen; that a sight of it would be instant death to any mortal beholder. He did not say why his face, if seen, would kill the beholder, but he clearly intimated that it was the excessive glory of that part of his body which would be so disastrous to any one who should gaze upon it. He declared, therefore, that, under the circumstances, the best that he could do would be to show the antipode of his face, his "back parts," which, being far less glorious than his face, could be seen with comparative safety. Disappointed in his hope of seeing any more glorious part, Moses was now glad to see even those parts, the least glorious of all. He therefore stood all agog for the show. Before the curtain (God's garment) rose, however, God required Moses to stand back in a cleft or crevice of the rock upon which they were standing, so that he could not see anything except what was directly in front of him. Besides this, while getting ready to show the parts promised, God held one of his hands over the eyes of the exceedingly meek (?) man, lest he might get a glimpse of some of the more glorious parts of the divine organism. When all was ready, however, he took away his hand, raised the curtain (his own petticoat), and opened the show—made a shockingly indecent exposure of his "back parts" to the delighted gaze of the show-loving old Moses. Where were the Comstocks

and the other guardians of the public morals while this scene was being enacted?

And now, let me ask, how can my opponents have the face to contend that the only true God—the infinite sum of all the forces that inhere in matter and that govern the universe, ever did draw itself in, on every side, from all portions of the infinite universe, and did thus, in a bodily form like that of a man, take its place upon a small mountain of this little planet, and make an indecent exposure of its “back parts” to gratify the morbid curiosity of one old man? Could blasphemy be possibly carried to any greater extent than they have carried it in this instance by contending that God actually was guilty of this abominably disgraceful conduct, that he actually was guilty of insulting the world by having this supremely disgusting account of it recorded, and that he actually is utterly unchanged—that he actually is no more decent to-day than he was then? I boldly deny that God was ever guilty of such infamous conduct. I boldly dencunce the story as an atrocious slander, a horrible blasphemy which should sink both its inventors and its defenders into the lowest depths of perdition. What would you say of this story if, instead of being thus given in your own Bible and concerning your own God, it had been given in some pagan Bible and concerning some pagan deity? Would you not point it out as proof positive of the abominable nature of the religion of those pagans? Would you recommend as a solemn duty, especially to your children, the reading of a pagan Bible filled with similar accounts of the similar indecencies practiced by the pagan deities? Would

you believe that any such accounts were true if they were recorded in any other book than your own Bible and concerning any other deity than your own god? Can you not believe worse things of your own Bible and your own God than you could believe concerning any other Bible or any other god? Would any decent god make so indecent an exposure of his "back parts?" And would an indecent god, if guilty of such conduct, be likely to proclaim his guilt thus to the world? What would you say of my story if I should tell you that I had met God in a bodily form, out upon some little hill of your own neighborhood; that I had there held a long and familiar conversation with him; that I had vanquished him in an argument, and that I had induced him to show me his—his—his "back parts?" Would you, even on my own direct testimony, which I believe has never been called in question, believe that these events had actually occurred? And would you believe that the party who showed me his "back parts" was actually the infinitely great and glorious God or power that rules the universe? If you would not believe all these things on my direct and unimpeached testimony, how can you believe them on the mere hearsay testimony of an unknown story-teller whose character for veracity always has been seriously called in question?

The custom of thus exhibiting only the "back parts" of their respective deities, and of thus pretending that their faces were too glorious to be gazed upon by mortal eyes, is said to have been once a very common one among the religious sects of nearly all coun-

tries. Indeed, it is said to prevail, even at the present time, in Thibet and Japan, in which countries the deities, or at least a portion of them, are simply living men who, by some priestly process, are changed into true and living gods. From this supremely disgusting pagan custom our Bible story in question undoubtedly originated. Many priests, too, of more than ordinary ambition and cunning, who have not claimed to be gods, but who have claimed to be the special favorites and boon companions of their respective gods, have put on veils, and then pretended that, by contact with the gods, they had absorbed so much of the divine afflatus that their own faces, ugly enough no doubt in fact, had become too glorious to be safely gazed upon by common mortals. This priestly trick, which, with many others, Moses is said to have practiced with great success, was well calculated to impose upon the credulity of the ignorant and superstitious people of remote and dark ages. All the blasphemies, however, which I have thus far proved against my opponents, are as nothing when compared with those which I shall now proceed to prove against them. Those which I have proved consist, as you know, principally in charging God with ignorance, with weakness, with being finite in his presence, and with false and vain-glorious assertions. Those which I shall yet prove consist in charging him with the far graver offenses of encouraging and even commanding the practice of lying, of cheating, of robbing, of murder, of slavery, of polygamy, of concubinage, of common prostitution, and of almost every other form of crime and of immorality; and in charging him with being himself person-

ally guilty of having "created evil," of having committed perjury, adultery, and murder; of having been shockingly jealous, treacherous, cruel, selfish, dishonest, revengeful, and cowardly; and of having required and accepted human sacrifices. These are fearfully blasphemous charges to bring against God, and yet I will fully prove that my opponents are guilty of the blasphemy of bringing against him all of these and many more equally grave charges. Since the same passages by which I prove one fact will often prove several others equally important to my purpose, I shall not attempt to prove all the facts separately.

In Ex. xxii, 2-6, we read: "If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. . . . If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges: he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever." From this we learn that God approved slavery, even the abominable slavery of brethren to their brethren. We also learn that a brutal slave, one who cared nothing for his wife and his children, was rewarded for his brutality by being permitted to abandon them, and to go free at the end of six years; while a good and loving husband and father, one who could not bear the thought of thus abandoning his dear ones to endure slavery alone,

was cruelly punished for his goodness and his affection, by being compelled to have his ears bored through with an awl, to be thus ignominiously branded like an ox, and to become a slave, a piece of property, a head of live-stock "forever." And the author of this unspeakably abominable law was the God that you, my opponents, have adopted, that you now worship, and that you declare to be utterly unchangeable—utterly incapable of ever becoming any better—any less an approver of such slavery than he was when he gave this law. If, then, this same unimproved pro-slavery God should conclude to have you, who happen to be so unfortunate as to be very poor, sold as slaves to your more fortunate brethren for six years, and if, at the end of that time, he should compel you either to abandon forever your wives and your little ones, or to have your ears bored through with awls, and yourselves made slaves forever, what would you think of his conduct? And yet, would such treatment be any worse if inflicted upon yourselves than it was when, for a similar misfortune, it was inflicted upon equally good and affectionate Hebrew husbands and fathers? In this passage, and in all similar passages, you will notice that God addresses himself exclusively to the wealthy and fortunate classes who are able to buy slaves. He never deigns to speak a word to the poor and unfortunate classes who are liable to be bought as slaves. He is exclusively the rich man's—the master's—God. He is never the God of the poor man—of the slave. He always says, "If thou buy," etc., never "If thou be bought," etc. And do you believe that this actually is the inspired word of God? Do you



believe that he—that the infinitely great and glorious power that rules the universe—was ever guilty of conduct half so atrocious? If you do, how can you consent, unless it be through abject fear, to serve so atrocious a monster? If you do not, how dare you thus blasphemously charge him with such guilt?

“If a man sell his daughter to be a maid-servant, she shall not go out as the men-servants do” (Ex. xxi, 7). “Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought into bondage already; neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and our vineyards” (Neh. v, 5). From these passages we learn that God authorized fathers to sell their own children, especially their own daughters, into slavery; and that, when they had been thus made slaves, the daughters were not permitted to go out free at the end of six years, as were the Hebrew male slaves. The females had to remain mere chattels forever. From these, and from the following passages, we also learn that if the poor among God’s peculiar people did not pay their debts by voluntarily selling themselves or their children into slavery, God authorized their creditors, with whom he seems always to have taken side, to seize them, or their children, or both, and make slaves of them: “And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee” (Lev. xxv, 39). “Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant

did fear the Lord; and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen" (2 Kings iv, 1). What would you think of this God whom you have adopted, and whom you declare to be "without parallax or shadow of turning," who you declare to be no better now than he was then, if, as in former times, he should thus now authorize men to sell their own children into slavery; and if he should thus authorize your creditors to make slaves of you and of your children? Would you still sing his praises so vociferously as you now do? If not, why do you sing them at all? Is he any better now than he was when he did these things to poor Hebrews, and any better than he would be if he should do the same things to you? Are you not real blasphemers when you charge him with such acts?

"Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you. . . . And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession, they shall be your bondmen forever" (Lev. xxv, 44-46). From this we learn that God not only permitted his chosen people to traffic for gain in human beings the same as in cattle, not only permitted them thus to traffic in the sons and the daughters of their neighbors and their guests, but also actually commanded them to do so, and declared that the persons thus reduced to slavery should be "bondmen forever." He certainly ap-

proved slavery, therefore, in this, its worst form, and fully intended that in this form it should be practiced "forever." He is certainly responsible, then, for all the wrongs, for all the horrors, for all the abominations of slavery that have ever cursed those countries in which the teachings of the Bible have been accepted as of divine authority. The slaveholders of the Southern States were certainly correct in claiming, as they did, that according to the plainest teachings of the Bible, slavery was an institution of divine origin—an institution, too, which could never with God's approbation be overthrown. But for these teachings of the Bible slavery would never have existed upon this continent. Those slaveholders were certainly correct, also, in claiming, as they did, that those who fought for the overthrow of slavery were fighting against God and the Bible. For one, I am proud to say that I fought against slavery, and against this pro-slavery God and this pro-slavery Bible; and that I helped to overcome them all. But how is it with my pro-Bible opponents, who also fought against God, the Bible, and slavery? Are they sure that God will not damn them for thus helping me and other Infidels to defeat him, and to overthrow one of his most favored institutions? I deny, however, that the true God—the infinite power that rules the universe—ever did thus approve slavery and command the practice of it "forever;" and I denounce as hard-mouthed blasphemers all those who have the impious audacity to contend that it ever did do any such things.

"I form light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil" (Is. xlv, 7). In this passage, light,

darkness, peace, and evil are evidently all spoken of in their entirety; all light, all darkness, all peace, and all evil are undeniably meant; and God is made just as fully the creator of evil as he is of light, peace, or darkness. So in Amos iii, 6: "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" God seems surprised that people should look upon any form of evil as having any other source, or author, than himself. So Job ii, 10, says: "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Upon whom did Job evidently look as the source of evil? "For the inhabitants of Maroth waited carefully for good: but evil came down from the Lord unto the gate of Jerusalem" (Mic. i, 12). If there had been no evil in God, could evil have thus come "down from him?" "And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people" (Ex. xxxiv, 14). Of necessity, that "which he thought to do unto his people" must have been either an act right and proper for him to perform, or one wrong and improper. If it was a right and proper act, then he "repented" of having "thought to do" that which was right and proper. If it was a wrong and improper act, then he had "thought to do" that which was wrong and improper, and, as we learn from the context, he actually would have done it, had not Moses shamed him out of his wicked intention. Interpret the language as we may, therefore, it involves a grave charge of guilt against God. And can my opponents bring such a charge against God and not be blasphemers?

"Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take

thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor; and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun" (2 Sam. xii, 11). And now, let me ask, do you, my opponents, truly believe that the infinitely great and glorious power that rules the universe ever did make and execute so unspeakably abominable a threat? If not, then you virtually admit that the God whom you worship, and whom you declare to be guilty of these things, is not the great and glorious power that rules the universe. You virtually admit that your God—the guilty one—is either a myth, or an inferior and evil deity. Do not dare, then, to longer assert that he is the Supreme Ruler of the universe. This atrocious threat to openly outrage a number of innocent women, David's wives, was professedly made against David, with whom God, it seems, was having a kind of lovers' quarrel. The punishment, however, as you see, was to fall upon other and innocent parties. Instead of punishing the offender, David himself, God permitted him to live right on, undisturbed, in all his regal splendor, carousing with his many wives and concubines, and, for the present, satisfied his vengeance by killing one of the offender's infant children. Having by this cruel and cowardly murder temporarily appeased his wrath, he fixed upon Absalom, one of David's own sons, as his instrument with which to execute his monstrous intentions against David's wives, who were not guilty of any offense at all. At that time Absalom was a wonderfully handsome, noble, and manly youth of nineteen—the idol of his father, the pride of the whole nation. Having, according to the chronology of the Bible, waited eleven

years, sullenly nursing his malice while the lad should attain full manhood, God took possession of him, and, by almighty power, which of course Absalom could not resist, led him on to commit the unspeakably cruel and revolting act of ravishing his father's wives—his own step-mothers—on the top of a house whither he had them dragged "in the sight of this sun," as God had threatened, and in the sight of all the people. In all that he did, Absalom was faithfully doing God's will—doing just what God irresistibly made him do. If he could have resisted the almighty influences with which God was leading him to commit this atrocious crime, he probably would have resisted them. In this case, however, the crime would never have been committed at all; and, for want of power to carry it out, God would have failed in his worse than hellish undertaking, and his atrocious threat would have proved to be simply an atrocious lie. In order to make true his own words, he had to render it utterly impossible for Absalom to take any other course than the one he did take. And yet, after having thus forever blackened the previously fair name of this brave and noble young man, he had him remorselessly butchered, together with twenty thousand other men who were guilty of no offense but that of doing God's will.

In this case, as in scores of other similar cases, without at all consulting their own wishes in regard to the matter, God, for the very vilest of purposes—that of having them publicly ravished—arbitrarily disposed of the women and of their virtue to whomsoever he pleased. And now, let me ask, what would the pure and modest women of our own time—the faithful

wives and fond mothers who worship this Bible monstrosity—think of him if, to spite some man with whom he had quarreled many years ago, he should now conclude to have them thus forcibly dragged to the top of a house, and there, “in the sight of this sun,” in the sight of one another, and in the sight of all the people, outraged in this unspeakably atrocious manner? How would my opponents like to have their own wives, their own mothers, their own sisters, and their own daughters outraged in this same way by this same God whom they now worship? And was his conduct on the occasion in question, when performed upon other equally good, pure, and modest women, any less atrocious than it would now be if performed upon our own women? And is he any better now than he was then? If not, is he not a hideous monster still? And will the worshipers of this monster dare to say that they are any better than he is? Will they ever try to be any better than is their God? If not, will they not always be capable of committing, and liable to commit, such crimes as their God is known to have committed? Could my opponents in any other way do so much to injure the cause of virtue as they do by these horribly blasphemous slanders against God? I assure you that he was never guilty of any such crimes.

## LECTURE SECOND.

In the fourth chapter of Judges we have an account of a terrible battle between the Hebrews and their neighbors, the Canaanites. The latter people being utterly overthrown, their commander, Sisera, all alone, fled toward the tent of Heber, a friend of his, who belonged to a neutral tribe. As he approached this tent, Jael, his friend's wife, came out to meet him, entreated him to come into the tent, and assured him that while he was under her protection he had nothing to fear. Gladly accepting what he believed to be the true and timely hospitality of a real friend, he did enter the tent, and, being very weary, soon fell asleep. Then he was foully murdered by this female fiend, the wife of his friend. The twenty-first verse says: "Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a nail of the tent, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died." And this was the way to please the God of the Bible—the God that my opponents worship. Those most hideous of all modern murderers, the Benders, of Kansas, who butchered their guests by the dozen, were doubtless trying to please this bloody God. At any rate, they did that which, according to the story before us, was bound to be pleasing in his sight.



When considered in connection with all its circumstances of monstrous treachery, violated hospitality, and cold-blooded deliberation, this murder of Sisera, in the hideousness of its atrocity, stands without a parallel in the whole world's annals of crime. Had the Hebrews been beaten, and had their leader, in like manner, sought refuge in her tent, this foul female fiend would, in the same way, have murdered him, in order to win favor with his victorious enemies. What she did was done from the very lowest and most selfish of purposes, and not for any love for God or for his people. And yet the Bible, which my opponents contend contains nothing but truth—nothing but the most excellent teachings—represents God, the God that you worship, and that you strive to be like, as being wonderfully pleased with this most foul of all recorded murders. Through his prophetess, Deborah, he is represented as saying: "Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent" (Jud. v, 24). In thus charging God with being pleased with this atrocious murder, with bestowing his richest blessings upon the murderess as a reward for her crime, and with holding her up for the admiration and the imitation of the world, my opponents are certainly guilty of blasphemy, and of the encouraging of treachery, murder, and other atrocious crimes. Unfortunately, too, this story, unlike most of the other immoral and crime-encouraging stories of the Bible, stands uncontradicted by any other passages. There is not in the whole Bible a single word that goes to prove that this shocking story is not true, or that your God is not, as it represents him to be, a

hideous murder-approving monster. It is no wonder, therefore, that the believers in the religion of the Bible have always been noted for their treachery and their thirst for blood. It is no wonder that they have always regarded the killing of infidels, heretics and heathens, by means the most foul, by tortures the most terrible, as one of the most acceptable methods of doing God service. A book containing teachings so derogatory to the character of God is simply a book of blasphemies, and all who sustain it are blasphemers. And can such blasphemies, when stuffed into the minds of the unreasoning masses as divine truths, be otherwise than destructive to all that is noble in the nature of man? Can they have any other than a very pernicious influence upon the moral characters of all those into the minds of whom they have been thus stuffed?

“And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he [God himself, you see] moved David against them to say, Go number Israel and Judah” (2 Sam. xxiv, 1). How this order of their king to “number” the people could be “against them,” I cannot understand. Be this as it may, however, David did as God “moved” him to do, and then God flew into a fearful fury, and, to punish David for his obedience, slew seventy thousand innocent men, women, and children, who did not even know why they were so cruelly slain. What could be more horrible in its cruelty, or more detestable in its injustice, than was this wholesale and indiscriminate slaughter? What harm was there in David’s obeying God when God “moved” him to take a census of the people? If

the obeying of that order was a great crime on the part of David, was not the giving of it a still greater crime on the part of God himself? Was David anything more than an accomplice in this crime? Why, then, did God let himself and his only accomplice go free, and wreak his vengeance upon seventy thousand innocent persons? Are not my opponents guilty of great blasphemy when they thus charge this atrocious act against God—against the infinitely great and glorious power that rules the universe?

In Josh. vii, 24-26, we read, "And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger." Probably Joshua did all this in order to get into his own pockets Achan's "silver" and his "wedge of gold," which he pretended to burn, but which we know he did not burn. We know that silver and gold cannot be burned.

It seems that this Achan had, for his own use, concealed a portion of the plunder which he had taken in one of the many marauding expeditions which Joshua and his band of cut-throats, God's peculiar people, made against their inoffensive neighbors. For this

act God did not at first have Achan himself punished. He merely paved the way to Achan's punishment by having thirty-six innocent persons slain. The slaying of these persons made known the fact that he was in a towering rage about something, and led to an investigation which resulted in the discovery that Achan was the party for whose offense these persons had been slain. By treachery Joshua then prevailed upon Achan to confess his offense, whatever it might be. The nineteenth verse says: "And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me." Thus treacherously appealed to, Achan did make a full confession. Instead of being let off, however, with some light punishment, as he had undoubtedly been led to believe that he would be if he would make a full confession, he was taken, as we have seen, together with his innocent children, his sheep, his oxen, and his asses, and mercilessly stoned to death and then burned.

Thus you see that, because one of the plunderers kept back a portion of the plunder, the God that you worship, and that you condemn me to eternal burning for not worshiping, worked himself up into a towering rage, and caused to be brutally butchered thirty-six innocent men, a whole family of innocent children, and a large number of innocent sheep, oxen, and asses. And this is only one of a vast number of instances in which, for some trifling offense committed by some other party, this adopted God of yours caused to be cruelly put to death large numbers of innocent

men, women, children, and domestic animals. And yet my opponents, after thus blasphemously describing their God as a monstrous embodiment of injustice and cruelty, have the effrontery to contend that he is worthy to be loved, praised, and worshiped by us all; that, in goodness, he is infinitely superior to any human being, and that he is the only true God, the infinite power that rules the universe. They do this, too, while admitting that he is no better now than he was then, and that he is utterly incapable of ever becoming any better. If they wish to do so, they may continue to worship this mythical monster, and to strive to become like him. As for myself, however, I can see nothing worthy of praise or of imitation in his whole blood-blackened history. I would much rather worship the devil, against whom no such charges were ever preferred.

“And I gave thee thy master’s house, and thy master’s wives into thy bosom, and I gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would, moreover, have given unto thee such and such things” (2 Sam. xii, 8). At the time mentioned in this passage, David, to whom all these things were given, already had a harem well filled with wives and concubines. Instead, however, of reproving him for his wholesale practice of polygamy, your God, we see, aided and encouraged him to indulge in that practice on a still more extensive scale, by thus making him a present of a whole household more of wives all at one time. These women were all the widows of Saul, who was one of David’s many fathers-in-law. Of course, then, all of these women

were David's own mothers-in-law. Their own wishes were never consulted in regard to this wholesale transfer of themselves like so much mere property, and together with a lot of other property, to their own son-in-law. This, however, was probably the best method then known of disposing of mothers-in-law. At any rate, it was God's method; and were it not for our ungodly laws, which will not permit them to do so, large numbers of my opponents, in their great desire to be as far as possible like their God, would doubtless get rid of their own mothers-in-law by this same beautiful and heaven-approved method of marrying them.

When God was thus aiding and encouraging the practice of polygamy and concubinage, he must, of necessity, have regarded that practice as right and proper, or as wrong and improper; and since, according to the unanimous testimony of all my opponents, he never changes, he must, of equal necessity, regard that practice now just as he regarded it then. If, therefore, he regarded it as right and proper then, he is bound, you see, of necessity, to regard it as equally right and proper now. And if he regards it as right and proper, is it not bound to be so in fact? Dare you charge him with being deceived in regard to the nature of this practice? Dare you claim that you know any better than does he what is right and proper, and what is wrong and improper? Dare you claim that you are any better in your opinions, your principles, and your practices than he was and is in his? If not—if you admit that when he was aiding and encouraging the practice of polygamy and concubinage he regarded these institutions as right and proper—if, as you then

must, you admit that he still regards them as right and proper, and if, as you then also must you admit, that he is correct in his views concerning them, do you not admit that they actually are right and proper? and do you not undeniably throw the whole great weight of God's influence, the whole great weight of your own influence, in favor of the present practice of those institutions? Where is Anthony Comstock? Why does he not arrest you for your immoral teachings? How dare you condemn in the Mormons and others the practice of these God-approved institutions which you are thus compelled to admit are right and proper? If, on the other hand, at the time of which we are speaking, God regarded the institutions in question as wrong and improper, then he undeniably aided and encouraged, among his chosen people, among those whom he had selected to be models for the imitation of the whole world, the practice of institutions which he himself regarded as wrong and improper, and which, if he was not deceived in regard to their nature, actually were wrong and improper. Without a decided change, therefore, for the better—and my opponents do not claim for him any such change—is he not bound to be just as much inclined now as he ever was to aid and encourage his worshipers in the practice of these wicked institutions? In any possible view of the case, are not my opponents guilty of blasphemy, when, by contending that this story is the inspired word of God, they make him, with any possible interpretation of the story, an aider and encourager of these gross forms of immorality?

The Bible, however, does not leave us in doubt as

to how God regarded polygamy, concubinage, lying, treachery, murder, etc., of which David was guilty, but which we now almost unanimously condemn at the present time as wrong and improper. The Bible makes God approve all these things. "Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite" (1 Kings xv, 5). From this general and emphatic expression of approval, and from several others that might be given, we learn that with the single exception named God approved all the long black list of immoralities and crimes with which David's life was crowded. We learn that all these things were not only "right in the eyes of the Lord," but that they were also actually "commanded" by him. A few of these acts we will now notice.

"And David took from him a thousand chariots, and seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen; David also houghed all the chariot horses, but reserved of them an hundred chariots" (1 Chron. xviii, 4). To say nothing of the injustice and general cruelty of the war that David was then waging against his inoffensive neighbors, what could have been more unnecessary or more fiendishly cruel than was his act of houghing or hamstringing so many thousand of poor harmless horses, and thus causing them to die in lingering torments? And yet this horrible act of cruelty was not only "right in the eyes of the Lord," but was also "commanded" by him, as the same horrible act had been on several former occasions. (See Josh. xi, 6, 9.) Thus (by the perpetration of many atrocious



acts of cruelty to men and to horses) the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went" (1 Chron. xviii, 6). Where was the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals?

"And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth . . . the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul (could he have had any soul?), he shall be chief and captain" (2 Sam. v, 8). "The lame and the blind" mentioned here, who, because of their unfortunate physical infirmities, were so "hated of David's soul," and whom he wished to have mercilessly slaughtered because of their misfortunes, seem to have been a crowd of utterly helpless creatures, who, for the purpose of asking alms, were wont to congregate at the gate of Jerusalem while it was still in the hands of the Jebusites. As we learn from the parallel account (1 Chron. xi, 6), Joab slaughtered all these helpless creatures, and, for this unparalleled act of cowardly cruelty, was made commander-in-chief of the armies of the Lord. And in this again, "David did that which was right in the sight of the Lord." "So (by such deeds as this) David waxed greater and greater: for the Lord of hosts was with him" (1 Chron. xi, 9). If it be not blasphemy to thus charge God with approving, and with even commanding, the butchery of the poor lame and blind wretches in question, in what does blasphemy consist?

"And David gathered all the people together and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it. And he brought forth the people that were therein and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and

under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln, and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon" (2 Sam. xii, 29, 31). It is but reasonable to suppose that, knowing the fearful fate that awaited themselves and their loved ones in case they were taken alive by this bloody monster, most of the men capable of bearing arms would die fighting. Most of those taken, therefore, must have been women, children, and helpless men. And would not a speedy death have been a severe enough punishment to inflict upon these poor helpless creatures for the crime of having lands and other property that David wanted? Was there any call for him to torture them to death by thus putting "them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron," and by thus making "them pass through the brick-kiln?" And my opponents blasphemously declare that in this case, also, "David did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him."

"And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites. . . . And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish. And Achish said, Whither have ye made a road to-day? And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites. And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring tidings to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us. . . . And Achish believed

David" (1 Sam. xxvii, 8-12). From the context we learn that, when hotly pursued by Saul, who wished to slay him, David fled to Achish, king of Gath, who took him and his followers in, gave them a whole city to dwell in, and in every way treated them royally as honored guests. In return for this noble and sorely-needed hospitality, David, as we have seen, went out with his band of six hundred cut-throats, and treacherously murdered and robbed whole communities of friendly and inoffensive people, the subjects of his generous friend and host, the king of Gath. It is no wonder, then, that, after this monstrous act of treachery and ingratitude, "David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring tidings to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us." From this prince of murderers doubtless came the murderers' motto, "Dead men tell no tales." The only wonder is that this friendly and generous king believed the lying report which, as we have seen, was given on his return by this monster of iniquity. And yet, in committing this horrible compound crime, unparalleled in atrocity by anything ever recorded in the annals of the world—this compound crime of lying, robbery, treachery, ingratitude, and murder, if not of rape and arson, "David," so say my opponents, "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him." And these are only a very few of the vast multitude of atrocious acts that rendered David so emphatically a man after God's own heart.

"And the Lord said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms, and children of whoredoms. . . .

So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim: which conceived and bare him a son" (Hos. i, 2, 3.) This was the first communication ever received from God by Hosea, and it, as you see, was a peremptory command to him to "go" and perform a very immoral act—to "go" and become a he-prostitute. Further on we learn that this woman of "whoredoms" bore Hosea two other children, and that, her charms having by that time become somewhat faded, he then grew weary of her, quarreled with her, called her by foul names, threatened to destroy her property and to strip her naked in the street, and drove her from his house. That he had been living with her during all this time in a state of open whoredom, without any pretense of marriage, we learn from the first four verses of the next chapter: "Plead with your mother," he said, "plead; for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband. . . . And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms." These "children of whoredoms," to whom this holy old he-whore prophet of the Lord was thus speaking, were his own children by Gomer, begotten upon her, as he himself declared, in the most shameful whoredom; and, because these children were the results of his own criminal intimacy with their mother, he declared that he would "not have mercy upon" them. Would not this holy old man's righteous indignation at Gomer's shameful conduct have appeared to much better advantage if he had not himself been an equally, if not a more guilty, participant in all that shameful conduct? And why did he see nothing wrong in her conduct—nothing, at any rate, displeasing either to him-

self or to his lewdness-loving God—until after she had borne him several children, and her beauty, as a result of bearing him these children, perhaps, had become somewhat faded? May it not be that he already had his holy libidinous eyes upon a younger and handsomer woman of “whoredoms,” and that he quarreled with Gomer for the express purpose of getting rid of her, and of thus making room for this other lewd woman in his holy bed? Be this as it may, he certainly did, almost immediately, take to his godly embrace another woman of notoriously lewd character. Hear the dear old fellow tell this portion of his own beautiful story: “Then [when he had slept several nights alone, after Gomer’s departure, and God had noticed how much he suffered for want of a woman] said the Lord unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress. . . . So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley: And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee” (Hos. iii, 1–3). The expression “I bought her to me,” evidently means nothing more nor less than that he paid in advance the fees to which, as a harlot or public prostitute, she was entitled for the use of her person. If she were a free woman, this fee would go to herself; if not, it would go to her master. Having paid these fees, Hosea had a right to the exclusive use of her person for as “many days” as he had paid for with his “fifteen pieces of silver,” and his “homer of barley,” and his “half homer of barley.” Until his time was out—until he

had received, in her peculiar kind of merchandise, the full value of all this silver and this barley—she had no right to “play the harlot,” or to “be for another man;” and Hosea, who seems to have fully understood what his own rights were in the matter, and to have been fully determined to exact all those rights, gave his new purchase to understand that she must not venture to take any privileges not guaranteed to her by the terms of the contract. What a love of a Lord it was that thus kindly furnished Hosea with a lewd woman whenever he perceived that this holy old man wanted one! No wonder Hosea loved him so much! If he is so kind to my opponents—and since he never changes, who knows but that he often may be so on the sly—we can easily understand why they, too, love him so much, and praise him so loudly. With what refreshing simplicity this man of God—this holy old he-whore—tells us how much he paid as fees to this prostitute, just what he paid it in, and that, by thus prudently paying in advance, he had her all to himself “for many days.”

In 2 Tim. iii, 6, Paul says: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” These bawdy-house accounts of the holy Hosea’s libidinous adventures, which I stoop to notice only that I may expose them, constitute a portion of the God-inspired scriptures to which Paul here refers. But what “doctrine,” what “reproof,” what “correction,” what “instruction in righteousness,” do we derive from these disgusting accounts? If from them we derive any “doctrine,” is it not the abominable

doctrine that, under certain circumstances at least, God is pleased to have us practice the lowest and most degrading forms of common prostitution—the abominable doctrine of unrestricted sexual promiscuity? Misled by this and other similar teachings of the Bible, many pious persons, improperly called free-lovers, have openly preached this degrading doctrine, and have attempted to openly practice it. If anybody derives any “reproof” or any “correction” from these accounts, who can it be unless it be those pretended champions of the Bible, my opponents? These persons who, while pretending that they are laboring for the Lord, have the impious audacity to condemn the God-approved, the God-commanded practice of prostitution, may, indeed, derive both “reproof” and “correction,” if not genuine satisfaction, from the scriptures in question. If anybody derives any “instruction in righteousness” from these scriptures, who can it be but these same parties, my opponents? Doubtless many of these holy men deal on the sly in that kind of “righteousness,” in which Hosea was commanded to indulge, and which cost him “fifteen pieces of silver” and a large quantity of “barley.” As a matter of policy, these men of course pretend to condemn the practices in question as prostitution, whoredom, etc. They may, however, and doubtless often do, learn from Hosea’s prudent example to pay the prostitute’s fees in advance, and thus secure to themselves “for many days” the undisturbed possession of her peculiar form of merchandise. Can my opponents mention anything else that can possibly be derived from these God-inspired scriptures?

If, in Hosea's time, God regarded as right and proper this open cohabitation with common hired prostitutes, in which he commanded Hosea to engage, must he not now, of necessity, regard it as equally right and proper when practiced by his worshipers of the present time? Has he since that time undergone any change in his views concerning this practice? And has either the moral or the physical nature of the practice itself since then undergone any change? And while my opponents know that God regards this practice as right and proper, will they be likely to regard it as wrong and improper. And will they, except when deterred by fear of the law and of public opinion, be likely to avoid indulging in it? In this case, is not the whole mighty influence of God and the Bible entirely on the side of the most baneful form of immorality? The believer reasons simply and correctly as follows: "Since God once commanded this practice, he must have regarded it as right and proper; and since he never changes, he must still regard it as right and proper; and since he cannot be deceived in regard to the matter, it must actually be right and proper; and since it is actually right and proper, I will indulge in it." Were I a believer, I would reason in this manner, arrive at this conclusion, and act accordingly. Unbelief alone saves me. If, on the other hand, God commanded Hosea, whom he set up as a model for the imitation of all men, to do that which he himself regarded as wrong and improper, then he was undeniably a bad and improper God; and since he is utterly unchangeable, he is undeniably a bad and improper God now, sure at all times to en-



courage, and likely at any time to command, his worshipers to engage in the practice of the lowest forms of prostitution. Is not his whole mighty influence, then, in this case as in the other, entirely on the side of immorality? Believing that their God is pleased with such immorality, will not many of his worshipers be encouraged by that belief to practice it? In what other way could they derive more pleasure from their efforts to please him? In any possible view of the case, then, can such horribly blasphemous teachings concerning God have any other than a direct tendency to destroy, in the characters of those who accept them, all the principles of morality and virtue? Can we wonder that, with the Bible for its code of morals, all Christendom is reeking with immorality and crime? Can we wonder that the statistics of England and Wales show that, according to the population of each sect, there are about three hundred times as many criminals among the believers in the Bible as there are among the avowed Infidels?

“But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. ii, 17). Here God made a positive and unconditional threat or promise which he certainly never fulfilled. In defiance of this unreasonable prohibition and threat, Adam and Eve, we are told, did have the pluck and the good sense to eat all they wanted of that most desirable fruit thus so positively and so foolishly prohibited. This was the very fruit which God very well knew that they most sorely needed. It was the very fruit, too, which when making it and making them, he very

well knew that they would eat. Indeed, it was the very fruit which, "before the foundation of the world," he had himself predetermined that they should eat. "Before the foundation of the world," as we learn elsewhere, he had predetermined to beget himself a son, whose mission on earth should be to redeem mankind, or at least a certain portion of them called the "elect," from the otherwise fatal effects of a fall which was to be brought about by the eating, on the part of Adam and Eve, who were not yet created, of this very same fruit, which was also not yet created. Before he could predetermine a redeemer from a certain fall, God had, of necessity, first to predetermine that fall. Had he not made it utterly impossible for the yet uncreated Adam and Eve to fail to eat the yet uncreated fruit in question, and to fall from eating it, how could he have foreknown, as he certainly did, with absolute certainty, that they would eat of it, and that they would fall in consequence of that eating? If Adam and Eve could have failed to eat that fruit and to fall in consequence of eating it, they probably would have so failed; and this failure on their part would inevitably have caused an utter failure of all of God's plans for the future. In that case, there never would have been any fall of man, any redemption from that fall, any redeemer, any gospel, any apostles, any saints, any Christian church, any hell, any damnation, any remission of sins, any purgatory, any profitable trade for priests, or anything else that God "before the foundation of the world" predetermined should be. The eating of that fruit by Adam and Eve, their fall consequent upon that eating, and their

continued existence after that fall, were absolutely necessary parts of God's whole great plan for the future. The killing of Adam and Eve, as threatened "on the day that" they ate of the fruit in question, certainly formed no part of that plan. Indeed, by exterminating the human race from the face of the earth, such a killing would have effectually thwarted every part of that plan. The fruit, therefore, was placed right in the way of Adam and Eve, and the proper agencies, all of them God's own works, were put in operation to make it absolutely certain that they would not fail to eat of it. Indeed, if it was not made expressly for them to eat, for whom was it made? Did God himself, in order to know good from evil, need to eat of it occasionally? If not, and if it was not meant for man, was it not an utterly worthless fruit made without any design at all? When Adam and Eve, thus irresistibly led to do so, did eat of that fruit, and did by so doing become "as Gods, knowing good and evil," God did not, of course, kill them as he had so positively declared that he would. So far from dying, according to that declaration, on the very day on which they ate the fruit, they began, on that very day, to dress themselves up for a long life, and did live right on for nearly a thousand years, and then died, not from the effects of eating that fruit, but of extreme old age. And God who, if he be indeed omniscient, as all my opponents declare that he is, must, of necessity, see all things in the future as clearly as he sees all things in the present, knew very well when making the promise or threat in question that he would never

fulfill it. He knew very well that he did not intend ever to fulfill it. If, then, this story be true, as all my opponents blasphemously declare that it is, if God really did make that silly threat, was he not, in making it, undeniably guilty of telling a wilful, a deliberate, and an utterly uncalled for falsehood?

In Gen. xii, 15, 16, we have the following remarkable promises made to Abraham: "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then [and evidently not otherwise] shall thy seed also be numbered." These extravagant promises have certainly never been fulfilled. Abraham and his seed did not possess that land "forever." Indeed, for some two thousand years they have not possessed any land at all. Besides this, they have never been, in number, "as the dust of the earth." They have never been a very numerous people. They could always be easily "numbered." In Gen. xv, 18, the extent of this land is given: "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt, unto the great river the river Euphrates." As here described, the land was never given at all. The Hebrews never did possess any land near the Nile, the only "river of Egypt," and very little, if any, near the Euphrates. And, when making these promises, did not God know very well that he would never fulfill them? Did he ever intend to fulfill them? In thus representing him as a liar, are not my opponents again guilty of blasphemy?

In 2 Kings xx, 1, we read: "Set thine house in

order, for thou shalt die, and not live." This unconditional declaration was made to Hezekiah, who was very sick, and who had inquired of God what was to be the result of that sickness. Hezekiah, however, did not die, as God thus so positively declared that he should. On the contrary, he recovered, and lived on for many more years. Here, then, by again making God out a liar, my opponents are again guilty of blasphemy.

In Jon. iii, 4, we read: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." This promise or threat was never executed. And since, when making it, God must have very well known that he would never execute it, he certainly could not have had any intention to ever execute it. Have not my opponents, then, again blasphemously made him out a deliberate, if not a malicious, liar?

In the fourteenth chapter of Numbers, God declares his intention to break a solemn promise, which, under oath, he had often made to the Hebrews. In verse 30th, referring to this oft-repeated promise, he says: "Doubtless ye shall not come into the land concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein." God here admits that he had made a sworn promise to the Hebrews, to whom he is speaking, to make them "dwell" in a certain land. This promise, of course, involved the safely leading of them to that land. On the strength of this promise, which was entirely unconditional, he had induced them to leave their comparatively comfortable home in Egypt. Now, however, as related in the next three verses, after having drawn them out into a terrible desert, in which they are utterly helpless, he declares, with a kind of fiendish

exultation, that he intends to deliberately violate this his solemnly sworn promise; that, so far from leading them safely through to the land in question, as he had sworn that he would, he intends to cruelly destroy them all on that terrible desert. "But as for you," he says, "your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness, . . . and [by the horrible calamities which he proposes to thus treacherously bring upon them] ye shall know my breach of promise." And, as we learn further on, he actually did execute this horrible threat. He actually did thus lay perjury on his own soul<sup>o</sup> (if he had any soul), and actually did thus cruelly and treacherously destroy many hundreds of thousands of these poor people who had loved him, and who had imprudently trusted and followed him. And this he did, notwithstanding his promise was entirely unconditional—notwithstanding all possible conditions, had there been any, were under his own control. He did this, too, simply because the people had believed the report of a party of distinguished men, whom he himself had selected and sent out to spy out the land upon which as a robber he was intending to seize, and who had brought back an unfavorable, but nearly correct report concerning it. And what are we to learn from the sad fate of these unfortunate people? What can we learn from it, except it be that, as a rule, it is safer to put God's special messengers down as unmitigated liars and scoundrels, utterly unworthy of belief, than it is to regard them as truthful and honorable men, worthy of belief. Had the Hebrews put God's chosen messengers down as liars, and had rejected their report, they would have

escaped the terrible calamities that fell upon them. "A word to the wise is sufficient."

Since, at the time of making the promise in question, all future events were bound to be clearly present to God's infinite prevision, he undeniably must have known that the promise would never be fulfilled; and, knowing this, he certainly could not have intended ever to fulfill it; he certainly could not have intended ever to do that which he knew was never to be done at all. Indeed, he could not possibly have foreseen, as actually occurring in the future, anything that he had not himself predetermined should occur. Since, then, the breaking of the promise in question was thus clearly present to his prevision at the time that he made the promise, it is undeniable that he made it while fully intending to break it. This conclusion is inevitable, and since he himself calls his base act on this occasion a "breach of promise," I do not think that my opponents will venture to deny that it really was a "breach of promise." In other words, if they still continue to contend that the story is a true one, they are compelled to admit that on this occasion their adopted God was guilty of deliberately and maliciously swearing a lie. If, on the other hand, they deny the truth of the story, and claim that he never was guilty of thus swearing a lie, then they are compelled to admit that he certainly was guilty of inspiring the writer of the story to write a lie very damaging to his own character. They are compelled to choose one horn or the other of this dilemma; and, choose whichever horn they may, they inevitably convict their God of lying. Are they not, then, guilty

of horrible blasphemy? For my own part, I deny that God—that the infinitely great and glorious power that rules the universe—ever did thus either swear a lie or inspire any one to write a lie. When discouraging so glibly upon God's promises, why do my opponents never notice this promise? And why do they teach that he "cannot lie," when the Bible thus so plainly teaches that he can, and that he does lie?

"I saw the Lord sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand, and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall entice Ahab king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one spake saying after this manner, and another saying after that manner. Then there came out a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will entice him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And the Lord said, Thou shalt entice him, and thou shalt also prevail: Go out and do even so. Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil against thee" (2 Chron. xviii, 18-22). From this we learn how God and his saints occupy their time in heaven, and for what purposes they occasionally visit the earth. From the context, it seems that God had a quarrel with Ahab, king of Israel, one of his own chosen people, and wished to destroy him, but was not able to do so unless he could entice him out of his stronghold at Samaria. He therefore resorted to the despicable means described in the passages above quoted. He sent out one of the professional liars that



he had with him there in heaven, and, by means of this person's skilfully-told lies, actually did draw Ahab out into a disadvantageous position, and, by means of this atrocious treachery, actually did accomplish his destruction.

I suppose my opponents will call this godly lying, and will loudly praise God for having practiced it on this occasion, or for having had it practiced by one of his favorite liars in heaven. Indeed, some of my opponents seem to be laboring faithfully to qualify themselves to serve God, when they get to heaven, in the same capacity in which this lying spirit so efficiently served him on the occasion in question. Ahab's prophets were not to blame for teaching that which was not true. They were simply the instruments through which God spoke. Being inspired of God, or at least of an authorized agent of his, to teach just what they did teach, they evidently thought that they were teaching the truth. It was not they that did the lying. It was God that did it. They were as honest as were the prophets who were opposed to Ahab. All were equally God's instruments. Those prophets were themselves thoroughly deceived by the inspiration of this lie-loving God, in whom, like my opponents, they implicitly and blindly trusted. From all of this, is it not clear that this God—the adopted God of my opponents—was once accustomed to resort to lying whenever it suited his purposes to do so? And have we any proof that he has ever abandoned this monstrous practice? If he has abandoned it, when did he do so, and who induced him to do so? If he has not abandoned it, is he not a lying God still? In any view of

the case, he either lied, as the story says he did to Ahab, or else inspired the writer of the story to write a lie. It is utterly impossible for my opponents to avoid arriving at one or the other of these conclusions. No matter at which one of them they arrive, however, they inevitably place their God before us convicted of deliberate, wilful, and malicious lying; and, in doing this, they undeniably place themselves before us convicted of the most horrible and uncalled-for blasphemy.

From these same passages we also learn several other important facts. From the fact that he was seen, we learn that God was a visible object, and, consequently, a material one. From the fact that he was sitting, and from the fact that no one can sit without a body to sit with, we learn that he had a body. From the fact that he had a throne, we learn that he preferred a monarchical to a republican form of government. From the fact that hosts were seen "standing on his right hand, and on his left," we learn that he had hands, and that he was limited in his own extent—so much so that the beholder could see from side to side of him at one view. From the fact that he spoke, we learn that he had organs of speech. He could not possibly have spoken without them. From the fact that he heard, we learn that he had organs of hearing. From the fact that he thought, we learn that he had organs of thought. From the fact that he had to inquire what the heavenly liar in question proposed to do, we learn that he was limited in his own knowledge. From the fact that, in order to overcome a poor feeble mortal, he was compelled to resort to lying, we learn that he was limited in his own power. From

the fact that, in order to accomplish the murder of several of his own children, he did resort to lying, we learn that he was woefully wanting in his own goodness. From the fact that he had a hard-faced professional liar in heaven with him, we learn that such liars go to heaven when they die. What a cheering thought this must be to many of my opponents! From the fact that he preferred the plan proposed by this liar to any of the plans proposed by any of his more honest worshipers, we learn that liars have more influence with him than have more honest persons. What a cheerful thought this must also be to many of my opponents! From the same fact we also learn that he preferred to accomplish his difficult undertakings by means of lying rather than by any more honorable means. Indeed, from the fact that he did not call for any plan except one by which Ahab could be enticed or deceived out of his stronghold, we learn that from the very first, he proposed to deal in deception alone. And, finally, from the fact that, in this whole affair, he acted just as a mean, cowardly, treacherous, and bloodthirsty man would be likely to act under similar circumstances, we learn that, in his character, he resembled a mean, cowardly, treacherous, and bloodthirsty man; and that unless he has undergone a great change for the better—a change which my opponents do not claim for him—he still resembles such a man. I am aware that these are all hard and blasphemous conclusions. I defy my opponents, however, by fair and logical arguments, based upon the hard and blasphemous scriptures in question, to arrive at any other. I deny the whole blasphemous story.

“Then said I, Ah, Lord God! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas, the sword reacheth unto the soul” (Jer. iv, 10). Had the Lord thus “greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem,” or did he simply inspire Jeremiah to write a lie concerning the matter? He must have done the one or the other; and, in either case, was he not guilty of lying? “O Lord,” says Jeremiah again, “thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived” (Jer. xx, 7). Had the Lord thus deceived Jeremiah, or did he again simply inspire that lachrymose old prophet to write a lie in regard to the matter? He certainly must have done the one or the other; and, in either case, does he not again stand before us convicted of lying? Jeremiah, who seems to have been a really honest man, evidently looked upon this Lord God with a great deal of suspicion, and with very little reverence. At another time, in language far more forcible and familiar than reverential and polite, he called this mendaciously-inclined Lord God to account as follows: “Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar” (Jer. xv, 18)? At still another time, he exhorted this same Lord God to refrain from disgraceful conduct, to keep his sworn promises like a gentleman, and to try to be a respectable God. “Do not abhor us, for thy name’s sake, do not disgrace the throne of thy glory: remember, break not thy covenant with us” (Jer. xiv, 21). Jeremiah evidently believed that, if left to himself, this Lord God, or Chief God, as the expression implies, was in a fair way to become “altogether . . . as a liar.” He also evidently believed that, if not dissuaded from so do-

ing, he would "disgrace the throne" of his "glory," "break" his "covenants," and do other acts unworthy of a God, or even of a gentleman. In declaring that all these descriptions, so dishonorable to God, are true, are not my opponents again undeniably guilty of blasphemy?

"And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I, the Lord, have deceived that prophet" (Ezek. xiv, 9). Of necessity, this language must be either true or false. If true, then God did occasionally deceive the prophets. If false, then, since "all scripture is given by inspiration of God," he certainly did, on this occasion, inspire Ezekiel to write a lie. In either case, what kind of a being is he, what kind of a book is the Bible, and what kind of men are my opponents?

From the first chapter of Exodus, we learn that God rewarded two midwives, Shiprah and Puah, for lying to Pharaoh concerning the births of Hebrew infants. From several succeeding chapters, we learn that he also instructed Moses to lie to Pharaoh, by telling him that the Hebrews simply wished to go out a three days' journey, to hold a kind of religious festival or camp-meeting, whereas they really meant to run entirely away and never come back at all. We learn, too, that he instructed Moses to lie to Pharaoh, also, in regard to the "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment," which the Hebrews were to pretend to borrow of the Egyptians, but which they were in reality to carry with them when they fled from the country. We learn, further, that God promised Moses to assist him in so deceiving the Egyptians that they

would "lend" all their valuables to the treacherous Hebrews. "And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: but every woman shall borrow of her neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians" (Ex. iii, 21, 22). Faithfully following the instructions of this monstrously dishonest God, whom he himself doubtless made, or helped to make, Moses did "spoil the Egyptians," who kindly loaned all their valuables to their treacherous Hebrew friends and neighbors, fully expecting that within a few days all these things would be faithfully returned. And now, let me ask, if God was unwilling to supply his people with such things as he wished them to have, in an honorable way, was he not woefully wanting in goodness? If he was unable to supply them with these things by fair and honorable means, was he not woefully wanting in power? Is not the fact, then, that he did not supply them with these things by fair and honorable means, proof positive that he was woefully wanting either in goodness, or in power, or in both? In making this admission, however, do you not slander him, and deny his attributes, all of which are infinite? And are you not, then, guilty of blasphemy? Do you really believe that the infinite power that rules the universe ever did thus select one small tribe of semi-barbarians to be its "peculiar people," and that it ever did thus instruct and aid them to deceive and to rob

other men? Can your dishonest God of the Bible be the true God—the God of nature?

From the second chapter of Joshua, we learn that God rewarded a certain woman by the name of Rahab for lying to her neighbors, the inhabitants of Jericho, concerning the Hebrew spies whom she was then concealing in her house. This woman was a harlot, or common prostitute, and this fact probably explains why it was that God was so good to her, and also why it was that during their stay in Jericho, his messengers made her house their resting-place. "Birds of a feather," etc.

When God wished Samuel to go to Bethlehem to anoint David king of Israel, in place of Saul, who, by an act of humanity shown to a captured king, had offended God, Samuel was afraid to go lest Saul should kill him. God, therefore, instructed Samuel to go with a base lie in his mouth, to take with him a heifer, and to falsely and treacherously swear that he had come for no other purpose than to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. Samuel, of course, swore to the required lie, and thus exemplified the baleful influence which this mendacious and immoral God has always exercised upon the moral characters of his worshipers. These facts we learn from 1 Sam. xvi, 1-5.

## LECTURE THIRD.

In the eighth and ninth chapters of Romans, we find the following passages: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. . . . For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. [What an inordinate craver he was of notoriety!] Therefore, hath he mercy [not on those who deserve it, but, without any regard to merit] on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth. . . . Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show his wrath [to whom and against whom does he wish to show his wrath? And how came he by this unreasonable wrath? Should the potter indulge in wrath against his own vessels for being just what he himself made them—just what he himself wished them to be?], and to make his power known, endured with much long



suffering the vessels of wrath [made such by himself, without their having had anything at all to do in the matter] fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy [made such by himself, without their having had anything at all to do in the matter], which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us [How unanimously all theologians believe themselves to be "vessels of mercy," their neighbors to be "vessels of wrath!"], whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the gentiles." In Eph. i, 4, Paul, also, to the same effect, says: "According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Why "we" rather than anybody else? So also in 2 Thess. ii, 13: "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning [by the most atrocious partiality] chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the [falsely so-called] truth."

From these, and from a vast number of other similar passages, we learn that, "before the foundation of the world," God, by the most inexcusable partiality, unchangeably predestinated a certain small portion of the human race to eternal salvation, and all the balance to eternal damnation. We also learn that he exerts upon all men an influence so irresistible that not an individual of them can possibly escape the destiny, whether good or bad, to which he has been thus eternally predestinated. We also learn that, by these same irresistible influences, God causes every individ-

ual to seem to deserve, and to be fitted for, the destiny, whatever it may be, to which he has thus been eternally predestinated. We learn, further, that to those whom he has already unchangeably predestinated to salvation—to those who, therefore, could not possibly fail to attain salvation any way—he gives power to believe certain absurd doctrines, such as that a certain child was begotten by the shadow of a ghost, that a certain God is his own father and his own son, that three distinct gods are only one single God, etc; and that, although he has thus already unchangeably predestinated them to salvation any way, he then falsely pretends that he saves them simply because of their belief in these absurd doctrines, a belief with which he himself fills them, and which, consequently, involves no merit on their own part; and that he thus makes them seem to merit the salvation to which he has predestinated them, and, by their woful want of common sense, to be well fitted for that salvation. We learn still further, that, from those whom he has already unchangeably predestinated to certain damnation any way, he either withholds all power to believe these absurd doctrines, and then falsely pretends that he damns them simply because of their unbelief, or else manufactures for them a lie, irresistibly deludes them into believing it, and then falsely pretends that he damns them simply because they have believed it. All of this is abominably partial and unfair, as well as monstrously unjust and cruel to those who are damned. Since, like mere machines, those who are predestinated to salvation are simply made to believe the absurd doctrines in question, their faith in these doctrines can

not possibly involve any merit on their own part. So, on the other hand, the unbelief in these absurd doctrines, on the part of a portion of those who are predestinated to damnation, and the belief on the part of the balance of them in a God-prepared lie, cannot possibly involve any demerit on the part of the respective subjects of them, since, like mere machines, these two classes of persons are, by God's almighty power, simply made to be just what they are. It would be just as reasonable and fair for God to damn us for not flying, when he has given us no wings to fly with, as it is for him to damn us for not believing certain absurdities, when he has given us no bump of credulity to believe them with. We would all gladly fly, if we could; and, if we could, we would all just as gladly believe all that it is really necessary for us to believe in order to attain salvation. So of those who, by the almighty power of God himself, are made to believe a lie. It would be just as reasonable and fair for God to make them blind, and then damn them for being so, as it is for him to make them believe a lie, and then damn them because they do believe it. Why does he not damn us poor "non-elect" all at once, according to his unchangeable and horribly cruel predestination, without all this silly effort to make us seem to merit this monstrously unjust doom? Since we cannot possibly be saved, why tantalize us with false hopes of salvation? Why tantalize the starving man with the sight of food which you know that he can never touch? Why insult us by urging us to love and serve a hideous monster, who, "before the foundation of the world"—before we could possibly have been guilty

of any offense whatever—cruelly doomed us to writhe and scream for ever and ever in the unutterable torments of “fire and brimstone?” Will God, think you, ever give “saving faith” to any one whom he has thus unchangeably doomed to damnation? If not, why insult such a man by calling upon him to believe?

But does God, you ask, make certain persons believe a lie? Paul says that he does, and that he makes their unbelief, thus forced upon them, an excuse for inflicting upon them the damnation to which, from all eternity, he had unchangeably predestinated them, and which consequently, they would inevitably have had to endure all the same if this pretended excuse had never been invented. “And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie [and this he will do expressly in order] that they all might be damned” (2 Thess. ii, 11, 12). This makes the case a very clear one, and, at the same time, makes God a hideous fiend, a thousand times worse than the devil.

In order that these infinitely injured people may “believe a lie,” it is absolutely necessary that a suitable lie be furnished them to believe. Without a lie to believe, they could never be led by the “strong delusion” in question to “believe a lie.” But who is to furnish them the necessary lie? Who, except God himself, possibly could furnish it? Who else foreknew that there was ever to be any such lie, and that it was ever to be believed? And could he have possibly foreknown that these things certainly would be, unless he had himself unchangeably predetermined that they certainly should be? Since, from “before

the foundation of the world," the elect—"the vessels of mercy," as they are sometimes called—were infallibly predestinated to salvation—since, millions of ages before they were born, God made it utterly impossible for them not to attain salvation—since their salvation does not in any way depend upon themselves, it evidently cannot possibly involve any merit on their own part. And so, too, of the non-elect—"the vessels of wrath," as they are sometimes called. Since, millions of ages before they were born, the dire doom of damnation was unchangeably fixed upon them, that doom evidently does not depend upon anything demeritorious in themselves. While writhing for ever and ever in the unutterable torments of fire and brimstone, simply because God made them expressly for this occupation, and rendered it utterly impossible for them to engage in any other, these persons may be just as good, just as worthy of eternal happiness as are any of those who, for similar reasons, are tooting on penny-trumpets, or playing on golden harps in heaven. Indeed, judging from the crowds that I now see heading heavenwards, I am free to say that, for the best society, I would much rather risk the other place.

I have heard certain champions of the Bible attempt to justify God's atrocious act of thus damning these unfortunate persons millions of ages in advance of their creation, by claiming that he damned them on account of the sins which he foresaw that they would commit after they were created. This, however, is not the teaching of the Bible. It plainly teaches that he made them expressly for damnation, just as a potter makes certain vessels expressly for dishonorable

uses; and it teaches that he had just as good a right to do this, and to include in his cruel decree of damnation millions of infants not a span long that were to die before birth—before they could sin at all—as the potter has to make, for dishonorable uses, certain vessels that never have been, and never can be, guilty of any offense whatever. Besides this, how could God have possibly foreseen that certain sins would be committed, millions of ages in the future, by certain persons, predetermined by him to be then created, unless he himself, at the same time that he predetermined their creation, also predetermined that they inevitably should be guilty of those very sins. If those persons possibly could have avoided committing the offenses that God foresaw that they certainly were to commit, they probably would have avoided committing them. In that case, however, the events that he thought he foresaw as certainly occurring, would never have occurred at all, and his pretended fore-knowledge would have reduced to extremely poor guess-work. Must he not, then, of absolute necessity, have predetermined the acts and the characters of all men just as much as he predetermined their existence and their final destiny? Is it not an undeniable fact that if there be a personal God at all, whoever ultimately lands in hell does so simply because this God has made him expressly for that particular destiny, and has made it utterly impossible for him to attain any other? As I have already said, this makes God a thousand times worse than the devil was ever represented to be, since it makes God, who could do otherwise, spend a great portion of his time making men for the express purpose of seeing

them writhe for ever and ever in the unutterable torments of fire and brimstone, while the devil, who could not do otherwise if he so desired, and who is himself also helplessly suffering these same terrible torments, simply receives those whom God makes for him and forwards to his fearfully fiery dominions. Would any but the foulest of all fiends make men thus for the express purpose of damning them? Would any but the foulest of all fiends make men at all if he knew that they would suffer eternal torments if made, or if he knew that there was even the remotest chance for them to thus suffer? The doctrine in question is undeniably the most blasphemous one ever taught among men; and yet there is no doctrine more clearly taught in the Bible. So long, therefore, as the Bible continues to be accepted as conclusive authority in regard to such matters, my Presbyterian friends, and others who advocate this horribly blasphemous doctrine, need have no fear that it can ever be overthrown.

But who, you may ask, are those unfortunate persons whom God is thus, "by strong delusions," so shamefully and so irresistibly leading to "believe a lie that they might all be damned?" So far as my subject is concerned, I might omit any notice of this question at all. I am dealing with the deluder, not the deluded—with the damner, not the damned; and no matter who the victims of this God-sent delusion and of this God-invented lie may be, the sender of the delusion, the inventor of the lie, the author of the damnation, remains the same. In any case, these victims, whoever they may be, undeniably receive at the

hands of God—the God that you either blindly or wickedly worship—an infinite wrong; and he undeniably stands convicted of an infinite wrong-doing. Since you desire me to do so, however, I will make it as clear to you as possible who these victims really are. In the first place, then, what assurance have my opponents that they are not themselves the very parties that are being thus deluded, and thus booked for eternal damnation? Would it not be just as fair and just as proper for God to thus “send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned,” as it would be for him to thus delude anybody else into believing the same lie for the same purpose? Indeed, by reading the whole chapter from which I have quoted, you will clearly perceive that the language in question cannot possibly be applied, as my opponents would all like to apply it, to Infidels and other non-professors of religion. These parties, and especially the Infidels, are all to be damned, it is true, but, as we elsewhere learn, their damnation is to be administered to them ostensibly because they have not believed anything at all, and not, like that of the parties whose case is now under consideration, because they have believed a lie. Paul clearly describes the parties, to whom he applies the fearful language in question, as sitting in the temple of God, claiming to be the people of God, and arrogating to themselves many of the powers and prerogatives of God. He describes them further as a portion of the Christian church, who are to fall away from that church, and to corrupt themselves by the rejection of true doctrines and the adoption of false ones, and by the indulgence



of wicked practices; but who, nevertheless, are to claim to be the true church, and who are really to be loud-mouthed, arrogant, and intolerant professors of religion.

From this, you perceive that these unfortunate victims of God's "strong delusion," must, of necessity, constitute some church organization, and this lets off the Infidels and all other non-professors of religion. All theologians admit this fact, and differ in opinion only when they attempt to fix upon the particular sect or division of the church that is being thus so scandalously deluded and damned. They all regard it as a truly glorious thing for any other sect to be thus treacherously tricked into damnation, but, for obvious reasons, none of them desire themselves to undergo these interesting and glorious operations.

Since Paul describes the falling away in question as a very great one, threatening the very existence of the church, theologians all agree that it will not do to fix upon some small and obscure sub-sects, such as the Mormons, Millerites, etc. They all agree that the description cannot be filled by anything less than the entire Catholic or the entire Protestant division of the Christian church. As a matter of course, therefore, the Catholics, for the love of God, boldly claim, and, indeed, quite clearly prove, that the Protestants correspond exactly to the description given by Paul of those who were to fall away from the church, and who were then to be so atrociously tricked and damned by the God whom they professed to serve. On the other hand, equally as a matter of course, and equally for the love of God, the Protestants return this truly char-

acteristic Christian compliment, by just as boldly claiming and just as clearly proving the very same things in regard to the Catholics. As to myself, I suspect that both parties are correct. I am certain that both parties have been deluded into believing a lie—in fact, into believing many lies—and the damnation, I suppose, will follow as a matter of course. Should my views of the case prove to be correct, then we will all be damned together; some of us for what we do believe, and the balance for what we do not believe. In any view of the case, those who escape damnation are bound to be “few and far between”—too few, by far, to keep the weeds down in the streets of the New Jerusalem. Since God is thus confessedly a deluder or deceiver, no one can be at all sure that his own religious faith is not a “strong delusion” sent upon him by God as a pretext for damning him. In view of all these things, then, let us all, Christians and Infidels, prepare to be damned.

In the twentieth chapter of Ezekiel, God declares that, for a pretext to render his chosen people “desolate,” he gave them “statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live.” He also declares that he “polluted them,” and caused them to burn their own children as sacrifices to him upon altars. To thus assert, as my opponents do, that the infinite sum of all the forces eternally inherent in nature ever did do such things as these, is to assert something so supremely absurd, and so monstrously blasphemous, that it requires no further notice.

In Jon. iii, 10, we read: “If so be they will hearken; and turn every man from his evil way that I may re-

pent me of the evil which I purpose to do unto them [why?], because of the evil of their doings." Here we have God represented as being in doubt as to whether the people of whom he was speaking would, or would not, "hearken, and turn every man from his evil way;" and this doubt on his part in regard to this matter is *prima facie* evidence that he was not, as my opponents declare that he always was, and that he still is, infinite in knowledge. It is *prima facie* evidence that, in regard to his knowledge, he was, on the contrary, not at all superior to a man of ordinary intelligence. He proposed to "repent," provided those people would repent first; and he proposed to do evil, because they had already done evil. From this, we learn that, in his actions, he was controlled not by infinite wisdom and infinite goodness, but by the actions of the ignorant, superstitious, and wicked men of a pagan city. Did he not, in repenting, display a purely human weakness? and in proposing to do evil simply because the men of that city had done evil, did he not display a base human motive and a woful want of goodness? And, in thus charging him with all these things, so derogatory to the character of a God, are not my opponents again undeniably guilty of a monstrous act of blasphemy?

From the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy, we learn that, in one of the sudden fits of jealousy to which he is said to have been extremely subject, God worked himself up to an uncontrollable fury, and then declared that, without any distinction of age, sex, or condition, he would mercilessly destroy all, except Moses, of his entire nation of chosen people whom he

had so often and so solemnly sworn to protect. When, however, his special favorite, adviser, and manager, Moses, who, by an unaccountably strange coincidence, was always present, and was always the only one present, on all the occasions of these fits, had reasoned with him in regard to this matter, and had shown him the disgraceful nature of his proposed course of conduct—the unpopularity which by that course he would bring upon himself—he concluded to break his word, and to back down from this his proposed wholesale slaughter of his people. As we learn in another place, however, he did not back down because of the enormity of his proposed crime. Of that enormity he seemed to be totally unconscious, or utterly callous. He backed down simply from fear—from fear that, if he should commit the atrocious crime proposed, his enemies would make fun of him, and claim that he had killed his people simply because he was unable to govern them, or claim that they themselves had done this killing. The following is his own version of the affair: “I said I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men [and I would have gone on and accomplished this threat], were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, Our hand is high and the Lord hath not done this” (Deut. xxxii, 26, 27). From this it is evident that, if he could have been sure that he should himself receive the supposed honor of the proposed crime, he would certainly have gone on and committed it. I do not know which was the more abominable, the atrocious

crime which he proposed to commit, or the despicable cowardice which alone prevented him from committing it. Were I, like my opponents, to thus charge God with being both a criminal and a coward, I would not, like them, after having been guilty of this horrible blasphemy, continue to worship him.

On various other occasions, when in similar fits of jealousy and fury, he declared, in the most positive manner, that he would utterly destroy all of these his peculiar rascals, and choose an entirely new set. On every one of these occasions, however, Moses, who, as I have already said, always happened to be present on all of these occasions—who seems, moreover, to have been the greatest rascal of the whole band, and to have been at all times more than a match for God in argument—succeeded in shaming him out of his proposed vengeance. This he did by representing to him what his enemies would say of conduct so inexpressibly atrocious. And, in thus charging God with being a scandalously jealous and ferocious person, a weak reasoner, a moral coward, a promise breaker, etc., are not my opponents again guilty of blasphemy?

In the twentieth chapter of Ezekiel, God refers to these events, and again declares that it was only from fear of being disgraced in the eyes of his enemies—he had no friends—that he backed down from executing his oft-repeated and unconditional threat to destroy his rebellious and rascally people. He then goes on to say that, being thus afraid to execute this threat, he had sworn to take vengeance on his people in some other way. He also informs us that, in order to have a pretext for what he proposed to do to them, he had

himself caused them to commit many very wicked acts. "Wherefore," says he, "I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live; and I polluted them in their own gifts [to him], in that they caused to pass through the fire [as burnt-offerings to himself] all that openeth the womb [all their first-born children], that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. xx, 25, 26). Was not this a rather strange method by which to convince them that he was the Lord? Could he not have convinced them of this fact—if it was a fact—in a less cruel way?

In Ex. xxxiii, 3, we read: "For I will not go up in the midst of thee: for thou art a stiff-necked people: lest I consume thee in the way." Here God is represented not only as being limited in his presence, but also as being afraid to trust himself in the company of his chosen people—afraid lest, in one of his frequent fits of fearful fury, he might entirely lose control of himself and murder them all. I do not know which was the more to be pitied, this poor insane God, or the unfortunate people who were thus constantly exposed to his insane fury. "Therefore, he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them" (Ps. cvi, 23). Here this poor, passionate, and inefficient God is represented as very frankly admitting that he was entirely under the control—that he was, in fact, the mere instrument—of his chief favorite, Moses. And are not such representations highly blasphemous?

"And I sought for a man among them, that should

make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore, have I poured out my indignation upon them. I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath" (Ezek. xxii, 30, 31). From this, it is clear that, in his frequent fits of frantic fury, this unfortunate and ill gotten-up God lost all power of self-control; that, in his lucid intervals, he did not really wish to destroy the people in question; and that, in order to save them from his own fury when his next fit should come on, he tried hard to find some one to play Moses with him—to coax him like a spoiled child not to be naughty; but that, not finding any one to play this rôle, he actually had committed the horrible deed which he mentions, and which he had so earnestly hoped that some man more powerful than himself would prevent him from committing. Poor insane God! Why did priests ever make him so? What a monstrous character his own blasphemous inspired writers gave him! With such a God, who would exchange places?

In all these cases, God is clearly represented as being subject to uncontrollable fits of anger, jealousy, fury, fear, etc.—all of them the lowest, the most animal, of the human passions—and as saying and doing things far worse than were ever said or done by the most despicable of human tyrants. Notwithstanding all this, however, Moses, according to his own account, could, at all times and under all circumstances, lead, as it were by the nose, this fearfully furious God hither and thither at pleasure, and, with the utmost ease, vanquish him in every argument. And now, let me ask,

could any man thus completely control the action of the Supreme Ruler of the Universe—the only true God—the illimitable and inconceivably glorious power that sustains, in all their unspeakably sublime revolutions, the billions of billions of mighty worlds and systems of worlds that crowd every portion of infinite space? And dare my opponents deliberately commit the horrible blasphemy of charging that this infinitely mighty and glorious power—this only true God—ever does thus go into uncontrollable fits of anger, jealousy, fury, fear, etc., and that it ever does take walks, regale itself on roast meats, suffer defeat in argument from men, break its solemn promises, repent of what it has done, commit murder, show its back parts, etc.? Who, unless he be a fool that cannot reason, a coward that dare not reason, or a bigot that will not reason—who, I ask, that is a man, that can reason, that dare reason, and that does reason, will hesitate to answer that this infinitely great and glorious power (and what other true God is there?) never does, and never did, do any of these things? What, then, is this old, angry, jealous, furious, bloodthirsty, treacherous, and cowardly, being—this man-controlled, beef-eating, promise-breaking, weak-reasoning, ———-showing God of the Bible, except an old priest-invented, priest-paying, soul-enslaving, pagan myth—a monstrous remnant of primitive superstition and ignorance?

In Ezek. xxxix, 10, this same God says that his people “shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them.” Being ostensibly performed by way of retaliation upon open enemies, this form of robbery was not so bad as was the so-called borrowing



affair by which God's people "spoiled the Egyptians." In a case like this, I, being an Infidel, and an old soldier, might, perhaps, be induced to do a little robbing myself. I trust, however, that my opponents, being good Christians, could not, under any circumstances, be induced to do this. I further trust that no thought of popularity or of earthly gain has ever had anything to do with their being the worshipers of this notorious robber God. Be all this as it may, however, are they not guilty of blasphemy when they charge the true God—the infinite power that rules the universe—with ever having thus authorized robbery at all?

From a great number of passages, like the following, we learn that this monstrous God of the Bible was invented for the Hebrews alone; that he was never intended to be the God of any other people; and that, until he was adopted, or, rather, continued in use by the Christians, who, at first, were all Hebrews, he never was the God of any other people. "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee" (Gen. xvii, 7). From this, it is clear that it was only by a "covenant," or contract, that the party in question became the God of any people—of even the Hebrews. In consideration of such a "covenant," or contract, with the Hebrews, however, he speaks of himself, not in a general and unlimited manner, as he would speak if he regarded himself as the only God there was, and as the God of all nations, but in a particular and limited manner, as he naturally

would speak, if he believed himself to be only one of many gods, and as the God of the Hebrews alone. He does not speak of himself as God, but as "a god;" and since, as every grammarian knows, the limiting particle *a* means simply one, and since it is never applied to any object unless there be other objects of the same kind, the expression "a god" means simply one of the gods. The matter, then, reduces to this: That one of the gods, of whom there were many, proposes to become, by special contract, a special God or protector—a tutelary divinity—to a certain man to whom he has taken a fancy, and to his posterity. Indeed, as every Bible critic very well knows, the Hebrew word *Elohim*, which is the first appellation of the deity to be found in the Bible, is a noun in the plural number, and signifies, not an individual God, but an assemblage, corporation, or congress of gods, composed of many, or, at least, of several individuals. At the start, all of these gods seem to have worked harmoniously together as partners in the creation of all things. After a while, however, when men had become quite numerous, these gods seem to have dissolved their partnership—their *Elohim*, as they called it—and to have divided among the various members or stockholders of this company all of the company property, each individual receiving as his share a certain tribe of men, and, also, in most instances, the lands occupied by those men. In this division, Baal, for his portion, chose the Assyrians, and the country which they inhabited. Chemosh chose the Ammonites, and their country; Jehovah the Hebrews, and whatever country he might be able to take for them. And so of all the

other gods. Each of them became the tutelary divinity of a particular people to whom alone he devoted his entire attention, and whose entire devotion as worshipers he claimed to himself alone. All of these gods were equally real, and were usually admitted to be so by one another's worshipers. Naturally enough, however, each nation or people were wont to claim that, in some respect, their own particular God or tutelary divinity was superior to any of the other gods. Thus, while the Hebrews looked upon Baal, Chemosh, Molech, and other tutelary divinities of the neighboring nations as equally real gods, and while they often worshiped them as such, they were, nevertheless, wont to arrogantly claim that their own tutelary divinity, Jehovah, was greatly superior to any of these other gods. They were wont to express this assumed, but by no means established, superiority of their own God, by calling him the "Lord God," that is, the Lord, or chief of the gods—the head member of the Elohim, the "most high God," the "God of gods," etc.

"And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God" (Jer. xxx, 22). "For thou an holy people [that is, a people exclusively set aside, consecrated, or devoted, by contract] unto the Lord thy [no one else's] God, and the Lord hath chosen thee [and no one else] to be a peculiar people unto himself [and not to any other God], above all the nations that are upon the earth" (Deut. xiii, 2). "And ye shall be holy [that is, ye shall be by this contract confined in your worship exclusively] unto me: for I the Lord am holy [that is, by this contract, I am confined in all my dealings exclusively to you], and have severed you from other

people, that ye should be mine" (Lev. xx, 26). The "other people," of course, were not intended to be his, and he did not pretend to claim them as his. Of right, they all belonged to other gods, to whom they had fallen, in the general division of which I have spoken, just as the Hebrews, who had fallen to him in that division, belonged, of right, to himself. And this right of the other gods, he seems to have been willing, on all occasions, to respect. He never required the people of any other God to worship himself; and he was always furiously jealous and angry whenever any of these gods invaded his equal rights by leading his people to worship themselves.

All of the passages which I have just quoted were either spoken directly by this God of the Hebrews himself, if, indeed, he was a real being, or put into his mouth by his inventors, if he was not; and all of these passages, and many more like them, clearly indicate a covenant, or contract, by which the contracting parties, Jehovah, the chief or head God of the Elohim, on the one side, and the Hebrews on the other, mutually bound themselves to be "holy" to each other—that is, to be, as far as use and ownership were concerned, exclusively each other's property. It is a fact well known to all critics that, in the primitive sense in which it is used in all of these passages, the word "holy" signifies exclusiveness alone. It does not at all involve any idea of morality, purity, or any other virtue or form of goodness. It is only in comparatively modern times that any idea of excellence has been attached to the word. By being exclusively devoted to his service, a man could be just as "holy" to

the devil as he could be to the Lord. As a matter of necessity, this contract of mutual holiness, or exclusiveness, was just as binding upon one of the contracting parties as it was upon the other—just as binding upon the Lord as it was upon the Hebrews. If, then, by its provisions, the Hebrews were bound—as they certainly were—to confine themselves, in their capacity of worshipers, to this one God, he was certainly just as fully bound, by the same provisions, to confine himself, in his capacity of the object worshiped, to this one people. Indeed, this mutual holiness, or exclusiveness, to each other is clearly indicated in the language employed. God, you will notice, requires the Hebrews to be “holy” (wholly) or exclusive to himself; and, as an inducement to them to observe this exclusiveness, he informs them that he is thus “holy,” or exclusive. It is true that he does not say to whom he is thus “holy,” or exclusive, but the connection renders it impossible for him to mean anybody but the Hebrews. Had he meant to be the God of all nations, he would not have been “holy” to any of them. By never becoming the God of any other people, he faithfully kept his part of the covenant in question, and nothing enraged him so much as for the Hebrews, by turning their devotions to some other God, to break their part of it.

“Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you” (Jer. iii, 14). “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the

hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord" (Jer. xxxi, 31, 32). "Moreover, thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them [certain other gods of whom he was extremely jealous] to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, That thou hast slain my children" (Ezek. xvi, 20, 21). From these, and from a vast number of other similar passages, we learn that the peculiar union into which God and the Hebrews entered with each other, was a marriage union, or, at least, in its mutual obligations, exactly similar to such union. And, from its very nature, was not this union bound to be equally binding upon both of the parties to it—equally binding upon God, the husband, and the Hebrews, the wife—to mutually forsake all others and to cleave unto each other alone? If it was whoredom or adultery, as God always called it, for the Hebrews, the wife, in this case, to have any love intercourse with any other god—such intercourse as is held between worshipers and the object worshiped—would it not have been equally whoredom or adultery for God, the husband, to have similar intercourse with any other people? Was the husband any less bound than was the wife? Had he any other wife? If he had, who was she? If he had not, was he not, undeniably, the exclusive husband—God—the exclusive tutelary divinity of the Hebrews alone? If, then, there really be, as my opponents all declare that there is, at the present time, a love intercourse being carried on between this God, this husband of the Hebrews,

and another female, the Christian church, does not that intercourse constitute a case of whoredom or adultery on the part of both the participants in it?

From the fact that this husband God of the Hebrews believed that certain of his children had been "devoured" by the other gods, just as he was himself wont to devour roast children, roast beef, etc., he certainly must have believed that these gods were real living beings who, like himself, were capable of devouring or eating up roast children and other similar luxuries. And, from the fact that he was almost constantly in a towering rage of jealousy because of the real or the suspected intimacy of his wife with some of these other gods; from the fact that he was almost constantly giving her "curtain lectures" against these gods, and accusing her, not with vainly trying to commit whoredom or adultery with them, but with actually having committed this crime with them, he certainly must again have believed them to be, like himself, real beings, real males with whom his wife actually could have committed, and actually had committed this crime. As it is utterly impossible for a man to become really jealous of that which he does not believe to have any real existence, as it is utterly impossible for him to believe that his wife has actually committed whoredom or adultery without having had illicit sexual intercourse with a real man, or, at least, with a real male of some kind, so God could not possibly have been so jealous as he was, so certain as he was, that his wife had actually committed whoredom with these other gods, if he had not fully believed that they were real living beings, like himself, of the mas-

culine gender. And was he, or was he not, correct in his belief? If he was, then, of course, he was, and still is, only one of many similar gods, who may have been, and who may still be, his equals, or even his superiors, in every respect. If he was not, then, of course, in entertaining the erroneous opinions he did on this subject, he was certainly a very ignorant and superstitious God, utterly unfit to be worshiped by intelligent men. In the former case, my opponents are guilty of lying when they teach, as they all do, that he is the only God that does now or that ever did exist. In the latter case, they are equally guilty of lying when they teach, as they all do, that he is now, and that he always has been, infinite in knowledge. In any possible view of the case, they are guilty of lying—guilty of lying, too, not for the glory of God, as Paul claimed that he lied, but to the great detriment of God's character. And does not such lying against God constitute blasphemy?

If, in order to escape this unpleasant and otherwise utterly unavoidable dilemma, my opponents conclude to deny that God really did believe that his various and often successful rivals were real gods, how much better will they make the matter? Will they not make it worse? Will they not simply make their own God a huge idiot forever foaming with furious jealousy, jealousy of nothing at all; an atrocious monster forever insulting and abusing his wife, by falsely charging her with having committed whoredom or adultery with Baal, Chemosh, Molech, the Great Jumping Jingo, or something else which he does not believe has any existence at all? Will they not also make



their own God a very feeble being, rarely ever able to cope in his wife's affections, or in anything else, with his rivals, these utter nonentities? And will they not, by this unavailing subterfuge, so derogatory to God's character, become again guilty of blasphemy?

"Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel?" (Num. xvi, 9). "For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel" (Is. xlvii, 2). "So now the Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites (another god's people) from before his people Israel, and shouldst thou possess it? Wilt thou not possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess" (Jud. xi, 23, 24). In all of these passages the "God of Israel" is mentioned, just as is the "congregation of Israel" in the first passage, as something entirely confined to Israel—as a personage who had no more claim upon the love, the allegiance, or the adoration of any other people than Chemosh or any other God had upon the love, the allegiance, or the adoration of his people, the Hebrews, and who never any more thought of giving lands or other possessions to the Amorites or any other foreign nation than Chemosh or the god of any other foreign nation thought of giving lands or other possessions to his people. In short, he is clearly spoken of as one who had no better claim to be regarded as the universal God of all nations than had Chemosh, the god of the Amorites, who is mentioned in exactly the same manner, and in the same sense.

The last passage quoted was spoken by Jephthah to the king of the Amorites. From this passage we learn that Jephthah, inspired though he was by his own "God of Israel," did not doubt that Chemosh was a real god, standing in exactly the same relation to his chosen people, the Amorites, as that in which the "God of Israel" stood to his chosen people, Israel. We learn, too, that, in Jephthah's opinion, Chemosh could and did just as truly give lands and other possessions to his people as the "God of Israel" could and did give them to his. Indeed, as I have already said, every nation was supposed to have its own peculiar or exclusive tutelary divinity. All of these divinities were supposed to be equally real gods, but possessed of different degrees of power, intelligence, etc., each nation very naturally holding that their own God was superior to any of the others. The God that you now worship was only one of many similar gods; and, in choosing him, or, rather, in having him forced upon your ancestors, you did no better, perhaps, than you would have done had Baal, Chemosh, Molech, Apis, Juggernaut, or any other prominent god been thus chosen by you, or thus forced upon your ancestors. Indeed, I doubt whether you did as well. As given in the Bible, your God's record is rather worse than that of any other god of whom I have any knowledge. If you know of any other god with a worse record, what god is it, and in what respect is this record worse? Besides this, since the marriage union of this God and the Jewish church or nation was to be "forever," he is evidently still her husband and she is evidently still his wife. Will you please

inform us, then, in what relation your church stands to this wife's husband? In her love-intercourse with him, does she stand in the relation of a polygamous wife No. 2, or simply in that of a harlot defiling the wife's bed? According to your own teachings, she is bound to stand to him in one or the other of these relations. In view of all these facts, are not my opponents guilty of blasphemy in reducing the true God, the infinite power that rules the universe, to this little, furious, jealous, beef-eating God, married to one small nation, and a cruel and treacherous enemy to all other nations?

“Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live” (Ex. xxii 18). Here we have a law, founded upon what we now know to be a very gross superstition, and yet professing to come directly from God—a law that has caused hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women, and children to be put to death by the most cruel of all known tortures, a law that has often brought mourning and terror to nearly every family circle in all Christendom, a law that still binds to a worse than slavish superstition the minds of a great majority of all the believers in the Bible throughout the world. But does the true God, the infinite but unconscious sum of all the forces that exist in the universe, really believe thus in the existence of witches, and does it delight to see hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women, and children thus cruelly tortured to death for being witches—witches, too, which it must itself have made? In charging this infinite force, this great and glorious God, with superstition so degrading and cruelty so monstrous, are not my opponents again

guilty of blasphemy? The following passages, all bearing upon the same matter, require no additional comment: "A man also, or a woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones [with what else could they stone them?]; their blood shall be upon them" [upon whom?] (Lev. xx, 27). "And he [Manasseh] . . . observed times and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards; he wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger" (2 Chron.. xxxiii. 6). The God of the Bible, you perceive, is here clearly represented as fully believing in the actual existence of familiar spirits, enchantments, witches, wizards, etc; as fully believing that he himself, as the maker of all things, had made these things. You perceive that he is clearly represented as fully believing that Manasseh actually had dealt with all of these things, and not that he had merely tried or pretended to deal with them. Was the true God ever thus sunk in superstitions so degrading?

The lowest form of idolatry ever known to have been practiced by men is that which is called fetichism, and which consists in ascribing deific power and intelligence to certain natural but inanimate objects, such as stones, plants, drugs, decoctions of certain roots and leaves, dead men's hair, etc. This extremely degrading form of idolatry still prevails among some of the lowest tribes of Africa, who depend almost entirely upon it, in some of its forms, to charm away or keep off diseases, evil spirits, witches, etc., and to discover the perpetrators of crimes. When

used for this last purpose, it is usually in the form of a very virulent poison, and is taken into the stomach by the party who is undergoing trial. If he be guilty, which seems to be nearly always the case, the deific drug or fetich is supposed to discover that fact the moment it reaches his stomach, and to proceed at once to kill him because of his guilt. If, however, on the contrary, he be innocent, which seems rarely ever to be the case, the fetich discovers this fact also, and simply causes him to vomit forth the contents of his stomach and live. Low and cruel as is this form of fetichism, my opponents boldly charge their God with being a believer in it, and with having given many laws and instructions in regard to its practice. According to their teachings, he was once so completely a slave to this most degrading and hurtful of all superstitions, that he depended entirely upon its efficacy to discover the guilt or innocence of married women who happened to be so unfortunate as to be cursed with jealous husbands. From the fifth chapter of Numbers we learn that, whenever a husband became jealous of his wife, "and there be no witness against her," he was required to take her to a priest, who was to administer to her a fetich in the form of a foul and noxious drink, prepared according to a recipe furnished by God himself. "And when he [the priest] hath made her to drink the [fetich] water, then it shall come to pass that, if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the [fetich] water that causeth the curse [having discovered her guilt] shall enter into her, and become bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot; and the woman

shall be a curse among her people. And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean, then [the fetich having discovered and made known her innocence] she shall be free, and shall conceive seed" (Num. v, 27, 28). Could blasphemy be carried much farther than my opponents have carried it by thus charging against God this monstrous form of fetichism?

In Ex. xxxii, 27-29, we read: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses, and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother, that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day." What could be more horrible than this? Three thousand bleeding human sacrifices, or, as many of our Bibles have it, twenty-three thousand, offered to God in one day, by his own order, as the price of his blessing! And, like a ghoul, God accepted this horrible gift, this monstrous mass of ghastly corpses, as a pleasing sacrifice; and, in return for it, bestowed his "blessing," whatever that was, upon the horrid murderers who so readily offered it!

And yet, in this soul-sickening case, the blood-be-smeared murderers, upon whom God bestowed this "blessing," were themselves guilty of the very same offense for which they thus so cruelly and so treacherously butchered their poor unsuspecting sons, brothers, neighbors, and companions. Moses, it seems, had been

absent about six weeks, professedly spending his time at a kind of writing-school taught by God, his boon, companion, upon a mountain in the neighborhood. During his absence his brother Aaron was left in command of the people. While thus acting as commander-in-chief, Aaron, who seems to have had precious little faith in the jealous, bloodthirsty, beef-eating God of his brother, made, for the people to worship, a golden calf, which was certainly as harmless a god as he could have provided for that purpose. Upon his return, however, Moses looked upon this calf-god enterprise with a great deal of disfavor, as did also his companion and writing-master, the calf-god's great rival. Hence followed the horrible massacre which has just been described. Instead, however, of punishing Aaron himself, who was certainly the principal offender in this affair, God, Moses & Co. made him their high priest, and in his stead, as we have seen, caused to be mercilessly and treacherously butchered many thousands of inoffensive and unsuspecting persons who, as dutiful soldiers or subjects, had simply obeyed his commands.

And this is the God, all unchanged and unchangeable, who, by the sword, was forced upon our ancestors, and whom, simply because you were born to him and stuffed with him before you were old enough to reason, you still continue to blindly worship. Had you been thus born to some other God, and thus early stuffed with him, you would have been just as devoted worshipers of that God as you now are of this. And had you been as early and as thoroughly taught concerning nature and her powers, you would have needed no

God at all, certainly not such a one as you now have. Indeed, in that case, no one could have forced upon you any such a God. None but the mentally blind can truly worship this monstrous impersonation of almost everything that is wicked and atrocious. Since, according to your own teachings, this fearfully atrocious monster is utterly incapable of any change; since he is, consequently, just as atrocious a monster now as he ever was, what assurance have you that, on some occasion in the near future, he may not, as the price of his blessing to your father, your brother, your neighbor, and your companion, require them thus treacherously to butcher you? Or, failing to do this, why may he not, as the price of his blessing to you, require you thus treacherously to butcher your son, your brother, your neighbor, and your companion? Since you yourselves charge him with having once been guilty of this unspeakably horrible act, and since you yourselves contend that he has undergone no change for the better, can you, with any kind of plausibility, claim that he is now any too good to repeat that act? And would such a requirement, if now made upon your relatives with respect to yourselves, or upon yourselves with respect to your relatives, be any more horrible in its atrocity than it was on the occasion in question, when made upon certain Hebrews with respect to their nearest and dearest relatives? Would not the nature of the act be, of necessity, the very same? Bring the case home to yourselves, therefore, and then, perhaps, you may be able to see it in its true, its horribly atrocious light.

If this God should thus require you now, in cold



blood, to so cruelly and so treacherously butcher your own sons, your own brothers, your own neighbors, and your own companions, would you, or would you not, obey that requirement? If you would, then you are true and consistent worshipers of this bloody monstrosity, and are fair examples of what the teachings of the Bible—a great portion of them, anyway—tend to make of men. If you would not, then you are, undeniably, a set of base hypocrites, and not the true and obedient worshipers of this hideous monstrosity. Nothing short of a perfect willingness, on the part of the Hebrews in question, to treacherously butcher in cold blood their own unsuspecting sons, brothers, neighbors, and companions—nothing but a perfect willingness, on the part of Abraham, to butcher and roast his own son for this voracious and ghoulish God to regale himself upon, would satisfy him in the case of these parties, and, since he never changes, nothing short of a perfect willingness on your part to butcher, and, if need be, to roast and to serve up as God-food your own children and other dear ones, whenever called upon so to do, can possibly satisfy him in your case. Remember that this hideous monster has never grown any better. Abraham was perfectly willing to butcher, to roast, and to serve up his own son to gratify the insatiate olfactories of this hideous monster, and that willingness, on his part, to commit this soul-sickening crime was imputed to him, by the monster, for righteousness. This God may, or may not ever, require you thus to butcher, to roast, and to serve up to him your own children. Having never changed, however, since he did make such a require-

ment, he is certainly none too good to make such a requirement now. Whether he does, or does not, ever make any such requirement of you, does not make a particle of difference. He looks simply at your willingness to commit the crime. If, then, you would be righteous in his eyes, you must be perfectly willing at all times and under all circumstances, to commit this or any other horrible crime, if called upon by him so to do. This doctrine is plainly taught in the Bible, and, if the doctrine be a pernicious and blasphemous one, then the Bible is clearly a pernicious and blasphemous book. Naturally enough, Freeman and others, of our own time and our own country, misled by these plain teachings of the Bible, have, with the most pious intentions, imbrued their hands in the life-blood of their own children. And are not similar crimes bound to prevail among those who accept the teachings of the Bible as of divine authority? Put yourselves in the places of either the murderers or the murdered, and how do the cases which we have just noticed appear? And you shout the praises of this hideous God, and persecute me so bitterly because my soul revolts from the worship of so bloody a monster—because I cannot believe that the infinitely great and glorious power that rules the universe ever does or ever did thus require men, in cold blood, to treacherously butcher their own sons, their own brothers, their own neighbors, and their own companions—because I cannot believe that this infinitely great and glorious power ever does or ever did thus require men to butcher and to roast their own children for the gratification of its sense of smell; and because I will

not, like yourselves, hypocritically and blasphemously pretend to believe these monstrous charges against this infinitely great and glorious power!

In Deut. xiii, 6-10, we read: "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 thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou nor thy father; . . . thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shalt thine eye pity him; neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: but thou shalt surely kill him: thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones that he die." What could be more horribly blasphemous than to charge God, as my opponents all do, with having issued this atrocious—this worse than hellish—command. Jesus, the Holy Ghost, and the Virgin Mary are three deities which neither the Hebrews nor their fathers had known. If, then, you would obey this horrible commandment, you should kill your brother, your son, your daughter, your wife, your friend, your minister, or any other person who attempts to persuade you to serve any one of these deities.

In Num. xxv, 4, 5, we read: "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 turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor." The offense for which these men were thus to

suffer death was the exercising of the inalienable right—a right so unspeakably dear to all freemen of the present time—to marry whatsoever women they pleased, and to worship whatsoever gods they pleased. Since they were to be hanged up “before the Lord . . . that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel,” they were undeniably so many human sacrifices demanded by him, offered to him and accepted by him. If anything more blasphemous than this could be said against God, what is it?

## LECTURE FOURTH.

“And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.” So reads the twenty-first verse of the sixth chapter of the book of Joshua. For a long list of similar butcheries, see the entire book of Joshua, and especially the tenth chapter. By the direct command of the God whom you now worship, and who is certainly no better now than he was then, Joshua thus invariably butchered, without any distinction of age, sex, or condition, all the inhabitants of all the many cities that he captured. In every case of the taking of a city, he “utterly destroyed all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining; . . . he utterly destroyed all that breathed.” All of these horrible wholesale murders, too, were committed, not for anything wrong that the poor defenseless victims had done, but simply because this bloodthirsty adopted God of yours wanted their land for his own chosen band of robbers and cut-throats, whose tutelary divinity he then was. The whole soul-sickening history closes as follows: “And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time; because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel” (Josh. x, 42). How can you have the face to claim, as you do, that the illimitable force that rules the universe was ever this bloodthirsty monster—this “Lord

God of Israel?" How dare you make an assertion so fearfully full of blasphemy?

In the thirty-first chapter of Numbers we have an account of the destruction of the Midianites by the command of this same fearfully bloodthirsty tutelary divinity of the Hebrews—this "Lord God of Israel." In its soul-sickening atrocity, this utterly unjustifiable butchery eclipses any other butchery of which we have any account in the entire history of the world's cruelties and crimes. The soldiers who had been sent out against Midian slew all of the Midianitish men, who seem to have been completely surprised by this utterly unprovoked attack, and to have been totally unprepared to resist it. More merciful, however, than was either Moses or this "Lord God of Israel," these soldiers spared the women and children, and brought them all in as captives. Because of this act of mercy, Moses was very angry with the officers and the soldiers. Acting, therefore, under the direct orders of his God—the God that he himself had made, and that you now worship—he went out to meet the soldiers, and addressed them as follows: "Have ye saved all the women alive? 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 have not known man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves." Moses seems to have been almost overcome with astonishment that the soldiers of the Lord's peculiar people should have displayed humanity enough to spare the lives of the poor, bereaved, inoffensive, and utterly helpless women and children. In order to ascertain which ones of those

women had, and which ones of them had not, "known a man by lying with him," all of them who had passed beyond the age of infancy had, of necessity, to be subjected to a careful surgical examination of certain nameless parts of their bodies. A public examination so revolting to all the instincts of female modesty, performed by the lewd and unskillful priests and soldiery, cannot be more than hinted at before a mixed audience such as I am now addressing.

When, however, this unutterably revolting examination was ended—when, by this means, "all the women children that have not known man by lying with him," had been discovered and separated from the rest of the captives, then began the cold-blooded, the soul-sickening butchery of the many tens of thousands of wives, mothers, and male infants. A signal was given. At once the air was rent and the earth made to tremble with the deafening yells of the God-chosen legions of murderers, raging now like ravenous wild beasts at the smell of blood, and the piercing shrieks of their immense multitude of utterly helpless victims, now wild with unutterable terror. Picture to yourself, if you can, the whole unspeakably horrible scene as being now enacted before your own eyes. Picture it, too, if you can, as being enacted with your own wives, your own mothers, your own sisters, your own daughters, your own infant sons, as the victims, and some rival sect of religionists as the butchers. The little ones—your own sweet babes among them—cling to their mothers, and those of them who are old enough to know their danger plead piteously for protection, which, of course, the poor, doomed

mothers are unable to give. On their bended knees, in tones that would move the hearts of the foulest fiends of hell, the mothers—your own wives, your own mothers, your own sisters, your own daughters, among them—implore mercy, not for themselves, but for their poor, helpless little babes. These poor mothers, however, are not pleading with the foulest fiends of hell, who might show them some mercy; they are pleading with people who do not know any such thing as mercy—with the chosen people of your adopted God. By the tens of thousands at once these chosen servants of God tear the infants from the sheltering arms of their loving mothers, hurl them by their feet in the air, and crush their poor, tender little heads upon the stones. Hear the awful, the unearthly wailings of those bereaved mothers! Earth never before heard a sound so fearfully full of unutterable woe—of unimaginable despair! But those awful, those never-to-be-forgotten wailings are fast being hushed forever in death. By the direct orders of the God that you either blindly or wickedly worship, the heads of these poor, bereaved mothers are now being cleft from their shoulders and made to roll in the dust; their tender bosoms are being pierced with rude weapons of iron; their skulls are being crushed with heavy stones, and their throats are being cut and their bowels are being ripped open with formidable butcher-knives. The cries of the victims are now hushed forever in death. The murderers, hoarse and exhausted, cease their yellings. An awful silence reigns all around. Vast heaps of warm, quivering, bleeding corpses cover the ground. Great pools of



dark, smoking blood are collecting in all the low places. A fearfully sickening odor is arising from this, the most unutterably horrible of all the slaughter-pens of earth, and your God, delighted with this scene, smiles his approval and pronounces his blessing upon his faithful servants, covered now from head to foot with the blood and the brains of the women and the children that they have just finished murdering. Yes, if you can do so, picture to yourselves all the unutterable horrors of this, the most unimaginably hideous scene ever enacted by either the fiends of earth or the fiends of hell. If you can do so, picture to yourselves your own loved ones being thus brutally butchered by this fearfully bloodthirsty adopted or step-God of yours, and then, if you feel like doing so, break forth into hallelujahs of praise to this hideous deific monstrosity while he is thus occupied upon those loved ones. In the name of humanity, however, do not ask me—do not ask any one but a blind bigot like yourselves—to join you in these worse than hellish orgies. Do not ask me to blindly believe, as do you, or to blasphemously declare, as also do you, that any deed, so unutterably atrocious, was ever committed by the only true God—the God of nature. Remember that, to me, these deeds appear just as atrocious now as they would appear to us all if they were committed upon our own loved ones by the Brahmans, the Mohammedans, or some other foreign sect, professedly by the command of their own God, or by some rival sect of Christians, professedly by the command of this same God. In a poem, "The Devil's Defense," I have depicted this whole fiendish affair as follows:

He ord'reth his band, with a bloody hand,  
 To butcher both young and old;  
 To render the land like a waste of sand  
 Where the billows once have rolled.

They hasten to do as the Lord doth command,  
 Like demons let loose, they destroy the whole land;  
 Alas for the victims! wherever they turn  
 Destruction awaits, while their villages burn.  
 Great volumes of smoke, like a vast floating pall,  
 Hang dark o'er the valleys, the mountains, and all;  
 From the depths of their darkness arise on the air  
 Such terrible yells and such screams of despair,  
 That all the damned spirits and demons of hell  
 Could never this scene in its horrors excel.

Of strong and brave men but a few now remain,  
 Their bodies lie scattered all over the plain;  
 Those few are surrounded: like lions at bay,  
 They rush on their murderers, they yell and they slay.  
 But beaten by numbers, their eyes gleaming fire,  
 They scream their defiance, they fall, they expire.  
 Resistance now ceases, the ground is all red  
 With blood from the veins of poor Midian's dead.

But burst forth anew on the smoke-burdened air,  
 More terrible wailings of utter despair;  
 Old women, whose locks are as white as the snow,  
 Are butchered and left to the vulture and crow.  
 The fond mothers flee with their babes at the breast,  
 Oh! could they save these, they could lose all the rest;  
 But flight is in vain, by the Lord's chosen men  
 They are caught and conveyed to a vast slaughter-pen.  
 A signal is given — around them there rains  
 A shower of blood mixed with their babies' crushed brains.  
 Oh! horrible! horrible! maddening sight!  
 Haste! haste! ye wild darkness, and hide it in night!  
 The mothers still cling to the bodies yet hot,  
 They gaze in the eyes, but are recognized not;  
 Those blood-covered bodies still fondly they press,  
 The names they still call, and they wildly caress;  
 Their agonized bosoms with mother-love burn,

But no mark of love comes to them in return.  
The lips that so lately were wreathed in a smile,  
All mangled and gory still quiver awhile;  
Death's pallor creeps over each poor little face,  
The heart-throbbings cease, and the eyes glaze apace.  
Their lives have departed forever away,  
Those sweet little babies are now only clay.  
The mothers see this, and are now glad to die,  
No longer they struggle, no longer they cry :  
Their throats are now cut, and their blood, like a spout,  
On their babies' dear faces comes gushing right out ;  
Their bodies unburied encumber the sod,  
And this is all done by the orthodox God.

After witnessing this unspeakably horrible butchery of their mothers, their married sisters, and their little brothers, "all the women children that have not known man by lying with him," were divided out, for the vilest of purposes, among the blood-besmeared murderers of all these their dear ones. Of these "women children" there were thirty-two thousand, and the soldiers, the priests, the citizens, and your God all came in for a share of them. For his own share your God, the hideous monster that had all these atrocious murders committed, received thirty-two of these "women children," to be used either directly by himself or by his priests as his proxies. Since he then had a body, just like the body of a man, he could, of course, himself have used his share of those "women children," just as the priests and others used their shares—just as all men use their wives and their mistresses.

And this, the most hideous of all monsters, is, according to your own teachings, the God to whom you pay your blind and idolatrous, if not wicked and de-

grading, worship. This monster is the God for whom you erect so many of those gorgeous resorts of pride, vanity, fashion, bigotry, superstition, and intolerance, called churches. This monster is the God for whom you keep up so many vast armies of worse than useless priests. This monster is the God to whom you pretend to offer those buncombe public addresses of yours which you call prayers. This monster is the God that you pretend to bamboozle, by the most abject flatteries, into doing your bidding—into pardoning your sins, saving your souls, damning your neighbors, etc., just as the Jews, when he was simply their tutelary divinity, were wont to bamboozle him into doing their bidding by stuffing him with roast meat. And has this monster ever become any less a monster than he was when he committed the horrible deeds which we have just been noticing? If not, how can you have the hardness of face to blasphemously declare, as you do, that he is the only true God—the infinitely great and glorious power that rules the universe?

Beaten, as they have been, at every point at which I have met them, my opponents now rashly venture to assert that in one respect at least their God, or rather their step-God, this hideous monster of the Bible, has a better record than has most of his rival Gods; that he has never required human sacrifices to be offered to himself, has never accepted any such sacrifices, and has never even permitted such sacrifices to be offered upon his altars. Unfortunately, however, for my opponents, the Bible clearly teaches that this monstrous God did not only permit human sacrifices to be offered to himself, but also did require them to

be thus offered, and did accept them as pleasing sacrifices. At the close of the last lecture I gave an instance in which he required the "heads" or leaders of the people to be hanged up "before the Lord"—that is, before himself. This was certainly a propitiatory human sacrifice. Had these men been doomed to be simply put to death by hanging they would not have needed to be hanged up "before the Lord." As the case stood, it was absolutely necessary that they should suffer death in the immediate presence of the Lord, in order that, being delighted with the spectacle of their death agonies, "the fierce anger of the Lord" might "be turned away from Israel."

In Lev. xxvii, 28, 29, we read: "Notwithstanding no devoted thing [that is, no thing promised to the Lord by a vow] that a man shall devote unto the Lord of all that he hath, both of man and of beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed. . . None devoted, which shall be devoted of men [as were Jephthah's daughter and some others long afterwards] shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to death." As you plainly see, this law which, according to the teachings of all my opponents, was derived directly from God himself, just as fully provides for the devoting to him of human beings as it provides for the devoting to him of beasts or of anything else. You plainly see, too, that this law strictly forbids the redemption from death of any person thus devoted or solemnly promised to the Lord. You plainly see that all such persons "shall surely be put to death." I do not think that this law was ever repealed among the Jews. I think it was always lawful

among them to devote or promise by vow human beings to the Lord, and that it was never lawful among them to omit the putting to death of the persons thus devoted. At any rate, three hundred and forty-eight years afterward, according to the commonly accepted chronology of the Bible, in the time of Jephthah, both provisions of the law were still in force. This we learn from the fact that, according to the former provision of this law, Jephthah devoted his own beloved daughter to the Lord, and from the fact that, according to the second provision, he was prevented from withdrawing from the fulfillment of his rash vow which, upon calm reflection, he greatly regretted having made.

In 1 Kings, xiii, 1, 2, we read: "And behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the Lord unto Bethel; and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. And he [the man of God] cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, Oh altar, altar, thus saith the Lord, Behold a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer [as sacrifices, of course; nothing else was ever offered upon altars] the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee." Turning now to 2 Kings, xxiii, 20, we learn that, in accordance with this prediction, Josiah "slew [or "sacrificed," as it means, and as it is given in the margin] all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem." From the second verse of the preceding chapter we learn that, in doing these things, Josiah "did that which was right in the sight

of the Lord." Here, then, we have your God requiring human sacrifices to be offered to himself—my opponents will not dare to claim that he had them offered to any of his hated rival gods—and fully accepting them when they were offered. In thus charging their God with this awful crime, are not my opponents again guilty of great blasphemy?

In Jud. xi, 30, 31, we read: "And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house [not of the doors of his sheep-fold or his cattle-pen] to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering." Since the object which was to be offered to the Lord "for a burnt offering" was to come forth of the doors of Jephthah's "house," and not from those of his sheepfold or his cattle-pen, and since it was to come forth to "meet" him, it was certainly something that was accustomed to dwell in his house, and not something that was accustomed to dwell either in his sheepfold or in his cattle-pen. It was certainly something that could recognize him as he approached—something that could at any time open the doors of his house, and that could and would, because of its love for him, go forth to meet him. It could not have been a cat or a dog, for these, being unclean beasts, were never offered to God as "burnt offerings"—offerings upon which he was supposed to feast. And could it have been any other beast—any beast fit for a "burnt offering?" Can we for a moment believe

that Jephthah was accustomed to keep his bulls, his rams, etc., in his "house"—in his parlor with his wife and daughter—and that he expected one of these animals to open the "doors" of his "house," and rush forth in advance of the members of his family to "meet" him on his return? If not, if we are to believe that, like a decent man, he was not accustomed to keep any such animals in his house, and if we are to believe that, like an intelligent man, he did not expect any such animals to "come forth of the doors of" his "house to meet" him, are we not bound to believe that, from the very start, he fully meant to offer up to the Lord as a "burnt offering" some member of his family—some one that he was accustomed to keep in his "house," and that naturally would be very likely to "to come forth of the doors of" his "house to meet" him on his return? Indeed, could the very great value which obviously attached to the promised sacrifice have attached to any other living thing in his possession? Even admitting that he was accustomed to keep his bulls, his rams, and other very untidy "clean beasts" in his "house," with his family, and that he was accustomed to see these genteel beasts come "forth of the doors of" his "house to meet" him on his return from any journey, could he have had the face to thus ask God to grant him a great national victory in return for one of these common and cheap sacrifices, hundreds of which, for comparatively trivial matters, were wont to be offered to God every day? Did not Jephthah certainly mean to offer a sacrifice which, in his own estimation, as far exceeded in value a bull or a ram as a great national victory ex-



ceeded in importance the things for which bulls and rams were wont to be offered? Did he not expect God to regard his sacrifice as worth a thousand times more than a bull or a ram, and to be willing to give a thousand times as much for it? Could the sacrifice intended, then, have been anything else than one of the members of Jephthah's own family? At any rate, did he not, in fulfilment of his vow, offer to God, in the form of a "burnt offering," his own beautiful and dearly beloved daughter? And would he have done this if she had not at least been included among the things from among which he intended to select his sacrifice? And did not God accept this inestimably precious sacrifice, and did he not pay the great price demanded for it by Jephthah, by giving this latter personage the signal victory which he so greatly desired over his enemies, the Ammonites?

Admitting, however, that, at the time of which we are speaking, Jephthah was accustomed to keep his bull, his ram, etc., in his parlor with the members of his family—admitting, too, that, together with the members of his family, these high-toned beasts were accustomed to come joyfully forth to meet him on his return from any journey; admitting, further, that under these circumstances, Jephthah may have been uncertain whether, in the fulfilment of his vow, he would have to offer up as a "burnt offering" his wife, his daughter, his bull, his ram, or his mother-in-law, how much better do we render the matter? Admitting that he expected, on his return, to find all these *elite* beasts in his parlor, could he have reasonably expected that any one of them would be before

his daughter and all the other members of his family to come forth to meet him? Would he not have expected that some member of his family would be a thousand times more likely to come thus forth than would any of these beasts? In any conceivable view of the case, were not the various members of his family, if not the only living creatures from among which his sacrifice was to be taken, certainly included among those creatures? In any conceivable view of the case, must not Jephthah have certainly known that the sacrifice which he was devoting unto the Lord was a thousand times more likely to be some member of his family than it was to be anything else?

Be all these things as they may, however, my opponents themselves teach that God, foreknowing all things, knew very well, when Jephthah made the rash vow in question, just what the sacrifice promised would prove to be; and since, in return for that one well-known sacrifice, he granted, in advance, a favor worth more than ten thousand bulls or rams, it is evident that he regarded that single sacrifice as worth more than that number of bulls or rams. And what one living thing, of all that Jephthah possessed, except his own beautiful daughter or some other human being, could have been regarded by God as of so immense a value? It matters not, then, what Jephthah may, or may not, have expected that the promised sacrifice would prove to be, God certainly expected it to be just what it was—a human being. At any rate, since, according to the teachings of all my opponents, God had full control of all future events: since all power was then, as it is now, derived from

him; since no future event had any power of its own to either bring itself to pass or to prevent itself from coming to pass, he, and he alone, undeniably had it in his power, at the time in question, to so control events, in the then near future, that the promised burnt offering should be just what he wished it to be; and he just as undeniably did so control those events. Is not the fact, then, that the burnt offering in question did turn out to be a beautiful young woman proof positive that he willed it to turn out just so, and that he so controlled events that it could not turn out otherwise? If he had willed it to be otherwise than it was, and if he had done his utmost to so control events that it should be otherwise, would it not certainly have been otherwise? If he had not willed it to be a human being, would it have been one? If he had willed it to be anything else, would he not have either rejected Jephthah's offer as an improper one, or else have so controlled events that, upon this man's return from battle, he should be first met by some other creature, suitable for a burnt offering, and not thus by his own beloved daughter? See how it was in the case of Abraham, when, in like manner, he was about to sacrifice his son Isaac. In that case, God, not wishing the sacrifice to be made, very easily found means to prevent it from being made.

In their almost pitiable desperation, some of my opponents claim that God had nothing at all to do with the events that resulted in this young woman being offered to him as a burnt offering. They claim that all of these events occurred entirely by chance. This, however, is not the teaching of the Bible. It teaches that God

did have everything to do with those events—that he gave Jephthah a miraculous victory over the Ammonites, and that he gave this victory, too, in consideration of the great value of the offering promised to him by Jephthah. It teaches us, further, that it was left entirely with himself to select, from among all the living creatures in Jephthah's house, the particular one which he wished to have sacrificed to himself as a burnt offering; that he was to make this selection, and that he did make it, by causing that particular creature, and no other, to be the first to come forth to meet Jephthah upon his return. Besides all this, since those events were connected with other events more remote and more numerous, both in the past and in the future, and these with other events still more remote and still more numerous, and so on forever; since, in other words, those events constituted an essential and inseparable part of the entire grand total of all the events, past, present, and future, of the universe, they must, of necessity, have proceeded from the same grand cause that had produced, and that was to produce, all other events. If, then, those events were the result of chance, all other events must, of necessity, be also the result of chance. This entirely does away with God, and makes Atheists of those of my opponents who set up the unfounded claim in question. The same results, too, are inevitably reached by another portion of my opponents who very reasonably claim that those events proceeded simply from the laws of nature. The only way to save your God, then, you plainly see, is to boldly make him the author of those events.

Be all these things as they may, however, my opponents will not dare to deny the fact that, on his return from battle—from the God-procured victory in question—Jephthah, a man specially chosen and instructed of God to be a leader of the people and a model for their imitation, did regard his own daughter, who was the first to come “forth of the doors of” his “house to meet” him, as the thing, and the only thing, that he had devoted to God, and as the thing, and the only thing that God would certainly require at his hands, in fulfillment of that promise, and in return for the victory which God had given him on the strength of that promise. They will also not dare to deny the fact that the law which I have quoted—the law of his God and of his country—rendered it impossible for him to retract that vow—impossible for him to evade the painful fulfillment of the solemn obligation under which he had, by the making of that vow, placed himself to butcher and to roast his own daughter. He told her of his vow, and, so far from charging him with having made a wicked, or even an unnecessary, vow, she seemed to think that his act was a right and proper one, and that his vow should be sacredly kept. He reminded her of the law which required that, under these circumstances, she should “surely be put to death;” and she perceiving the unfortunate dilemma in which he had placed himself, expressed her entire willingness to be thus butchered, roasted, and served up, *a la mode cannibale*, on the Lord’s table. All she asked was a stay of proceedings for two months, that, as she expressed it, she might “go up and down the mountains, and bewail my virginity.” Just what she

meant by bewailing her "virginity," I do not certainly know. She probably meant a bewailing of the fact that, as a result of her father's vow, she was compelled to yield up her young and sweet life while she was yet a virgin—while yet were untasted by her the joys of wifedom, to which, like most other maidens, she had doubtless been wont to look forward with pleasing anticipations. Be this as it may, however, since she had, as yet, never been butchered, roasted, and devoured by a God, she doubtless felt a kind of timidity in entering upon that experience now. She may, therefore, have desired the delay in question also that she might put herself in the best possible condition to be butchered—that she might give to her flesh as delicious a flavor as possible. The very thought that, to the Lord's fastidious taste, she might prove an unsavory dish was probably more than her proud young spirit could bear.

The balance of this wonderfully charming and instructive story—this story which, with other Bible stories of the same kind, has led many pious men, like Freeman, even in our own time and our own country, to murder their own children for the glory of God—we learn from the thirty-ninth verse, which says, "And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed." If God had not been perfectly willing that this vow should be fulfilled, would he not, before the close of those two months, have released Jephthah from the obligation of that vow? Were not he and Jephthah at that time on very intimate terms? Were they not almost daily

holding interviews with each other? And did he not very well know that, without such a release given by himself, Jephthah was compelled by a law of the land—a law which had been given by God himself—to fulfill that rashly made vow? Does not the fact, then, that under the circumstances God permitted such a sacrifice to be offered to himself prove, beyond all reasonable contradiction, that the offering was an acceptable one? Was he not just as much present where that sacrifice was being made, as you are present here this evening? Did he not just as clearly see what was being done and hear what was being said on that occasion, as you now see what I am doing and hear what I am saying? Picture to yourselves, then, if you can, this adopted God of yours—this inordinate consumer of roast meats—sitting quietly by, licking his mouth and sniffing the air, as he watches the progress of the preparation of the horrible feast which is being prepared for the special gratification of his own appetite, or, at least, of his own sense of smell. Picture him to yourselves, if you can, as he quietly watches Jephthah, while this poor misguided fanatic—this true man of God—proceeds, with ghastly features, trembling hands, and streaming eyes, to cut the throat of his only child, the light of his home, his own loving daughter; as he proceeds to catch her blood in a basin, to rip open her body, to take out her heart, her liver, her intestines, etc.; as he proceeds, with unimaginable agony, to wash her bloody flesh, and to roast it upon the altar. Picture him to yourselves, if you can, as he proceeds, like a ghoul, to regale himself upon this horrible feast, either by devouring the

roasted flesh itself, or else by inhaling its savory odors. Yes, picture, if you can, all these things to yourselves, and then, if you feel like doing so, break forth in loud hallelujahs to this hideous monster, this cannibal God. In the name of humanity, however, I beseech you, do not ever again condemn Freeman and others who, in our own time, incited by this holy example of the Bible, and by other examples of the same nature, have, for the glory of this same unchangeable, flesh-loving monster, sacrificed to him their own beloved children. And do not ever again commit the atrocious blasphemy of claiming that this man-eating monster is the true God—the infinitely great and glorious power that rules the universe.

Here, then, we have a clear case in which a human sacrifice was offered to your God, by his true worshipers, and accepted by him. In this case, too, the sacrifice was in that most horrible of all forms, the form of a “burnt offering”—the form upon which your God, like all other gods, was then supposed to feast. This is just as clear, just as soul-sickening, a case as is any one that can be made out against any other god ever worshiped by men. In this case, too, the sacrifice was made, as you see, not, as some of my opponents would fain have us believe that it was, in violation of your God’s revealed laws, but strictly in accordance with them. The law involved in the case has already been quoted. Having, in accordance with this God-given law, and in accordance with what he believed to be, under the circumstances, his solemn duty, “devoted” to the Lord some member of his family, Jephthah, when he perceived that the death-lot had fallen upon



his only child, his beloved daughter, did not for a moment think of such a thing as the evading of the performance of that vow. He knew that, without violating the law of his country and of his God, he could not "go back" upon the performance of that vow. In the bitterness of a heart wounded unto death, he simply said: "Alas, my daughter, thou [by being thus the first to come "forth of the doors of my house to meet me"] hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth to the Lord [in a vow, declaring "that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me. . . . shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering;"] and since the law strictly requires that everything thus devoted unto the Lord "shall surely be put to death"], I cannot go back." The Hebrews, too, who, for nearly two months before the occurrence of the awful tragedy in question, doubtless knew what Jephthah proposed to do to his daughter, made no effort to prevent him from accomplishing that purpose. They evidently believed that such sacrifices were peculiarly acceptable to God, and that, consequently, it was perfectly right and proper, in Jephthah or in any one else who saw fit to do so, to offer them. So, after Jephthah had sacrificed his daughter, the Hebrews, so far from condemning and punishing him as a criminal who had violated their laws, honored him as the preserver of those laws, and rewarded him by making him their governor and supreme judge during the balance of his life. They certainly regarded human sacrifices, when offered to their own God, as perfectly right and proper. And

he certainly regarded such sacrifices, when offered to himself, in this same light. He certainly looked with special approbation upon those parents who were willing to thus sacrifice their children unto him. See the case of Abraham. He was perfectly willing to thus sacrifice his own son Isaac, and this willingness was imputed to him, by this same God, for "righteousness." This could not have been, had not God regarded the act which Abraham was thus willing to perform as a righteous act. Had he regarded the act as a criminal one, then, of necessity, he would have regarded a willingness, on the part of Abraham or of any one else, as an indication of criminality, and not of "righteousness." Would time permit me to do so, I could show that, although they were not generally thus roasted as food for him, vast numbers of other human beings were, under this same God-given law, sacrificed, not as criminals, but as pure sacrifices, to this your blood-besmeared God, and accepted by him. I will give two more instances, in both of which he himself demanded, as well as accepted the sacrifice.

In the twenty-first chapter of 2 Samuel we learn that, for an offense committed some thirty years before, by their grandfather, Saul—an offense for which Saul himself had never been punished or even reproved—God required seven innocent children to be offered up unto himself as sacrifices to appease his wrath which had so strangely kindled up so many years after the commission of the alleged offense. Although five of these children were his own stepsons, David, who, for obvious reasons, was a man after God's own heart, had this horrible sacrifice duly

offered. The ninth and the fourteenth verses say: "And he [David] delivered them [the seven children in question] into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the Lord. . . . And after that God was entreated for the land." That is, his wrath being appeased by this sacrifice, he ceased to afflict the people of the land.

It seems that, at the time in question, God, without any apparent reason for so doing, was afflicting the land with a grievous famine. When, however, he was interviewed in regard to this matter, he "answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites." God also seems to have given his interviewer, David, to understand that whatever sacrifices the Gibeonites might demand would be satisfactory to himself, and must be offered to himself before the famine would be made to cease. "Wherefore [that is, in consideration of what God had evidently just made known to him] David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement [which, in the interview just held, God had required to be made to himself, but which he had left to be determined by the Gibeonites] that [by turning away God's wrath, and thus causing him to remove the famine] ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord? And the Gibeonites said unto him, . . . Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord in Gibeah of Saul, whom the the Lord did choose. And the king said, I will give them" (2 Sam. xxi, 3-6).

From the tenth verse we learn that the friends of these murdered children were not permitted to take

their dead bodies down for burial, since the mother of two of them, to keep the birds and the beasts of prey from feeding upon the beloved forms of her poor children thus foully murdered, lay upon the cold, hard rock near them, and guarded them day and night, from the time of barley harvest, when they were murdered, until the rains of autumn began to fall upon them. Then nothing remained of them but their bones, and these had fallen asunder and lay scattered upon the ground just as they had fallen. And the God that you worship positively demanded that this horrible human sacrifice should be offered to himself before he would relieve the land from the long and fearful famine with which he was afflicting it. So soon, however, as this monstrous sacrifice was offered to him—so soon as he had enjoyed the spectacle so delightful to him of these poor children's death agonies—so soon as he had feasted his delighted eyes upon their swollen and blackened faces, their gaping mouths, and their protruding eye-balls—so soon as he had feasted his nostrils upon the horrible stench of their decaying bodies, and had seen their fleshless bones fall asunder, then, and not till then, he "was entreated for the land," and caused the famine to cease. The other five children, being full orphans, had no fond mother to thus guard their decaying bodies. Their step-father, David, who should have been their protector, after having them thus foully murdered, was in his gorgeous harem, reveling with his many wives and concubines, and thus doing "that which was right in the eyes of the Lord," and turning "not aside from anything that he commanded him,"

while the bodies of these his poor murdered step-children were thus dropping to pieces in the rain and the sun.

Picture to yourselves the unutterable agony of that loving mother as she keeps her lone vigils, day and night, upon the cold, hard rock, for long weary months, while the bodies of her poor murdered children are slowly dropping to pieces before her very face. Or, rather, since the deed would be no more atrocious if perpetrated upon your own children, picture to yourselves your own sweet, innocent, and beloved little ones as thus foully murdered to please this God, and as thus denied the last sad rite of burial. Picture yourselves as thus guarding their dead bodies, day and night, for long weary months. Picture yourselves as gazing upon those bodies, day after day, while they slowly turn their livid, parted, but mute lips, their protruding, but sightless, eyes in all directions, as if to reproach the whole world for its cruelty, as the deadly rope, which still cuts into their tender little necks, winds and then unwinds itself in the sad wailing winds of coming autumn. Picture yourselves as gazing thus for long weary months upon those bodies—the bodies of those who had so recently been the lights of your own homes, the joys of your own lives—picture yourselves as gazing on those bodies, while every vestige of resemblance to their former selves slowly fades from their swollen and ghastly features, while the flesh slowly drops from their bones, and while their bones slowly fall asunder and drop upon the ground. Yes, picture to yourselves all these things, and then, if you feel like doing so, break forth,

as you now often do, in loud hallelujahs to the unutterably hideous monster that had it done—the monster that, according to your own teachings, is not a particle better now than he was then. Do not, however, I beg of you, commit the fearful blasphemy of charging these soul-sickening atrocities against the true God—the God of nature! And do not ask me—do not ask any free man—do not ask any one but a priest-blinded bigot, or a puling, conscienceless hypocrite to join you in orgies so unspeakably horrible as such shoutings, under such circumstances, would undeniably be. I would a thousand times rather shout the praises of the devil, who has never been charged, even by his most implacable enemies, with deeds half so atrocious.

The last case, and the most important one, to which I shall call your attention, of a human sacrifice offered to your God and accepted by him, is that of Jesus, who is said to have been this same God's own son. In regard to this case I need say but little. My opponents all admit that this was a pure sacrifice—that death was inflicted upon Jesus by men to appease God's wrath against themselves, and not as a punishment to him for any offenses of which he had been guilty. They all admit that he had never been guilty of any offenses at all for which he could have been punished. They all admit, too, that the body of Jesus—the only part of him that could and that did suffer death, and that could be and that was offered up to God as a "bleeding sacrifice"—was a human body. They all admit, further, that God required this human body with the life still in it to be offered up to himself as a "bleeding sacrifice"—a "peace-

offering" to appease his own wrath, not against the innocent victim, but against the men who offered the victim. They admit, also, that God himself concocted the whole bloody programme that was followed out by the murderers of Jesus in this horribly iniquitous affair—he himself so controlled events, so aided and abetted the murderers, who were simply instruments in his employ, that they should not and could not fail to sacrifice Jesus to him just as they did. They admit, still further, that this was to God the most acceptable of all possible sacrifices; that he was so delighted with it that, in return for it, he let all mankind—all of the murderers—off from eternal burnings in hell, to which he would otherwise certainly have doomed them because of a little fruit of his which Adam and Eve had eaten forty centuries before. Indeed, I believe that there is nothing connected with this monstrous affair that my opponents do not admit, and even shamelessly teach. I need not, therefore, add anything more. But are they not guilty of fearful blasphemy in thus charging the infinite force that rules the universe with having had a son with a body like that of a man, and with having had that son brutally murdered before its eyes to appease its wrath which had been aroused a hundred generations before by the loss of a little fruit?

Of the many hundreds of other cases of blasphemy of which my opponents are guilty, I will notice only one more. This is the crowning blasphemy of charging God with having literally begotten himself a son upon a woman to whom he was not married, or, rather, with having begotten himself upon that woman;

with having drawn himself in on every side from the infinite universe; with having compressed himself into a life-germ or spermatozoön so extremely small as to be utterly invisible to the naked eye; with having, in that form, crawled, like a parasitic animalcule, into the womb of an unmarried woman; with having thus rendered her pregnant; with having passed, like any other child, through the processes of gestation and birth; with having been a little, helpless, toothless baby, wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and squalling and writhing from colic and other infantile ailments; and that he did and became all of these things simply that he might have himself killed to appease his own unreasonable wrath. Just picture to yourselves my pious opponents with a powerful microscope searching for their God—for the entire infinite power that rules the universe—in a single drop of liquid, just as you would search for trichinæ in a small bit of diseased pork or sausage. When you have pictured all this to yourselves, then ask yourselves whether blasphemy could be carried to a more fearful extent than my opponents have thus carried it. And now, defying my opponents to deny a single charge that I have brought against them, I close.

THE END.



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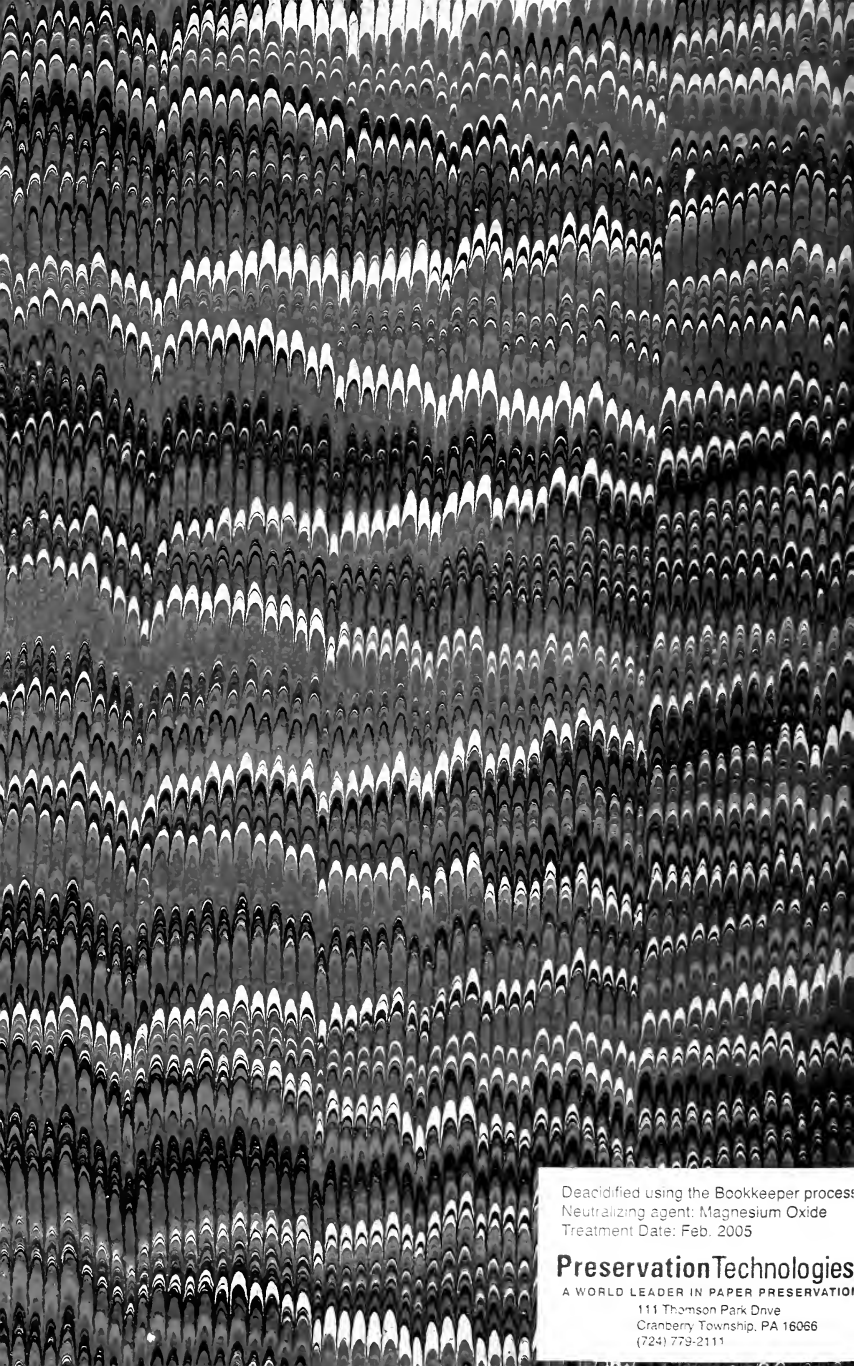








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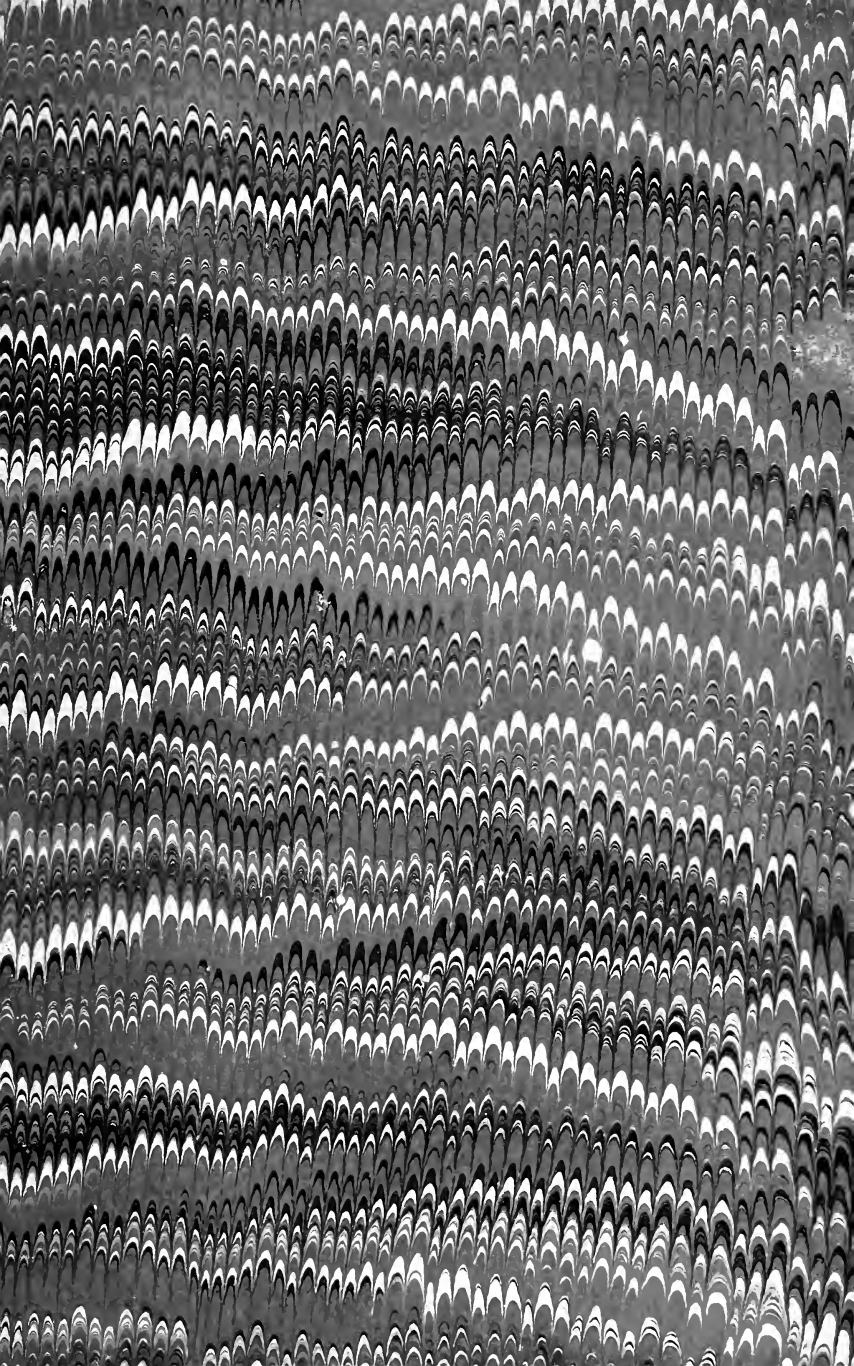


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