

THE AGE OF UNREASON,

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BEING

A REPLY

TO

THOMAS PAINE, ROBERT INGERSOLL, FELIX ADLER,
REV. C. B. FROTHINGHAM, AND OTHER
AMERICAN RATIONALISTS,

BY

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PREFACE.

THE AGE OF UNREASON.

Tom Paine's "AGE OF REASON," Robert Ingersoll's lectures on the "MISTAKES OF MOSES," "HELL," etc., Dr. Adler's sermons, and Rev. O. B. Frothingham's lectures and essays contain the most popular form of modern Rationalism in this country. These writers and orators put the objections to Christianity in a most taking form, pungent, witty, epigrammatic, and sauced with caricature and eloquence. They first create a laugh against the dogma, then a prejudice; or they embellish a half truth of reason with the graces of rhetorical diction, so as to make it appear a good substitute for revelation. They have painted the wicked old harridan Goddess of Reason to make her look like a respectable maiden. Even the trained apologist of Christianity, encased in mediæval armor, and wielding the ponderous lance of erudition, is sometimes disconcerted by the novel attacks of these light infantry of unbelief. They often wheel around him and unhorse him before he has had time to draw his heavy sword from its scabbard.

It is not surprising, therefore, that so many ordinary Christians, whose religious science does not extend beyond the Catechism, should be unable to explode sophisms so adroitly put. How could they be expected to answer a Rationalist who has talent enough to make them laugh in spite of themselves at doctrines which in their heart they revere? How could they answer objections drawn from texts of scripture, separated from their context and distorted by artists skilled in coloring error and caricaturing truth? No wonder, then, that so many of our intelligent young people—clerks, school-teachers, attorneys, physicians, brokers, bankers and mechanics—should fall a prey to Rationalism. They cannot answer it. Its objections to Christianity are current in their places of business. Its principles are propagated

by many whose morals have gone the way of their lost faith. Behold the proof of this fact in the large audiences of intelligent men and women who greet with applause, both in town and country, the assaults of prominent Rationalists on Christianity. The press generally applauds them. Their printed lectures are on every news-stand, and in many households; while there has been no answer to them,—none certainly that is satisfactory,—none that meets them on their own ground or in their own style. The few Protestant theologians who have attempted replies have signally failed, for these infidels are but logical Protestants, as both draw their inferences from the same principle—the all-sufficiency of reason in matters of religion.

The injury done by these Rationalists is not confined to the non-Catholic community. I have found the poison working even among respectable and educated Catholics, who had either forgotten the answers to infidelity which they had learned in school, or who were disconcerted by the novelty of garb which the old difficulties had assumed. Prompted by these considerations, I have taken up the glove thrown down by insolent and aggressive unbelief. I have stated the objections to Christian truth in the exact words of their authors, and answered as briefly, clearly and absolutely as the case required. I have avoided all superfluous learning as unnecessary and prolix. There is no erudition displayed by our adversaries. It is a battle with small arms, in which heavy artillery is not used. We have to deal with false wit, caricature, sarcasm and sophism; with Voltaire dressed in the American cap of liberty instead of a French *bonnet rouge*. To unmask is to conquer in this fight. The reader, I hope, will find that I have succeeded in my task, and reassured his reason that infidelity is unreasonable.

ST. ELIZABETH'S,
WASHINGTON HEIGHTS, December 20, 1880. }

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CHAPTER I.

MR. PAINE'S CREED.

Let us first follow Thomas Paine's "Age of Reason" step by step; skipping his declarations and declamations, stopping only to refute his arguments, or what seems to be his arguments, against Christianity. His work is prior to anything written by Ingersoll or Frothingham. They but imitate him. His theories are all contained in the first part of his book. The second part of it is only a dilution of the first with distorted texts of the Bible thrown in from time to time, like bits of bread in a plate of soup. We shall endeavor to show the unreasonableness of the system and theories which he undertakes to substitute in the place of Christian doctrines. We do not purpose dwelling on anything which has not the shape of an argument or a doctrine in the arch-rationalist's book. We use the Boston edition of Josiah P. Mendum, published A. D., 1876. If, therefore, the reader should sometimes think that we pass abruptly from one point to another; or if he should find in our reply to Ingersoll and Frothingham arguments similar to those used against Paine, he must attribute the fact to the nature of the subject and the style of the writers under discussion. Paine's book is very disorderly. He frequently repeats himself and reiterates his objections. There is properly in it no method, or proper division of matter. Ingersoll

presents Paine's difficulties in a new dress ; and often repeats in one lecture what he had said in another. In chasing these foxes to their kennel, we cannot therefore pick our way, but must follow their scent though it lead over irregular roads, and across the country. Let us begin. On page 6 Mr. Paine makes his declaration of faith as follows :

" I believe in one God and no more ; and I hope for happiness beyond this life. I believe the equality of man ; and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy and endeavoring to make our fellow creatures happy." Now every Christian can accept this credo with the addition of other items. There is nothing in all that Mr. Paine here lays down contrary to the doctrines of the Church, which teaches us to love God as well as to believe in Him ; to hope for an eternal reward hereafter in heaven for the merits of good works done on earth ; and to love our neighbors as ourselves, in fulfillment of the second great Commandment of the New Law. Mr. Paine's creed, in all its positive part, chimes with Christianity. It is in his negations that the collision with Christian truth occurs. Hear him again : " I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish Church, by the Roman Church, by the Greek Church, by the Turkish Church, by the Protestant Church, nor by any Church that I know of." Since the Turkish Church—we use Mr. Paine's word and shall not quibble with him about its propriety—gives apodictic evidence of imposture by teaching immorality of the grossest kind, and the necessity of carrying out proselytism by the force of the sword, we see nothing to admire as extraordinary in his common sense for rejecting it. A

religion of sensuality propagated by brute force cannot be the religion of truth, of God, whose very idea implies sanctity and respect for the free will of his rational creatures. Since Protestantism started out with a denial of the freedom of the human will, and an assertion of man's total depravity, we cannot wonder at Mr. Paine finding it repugnant to his reason ; and since there is neither a principle of unity nor of authority in it, and since it now presents to the eye of common sense nothing but a bundle of contradictions, we can readily understand Mr. Paine's refusal to believe in it. No logical mind can admit truth to be self-contradictory, or respect any religion which vilifies nature and man's natural rights—his innate power of intellect, and innate power of will, attested by his own self-consciousness.* Nor does it require much acumen to see in the Greek Church but a schism prompted by pride and sustained by political intrigue, gradually deteriorating into degradation and servility to the power of a despotic state. Religion to be of God should be *one* like Him, always identical as He is, adapted by its universality to every clime, nation, race, and condition ; to the ignorant as well as to the educated ; a universal mother of the human race, as God is its universal Father. And such certainly is not the Greek Church. Mr. Paine knew that it is historically but a schism from the Roman Church, and therefore he justly rejects it. His common sense further showed him that the Jewish Church had done its work, that its mission was accomplished ; that it was but a temporary arrangement, local and national, to be

* Every one knows that Luther and Calvin denied the freedom of the human will, and asserted the total depravity of human nature after the fall. The Council of Trent condemned their error.

developed and perfected in the world religion now universally known as Christian. The Jewish religion is only a relic, as the Greek, Protestant, and Turkish "Churches," are only ruins moldering into absolute decay. But why reject the Catholic Church, especially if he knew what she is and what she is not? The Catholic Church is like God. Her unity, as well as her universality, is astonishingly striking. She respects reason and the age of reason. She condemns as a heresy the doctrine of total depravity; recognizes freedom of the will as a dogma of faith; holds the doctrine of the existence of natural powers in the intellect and of capacity for natural virtues in the heart; admits and claims as part of Catholic treasure every truth of science and of history, whether found among pagans, idolaters, Buddhists, or Brahmins, among the followers of Lao-Tseu or Confucius, among the fetish worshippers of Central Africa or New Zealand, or the adorers of the Great Spirit amid the American Indians. No truth is foreign to her. Every right is sacred to her, and every good man is her son. Her soul is greater than her body, and she claims as hers millions of truths and countless human beings who, although accidentally not under the jurisdiction of her visible head at Rome, are always under the dominion and direct influence of her invisible head, the Incarnate Son of God, now reigning gloriously in heaven. This is the doctrine of her apostles, Peter and Paul, and the teaching of her ablest theologians, following the lead of St. Thomas of Aquin. The Catholic or Roman Church is not the Bourbon dynasty; it is not Louis XIV. or his clerical courtiers, nor Louis XV. and his despicable *abbés de cour*; it is

not the Hohenzollern nor the Hapsburg dynasty; nor is it this, that, or the other king or parliament, or pope or bishop or priest whose abuse of power, under the name of religion, has often caused the ignorant to identify the creed with the man, and to hold the Church responsible for the shortcomings of the minister—an error into which so intelligent a man as Mr. Paine should never have fallen. The Church is not the Roman congregation that condemned Galileo, if it did so; nor is it the Roman nor the Spanish Inquisition. The Church claims to be a supernatural and divine society, acting through and by human means. The means, being human, have all the weaknesses and foibles of humanity, the prejudices of race, of family, and of dynasty. The Church acts on free men, not on slaves; and consequently these free men sometimes abuse their power, rebel against her, indulge their passions in spite of her protests, and often weakly or maliciously deprave themselves, notwithstanding the means which she gives them to help their natural infirmity. I am an American citizen. As such, I despise bad kings as much as Mr. Paine could despise them. The number of good kings is very small. The whole line of French and English monarchs is tarred with a stick. There were, no doubt, a few gentlemen among them; the rest were all bad and vicious. The most of the German emperors have spent their time in persecuting or in trying to corrupt the Church. Charles V. and Philip II., although both persecuted the Protestants, as they said, for the glory of God, but really for their own political purposes, were very bad Catholics. It is true they tried to cheat the devil at their death, but they served him pretty faithfully while they enjoyed good health. The in-

families of the Gallican Louis XIV. and his disgusting successor, Louis XV., did more to corrupt the French clergy and injure the Church than all other ante-revolution causes combined.* I am not bound to defend the so-called Catholic kings or emperors of the Middle Ages. As an American, I prefer a Church separated from the State; I prefer our republican system of freedom to all the privileges, so called, even of such Catholic governments as Spain or Italy. But shall I, therefore, blame an English Catholic for loving his queen and her royal dynasty, or a Prussian Catholic for being loyal to his emperor, or a Spaniard for his devotion to his king and his antipathy to a republic? Why should not the Austrian or the Italian or the Englishman prefer the union of Church and State which has existed for centuries in his land; a union not brought about by revolution, by force, or by violence, but one which grew naturally into existence by centuries of harmonious coworking, and which is now rendered sacred by all the traditions of the past, and inherits its right to perpetuation by everything just and lawful? Why should I force my national system on him? Why blame him, be he priest or layman, for defending the actual condition of things against those who would destroy it by unjust laws or violence? One of the chief beauties of the Catholic Church is precisely this, that she forces no form of civil government on the people; she respects national customs and opinions and all forms of established government. There is no fanaticism about her. She defends nature and natural rights, and therefore she makes all

* Read especially the Memoirs of Madam the Countess du Barry to learn the inner life of France in Louis XV.'s reign.

due allowance for natural prejudices and infirmities. The freedom of the human will is an article of her faith. Although an infallible tribunal in matters of faith and morals and in all that concerns the supernatural order, she is far more tolerant in her dealings with the natural order than those creeds or those men who, while they practically deny all infallibility, act when they have the power as though they were not only infallible but impeccable.* The infidels in power in France now have recently exiled hundreds of educated gentlemen for the crime of teaching school according to Christian principles. Yet these rationalists will mount the rostrum and prate about their love of liberty, fraternity and equality!

It is ignorance to judge the Catholic Church by the conduct of mediæval kings, emperors, or barons; or to measure her by the conduct of a portion of the clergy, corrupted by state interference in religious affairs. Judge her by her doctrines, by her decrees and supreme declarations, and she will be found from the days of Adam, her first child, down through all the stages of her development, faultless, uniform in essentials, liberal in accidentals, holy and Catholic.

"My own mind is my own church," continues Mr. Paine. Now, here is the foundation of a system; after so much negation we have an attempt at the positive. Let us see how logical this positive declaration is.

* The English law holds that the king "can do no wrong"—he is legally more than pope. Bob Ingersoll in his lecture, "What shall I do to be Saved," says that if he had the power he would make a law preventing young women from becoming nuns. So much for the liberalism of rationalists.

CHAPTER II.

"MY OWN MIND IS MY OWN CHURCH."

Now, as Mr. Paine is a man opposed to what he terms superstitions, and to all usurpations of authority by king or pope, he must, to be consistent with himself, allow every man to choose his church, like himself. He very frankly does this, for he says: "I do not mean by this declaration to condemn those who believe otherwise, they have the same right to their belief that I have to mine." As a matter of fact the human race seems to have found more happiness in admitting some external authority in religious matters than in following Mr. Paine's principle. He, of course, calls such admission superstition; but for six thousand years and more the mightiest and most cultivated, as well as the humblest of the human race, with few exceptions, have followed a course opposite to that of Mr. Paine. This voice of humanity protesting against his theory should have some weight. It is the voice of nature and therefore deserves a respectful hearing from those who profess to believe only in nature. The child begins life by believing in an authority exterior to itself, and it would, in fact, be impossible to live in society if every one should be judge of his own affairs, even in the natural order. The human race is essentially teachable, and requires teachers endowed with authority for its progress and development. Our mothers teach us

to walk and talk; when we grow up we are sent to school to be taught by others; and the best of us, all our lifetime, are but learners, trusting to other authorities besides our own mind. Indeed, it seems to be a law of the whole animal kingdom, man inclusive, to be teachable by external authority. The young bird learns to eat and fly from its parent; the chicken is trained to pick by its mother; and although instinct and the innate desire of self-preservation does much, training and education do more in the perfecting of animal development.

But let us analyze this principle of Mr. Paine. Is it not one of those offhand and slipshod expressions of the rationalists that tickle the ear and flatter the vanity of the "groundlings," but will not bear a close scrutiny or a detailed examination? This theory, "My own mind is my own church," to be of any service must be of universal application. Every man has a right to say this as well as Mr. Paine. But at what period in life is a man's mind to be made the rule of his belief? At the age of seven years we are ordinarily said to have arrived at the age of reason. Does Mr. Paine mean that every child of seven, or even of the age of fourteen, is to take his own mind as the rule of his faith? But, is it the mind influenced by passion and prejudice, or the mind purified by a Kantian criticism of pure reason? How can we get our mind into the state of pure reason? How can we fully divest ourselves of our passions and prejudices? Who is there that has ever succeeded in doing so fully? What are the dunces to do, who may study for years and yet never be able to learn enough to be called men of mind; or to make an argument?

Are they to be lost because they have not mind enough? What are all the illiterate to do if every one must make his own mind his own church? They know not how to read, or to meditate, or to argue properly. The millions of African and Asiatic savages, the wild Indians of our plains; the millions who have lived in ignorance long before Christ and since, are they all to be damned because they cannot use their minds like educated rationalists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? Or is this a principle that applies only to a few, the *elite* of the race, who, like Messrs. Paine, and Ingersoll, are cultivated gentlemen? But, then, why do these radically democratic gentlemen adopt so aristocratic a principle of religious belief? In that case, who will measure the amount of intelligence necessary to use it? Certainly the great scholars of the Christian era; and some of them were abler men than our modern rationalists, did not use this principle in religion; neither did the great scholastics of the middle ages; nor do the majority of the educated in this age. They all reject Mr. Paine's plan in religion as impracticable and absurd. God is not merely the God of the *élite*; he is not a respecter of persons; he is not an exclusionist. He is the God of the poor and of the ignorant as well as of the rich and the philosophers, of the peasant and serf as well as of the king and ruler; and to be true to his character as a just and merciful father he must adapt means adequate to the necessities of all his creatures who desire to know and love him. This he has done by establishing an infallible teaching authority in his church, which will prevent men from making mistakes through following the promptings of passion, the bias of prejudice, or the blunders arising

from the natural weakness of the human intellect. How would Mr. Paine's principle apply in his own family? He, the father of it, tells his wife and children that they are no longer to respect external authority; that they are sufficient to themselves. He tells them to follow out his theory in practice; for if he meant to confine it to the order of mere speculation, it is useless. "My own mind is my own church." We imagine we hear an interesting dialogue:

MR. PAINE. "Wife, fetch me dry stockings."

MRS. PAINE. "I am busy now, Tom, and cannot."

PAINE. "But you must obey me now; I got my stockings wet last night on the way home from the club room, and they are not yet dry; obey me at once; that is your duty."

MRS. PAINE. "I do not consider it my duty to obey you; you stay out late at night.* No wife is bound to obey a disagreeable husband. That's part of my religion; and 'my own mind is my own church.' My duties towards you as well as towards my children will be dictated by my own mind, and not by you, sir."

PAINE. Well, wife, that is logical, I must admit; you have an equal right with myself to judge for yourself. Betsy" (to his ten-year-old daughter),† "do you carry them hither; I am barefoot, child, and do not wish to catch cold by walking to the clothes room for them."

BETSY. "I cannot, papa; I am busy dressing dolly, and that is of more importance than your stockings. You know, papa, you told me that my 'own mind is my

* He was a man of great social habits, and finally separated from his second wife, A. D. 1774.

† Paine, we believe, had no children; we supply them for argument's sake.

own church ;' and it tells me now that I need not go for your stockings."

PAINE (to his son) : " Well, Tom, my son, do you get them."

YOUNG TOM. " You go to h——, if there is such a place. Do you think, old man, I've nothing else to do but wait on you after your sprees. I'm reading the 'Life and Adventures of Jonathan Wild,' and it's too interesting to leave for your pleasure. Besides, I tell you, governor, I'm not going to school any more to have the external authority of an old pedagogue impose on me his opinions. If my mind is good enough to be my church, I don't see why it is not good enough to be my schoolhouse and schoolmaster also."

Thus does Mr. Paine's theory work in trifles. According to it he could not consistently reprove his own child. But how much worse when there is question of more serious matters ; of duties sacred which passions oppose, passions which blind the mind, destroy the body, and ruin society ; passions which even an infallible Church with her countless supernatural helps finds it so difficult to control. Alas ! the day for human society when the theory that every man's hat is his own church steeple shall become of universal acceptance ; when every dunce shall take no guide but his own stupid intellect in faith and morals. " I, sir, I," said a French boor of the last century, a believer in Paine's doctrines, to a venerable priest who had been correcting him for beating his wife, " I, sir, believe none of your doctrines. I," clapping his hand to his blockhead brow, " I believe only what I can understand." " Ah, my poor fellow," replied the *curé*, " then, you don't believe much." How true this is of

many of Mr. Paine's admirers. They attack what they do not understand. They do not take the trouble to study Christianity. They see it only in caricature ; and never seem to find out that, like Don Quixote, they are assailing windmills instead of real giants.

CHAPTER III.

REVELATION.

Before approaching his assault on "revelation," Mr. Paine premises many things that cannot well be classified. At the bottom of page 6, he speaks of one as a type of a class "who takes up the trade of a priest for the sake of gain, and in order to qualify himself for that trade, he begins with a perjury. Can we conceive anything more destructive to morality than this?" We answer candidly, nothing! But what is the inference which Mr. Paine would have us draw from his remark? Surely not that all priests, or that a majority of them, have gone into the ministry for sake of gain. We know the abuses of the Scottish monasteries in the sixteenth century; abuses that rendered the Protestant apostasy possible in Scotland. We know the scandals of the German mediæval clergy, when the emperors sold mitres and croziers to the highest bidder in spite of the popes; we know the abuses of Louis XIVth's half schismatic national church; but are we to judge *all* the clergy by these abuses, abuses condemned repeatedly by the supreme Church authority? Are we to condemn anything because of the abuses of it? Are we to take Erasmus' joke of *Kerdos* or gain rhyming with *sacerdos*, as an indication of universal corruption even in the sixteenth century; and forget the glories of the past and of the present? Could not Mr. Paine admire

the holy priests of the first ages of the Church, who died poor, chaste martyrs to truth; or the saintly friars of the thirteenth century, sons of Dominic and Francis, who taught the afflicted serfs of Europe to bear their burdens, by setting them examples of absolute voluntary poverty, or the learning and missionary zeal of the Sons of Loyola, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; or the clergy of modern times, robbed by followers of Mr. Paine's teaching of possessions justly acquired and justly held for ages, now living on a mere pittance smaller than Mr. Paine's salary when he was an excise man, smaller than the amount Mr. Ingersoll can realize in one night by a lecture assailing the Divinity of Jesus Christ? Why look at the spots and not admire the beauties? Granted that, sometimes, the clergy have become as corrupt as Mr. Paine's boon companions, or the followers of his theories who murdered the innocent after 1798, were there no great reformers to praise? Was there not a Hildebrand, the scourge of German despotism, of simony and sensuality; a Honorius III., an Innocent III., avengers of social morality and defenders of the sanctity of marriage? Was there no Vincent de Paul, no Francis de Sales, or, going back farther, no Bernard, no Thomas Aquinas, or a Bonaventure, or a Thomas of Canterbury, men of genius, sanctity and learning, to evoke a word of praise from this pretended unbiased rationalist and unprejudiced follower of the light of pure reason? If we are to judge of an age or a class by its crimes, then we are like men who judge of the sun by its spots, and use its own light to detect them. Even the age of Tacitus, which gave us the horrors of the pagan Roman Empire, recorded in his

Annals, shows us the virtues that bloomed around his hero Agricola.

Further on Mr. Paine writes that "the adulterous connection of Church and State, wherever it had taken place, had so effectually prohibited by pains and penalties every discussion upon established creeds and upon first principles of religion, that until the system of government should be changed those subjects could not be brought fairly and openly before the world." The union of Church and State as it exists in Protestant countries, a union formed by the robbers of Catholic Church property, is unquestionably adulterous and contrary to the fundamental principle of Protestantism—the right of private judgment. It is absurd on the one hand to admit the right of every man to judge for himself in matters of religion, and on the other to punish him by fine, imprisonment and sometimes death for asserting this right in practice. But no such charge can be made against the union which existed in Catholic countries in ante-reformation times. That union was the natural consequence of the social and religious progress of the people of Europe, of the co-ordinate working of religion and politics. It did not exist from the beginning. It is doubtful whether the union was always voluntary on the part of the Church during the reign of the Eastern Christian emperors. They did not always respect the rights of the Church and sometimes imagined themselves in regard to her as heirs of all the prerogatives of the pagan emperors who were at the same time supreme pontiffs. But when the priests and the bishops converted the barbarian invaders of the Roman empire, they became in virtue of their education and social standing the leaders of

the people and the counsel of their kings. Grateful children enriched the Church by voluntary donations, prompted by piety; and good sense suggested that in matters of state as well as in matters of religion, it would be wise to follow the advice of those who, amid general ignorance, preserved the learning and science of the past. The feudal system helped the growth of clerical temporalities; and gradually, without force, or violence, the people became one politically and religiously. The king became the right arm of the Church. It was impossible to assail her without attacking the political system with which she had become incorporated. Every heretic was at the same time a rebel and a traitor of whose civil criminality the State took cognizance after the Church had condemned his errors. There was nothing unnatural or adulterous in this. It was perfectly natural, and yet in no sense of the word essential to the Church's mission or well-being. Yet, be it remembered to her credit that, although claiming absolute infallibility, she never stained a page of her mediæval history with blood; but enacted canons forbidding the proselytism of pagans by force, as when she condemned Charlemagne for attempting to make Christians of the Saxons by the power of the sword, and reproved the king and queen of Spain for using the political machinery of the State institution known as the Inquisition for the purpose of compelling the Moors to receive baptism against their will. This, that, or the other king or other political power may have persecuted heretics, exiled them, or put them to death; and this, that, or the other churchman, acting in the interest of his nation or country, may have sanctioned the act—but the Church as such, never; the Pope as

head of the Church, never. Her axiom and theirs, written in her canon law, is that *she* "*abhors blood.*" The blood of executed heresiarchs should never be cast up to the Church, by any man who looks beyond the surface of history, studies her laws and their spirit, and understands that she cannot claim to do what God Almighty himself will not do, namely coerce the freedom of the human will, and prevent by force the existence of misery, weakness and crime among men. The crimes of clerical politicians should not be charged to the Church, the Immaculate Bride of Christ. The act of the king is not the specific act of the pontiff. The act of the feudal lord is not the specific act of the bishop, even though the same man might be at the same time king and pontiff, baron and bishop.

Mr. Paine finally comes to *Revelation*. "The Jews say that their word of God was given by God to Moses face to face." This is incorrect. The Jews say nothing of the kind. A great deal of the Jewish word of God was never written by Moses at all, nor given to him. Even of all that he did write, only a portion was given to him on Mount Sinai "face to face." But your rationalist, whether Mr. Paine or Mr. Ingersoll, never is exact. Exactness is repugnant to his style of declamation. "The Christians say that their word of God came by divine inspiration." But why this distinction between Jewish and Christian revelation? The Christians hold the Jewish law and the prophets to be as much a part of divine revelation as the New Testament; and therefore, to separate the two creeds, when the one is but the accomplishment and perfection of the other, is to write without precision and to lead into mistakes. "Revelation when applied to religion

means something communicated *immediately* from God to man." This is not necessarily true. A thing may be revealed to me by God, without being revealed *immediately* to me by him. He is free to choose his own means of revelation; and instead of revealing to each individual of the human race in person, he is free to choose a set of teachers, reveal to them what he wishes to communicate to the whole race, and impose upon it the obligation of hearing his messengers.

Who can dictate to God the mode in which he must reveal to his creatures? But hear Mr. Paine: "No one will deny or dispute the power of the Almighty to make such a communication if he pleases." But if it is possible for him to make a communication, why is it not possible for him to choose his own *mode* of making it? What prevents? "But admitting, for the sake of a case, that something has been revealed to a certain person, and not revealed to any other person, it is a revelation to that person only," unless the person first receiving the revelation receive at the same time a mission to communicate it to others, and can prove the existence of this mission by signs absolutely satisfactory. "When he tells it to a second person, a second to a third, a third to a fourth, and so on, it ceases to be a revelation to all those persons." This is a *non sequitur* of the grossest kind. No matter how many persons may receive a revelation; no matter how many channels it may pass through before reaching us, it always remains revelation. The mode of receiving it may vary with different individuals; but the substance is always the same. It is the same Croton water whether we drink it in Croton lake, in the park reservoir, or draw it from the faucets in our houses. "It is

revelation to the first person only, and *hearsay* to every other; and consequently they are not obliged to believe it." This is the shallowest kind of writing. There may be mediate as well as immediate revelation. The question is, has God spoken to some individuals of the human race and commissioned them to teach others? If he has, what they teach is revealed truth, and they receive revelation as much as if they had stood with Moses on Mount Sinai, or with the twelve apostles when Christ told them "to go teach all nations." We admit that God could reveal to every individual of the race if he had so willed. But he has not so willed. As there is order in the natural order; as order is nature's first law; so is it heaven's. The supernatural order usually follows the natural order. Miracles are exceptions, not contradictions, to the ordinary laws of nature. Not all the orbs that float in the firmament are suns shining by their own light; some receive their light from others, and some are subordinated to others. They have a hierarchy. In the social order not all are kings and rulers. Some are born to obey. In the family the child is not born a fully developed man; but is a teachable creature, having a father and a mother to instruct and develop him. And so God having decreed to establish a supernatural order, a supernatural revelation, thought it best to follow the analogy of nature in establishing it so as to render it more readily acceptable to intellects accustomed to judge by what they see in nature. Hence he chose out certain men to be fathers and rulers of his children; to be like the suns to the planets; to be their teachers, to give them light; setting certain marks upon them, certain signs of the divine character of their mission,

that other men by consulting their common sense, freed from passion and prejudice, might see clearly and accept without hesitation the revelation which they should impart. To call a thing hearsay merely because it passes through second hands, is very erroneous. A piece of gold is gold still though it should cross the seas and a score of hands should handle it. All the facts of history according to Paine's theory would be mere hearsay for us, even if written down by men actually witnesses of the facts which they record. And although we are willing to discount much of what such historians as Macaulay and Froude have written, we would consider ourselves insane to deny all the facts which they register, merely because they relate them at second hand. The divine agents of revelation not only relate facts, but prove by unmistakable signs, by miracles and prophecies, that they tell the truth, and that their mission is from God. There is a good deal of presumption, to say the least, in telling God that he cannot reveal to me through another; that he must talk to myself if he wants to communicate anything to me, otherwise that I shall not accept anything that is brought to me by a messenger, although that messenger may carry divine credentials. This is playing the king with God and not the democrat.

Mr. Paine is a great admirer of the order of nature and of civil order. Now how would his theory of religion work applied to it? He would destroy all ambassadors between nations and force their rulers to make periodical visits to each other for purposes of intercommunion. We should have to change the whole of international law; and change society to its very foundations, by abolishing agents of mercantile houses, telegram messengers, bell

boys, school teachers, and professors of every description. Why insist on a relation between God and man in revelation, which is not found in natural society? Why force the Almighty to come down and talk to Mr. Paine and me, when he can do it with greater propriety and more in consonance with his omnipotent majesty by sending me divinely commissioned messengers, his prophets, his apostles, his Church, bearing unmistakable credentials of a divine origin?

Let us follow our illogical rationalist: "When Moses told the children of Israel that he received the two tables of the commandments from the hands of God, they were not obliged to believe him, because they had no other authority for it than his telling them so; and I have no other authority for it than some historian telling me so." But they had a million proofs in the honest character and in the wonderful miracles of Moses that he was no liar, but was stating the truth. Did not the children of Israel know Moses' character to be that of an honest and veracious man? Why, then, should they not believe him? Is there no such thing as human certainty in the reliability of our fellow beings? Do they always lie when they speak to us? Are we not sure, absolutely sure by an innate conviction of our reason, that in certain cases they do not deceive us? Suppose the children of Israel knew as matters of national history all about Moses' miraculous leading them out of Egypt and through the Red Sea; suppose they had been witnesses of the miracles recorded in the Pentateuch; suppose they had seen the thunders and lightning of Sinai and the rays of light emanating from the brow of Moses when he came down from the Mount; why should they not believe him? Would they not

be irrational to doubt him under all these circumstances?

How much evidence would Mr. Paine require to make him believe a fact prejudicial to Christianity? Why do rationalists swallow false charges against Christianity like sugar plums, and strain at the solid proofs of its divinity? Why this credulity in ordinary matters, and this spiteful unbelief when there is question of God's dealings with men? What harm has the supernatural done to these men that they should so oppose it? Alas! it pinches their corns, it opposes their passions, and imposes certain duties—that's the rub. Pascal has well said that if the axioms of mathematics entailed moral obligations men would disbelieve in mathematical truths.

"The Commandments carry no internal evidence of divinity with them."* Not to you now, perhaps, educated without any merit of your own in the full blaze of nineteen centuries of Christian civilization and religion. But judge them by the times in which Moses wrote them and by the moral condition of the pagan idolaters around him, and what then? Is it not the story of Columbus trying to make the egg stand on end—easy to do it after you have seen it done? Is it not a fact that neither Plato, nor Aristotle, nor any of the other great lights of pagan antiquity could solve the problem of life, now so readily solved by a Christian child of eleven summers? Is it not true that even the rationalists who object to Christianity, would be unable to do so save for the light of Christian principles which they inherit only to abuse? Why is it that none

* Ingersoll has this same idea in his lectures, *passim*.

of the learned pagans of antiquity ever invented a code like the Ten Commandments, or established a pure monotheistic system like that which underlies all the Mosaic legislation? Even if the Ten Commandments be but ten natural laws, what prevents God from giving them a supernatural sanction by a second revelation? Considering how frequently they are broken, even by saintly rationalists, it is probable that a third divine sanction of them would not make men always obey them. God is the God of nature as well as of grace, of reason as well as of revelation, and he is free to reveal a truth twice—yes, a million times—and to choose any mode of revelation that he pleases. The Ten Commandments are divine, for they are rational, and divine because they have been revealed. “They contain some good moral precepts, such as any man qualified to be a lawgiver or a legislator could produce himself, without having recourse to supernatural intervention.” Here Mr. Paine errs again in regard to the nature of revelation. He does not seem to know that God may reveal a truth of the natural order for the purpose of giving it a double sanction, as well as a truth above the natural ken of the human mind. Thus God repeatedly reveals the unity of his own nature, which is a truth of natural reason, as well as the Trinity of divine persons, which is a mystery above the natural powers of the human intellect. But in a word, if the ten commandments are so simple a code that any man could make it even in the barbarous age in which Moses lived—(Mr. Ingersoll says he could write a better code)—why is it that Lycurgus and Solon, with all their Grecian wit, failed to equal it and Cicero, in his work on laws, records nothing that comes near it? These braggarts boast of what they

can do. Where is their code? They build up nothing, while they strive in vain to destroy what is well and admirably built.

But Mr. Paine will deny the possibility of any agent proving his divine mission by miracles, for he denies the possibility of miracles. Let us examine this part of his theory.

CHAPTER IV.

MIRACLES AND MYTHOLOGY.

It must be understood that Paine, unlike Ingersoll, clearly admits the existence of God. Towards the end of the first part of "The Age of Reason" he writes: "It is certain that in one point all nations of the earth and all religions agree; all believe in a God; the things in which they disagree are the redundancies annexed to that belief; and, therefore, if ever a universal religion should prevail, it will not be believing anything new, but in getting rid of redundancies, and believing as man believed at first. Adam, if ever there was such a man, was created a Deist." The redundancies to which Mr. Paine alludes are, of course, the whole supernatural order of mystery, miracle, prophecy, and ceremonial.* Who is to decide what is and what is not "redundancy?" Does he not see that the idea of God implies the idea of Providence? If God has no care for his works, does not know how his laws act, or is indifferent to the fate of his creatures, especially those whom he has made with intelligence and will like his own, then he is not infinite, for he is not all wise, nor all just, nor all merciful—he is not God at all; or he is the cruel, indifferent monster whom Inger-

*Mr. Paine gets rid of the supernatural as a "redundancy;" Mr. Ingersoll goes farther and gets rid of the God of nature as a "redundancy." Thus "Endymion," Disraeli's hero, gets rid of a personal devil; Penruddock tells him he is on the way to get rid of a personal God.

soll attacks in his lectures. It is against this lazy, careless, heartless God of the Deist, as well as against the cruel and unjust God of the Calvinists, that the latest rationalist directs some of his cutting sarcasm. If there be a God, why does he not care for his laws and his creatures which they govern? Is it because he is too indolent or too indifferent? But is not an indifferent or an indolent God no God at all? And if this God has given laws to nature, why cannot he suspend them for a special purpose or make an exception to them when he wills it? Is he under the dominion of his own laws as Jupiter was bound by fate? Now we know that no physical laws are metaphysically necessary; we can imagine them different from what they are, some of them contrary to what they are. Metaphysical and mathematical laws alone are immutable. But as in man's nature the physical part subserves the moral and is dominated by it, so in the universe, physical laws are subordinate to moral purposes, and modifiable at God's good pleasure for moral ends. The stone thrown into the air naturally falls to the ground; but there is no metaphysical contradiction in having it suspended or continue its flight if the will of the Creator should command it. A man's body naturally dies; but if the Deity who made that body, and under whose laws it lives, should resuscitate it after death for a moral purpose, where is the difficulty or the absurdity? Mr. Paine admits the existence of a God who has created all things. Which is harder to believe, a creation out of nothing, or the restoration of a dead body to life? Which is harder for God to do, to create life out of nothing, or to restore it to a dead being? If, for moral ends, to convince human intellects of moral truth, God,

who is omnipotent, suspends a physical law or empowers an agent to do so; or, being omniscient, foretells the future through a prophet, or, being infinite, reveals mysteries above the natural grasp of finite intelligence, where is the absurdity or the difficulty? It is simply a question of fact whether he has done so or not; but no reasonable Deist can deny God's power to do it, or the intrinsic possibility of its being done. Mr. Paine may therefore attack the facts of revelation and deny their authenticity, but it is self-contradictory to attack as he does, their very possibility. He is a good republican, and his politics, judged by our national standard, are generally excellent; but in matters of metaphysics or religion he is a very poor logician; for while he vindicates the "rights of man," he forgets the "rights of God." Thus he errs in judging many of the wonderful facts recorded in the Bible. The fact that certain things are wonderful and above human power, if they are not self-contradictory, should not make a reasonable man deny them. Let him remember what Hamlet says to Horatio:—

"There are more things in heaven and earth,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

Let him remember that the God whom he admits has infinite power and has some right to use it.

Paine rejects the Gospel narration of the birth of Christ, because, according to him, we have it only on hearsay evidence. But how can he call authentic history hearsay evidence? Upon what ground can he reject the history of the New Testament, fortified as it is by all the conditions necessary to give it reliability, while he admits the authenticity of profane histories? Or does he intend to reject all history? In that case

how are we going to know anything at all about the past, since history is its record? And why should a man who believes in an infinite God, doubt a well authenticated historical fact, if it is not beyond divine power? There never was a series of facts so well authenticated as those recorded in the New Testament. Take the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, for instance. Enemies and friends testify to it. Discussion of the most searching kind, carried on for centuries, has failed to weaken its foundation; discussion, too, carried on among the most educated people. We now know that no educated pagan believed in the heathen deities. The best pagan philosophers laughed at them. No learned Turk can remain long a Mahomedan. But for nineteen centuries the most learned men in the world have been the best Christians; and the best Christians have always been the best men. They have lived up to their principles.

Nor does any analogy between Pagan mythology and Christian revelation afford argument for Paine's assertion that Christianity is the natural outcome of paganism and its condition at the birth of Christ. He forgets that the revelation made to Adam was Christian; that the whole Hebrew revelation was Christian; and that this Hebrew revelation was originally the property of the whole human race, which started on the road to progress, fully equipped with civilization and true religion. Barbarism is simply a falling away from the civilized state and not the original condition of man. Polytheism is simply a corruption of true religion. It is not therefore astonishing to find among peoples that had degenerated vestiges of primeval revelation and distortions of revealed doctrines. I find an argument for the truth

of the Catholic Church in the very objection which Protestants frequently bring against her. They say she is paganized; that many of her rites and ceremonies are of Pagan origin; because, for instance, they find lustral water, sacred fire, vestments of priests, sacrifices and a sacerdotal hierarchy, among idolaters. The fact shows that idolatry is but a travesty of true religion; and that men merely corrupted the ritual of monotheism, when they became Pagans. Polytheism with its nymphs, dryads, naiads, and hamadryads is but a corruption of the Christian doctrine of angels and guardian angels. A universal error indicates a universal truth. Dr. Engelbert Lorenze Fischer's learned work "*Heidenthum und Offenbarung*"* shows that the sacred writings of the Hindoos, Persians, Babylonians, Assyrians, and Egyptians contain the fundamental doctrines of the Bible and hence infers its divine character.

Paine admits the existence of the historical Christ; why then deny the history of his life, equally well authenticated? Hear him: "That such a person as Jesus Christ existed, and that he was crucified, which was the mode of execution at that day"—how do you know if you hold that all history is but hearsay evidence?—"are historical relations strictly within the bounds of probability. He preached most excellent morality and the equality of man"—but if his miracles are bogus, and if he when he tells us that he is God, as he frequently does, and that his flesh and blood are meat and drink, is deceiving us and lying, how can his morality be called "excellent?" Either Jesus Christ was God, as his own assertions and his miracles attest, as well as his fulfillment of all the Hebrew prophecies

* "*Heathenism and Revelation*" published at Mayence, A. D., 1878.

concerning the Messiah, or he is an impostor, a lunatic or a liar. Neither Paine, nor Renan, nor Ingersoll will say the latter. On the contrary they admit that he was a good man, virtuous, moral, exemplary, and great—but they have not logic enough to see that this implies an admission of his divinity. If he was good, virtuous, and exemplary he would not lie. But he says he is God, he claims divine power; "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth:" "I and the Father are one." In his trial he admits that he is the Son of God—therefore he is what he says he is, or something follows which even the worst rationalists are not vulgar enough to say. Even Ingersoll repels with indignation the charge made by some accuser that in a lecture he had spoken of Jesus Christ with contempt, by calling the story "a dirty little lie."*

The mythological story of the giants making war on Jupiter is but a travesty of the Christian doctrine that some of the angels rebelled against God and became devils. It is not true, as Paine says in this connection, that the Christians have promised the Devil "all the Jews, all the Turks by anticipation, nine-tenths of the world beside and Mahomet into the bargain." This certainly is not the teaching of the Catholic Church, which holds that all men in good faith performing their duty, as it is manifest to them, will be saved, and which permits us to hold, as I do, contrary to Massillon, that the greater portion of mankind will be saved.

Mr. Paine does not put the case correctly where he says:† "They" (the Christians) "represent this virtuous and amiable man Jesus Christ,"—who tells the

* See lectures on "Ghosts," "Hell," "Skulls," and "What Shall I do to be Saved?"

† Page 15.

world that he is God and that belief in him is essential to salvation—"to be at once both God, man, and also the Son of God, celestially begotten, on purpose to be sacrificed, because they say that Eve in her longing had eaten an apple." Now, I hold with the Scotists, a large school of Catholic theologians, that the incarnation would have taken place even if Adam and Eve had not disobeyed their Maker. The atonement is only a part of the motive of the Incarnation. The Almighty having made this beautiful universe, this wonderful order of created worlds, loved it. Especially did he love that part of it most like unto himself, the angelic choirs; and particularly the human race, which by its double nature united matter and spirit closely together. To crown His work He deified it; united it in the closest bonds to His own divine nature, by incarnating a divine person; thus bringing the material universe up to the dignity of His own Godhead. The atonement became a necessity after the fact of sin; for those who sinned could not atone for themselves. They fell and lost the power of rising. The Redeemer lifted them up; while at the same time, He blessed, glorified, deified all creation by condescending to be united to its lowest part, matter. He has thus identified himself with His own work; so that He lives and moves in it; so that He has enabled us to become partakers of the divine nature; and through us has elevated all inferior creatures. It is not the *apple* which made the sin. It is the *disobedience* of those who ate it; an act of disobedience to a positive, divine law. The beauty of this Christian idea of providence and of redemption, gives certainly a more noble idea of the Deity, than the cold and cruel theory of the Deists.

CHAPTER V.

SATAN, THE ATONEMENT, AND MR. PAINE'S PERORATION.

Satan and the multitude of bad spirits who fell with him are represented in the Bible as possessing the gift of free will; which they abuse for the purpose of injuring men. There is no deification of Satan in the Bible, as Mr. Paine asserts. There is no more difficulty in explaining the devil's conduct than there is in understanding that of men after the fall. Men are jealous of one another, injure one another, and sometimes commit atrocious sins. The rationalists of the French revolution committed acts of astounding cruelty, worthy of fiends and brutes. Even men with better principles than the rationalists fall into sin. The just man falls seven times a day. In a similar way the fallen angels, the chief of whom is Satan, have done and are doing wicked deeds to spite the Creator, who has punished them, and to injure men, whom they envy, because they were created to take the places lost in heaven by satanic rebellion. The jealousy of a fallen angel is as easy to explain as the envy of a fallen man, or of the fox in the fable who had lost his tail. As these fallen angels are of a higher order of intelligence than man, and of a much greater capacity, their sphere of action is wider, and their power to injure much greater than that of such men as Robespierre, Raspail, Gambetta or Garibaldi.

If there be a mystery in the Almighty's permitting these fallen angels to abuse their liberty just as he has permitted it in the case of man ; if there be a mystery in God's tolerating the existence of evil, how is Mr. Paine going to explain it by his theory of the indifference of God to human actions? How will he explain it without God's interference? How does the self-sufficiency of reason or of nature explain it? How can a man who denies original sin account for the horrible actions which men occasionally commit, sometimes individually and sometimes gregariously in mobs? Why then reject the Christian explanation because of mystery when no other theory offers a solution of it? It is just as easy to explain the evil which fallen angels do as to explain the evil which rationalist saints have done ; Saints Danton, Marat and Robespierre, and the holy brotherhood of Communists and Nihilists, who like Mr. Paine are Deists, or like Mr. Ingersoll, are Atheists. Hear Mr. Paine : "They," the Christians, "represent Satan as defeating, by stratagem, in the shape of an animal of the creation, all the power and wisdom of the Almighty." Not at all. The Bible represents Satan as seducing Eve and Adam from their allegiance to God, because God left it possible for Adam and Eve to sin by endowing them with free will. Eve yielded to a temptation presented to her by a much more intelligent being than herself. Nor can we judge of what the serpent was in appearance before the fall by what we know it to be now. The devil simply did what many a man is doing every day. He seduced a woman. Mr. Paine himself has had the power of seducing many a weak-minded young man from truth and virtue by destroying his religious

faith ; and it is very easy to do that if you inject an extra dose of pride into him and knock the sixth Commandment out of the decalogue for his convenience. The whole difficulty in the case of Satan and man is the power of free will. God had either to leave them that power, by which alone they are the lords of creation, and take the consequences of their abuse of it ; or destroy that power, and make them nothing but irresponsible clods, incapable of meritorious action or self-government.

This is the place to answer the query which Mr. Paine does not make, but which has been made by infidels in all ages. It is the old question, "Why did God create beings with free will, knowing that they would abuse it, and that he would have to damn them? Is he not to blame for their sin since he gave them the power to commit it?" This question touches the difficulty of reconciling God's foreknowledge with Satan's and Adam's fall. There is a mystery in it, we admit ; as there is in reconciling God's immutability with the freedom of his act in creating the universe, and various other subjects which terminate in a *cul de sac* for natural reason. But a mystery is not an absurdity ; and although we cannot comprehend its inner nature because we are finite, we can show that there is nothing repugnant to reason in it. In the labyrinth of mystery the Christian always finds the thread of Ariadne in the supernatural. God foresaw that Satan and Adam would fall, but that does not make Him the formal cause of their sin. I may know that a man will get drunk if I invite him to my dinner. I invite him because I love him. I warn him against drinking too much when he sits down to table, but in spite of my

warning he abuses the wine. Has he a just reason on this account for accusing my hospitality as the cause of his intoxication? Is it not his own fault? There can be no merit without free will any more than there can be demerit without it. Should God deprive of the means of meriting the millions of men and angels who use well their freedom of will, for the sake of the men and angels who maliciously abuse it? God's plan is to give heaven only to those who deserve it. Is not the reward worth working for? Does not God give warning enough of the danger of losing it and aid enough, in the million auxiliaries, sacramental and other, to win it? If in spite of all these aids men and angels deliberately fall, the blame is theirs; not of the Supreme Master of the universe whose providence is mysterious because He is infinite, and whose will is the supreme law of creation. Certainly the gift of free will is a boon, a power and a glory in itself. With it we are like unto God. If I give a man a sword or a gun to defend himself, why should he blame me, because some day he deliberately kills himself with it? God does not cause sin. He tolerates it. God does not kill the devil or deprive him of his natural power, because into his divine plan freedom of will entered as necessary for human and angelic dignity and merit.

Moreover, this mystery, which is undoubtedly a mystery for the Christian, but the solution of which he hopes for in the next life, where all mysteries are at an end, does not cease to be insoluble in the rationalistic theories. They all admit freedom of the human will; and Ingersoll particularly, in his lecture on "Robert Burns," fiercely abuses Calvinism for denying it. How then does a rationalist, who admits no God but

nature or the sun, explain the existence of moral evil, of dishonesty, murder, adultery and the like? Why did nature permit us to have base passions, and permit us to yield to them often to the destruction of our physical as well as our moral health? Why has nature given to one man strong passions; to another weak ones? One man is naturally fierce, irascible; a liver complaint or a bilious secretion will ruffle his temper; while another is lamblike in character. Will nature alone, without the intervention of a Supreme Being guiding all by the mysterious laws of His providence, explain the anomalies of the moral order any better than it does the phenomena of the physical world? Thus the rationalist's doctrine of *nature alone*, like the Protestant's theory of the *Bible alone*, will be found insufficient as a religious guide. A puncture explodes the bubble. The future life solves all mysteries for the Christian.

Mr. Paine again distorts the truth when he represents the Christian doctrine as compelling "the Almighty to the *direct necessity* either of surrendering the whole of the creation to the government and sovereignty of this Satan, or of capitulating for its redemption by coming down upon earth, and exhibiting himself upon a cross in the shape of a man." Where did he get this idea of redemption or the atonement? Certainly not from Christian sources. No honest man misrepresents what he is going to refute. Yet Mr. Paine's whole religion consists in preaching honesty. Is it honest to say that the Bible teaches the *direct necessity* of redemption, or that Christians believe in a necessitated incarnation? The incarnation was a voluntary act of God, as free as the act of creation. The mode, the

time, as well as the atonement itself, were all free acts of God. When man fell God could have left him severely alone. He had no right to get from God more than he had received. He had no right to the supernatural, either before he got it, or after losing it by an act of deliberate disobedience. God's act in sending his divine Son was an act of pure mercy, not of justice. The Incarnate Son's death upon the cross, to atone for men, was an act of supreme heroism, even from a rationalistic standpoint. For was not He that died innocent, pure, a benefactor of the human race, even according to the rationalists? Could he not have saved his life by a lie—which Mr. Ingersoll,* the most advanced of Mr. Paine's disciples, expressly states would have been permissible under such circumstances.

How little Mr. Paine understood the real meaning of the Bible, and how completely the slave of a gross literalism he must have been, may be judged from what he says on page 19: "Whenever we read the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and torturous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness with which more than half the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent that we called it the word of a demon than the word of God. It is a history of wickedness, that has served to corrupt and brutalize mankind; and, for my own part, I sincerely detest it as I detest every thing that is cruel." Could Mr. Paine point out one solitary individual of the human race whom the Bible

* I have been struck in reading "The Age of Reason" and Mr. Ingersoll's lectures with the substantial similarity of the latter to the former. The style of Ingersoll, although more pungent than that of Paine, does not clothe so original a matter. Ingersoll is evidently the copyist of Paine.

made cruel, dishonest or impure? Has it not made men better everywhere? Can he say the same for Deism?

What must be the mental condition of a man who does not seem to know that the Bible contains the record of the follies and crimes of the Jewish people as well as the teachings of revelation? These crimes are recorded for our condemnation, not for our approbation. The lesson to be learned from them is one of humility. They show us the weaknesses of human nature, and the forbearance and mercy of God, who often allows the wicked to prosper and the good to suffer in this world; because he has another world in which to balance his accounts. The Bible and its doctrine have civilized, softened and elevated men in all lands. But while Mr. Paine thus detests the atrocities recorded in the Bible, what does he think of the cruelty and diabolism of the first French revolution, the "*Age of Reason*" par excellence? In what part of the Bible is it recorded that women mutilated innocent men and turned their skulls into drinking cups, drinking from them human gore, as the Parisian belles did after 1789? The Jews, it is true, in their idolatry worshipped a golden calf—perhaps it was but a symbol—but the French Deists, of Mr. Paine's creed, worshipped a naked prostitute, whom they called the goddess of reason. Did any Hebrew judge or king ever treat his prisoners taken in war, and consequently by the national code of those times forfeit of life, as cruelly as the rationalistic triumvirate, Marat, Danton and Robespierre, treated their innocent victims, especially in the "*Noyades of Nantes*?" Men who remember the vandalism and wickedness of the late Commune, perpetrated in the name of reason, of

liberty, fraternity and equality, should be slow to condemn the bloody record of Hebrew wars.* Judging both by their fruits and in the light of history which has done the greater good to men, Rationalism or Christianity?

As a specimen of Mr. Paine's quibbling, let me quote the following: "I now go on to the book called the New Testament. The *new* Testament! that is, *new* will, as if there could be two wills of the Creator." Now every Christian child knows that the *new* Testament, or the *old* Testament is not so called, as if God had made a will, or in any sense to indicate that it is a testament like that made by a dying man. The term is not used in a strict but only in an analogical sense. You might as well find fault with New Yorkers for the conventionality by which one of their streets, not the widest, is called Broadway, or with Londoners because *the Route du roi* has been corrupted into Rotten Row. Nor is the word *new* used in contradiction to the *old*; but only for the purpose of distinguishing them; the old being the record of God's revelation to the Jews; the new being the record of his perfected revelation to humanity through his son Jesus Christ.

"Had it been the object or the intention of Jesus Christ to establish a new religion, he would undoubtedly have written the system himself, or procured it to be

* The Jews were the sheriffs of God to execute his judgments upon the criminal nations of the East, Chanaanites, Amalekites, etc., who had forfeited their right to live by their offences against God and society. God could have destroyed them by pestilences, etc., but he preferred to use the sword of Israel, so that the Jews by executing those criminals should learn to detest and shun the crimes which they were commissioned to punish.

written in his lifetime."* Now this we emphatically deny. This is a gratuitous assumption, and one which Protestants as well as Mr. Paine gratuitously make. Dear reader, whenever you hear a rationalist making such assertions as this, just ask him to prove them. God's revelation does not necessarily depend on any writing. His word to mankind has always been a *spoken* word, thus accommodated to the capacity of all mankind. The organ of that spoken word is the Catholic Church, teaching humanity through an infallible hierarchy. The written word is useful—"every scripture is useful"—but not essential. The divinity of Christ's religion is manifest in the very simplicity of its establishment. Human lawgivers write their codes, and hedge them in with human precautions; Jesus Christ spoke his code, and established his Church in opposition to every human agency, to show that it did not come from men, nor was it to depend on them alone for its perpetuity. Without learning or books, or armies or navies, in spite of Hebrew and Roman opposition, scoff of philosopher and interdict of emperor, the illiterate fishermen soon ruled over the known world as head of a universal religion, built on foundations stronger than the eternal hills. God's plans are always simple, and depend not on mere human means.

This is Mr. Paine's objection to the theory of Redemption. "If I owe a person money, and cannot pay him, and he threatens to put me in prison, another person can take the debt upon himself and pay it for me"—and this is the Calvinistic theory of the atonement, and of course we reject it. According to Calvin, Christ, as

* Page 23, "Age of Reason."

it were, throws a mantle over the sins of the few elect, and saves them without any merit of theirs. God looks at the mantle, the merits of his Son, and does not look at what it covers. These few elect being saved, the rest of mankind are damned ; they must be bad, for they are totally depraved, having lost everything by the fall, even free will. "But," continues the Deist, "if I have committed a crime, every circumstance of the case is changed ; moral justice cannot take the innocent for the guilty, even if the innocent would offer itself." But suppose a subject had lost favor with his prince, could not the prince's son atone for the offense, intercede with his father and get him to restore the offender to favor ? Suppose a man created with supernatural gifts should lose them by sin, should become disfranchised by rebellion, and lose all his property, could not that property be ransomed, and the rights of citizenship be restored by the supreme will of the supreme authority ? The offense was rank, but the atonement is equal to it. One drop of God's blood is sufficient to ransom ten thousand worlds. Besides this atonement does not consist in the theory of substitution. The merits of Jesus Christ are not substituted for our defects ; we enjoy free will after the fall ; we must use it and apply to ourselves the merits of the Redeemer by acts of virtue, by thorough co-operation with his grace, and by our own good deeds merit our own salvation. Had Mr. Paine understood the Catholic theory of the atonement, he would have seen that his objection could not hold good. In this theory it is possible for the sinner, no matter what his crimes, to repent, to undo by free will the evil done by free will, and by acts of that will rendered meritorious through the blood of the

Redeemer, to regain lost rights and privileges. In this sense the atonement is ours as well as Christ's ; we redeem ourselves by co-operating with the Redeemer and applying his merits to our souls.

What is Mr. Paine's Bible ? "The word of God is the creation we behold : And it is in *this word*, which no human invention can counterfeit or alter, that God speaketh universally to man." So far so good. The Catholic Church believes in nature and defends it. She accepts as cordially as Mr. Paine all the truths contained in the beautiful 19th psalm, the translation of which by Mr. ADDISON he quotes :—

"The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.
The unwearied sun from day to day
Does his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land,
The work of an Almighty hand.
Soon as the evening shades prevail
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the list'ning earth
Repeats the story of her birth ;
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.
What though in solemn silence all
Move round this dark terrestrial ball ;
What though no real voice, nor sound,
Amidst their radiant orbs be found ;
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing as they shine,
THE HAND THAT MADE THEM IS DIVINE."

Beautiful indeed, and true. This, at least, is a bit of

good poetry from the Bible Mr. Paine will admit.* But why deny to the Creator the power to speak to man directly; through a spiritual universe as well as through a material universe; by speech, the medium of intercommunion for rational beings, as well as through the dumb creatures that we behold? Is there no metaphysical and moral order for man's intellect or will? nothing higher than the creation around him, to which he feels himself superior, and in which he shows himself to be king and master? Is the supernatural world to be rejected because of its incomprehensibility, or because of the disagreement of men in explaining it? But does not the same difficulty exist in the order of nature? Where is the agreement of scientists as to the origin, cause, or mode of the material universe? Does it imply a God? No, says Ingersoll, Mr. Paine's logical disciple. Has all come from a germ? "*Omnia ab ovo?*" according to the axiom. Have the higher forms of life which we observe in it been developed by mutation of species, as Darwin maintains; and will this process of transmutation go on unto the end? Ask Darwin, Huxley and Spencer, Ingersoll, Paine or Büchner, Quatrefages, d'Holbach or Cabanis and you will find nothing but dissension and disagreement. Most of them reject God or His providence, to get rid of a difficulty; and yet the difficulty remains greater after the rejection than before it. These men who cannot explain the uses of snakes or bugs and mosquitoes, nor the origin of species, nor the origin of a solitary individual of any species, are the very ones who reject

* He is continually stating that there is no good poetry in the Bible.

God's presence and government from nature, because they are incomprehensible. They fail to see, or if they see they fail honestly to admit, that all the objections which they have been urging against the Deity and the divine economy of the world, tell with double force against the substitutes which they have put in God's place—Nature, the Sun, Chance or Fate. They fail to comprehend that a communication of God made to man by speech, or by messengers angelic, human, or divine, is a nobler form of revelation than that contained in the book of nature; and that man instead of being degraded is lifted up by it to a higher sphere than that in which nature leaves him. In nature God speaks by symbols; in revelation, He speaks unveiled.

In passing, we may notice the eccentricity of Mr. Paine in attacking the study of the dead languages.* Strange that so ardent an admirer of the "Age of Reason" should attack that which cultivates reason, and opens to it the treasures of Greek and Roman philosophy, poetry and history, which have done so much towards civilizing the world. Luther attacked the study of philosophy, Paine attacks the study of Latin and Greek; yet these are the champions of modern enlightenment!

After this digression our opponent renews his attack on the doctrine of the Redemption: "Putting, then, aside as a matter of distinct consideration the outrage offered to the moral justice of God, by supposing him to make the innocent"—Christ—"suffer for the guilty"—mankind—"and also the loose morality and low contrivance of supposing him to change himself into the

* Pages 43 and 44, "Age of Reason," Part first.

shape of a man," etc. But God did not *make* the innocent suffer for the guilty. The Innocent, a divine person, *volunteered* to atone for the guilty, who was not able to atone for himself. Has Mr. Paine no esthetic sense that he cannot admire the beauty of the doctrine that God the Creator wished to ennoble his work by uniting it to his own personality in the assumption of human nature, thus casting the glory of the Godhead over the whole universe by the Incarnation, and restoring the rights of fallen humanity by the Redemption?

Further on he gives us quite a lengthy and rather egotistical account of his studies and inclinations: "The natural bent of my mind was to science. I had some turn, and I believe some talent, for poetry; but this I rather repressed than encouraged, as leading too much into the field of imagination." Considering the manner in which he repeatedly travesties and distorts Christian dogmas, we should say that he missed his vocation as a caricaturist, though in this respect Mr. Ingersoll surpasses him; and, considering the progress which astronomy has made since his time, his acquaintance with it is not very remarkable. Here is a specimen of it, exhibited, we presume, to excite our admiration. Will not our school boys laugh at it? "That part of the universe that is called the solar system (meaning the system of worlds to which our earth belongs, and of which Sol, or, in English language, the Sun is the centre) consists, besides the sun, of *six* (!) distinct orbs or planets, or worlds, besides the secondary bodies, called satellites or moons, of which our earth has one (!) that attends her in her annual revolution round the sun, in like manner as the other satellites or

moons attend the planets or worlds to which they severally belong, as may be seen by the assistance of the telescope (!) The sun is the centre, etc." But that will do. This vain man's baby science is evidently as superficial as his appreciation of the great truths of Christianity.

It is pleasant to read, however, as he nears the close of his argumentation against Christianity, these words in regard to mystery: "With respect to mystery, everything we behold is in one sense a mystery to us. Our own existence is a mystery; the whole vegetable world is a mystery. We cannot account how it is that an acorn, when put into the ground, is made to develop itself and become an oak. We know not how it is that the seed we sow unfolds and multiplies itself, and returns to us such an abundant interest for so small a capital." Then why reject revealed truths on the ground that they are mysteries? Is not our rationalist contradicting himself. But he answers: "But though every created thing is in this sense a mystery, the word mystery cannot be applied to *moral truth* any more than obscurity can be applied to light." But obscurity may be applied to light. The lamp is brighter without the shade; the moon and sun are brighter without the clouds. Why can there be no mystery in moral truth? Mr. Paine can give no proof of his gratuitous assertion. As a man of science he should know that even in mathematical truths there is mystery. The indefinite or *ad infinitum* division of decimals, although the figure to be divided is definite and finite, is a mystery. We can never get to the end of a division of ten by three. "The God in whom we believe is a God of moral truth, and not a God of mys-

tery or obscurity." In himself he is all truth without obscurity; but relatively to us he is not without obscurity. Mr. Paine admits his existence. We defy him to explain the mode of it, or to deny that the very fact of this existence is to us anything but mysterious. "Mystery is the antagonist of truth." This is false. Mystery surrounds the very essence of truth; every truth ends in a mystery, because it ends in the infinite. The fault is not in truth, but in us, that there is mystery. We are finite. We cannot see beyond our limit; and this limit exists for us intellectually as well as physically. We need the telescope to discern well the mountains in the moon or the distant ship at sea. We need the telescope of faith and revelation to see the inner life of God. We see now darkly as in a mirror. In the next life we shall see God face to face. "Truth never envelops *itself* in mystery." Suppose we admit this, it does not therefore follow that there are no mysteries connected with truth. It is not truth, it is we that are enveloped in fog. We cannot see the whole of truth because our minds are not big enough; and we should therefore thank God for expanding our vision by revelation instead of objecting to it.

After all this said about "mystery," what are we to think of Mr. Paine's conclusion that "the very nature and design of religion, if I may so express it, prove even to demonstration"—mark the superb assurance of these rationalists—"that it must be free from everything of mystery." Now if "every thing that we behold" is full of mystery, why should religion alone be free from it? Should not Mr. Paine have derived a conclusion from his premises directly opposite to the one he has drawn? Religion treats of God, the highest

being and the greatest truth. If we could thoroughly comprehend him, he would not be God. A god whom I could perfectly comprehend would be a god of my own size; that is to say, he would be no god at all; nay he would be less than myself, less than the very atom floating in the sunbeam. I cannot comprehend it. It begins in a mystery which I cannot solve, and ends in a mystery which I cannot fathom. If then the smallest being is surrounded by mystery, why should the greatest be free from it? If the science of botany, of chemistry, of astronomy—in which Mr. Paine is such an expert—if mathematics even be full of inexplicable mysteries, why should theology, the science of religion, be free from them?

The resumé of his objections to miracles is equally jejune and puerile. We ask the reader's forgiveness for dwelling on it; but let him consider how many weak minds are daily seduced from Christianity by these shallow sophistries, and then he will see the necessity of our refutation of them. "In the same sense that everything may be said to be a mystery, so also may it be said that everything is a miracle, and that no one thing is a greater miracle than another. The elephant, though larger, is not a greater miracle than a mite; nor a mountain a greater miracle than an atom. To an Almighty power it is no more difficult to make the one than the other; and no more difficult to make a million of worlds than to make one." Then in the name of that common sense which Mr. Paine and his brother infidels so frequently invoke, why does he object to the possibility of those miracles recorded in the Bible?

But they will say that their objection is not to the possibility of miracles, but to the propriety of using them

for the purpose of establishing a true religion. In fact, this is what Mr. Paine says: "Since their appearances are so capable of deceiving, and things not real have a strong resemblance to things that are, nothing can be more inconsistent than to suppose that the Almighty would make use of means, such as are called miracles, that would subject the person who performed them to the suspicion of being an impostor, and the person who related them to be suspected of lying, and the doctrine intended to be supported thereby to be suspected as a fabulous invention."* Here Paine evidently does not understand the character of real miracles. His conclusion ought to be the contrary of what he makes it. He confounds them with performances by sleight of hand or conjurors' tricks. Does he not comprehend that there are circumstances in which deception is impossible? Lazarus died and was buried. His body had already begun to decompose, hundreds saw it, and saw Jesus Christ raise it to life. Could anything be a proof stronger of the divine character of the doctrine, or of him who preached it, than this manifestation of super-human power? Jesus Christ died in the presence of hundreds. He was buried. The tomb in which his body was placed was officially sealed by the enemies of his doctrine and a guard of Roman soldiers set to watch it. Every precaution against fraud was taken. Now he did rise; and he arose, as he said he would, on the third day, to confirm his doctrines and show forth his divinity. Hundreds saw him after his resurrection. The guards set to watch him became unwilling witnesses to the fact that he had risen. Could God choose

* Page 66.

any better means than this to prove the truth of his revelation; or could any divine messenger show the authenticity of his mission by better evidence than such a miracle? Once admitted the possibility of miracles, the question of their existence becomes one of historical certainty; and this has been repeatedly shown in the case of the Biblical narratives. You meet a man, blind, deaf or dumb, or with a disease pronounced incurable by the best physicians, on his road to Lourdes.* You meet him on his return cured. He knows that a miracle has been worked on him. If you are honest, why not admit that God cured him miraculously—since he can do it if he wills—instead of seeking for some out-of-the-way explanation of the fact? These rationalists will admit anything, but the manifestation of God's power contrary to their notions; and yet that manifestation exists to-day as plainly as in the days of Moses and Jesus Christ.

A good instance of Mr. Paine's talent for caricature—for caricature is the stock in trade of the rationalists from Voltaire downward—occurs on page 68. Speaking of the temptation of our Lord he says: "The most extraordinary of all the things called miracles, related in the New Testament, is that of the devil *flying* away with Jesus Christ." These words "*flying away*," show where the caricature comes in. The Bible says "*led*," or "*took*," for our Lord allowed himself to be led and to be tempted by the devil for our benefit, that we might learn from him how to resist temptation. The devil did not know that Jesus Christ was the Son of God,

* We are glad to see that Rev. Dr. Tyng of New York admits the truth of many of the Lourdes' miracles. Why not?

although Mr. Paine elsewhere says that Christians make the devil omnipotent and omniscient. "And showing him and promising to him *all the kingdoms of the world*. How happened it that he did not discover America; or is it only with kingdoms that his sooty highness has any interest?" This is as puerile in wit as Mr. Paine's lessons in astronomy to which we have already alluded. No man but a blockhead could fail to see that this text is not to be taken according to its mere verbal signification. The devil could have pointed out the direction of the different kingdoms, districts, or parts of the earth, without showing them as it were on a map. But, suppose we take it as Mr. Paine does, and argue as he does. How does he know that the devil did not point out America? How does he know that at that time America was not a kingdom? Alas! it is not with kingdoms alone that Satan has to deal. He succeeds equally well with infidel republics. Let it always be remembered that the Creator, although exiling the rebellious angels from heaven, has never destroyed their natural powers of intellect, will, or capacity for rapid locomotion.

Mr. Paine disposes of prophets and prophecy by telling us that "prophets" mean "poets," and "prophecy" "poetry," in the Bible. But if this be so, how is it that the poems called the Psalms are not classed as the works of the prophets, and that the sublime poetry of the book of Job has never caused him to find a place among the prophets? How can a man like Mr. Paine who despises the dead languages and linguistic science, of which he knows nothing, undertake with propriety to substitute his offhand assertions for the teaching of good rhetoricians or of commentators profoundly learned

in the original languages of the Bible? They deny the identity of the terms poet and prophet, poetry and prophecy from Blair to Gesenius.

He further argues against the truth of prophecy from its obscurity. "If there were 'prophets,' it is consistent to believe that the event so communicated would be told in terms that could be understood, and not related in such a loose and obscure manner as to be out of the comprehensions of those that heard it, and so equivocal as to fit almost any circumstance that might happen afterward." Now, this remark does not apply to the great prophecies of the Old Testament, that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head; that all generations would be blessed in Abraham; that the sceptre should not depart from Judah until the advent of the Messiah; that a great prophet would arise like unto Moses; that he would be born of a virgin, be called Emmanuel, be put to death after the lapse of a certain specified time, etc.: all these Messianic prophecies are clear. The Jews understood them, the tradition in regard to them being stronger even than the written word. It is true that they now try to distort them from their plain meaning for an interested purpose, to destroy the force of Christian arguments. Human prejudice can distort the clearest text.

Nothing can be clearer than our Lord's prophecy about his own death, crucifixion, and resurrection after three days. Where, then, is the obscurity? Yes, there is obscurity for a man who deliberately shuts his eyes to the light, and who sets out on his investigation with the preconceived purpose of caricaturing everything that he meets on the way.

True the Book of Revelation, or Apocalypse of St.

John, is obscure, but there is nothing in it essential to Christian belief. Its obscurity is providential in the interest of truth, for it proves that the Protestant theory of private interpretation is erroneous, and it humbles the pride of the human intellect, by showing it that the mysteries of faith are far beyond its natural ken. When God inspires a work Mr. Paine ought to know that he has no right to dictate to Him how it shall be written, or that he must reveal the whole of anything that he wishes to communicate to man. If He prefers to reveal a truth only in part, so as to leave to man the merit of obedience and of faith, who shall gainsay this right of the Sovereign Creator of the Universe and the Redeemer of fallen humanity?

Mr. Paine finally sums up his principles. This is his trinity of dogmas which in an "Age of Reason" should take the place of Christian doctrine and morals. He says: "First the idea or belief of a word of God existing in print, or in writing, or in speech, is inconsistent in itself for various reasons."

These reasons, among many others, are the want of a universal language. Does he not understand that the "word" of God means the *doctrines*, which God reveals and not the *verbal* clothing of them. "The mutability of language"—but ideas and doctrines need not change because their clothing does; the doctrine may be the same whether expressed in English, French or Hebrew, "The errors to which translations are subject; the possibility of totally suppressing such a word; the probability of altering it, or of fabricating the whole and imposing it upon the world." This theory is based on a pun on the *word* of God. Paine seems to hold that the *word* of God must mean not the ideas, doctrines or facts recorded

under the influence of well-authenticated inspiration, but the *words*, the verbal covering of them.*

"Secondly—The creation we behold is the real and *ever* existing word of God"—Is creation eternal?—"in which we cannot be deceived." But we are often deceived in creation, we expect rain and it does not come, even the ordinary signs of a storm are not always followed by what they indicate. But why does Mr. Paine call the *word* of God in one place the *letters* of the Bible and call it here the unwritten, unspeaking material universe? The *word* of God varies in his notions to suit his purpose. But is not the Book of Nature as mutable, as fickle and as difficult to understand as the Book of Revelation? Ask the commentators on this Book of Nature, the botanists, geologists, chemists and astronomers. How various their explanations of natural phenomena; how contradictory their theories. Verily the Lord has delivered the earth up to the disputes of men. Hardly

*According to Paine's explanation, no translation could have any weight, because it would not be the *word* of the author; yet we all know that translations of Tacitus, Livy, Cicero, etc., are their *word* and have equal weight with the originals as to questions of fact, although not clothed in the dress which the authors gave them. Considering that Mr. Paine was ignorant of the languages in which the books of the Bible were originally written, and openly expresses his contempt for them, while at the same time he grossly distorts the meaning of the texts in unauthenticated translations, he forfeits his right to be considered an authority on any *word*, original, or translated. Since every man should be his own judge of the Bible, according to Mr. Paine, he must be thrown out of court. He could not read the originals; his knowledge of them came only from translations, which he was unable to verify; and therefore, still according to his own theory he was admitting "hearsay" or secondhand evidence. The reader will remember how strongly he denounces "secondhand" revelation; the only kind, after all, upon which he builds his "Age of Reason."

any two scientists agree in explaining some of the most simple phenomena of nature. There are theories as to the origin of matter, of species, of the divisibility of matter, of the nature of light and electrical phenomena. Nature is not such a simple book after all, but "it proclaims His power, it demonstrates His wisdom, it manifests His goodness and beneficence." We admit that it does in spite of the existence of physical evils and of plants and animals which seem not only to be useless but positively noxious, and in spite of destroying pestilence, famine, hurricanes and earthquakes. Why will not Mr. Paine, in like manner, rise higher than nature and admit the existence of a supernatural revelation in spite of its concomitant mysteries and difficulties—mysteries and difficulties not a whit greater than those surrounding his goddess—Nature.

Thirdly—"The moral duty of man consists in imitating the moral goodness and beneficence of God, manifested in the creation towards all his creatures. That seeing, as we daily do, the goodness of God to all men, it is an example calling upon all men to practice the same towards each other; and consequently, that everything of persecution and revenge between man and man, and everything of cruelty to animals, is a violation of moral duty." This sounds well in print, and so far as it teaches the necessity of obeying the natural law is good. But do men obey the natural law? Do Rationalists do it? Does no Rationalist break the Ten Commandments? If men are to follow their natural instincts and inclinations, will not polygamy and divorce, the two natural children of Rationalism, become the practice of mankind? Is not the example of a God so loving the world as to send his only begotten Son to redeem it;

of an Incarnate God, whose whole life was one of self-restraint, mortification and suffering a higher incentive to virtue than any natural law? Is not mankind honored by the fact that God has spoken to it? Do we not know that even believers in revelation and its ennobling truths fall short of perfection in their conduct? And how then can we expect mere Rationalists who have neither the example of Christ to encourage them, nor the restraining laws of Christianity to curb their passions, nor the numerous aids and graces of the Redeemer and his sacraments to assist them, to be models of virtue or stoical in their lives, especially if they have no certainty of a future life, of a place of reward and punishment hereafter? The uncertainty of Deists in this regard spoils all their fine writing about virtue, and the obligation of doing good. A law that has no sanction has no force, and will obtain neither respect nor obedience. Yet this is the kind of law which Mr. Paine endeavors to establish. He writes finely about it; but he destroys its efficacy. "I trouble not myself about the manner of future existence. I content myself with believing, even to positive conviction, that the power that gave me existence is able to continue it in any form and manner he pleases, either with or without this body; and it appears *more probable* to me that I shall continue to exist hereafter."*

Thus the existence of a future life is merely *probable*.

Thus the age of reason ends in gross materialism.

For tell me, ye men of strong passions, of sensual or cruel natures, what restraining influence there can be for you if this life is probably the end of all things and

* "Age of Reason," p. 71.

the future is but a possibility? Does not common sense tell us that the result of this materialistic Deism must necessarily be public and private vice, universal selfishness, each man living according to the principles of Epicureanism as well expressed in the Epicurean Ode of Horace to a fashionable woman,* or in the college song of Gaudeamus.

Gaudeamus igitur
Iuvenes dum sumus
Post delectam juventutem
Post molestatam senectutem

Nos habebit humus, etc., etc., a pleasant song at a college dinner; but if we would act according to its principles, as Paine and Ingersoll desire, we should soon find ourselves in—jail!

* TO LEUCONOE.

"Thy life with wiser acts be crown'd
Thy filter'd wines abundant pour;
The lengthen'd hope with prudence bound
Proportion'd to the flying hour:
Even while we talk in careless ease,
Our envious minutes wing their flight;
Then swift the fleeting pleasure seize,
Nor trust to-morrow's doubtful light."
Ode XI., lib. 1, Car. Francis' translation.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RATIONALISM OF ROBERT INGERSOLL.

Robert Ingersoll is more of a Rationalist than Thomas Paine, whose "Age of Reason" and "Rights of Man" he has evidently studied; for while Paine rests at Deism on his intellectual travels, Ingersoll advances to the confines of absolute Atheism. We do not think, however, that he is an Atheist in the full sense of the word, for his assaults upon the Deity are, for the most part, attacks upon him as misrepresented in Calvinistic theology as the positive author of sin, of total depravity and foreordained damnation without human demerits. Ingersoll rebels against the God of John Calvin, the cruel, ruthless being who condemns to eternal perdition the majority of human beings without their fault, and saves the few elect, arch-sinners and ruffians though they be, without their deserts; who has taken away from man all liberty of action and made human nature a totally depraved thing, and who takes infinite pleasure in the torture of his creatures, condemned for ever to be tossed on pitchforks by fire-vomiting devils and to burn for endless ages in flaming brimstone, without ever having been responsible for a solitary sin committed in the flesh. Ingersoll, like the poet Burns and like all the modern Genevan and New England leaders of free thought, revolts and holds aloft the standard of free will, natural good, and natural virtue.

In these regards the Catholic church is with him, as she has been ever the champion of free will and natural rights against the so-called Reformers. For proof of this Ingersoll and his co-rationalists should read the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent.

But does Ingersoll really deny the existence of God? Although many passages occur in his lectures which favor such a supposition, yet we doubt. We hope we misunderstand him on this point. He is too honest a man, too sincere an admirer of nature, not to recognize nature's God, who speaks to him in every being around him. Any man who can gaze at the beauties of this universe, its order and design, its variety of stream, mountain, and forest, the variegated charms of its flower bedecked plains, its round of changing seasons, the planetary system of which it forms a part, the million orbs that float in glorious splendor in the blue canopy above us; who can listen to the sighing of the breeze, the roar of the whirlwind, the pealing of the thunder, the singing of the birds, and study the multiform species of life, vegetable and animal, the strange instincts of brutes and the wonderful laws of reproduction, and not admit a supreme, intelligent and omnipotent cause of all is fit only for a lunatic asylum. Every science points to this intelligent cause as its last and sole explanation; geology, botany, chemistry, astronomy—all tell of a mystery, a mystery insoluble by the investigating mind of man; a mystery pointing to a cause like unto man as its author, and infinitely superior to man in knowledge and power; a mystery soluble only by the admission of a Supreme Architect who built the mountains and hurled the mighty boulders hither and thither as he listed; who planted the first seed, created the first egg or bird, gave

laws to the stars and bade the winds and waves come and go at the dictate of his Almighty will. Our very feelings speak of God. The voice of the human race speaking through the fetish worshippers of Central Africa, as well as through the learned men of the Athenian Acropolis and of the Roman Capitol, cries out that there is a God, omnipotent and supremely intelligent.

Our very lives are proofs of immortality. We believe in the existence of the next hour, or the next day or year, though we know that we live only in the present. To believe in the existence of the future hour is as difficult as to believe in endless immortality. Yet we know that to-morrow will come though our bodies may be dead. Our hope never dies, a hope that is the voice of our nature. But if it be rational, as the Rationalists hold, for every being to live according to its nature, why should we destroy that which is the voice of our nature; the belief in immortality which subjectively implies the perpetuity of our soul's existence after separation from the body, and objectively intimates the existence of an eternal spirit—God—whom we hope to see, whom we crave to see, and whom the whole human race has ever adored? These Rationalists tell us to follow nature. If we do we shall believe in God, immortality, and a future life. Nature demands it. It requires violence to nature not to believe in these truths.

We believe, therefore, that Ingersoll is not at heart an Atheist. He attacks a misrepresented God. Like an honest logician he cannot abide the absurdities of Protestantism, and he has never studied Catholic doctrine sufficiently. If he had rested content, therefore, with destroying the superstitions of Calvinism and its misinterpretation of the Bible, we, as Catholics,

should have little to object to him. We can even admit to him that the Bible is neither necessary nor essential to the Catholic Church. Jesus Christ never wrote a bit of it; neither did he order any one to write it. The Church has lived and can live without it. The Church lived from Adam to Moses without a syllable of the Bible; and the Church was fully developed and established by Jesus Christ, long before a word of the New Testament was ever penned by an apostle. The Church is not under the wing of the Bible; but the Bible is under the protection of the Church. The Bible does not own or form the Church, as in Protestantism it is supposed to; but the Church owns and explains the Bible. The first revelation made to Adam was the Church, and he was the first Catholic. The verbal communications made by God to men from Adam to Jesus Christ, formed the Church, which dates her unity, her Catholicity, her sanctity, and even her apostolicity, from the cradle of the human race. God never wrote to men. He spoke to them, or sent his angels to speak to them. Men, through his inspiration, wrote certain books for greater convenience, to use the ordinary means of perpetuating historical facts and revealed doctrines. There may be hundreds of thousands of mistakes in the Bible, mistakes of printers, copyists, translators; and even mistakes of grammar, rhetoric, geography, and astronomy by the very inspired writers themselves. The style of the Bible is sometimes very obscure, and is not classical.*

* The Latin Vulgate, although the authoritative version of the Latin Church, has been repeatedly revised and corrected by order of the popes, and is still full of small errors. The late Abbé Le Hir, Professor in St. Sulpice, Paris, and a most learned orientalist, corrected the Latin version of the Book of Job, daily, in class.

No private individual can interpret it properly. The Church claims the sole judicial right to interpret authoritatively every passage in it; but it is a right which she has seldom employed; which she employs only where a text gives rise to a doctrinal dispute. Consequently, even Catholic interpreters vary at almost every page from Genesis to the Apocalypse in their renderings of the meaning of the Bible texts; and this variety is tolerated, and this freedom untrammelled by the Church. Thus, therefore, we may admit with Paine and Ingersoll, that there are some mistakes in the Bible; and that the modern Protestant sects have been obliged to give up the literalism of the early Reformers in their explanation of it. Protestantism in presence of Rationalism is like an iceberg gradually melting away before the sun. So, in substance, says Schleiermacher.

But these mistakes in the Bible are not essential, nor doctrinal. And in particular, the so-called mistakes which Mr. Ingersoll has been pleased to pick out of the Pentateuch, and especially out of its first book, Genesis, are not errors of Moses, but mistakes of Mr. Ingersoll himself, as we shall presently see. In his beautifully written lecture on the "*Mistakes of Moses*," a lecture full of wit and broad caricature equal to that of Voltaire himself, he begins by saying that he wishes "to take from the world the consolation naturally arising from a belief in eternal fire." Now, this remark does not hit the Catholic Church. She does not teach that there is "an eternal fire," in the sense of Mr. Ingersoll. She teaches that there is an eternal pain of loss and pain of sense in hell for those who, by abuse of their free will, have deserved it. But she has

never decreed that the pain of sense consisted in a material fire, and it is not probable that she ever will. Mr. Ingersoll has hit John Calvin; but not the Catholic Church. Why does not Mr. Ingersoll study the doctrines of the Catholic Church? He continues, "They have, at Andover, a kind of minister factory; and every professor in that factory takes an oath once in every five years * * * that not only has he not during the last five years, but so help him God, he will not, during the next five years, intellectually advance." This is an absurd and illogical oath for those who believe in the right of private judgment; as illogical as an Anglican minister's subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, or a Presbyterian trial for heresy. The capital of the sects is private judgment, and they have no right to tie it up by oaths or formulas of any kind. "These men should be allowed to grow. They should have the air of liberty and the sunshine of thought." Right! honest Mr. Ingersoll.

Mr. Ingersoll further says, "Now we believe in three Gods with one head," thus caricaturing the Christian mystery of the Trinity. Now the Catholic catechism distinctly teaches that there is but one God; one divine substance, one nature, though there are three persons in this one nature. To say that there are three Gods is a heresy, according to Catholics. In this doctrine there is a mystery of revelation. Greater minds than even Mr. Ingersoll have believed it and do believe it. Will he reject it because it is a mystery? Then why does he not reject the fact that a chicken will come out of a well-hatched egg, or that a stalk and ear of corn will grow out of a single grain planted in the earth? because he cannot understand them. Nature is full of

mysteries as difficult of explanation as the Christian Trinity; yet Mr. Ingersoll believes in nature, although he cannot fathom its mysteries. Why reject the supernatural on account of mysteries, since their analogies exist everywhere in the natural universe? If he had said that the Protestant sects which believe in the Trinity and in the incarnation; who hold that the child born in the stable at Bethlehem is the eternal Son of God, have no logic in them for declining to go farther, and believe all the revealed mysteries, like transubstantiation for instance, not a whit more difficult of credence, he would have spoken to some purpose. But when he compares belief in the Trinity to the Mahomedan belief that Mahomet saw an angel "named Gabriel in heaven who was so broad between his eyes that it would take a smart camel three hundred days to make the journey," he is witty, but not logical. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity has analogies countless in nature; and if Mr. Ingersoll will take the serious trouble of reading any Catholic treatise on the subject, he will find that it gives the most sublime and rational explanation of the inner life of the Deity possible to men here below; while the Mahomedan "*yarn*," pardon the word, but it is in the style of Ingersoll, has no sense or purpose, and is metaphysically absurd, since angels have no bodies, and consequently no eyes.*

* "At the same time, I think a person who is terrified with the imagination of ghosts and spectres much more reasonable than one who, contrary to the report of all historians, sacred and profane, ancient and modern, and to the traditions of all nations, thinks the appearance of spirits fabulous and groundless. * * * I might here add that not only the historians, to whom we may join the poets, but likewise the philosophers of antiquity have favored this opinion," viz.: that spirits exist and sometimes visibly appear.—Addison in the *Spectator*, "*Roger*

Again he writes: "Now some one says, 'The religion of my father and mother is good enough for me.' Suppose we all said this, where would be the progress of the world?" Catholics continually urge on Protestants the necessity of following out their own theory of private investigation, so that they may see the absurdity of their heresies and the truth of the old Church. Consequently we can so far agree with Mr. Ingersoll. But under the Catholic system his query does not hold good. Our Church is infallible; we know it is the only Church of Jesus Christ; we see everywhere its unity and sameness, a self-evident quality of truth; and the divisions and disputes of the sects a proof of their error; and we fail to see how progress can be better promoted by the quarrels and doubts of straggling sects, than by the onward march of a united society in the pursuit of virtue under the reign of sovereign truth and the guidance of a disciplined hierarchy.

Then Mr. Ingersoll comes down to Moses and the Pentateuch. Now, to say the least of Moses, he was a much greater man than Ingersoll, and deserves the latter's respect. Moses lived long before modern civilization; in ages of rudeness and barbarism; yet was there ever such a general, statesman, or lawgiver? He was a patriot who could not be bought by all the

de Coverley," Chapter VI. A good answer from a great writer to Mr. Ingersoll's lecture on "Ghosts." He ought to know that the invisible is more real than the visible. Force, substance, intellect, mind, are all invisible, yet how real compared to mode or inert matter. To deny the reality of things invisible is to deny the reality of all forces. They are all intangible and invisible. Every school-boy knows that we can touch or see modes only, as color, form, etc., and not substances,

wealth and culture of Egypt to betray his race. He took them, a race of slaves; brought them successfully out of the land of their oppressors, rich, powerful, and learned, as the world then went; conducted a masterly retreat in the face of an advancing army that could have annihilated them with one blow if it came to a hand-to-hand encounter; trained these liberated serfs into an army of brave warriors, made them bold and aggressive; suppressed their rebellions against his authority, bore himself patiently and meekly in all their complaints and distresses; gave them a code of laws that has never been surpassed; made them a great nation, morally and socially the highest in the East, professing the only pure form of religion amid surrounding superstition and idolatry, and for fifteen hundred years, a period of national life unparalleled in history, ancient or modern, stamped his name and glory upon their civil life and religious condition. Surely such a man deserves more respect than Mr. Ingersoll gives him, even if he did make some mistakes. He was the greatest legislator in history, save Jesus Christ. Mr. Ingersoll worships the memory of Lincoln for emancipating the slaves, but withholds respect from Moses, the emancipator of a nation at a time of general barbarism.

Mr. Ingersoll begins his lecture on the mistakes of Moses, thus: "Now, right here, in the commencement, let me say that Moses never wrote one word of the Pentateuch." Well, suppose so. What of it? Does that prove that he did not cause it to be written? *Qui facit per alium facit per se*. "Not one word was written until he had been dust and ashes for hundreds of years." Now this is a gratuitous assertion of Mr. Ingersoll for which

he does not offer or attempt to offer a solitary proof. The testimony of the Hebrew writers and people without exception, and the uninterrupted tradition of the whole of Christendom, are surely of more weight in affirming that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch, than Mr. Ingersoll's *ipse dixit* in denial. What becomes of historical certainty, or the authenticity of any book, if a mere denial, without proof, shall be deemed sufficient to cast discredit on it? Yet there are many thoughtless persons who admit the assertions of such men as Ingersoll without proof; thus doing honor neither to their intelligence nor impartiality.* Why this credulity in favor of shallow unbelief, and this hesitation in face of well-attested faith? Why is it that some men who will not even nibble at the line of Peter the Fisherman, will swallow line, hook and sinker of the infidel "Bob" Ingersoll? Why not exact proof from these Rationalists before believing their assertions?

This gentleman now descends to details in his assault upon the veracity of the Pentateuch. He says, "It begins by telling us that God made the universe out of nothing." This is simply untrue. Moses says that God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning; but he does not explain the mode of this creation. Mr. Ingersoll is not always honest in his quotations. Is it a part of natural religion thus to deceive? He says he "cannot imagine of nothing being made into something." Of course not if he imagines nothing to be a material. Mr. Ingersoll merely puns on the word "*nothing*." Does he not understand that there was a period when nothing was; and that all which now

* The reader may consult Father Walworth's excellent book, "*The Gentle Skeptic*," for proofs of the authenticity, etc., of the Bible.

exists had a beginning given to it by the Creator, whose omnipotence brought out of the void all the substances which now exist? He cannot understand the mystery of creative production any more than we can; but reason forces us to admit the fact, or believe in the absurd doctrine of the eternity of matter, or in an endless chain of created substances, each resting on another, the first on the last, like a snake with his tail in his mouth. Why prefer belief in an absurdity to belief in a mystery? Are there not millions of mysteries since creation which Mr. Ingersoll must accept as insoluble with present light as well as the one which creation implies?

Again, "Moses describes God dividing the light from the darkness. I suppose that at that time they must have been mixed, they must have been entities. The reason I think so is, because in that same book I find that darkness overspread Egypt so thick that it could be felt, and they used to have on exhibition in Rome a bottle of the darkness that once overspread Egypt." This is false and Mr. Ingersoll knew it, when he wrote it for the sake of being witty. If there ever was darkness that could be felt, it must have existed in the skull of him who takes literally the words that "darkness could be felt," or who infers that light and darkness must be entities, because God is said to have divided day from night. In his lecture on "Skulls," Mr. Ingersoll ridicules the skull of the dweller in a "dug-out;" but there never was one there so stupid as not to understand the use of figurative language, and that day and night may have for synonyms light and darkness. Between the skull of a prejudiced Rationalist, and the owner of a "dug-out," the difference is sometimes very slight.

"The next thing that he informs us is that God divided the waters above the firmament from those below the firmament. The man who wrote that believed the firmament to be a solid affair. * * * That is where they kept the water. * * * Men believed that an angel could take a lever, raise a window, and let out the desired quantity. I find in the psalms that 'he bowed the heavens and came down.'" Now we know that Mr. Ingersoll is not a serious scholar; but we can not imagine why so witty a man should be guilty of writing such puerile nonsense as this. The word "firmament" in English does not render the Hebrew term *Raqia* properly. The Hebrew word signifies something extended or spread out, and is therefore quite appropriate. Mistranslations of this kind are common, especially in the Protestant versions of the Bible. Thus Professor Huxley ridiculed the idea of a "whale" swallowing Jonah as a physical impossibility for that kind of fish, not seeming to know that the word "*whale*" is an incorrect rendering of a word which means generally a very large fish. Now geology proves that at the period referred to there were enormous fishes known by the name of plesiosaurus and ichthyosaurus which could have swallowed not only Jonah but Huxley, Darwin and Ingersoll at the same time. Thus does science make fools of scientists. The man who cannot understand that "the bowing of the heavens" is a figurative expression, just as are the expressions so common in the Bible about the "eye" of God and the "hand" of God, must have been "mixing" not light and darkness, like Moses, but his own drinks.

Every one knows that the peculiar hatred of the Mosaic religion was to an anthropomorphic God;

and that all phrases referring to Him as possessing corporeal qualities must be taken in a metaphorical sense. If one were to call Mr. Ingersoll "an ass," for misunderstanding such simple Biblical figures of speech, the dullest wight among the "dug-outs" would not therefore conclude that he had long ears, hoofs instead of feet, and carried a pack-saddle.

Again hear him: "The next thing he (Moses) tells us is that the grass began to grow and the branches of the trees laughed into blossom, and the grass ran up the shoulder of the hills, and yet not a solitary ray of light had left the eternal quiver of the sun. Not a blade of grass had ever been touched by a gleam of light. And I do not think that grass will grow to hurt without a gleam of sunshine. I think the man who wrote that made a mistake." Now Mr. Ingersoll had only to open his eyes and read in Genesis before a word is said of the creation of the grass that God said, "Let there be light and there was light." Light was created therefore before the grass according to Moses, and Mr. Ingersoll does the great lawgiver a gross injustice in thus misquoting him. Why this plain misstatement? Why deceive an audience in this way? Yet this man is continually accusing the clergy of deceiving the people. In the same manner he distorts by an exaggerated literalism many other expressions of the Bible and its recorded miracles, without taking the trouble to read the explanations given of them by learned commentators, who understood the original text, which Mr. Ingersoll does not. He forgets that Moses did not intend to write a geography, a work on botany or astronomy, and that it is unfair to judge his work from these stand-points. Yet, even from a scientific point of

view, the teachings of Moses are every day being more and more vindicated. Science now traces everything back to a beginning beyond which it cannot go, and this beginning is the origin of all things spoken of in the Mosaic narration, "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The heavens are put as created before the earth, just as astronomy tells us;—"the earth was without form and void"—this is the very chaotic state to which geology traces everything in this earth; and mark that the statement is confined to the earth. It is not said that the other planets or the stars were in a chaotic state. Geology further shows that creation was not simultaneous, but progressive, just as Moses beautifully narrates; and it is a creation progressing from the lower to the higher, as geology records. A man writing from mere guess-work would have been most likely to make creation a simultaneous act, and to put man first on the list. Moses does nothing of the sort, and science shows that he is correct. The creation of light before the sun now offers no difficulty to men of science, although it does to Ingersoll. Why, the distinguished geologist, Dana, uses the very fact that light, which covers the associated phenomena of heat and electricity, is said to have existed before the sun shone upon the earth, as a proof of the inspiration of the book of Genesis, on the ground that no one would have guessed what must have seemed so unlikely in an unscientific age. The progress of science confirms daily the truth of the Mosaic narration. Let it be judged fairly and not caricatured by men who abuse their reason to distort the gifts of revelation.

From exaggerating and caricaturing the letter of the Mosaic narration, Mr. Ingersoll proceeds to accuse the

doctrines of Moses. He says that, in the second chapter of Genesis, "God tried to palm off on Adam a beast as his helpmeet." Now, this is a positive untruth, and we find it hard to explain the malice of Mr. Ingersoll's falsehood. Really, why does he hate the Bible and Christianity so much? What has he to give us in their stead? What has any Rationalist ever given us? Voltaire and Rousseau gave us the grossest immorality. The Rationalists of the eighteenth century gave us the horrors of the French revolution—men drinking human gore, women turned into brutes, and a prostitute made the object of human adoration. The Rationalists of the nineteenth century have given us the barbarism of the Parisian commune, burning temples of art and killing, in the name of reason, inoffensive victims. Tom Paine gave us divorce exemplified in his own life. It remains to be seen what Mr. Ingersoll will give us before he dies. So far he has only given us a few written caricatures. Darwin has changed us from Christians into monkeys. Felix Adler and Mr. Frothingham alone have given us something good and innocent. They have given us a *kindergarten*!* Because God caused the *domestic* animals to pass before Adam, it does not follow that He wished him to choose one of them for his helpmeet. Nor does the Bible say that God caused *all* the animals to pass before Adam; nor is this text to be understood as of a passing before him, as sheep pass before the man who counts them as they enter the fold. When the New Testament says "many are called but few are chosen," the many means all mankind; and, in like manner, other texts of the Bible

* See refutation of Frothingham's *Rationalism*, last chapter of this book.

must be explained by their context and sense, not by the mere verbal phraseology, often very unreliable, especially in our English translations. Mr. Ingersoll's literalism of interpretation proves one thing, however. It proves, by a *reductio ad absurdum*, the folly of the system of Protestant private judgment in Biblical investigation, and it is a bitter satire on the first Reformers—Luther, Calvin, and Melancthon—who held that every word, nay, every letter, of the Bible is inspired.

Next, Mr. Ingersoll ridicules the "rib" and the "snake" story, as he calls them. Now, the word "rib" does not correctly render the original Hebrew word, which means side; and there is a beauty in the idea that the body of the wife was formed out of the side of her husband—the side next his heart—out of his flesh and blood—instead of having been formed directly out of the earth, like Adam himself, which a poet like Mr. Ingersoll, who continually vaunts his love for his wife, his respect for women's rights, and his reverence for the domestic virtues, should admire instead of ridiculing. Matthew Henry, quaintly but delightfully, paraphrases the Mosaic account of the formation of Eve in the following words: "Woman was taken out of man—not out of his head to top him, nor out of his feet to be trampled under foot, but out of his side to be equal to him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved." Could not Mr. Ingersoll lift his mind above caricature into the serious consideration of the mystic, spiritual symbolism and real meaning of the formation of Eve out of the side of Adam, instead of indulging in the low cynicism of caricaturing God as holding a "rib" in his hand previous to making the

mother of mankind. Leech, in *Punch*, Nast, in *Harper's Weekly*, or Keppler, in *Puck*, or any comic artist, could caricature better than this. We know how a stroke of the pencil can distort beauty. Hogarth has taught us this. We know how the holiest grief, the sincerest emotion, the sweetest face, may become, under the touch of a clever caricaturist, an object of ridicule and laughter. Mr. Ingersoll is simply an adroit artist in these caricatures. But a man who cannot half appreciate Shakespeare's dramas, but treats all the higher forms of epic art with contempt, as he does in his lecture on Robert Burns, must have necessarily a one-sided mind. He can see only the comic in the grand symbolism of the oldest and most sublime record of the doings of the human race. He would ridicule Niagara Falls, and prefer to them a fall of rain from a spout on the eave of a house; laugh at the grandeur of Alpine scenery, and prefer to it the view of a hencoop, if his anti-religious views were interested in the proceeding.

The serpent, the symbol of cunning in every ancient tongue, is properly the instrument used by the archfiend to tempt the first human pair. And here let me answer Mr. Ingersoll's frequent query: "Why did God make the devil? why did God make hell?" God did not make the devil; the devil made himself. God did not make hell; the devils and bad men made it. God created a noble being whom he endowed with the dignity of free will, and that being abused his free will, did so deliberately, and thus caused sin and evil. God created a human pair whom he endowed with the noblest attribute of all, freedom of the human will, in virtue of which they could merit or demerit, do right or do evil, and

they chose to do evil, and their evil entailed a necessary punishment on themselves and their posterity.

Does Mr. Ingersoll ask why God made the devils or men free? Then I ask him, Would he prefer to have been created a rock, a tree or a brute? None of these is free, and therefore deserves nothing because it can merit nothing. A true Rationalist would recognize the dignity of his freedom of will, an attribute which makes him like unto God, and lifts him immeasurably above the lower kingdoms of creation. He knows that his obedience to law and ethics will be rewarded, and that his offenses against both will be punished, as they deserve to be. He will not reproach God with his own faults, nor blame his just Creator for sending him to a jail which his sins have merited. When we read these attacks of Rationalists upon the restraining influences of Christianity, we are reminded of what the witty author of *Hudibras* tells us of rogues, who when they feel the halter around their necks are sure to upbraid the law that hangs them.* Perhaps Mr. Ingersoll fears the punishment which he knows that he deserves.

God respects the laws of nature. Now we cannot transmit what we have not. By original sin Adam and Eve lost the supernatural order,—in my opinion that is all they did lose. They could not therefore transmit it to their posterity; but they did transmit human nature, a good intelligence and a free will, powerful enough to practice natural virtues and capable of doing good and right. The law of nature is that sick parents will beget sick children; the law of

* "No rogue e'er felt the halter draw
With good opinion of the law."

the state sometimes is that forfeiture of estates for the parents implies forfeiture for the children; yet who will say that this is contrary to natural equity? Mr. Ingersoll, who objects to Almighty God's working a miracle in the interest of revealed truth, should not expect Him to change the laws of nature at every moment, by violating free will, the transmission of disease, or inherited qualities, etc., to suit his rationalistic theories. Nature and the state visit the sins of parents on the children. Mr. Ingersoll believes in both; he holds that the state should punish rebels and confiscate their property, to the detriment of their innocent children. Why, then, withhold this privilege from God, who has supreme dominion over both nature and the state? Besides, it is only in the next life that we shall be able to understand all the reasons of God's acts; they are partially veiled here below.

He next attacks the deluge and the ark; but all geology attests the existence of a partial cataclysm, such as the deluge was.* To suit his purpose Mr. Ingersoll makes the ark very small; while according to Veith and Don. Calmet, both learned scholars, which Mr. Ingersoll is not, Moses makes it a vessel of rectangular form, three stories high, having a capacity of thirty-three thousand, seven hundred and fifty feet; certainly much larger than the "Great Eastern," or any modern man-of-war. It was large enough to hold a great army; quite large enough to hold all the species of life, then extant, not so very numerous when we consider that many of the

* We may remark here that the best Catholic scientists are giving up the idea of a universal deluge.

so-called species of modern times are but modifications of original stock. Nor are we by any means bound to believe that the deluge was universal, save as to mankind; nor does the Bible say that the rain alone caused the deluge, as Mr. Ingersoll falsely asserts. Moses distinctly states that "the fountains of the great deep were broken up;" there was an inundation of the ocean as well as a down-pour of rain. M. Quatrefages, a most eminent French savant, in a recent work, "*L'espèce Humaine*," shows conclusively that the spread of the animal kingdom upon the earth was gradual; just as the fact of the deluge, and the population of the earth after it, suppose.

Mr. Ingersoll blames God as cruel for sending the deluge to destroy wicked men. But his objection proves too much. His God, we suppose, is nature. At times he seems to believe in nature alone, as the cause of all things. But nature kills men. Natural causes destroy them. The lightning strikes innocent cattle, and kills women and children. The sea devours ships. Floods, partial deluges, in the nineteenth century come down from the hills, swell the rivers, drown inoffensive farmers and their flocks. Nature permits railroad accidents, steamboat explosions; cruel nature permits disease, the birth of cripples, and of deaf and dumb and blind children. Cruel, heartless nature sends a famine to the Irish and destroys in one shower of hail the crops of a whole region. Is Mr. Ingersoll's God any better than that of the Christians? Who sends him headaches and the rheumatism? Who sends the measles and the small-pox to his children? Who will finally rob him of his darling wife and leave him, perhaps, a weeping widower, sorrowing and groaning over the

cruelty, ferocity and heartlessness of the goddess whom he worships?—Nature! His argument proves too much; it proves against himself as well as against us. Let him, then, understand that the laws of divine providence are inscrutable to man here below, but that we shall find their explanation in a better world. We have but five senses; if we had a sixth we would understand much more than we do now. We can readily comprehend the possibility of a higher order of intellect than our own, grasping more in its ken and understanding what is to us now but mystery. There are mysteries enough around us to make us realize the narrowness of our vision, the insufficiency of our knowledge. Let us, then, believe and adore, and wait for immortality for a full explanation of the plans, laws and order of the Omnipotent Being who created all things and rules all things by his almighty intellect and will. The inhabitant of Central Africa may not believe in the existence of snow because he never saw it, and cannot understand the theory of its formation. He is like the Rationalist who disbelieves in the supernatural, because he is not God himself. If we believe only what we can perfectly understand we may become like the philosopher Jouffroy, who doubted his own existence.

Again, Mr. Ingersoll shows his dishonesty by taking to the letter the expression of the Bible that God "went down," as it were a staircase, to confound the language of men when they were building the tower of Babel. He is guilty of a folly similar to that of him who would take the expression used of a courageous man that "he is a lion," in its verbal signification. The purity of the Mosaic monotheism is one of its greatest

A fault common to Ingersoll and the other Rationalists is, that they imagine that religious truth progresses in the same way as the natural sciences and arts. They forget that barbarism was not the primeval condition of man, but is a state of degeneracy for him. He was created perfect physically, mentally and morally; but under certain circumstances he has and he will degenerate in those three points of view. To suppose that the first form of religious worship was fetishism, from which men developed upward into monotheism, is to belie all authentic history. Consequently when, in his lecture on "*Skulls*," he traces the progress of the arts from the "dug-out" to the man of war, from the wooden to the iron plow, from the boomerang to the rifled cannon, etc., and concludes that religious progress must be of the same character, he is grossly in error. There is no progress in the principles of mathematics, though there may be development in their application to the arts. Two and two made four, and the sum of the three angles of a right-angled triangle was equal to two right angles on creation's dawn as well as in the nineteenth century. So is it with the eternal principles of religion, law and ethics, the unity of God, the principles of equity, and of morality. They are, like God, immutable. Mental philosophy has made no essential progress in centuries. It may change its form but not its substance. The religion of Adam is the same in essence as ours. He was the first Catholic. Just as in the Catholic Church the definition of a new dogma is not the declaration of a novelty, but merely the accidental development of original revelation, so in the history of the race, every new manifestation of the divine mind has been but a fuller explanation of the original revelation made to

Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Nor has the development of "skulls" been such as Mr. Ingersoll, with the phrenologists, states. There are individuals, indeed, whose skulls physically bear relation to their mental condition. There is some truth in phrenology. But the law of progress is not uniform in this respect. Adam, Noe, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and the Hebrew race in general, thousands of years ago, had finer shaped heads than Mr. Ingersoll; and he has a fine one. But we have seen men in our own age with foreheads as large as the tailboard of a boulevard cart, and yet there was nothing behind them save what we generally find in such conveyances—Dirt!

Another common difficulty of the Rationalists is that they cannot understand the meaning of the crimes and follies of men recorded in the Bible. The Pentateuch is full of such iniquities; for it is a history of the weaknesses as well as of the virtues of the first men, both presented to us for our good, to teach us how weak we are, and how bad we may become without the continual help of our Almighty Creator. But with all its sins, how nobler the Jewish race was than the pagan nations of antiquity! Read Juvenal, read Tacitus, and compare.

We have already pointed out the fact that every argument made against the God of the Christians can be turned against the divinity which the Rationalists worship. We have already shown this in the case of the worship of nature. And so when Mr. Ingersoll seems, in his lecture on "*Skulls*," to worship the sun, we ask, how can he adore that cruel deity which kills men by the arrows of its rays, creates malaria and fever, evokes from mother earth the germs of plagues

and diseases, and sends them on the wings of its messengers, the winds, to torture and destroy innocent men and the inoffending beasts of the field? Its cruelty extends even to the vegetable kingdom, which it often scorches up and destroys. So much for Ingersoll's substitutes for the God of Hebrews and Christians.

How much more rational is the Christian explanation of human afflictions, even of the snakes sent to punish the Israelites in the desert; that all comes from the hand of a good Father who sends these trials for our conversion, purification, and preparation for a better world of endless bliss hereafter. But Mr. Ingersoll cannot understand the beautiful mysticism, the holy asceticism of the Christian faith, and the supreme happiness of those who practice its precepts! He is a coarse man of strong animal instincts; and his philosophy is animal and superficial. A good square meal, a bottle of wine, a wife, if she is healthy, and children if they are not teething, and have not the measles—that's his religion, as he tells us at the end of his "caricatures" of Moses, quoting the words of Robert Burns:

" To make a happy fireside clime
To weans and wife—
That's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life."

The poor drunken gauger who wrote these lines unfortunately showed by his own debaucheries that it is impossible to make home happy without the practice and restraining influences of the Christian religion. Mr. Ingersoll quotes from a bad example. In fact, in his treatise on "*Skulls*," he teaches that children should

lie, and not be punished for it. This Rationalism verifies the old story of Horace's monster:

" Mulied formosa desuper
Desinit forma piscina."

The tail betrays the character of the head.

It would be an endless task to correct all the caricatures of Mr. Ingersoll's "*Mistakes of Moses*." He tells us that Moses forbade the making of images, and thus killed art in Palestine; whereas Moses only forbade the making of images so as to adore or serve them. The tabernacle had images of seraphim on it. He says that Moses teaches that labor is a curse, whereas Moses teaches that labor is a blessing, and that it is *hard* labor which is the curse. And is not *hard* labor a curse? He says that Moses despises woman because he gives no account of the death of Eve. This would prove that Moses despises Adam also, because he gives no account of his burial. *Quod nimis probat nihil probat*. The truth is that the first account of a burial in the Pentateuch is that of a woman, Abraham's wife, Sarah.

But "polygamy?" says Ingersoll. Well, polygamy is not contrary to the law of nature, though it is contrary to the Christian law, and, judging the institution as tolerated under the Mosaic law, it was far purer than among the surrounding nations. We must judge men by the times in which they lived. This sentimentality and gush about the dignity of woman are insincere on the part of the Rationalists. Christianity alone has elevated woman, while Rationalism has degraded her. The Goddess of Reason stamps infamy on their record, and there is hardly a man of them but has turned out to be a practical polygamist in the end. Tom Paine,

for instance; Rousseau, for instance; Voltaire, for instance; and—the list is not yet complete.

Neither is slavery contrary to the natural law, although it is contrary to the spirit of Christianity. Slavery under the Hebrew law was by no means so severe as under the pagan institutions, even of cultivated nations as Greece and Rome. Instead of blaming Moses, therefore, for tolerating it, he should be praised for ameliorating the condition of a class everywhere else degraded to the condition of beasts, and for improving on an institution universal in his time. "Gush" and sentimentality about slavery, polygamy, and the rights of women is the stock in trade of these Rationalists. Common sense and reason, although they often quote them, are by them seldom applied to the solution of social questions. It was Moses who wrote: "*Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of the strangers that are in the land; at his day thou shalt give him his hire; neither shall the sun go down upon it, for he is poor and setteth his heart upon it.*" This is the genuine religion of humanity which Ingersoll talks about, but which the Hebrews were obliged by the law of Moses to practice. "If a man shall steal an ox or a sheep, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep." "Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small; but thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have; for all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the Lord thy God.

"Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger as for one of your own country, for I am the Lord your God." When a man harvested, the Mosaic

law forbade him to reap the corners of his field, or to gather up the gleanings, and if he forgot a sheaf and left it in the field he must not go again and fetch it. "Thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger." In time of war the Jews were forbidden to cut down the fruit-trees in the enemy's country. Death was the punishment for adultery. Rationalism legalizes adultery by admitting divorce. Ruth, Anna, the mother of Samuel, Miriam, the sister of Moses, a prophetess, and the skillful women who helped to make the tent which afterwards became the tabernacle prove that Ingersoll calumniates Moses when he says that the Hebrew law degraded woman. Had Mr. Ingersoll lived in the time of Moses, could he have made better laws? He says he could "'beat' the ten commandments." Who has ever improved on them? Perhaps he could "beat" the Lord's Prayer also; in fact, he thinks he could improve the whole of creation, if he had only been consulted about the work. As Horace says, "he would sweat much and labor in vain."

How can he call the God of the Pentateuch a cruel God after reading this passage? "The Lord; the Lord God, *merciful and gracious, patient and of much compassion* and true; who keepest mercy unto thousands; who takest away iniquity, and wickedness and sin" (Exodus, ch. xxxiv, verses 6 and 7).

Mr. Ingersoll believes in extirpating Mormonism and human slavery by force. Doubtless he believes that the State should hang murderers. Why, then, blame the Almighty for extirpating sodomites, murderers, nations addicted to bestiality, slaughtering their own children on altars to Moloch, and adoring Astaroth, the idol of the lowest form of sensual worship? Was

it not a blessing for the world to have such human monsters extirpated by the brave warriors of Sion, who carried pure civilization and pure religion at the point of their swords? Why, then, call God cruel for extirpating gross crime and bestial criminals by force, by the force of Hebrew arms? Why does Mr. Ingersoll blame the Almighty for telling the Jews to punish idolaters; when Mr. Ingersoll himself, false to his theories about religious liberty, insists on punishing Mormons, and distinctly states that if he had the power he would prevent young women from going into convents to satisfy the desires of their pure conscience? Is not this a violation of the principles of religious liberty?

The rest of Mr. Ingersoll's caricatures do not affect a Catholic. They fall harmless at the feet of the Catholic Church; though we must confess that a Protestant cannot answer him. He has destroyed Puritanism and Presbyterianism. He has shown that the theory of the Bible and the Bible alone, as the rule of faith is absurd; that the theory of private interpretation is a farce; that the Calvinistic doctrine of total depravity and predestination are infamous, and that the God of Calvin's system is an unjust tyrant. But his attacks do not generally affect the Catholic Church. She admits that the Bible is very, very hard to understand, and that the unstable wrest it to their own destruction. She admits that her own ablest theologians and commentators often disagree about the explanation of its texts. She seldom speaks authoritatively on any one of them; if, therefore, some reader of Paine or Ingersoll should be puzzled for an answer to some special objection made against a text, he should consult her learned commentators. They will

answer all difficulties. If they disagree, a Catholic is free to elect any explanation he may find satisfactory, provided he be ready to admit that the only authoritative decision is that of the Church herself. She is the judge of the code, unerring and infallible. The Catholic may feel certain that every one of those objections to biblical facts and doctrines is stale, and has been repeatedly answered. He has but to consult and he will find the solution. Not so poor Protestant believers in biblical inspiration left to their own weak light. They cannot answer aggressive Rationalism; their religious convictions fall an easy prey to the scoffer. His ridicule has penetrated the school-house and corrupted the teachers; the counting-house of the merchant; the office of the lawyer, the physician, and the editor; the shop and factory of the artisan, and the cottage of the farmer, and the result is seen in the crowded audiences that nightly greet him with laughter and applause in every city and town in which he attacks Christianity. New England, once the home of orthodox Calvinism, has gone over to him. The West is with him, in fact, the educated mind of young Protestantism everywhere in this land is with him; and the few old orthodox believers that remain in the sects can but hoot out their unheeded protests, like midnight owls seated among the ivy of a ruined castle. Will they not learn at last that their Christianity can be saved only by a return to the old fortress?

CHAPTER VII.

THE RATIONALISM OF REV. O. B. FROTHINGHAM AND DR.
FELIX ADLER.

Besides Paine and Ingersoll there are other prominent American rationalists of a milder type and a politer style. One of them is Dr. Felix Adler, a popular young preacher of Hebrew origin and unorthodox views. He gives ethical lectures in a hall in New York, and hates a dogma as a bull does a red rag. He completely discards the literalism of the orthodox Hebrews, many of whom he has influenced, and professes to believe in natural morality alone. A number of very intelligent people go to hear him preach every Sunday, and his popularity has increased to such an extent that he is supplanting his former leader, the Rev. O. B. Frothingham,* who has retired from the field.

Mr. Adler does not seem to understand that you can build no true ethical system on erroneous principles, especially when they have no proper sanction. The false necessarily tends to the vicious. The false is the

* The doctrines of these gentlemen will be found in Dr. Felix Adler's sermons, published in the New York papers, and in Frothingham's writings, "*The Holy Ghost, Lord and Giver of Life*," published by D. G. Francis, New York; "*Proceedings at a Reception in Honor of the Rev. O. B. Frothingham*," given by the Independent Liberal Church in New York, published by G. P. Putnam's Sons; "*Farewell Sermon*" of the same, delivered April 27, 1879, published by the same.

immoral of the intellect leading to the vicious, which is the immoral of the will. When Rationalists, therefore, become unethical it is *in consequence* of, while when Christians fall, it is *in spite of*, their principles. The Christian—and when I say Christian I mean Jew also, for the Jew is but an undeveloped Christian—has always the means of reform in his good principles, which have an authoritative sanction in his faith; the Rationalist has not, for he is anchorless and rudderless. He has but a vacillating opinion, or the opinion of a man like himself to rest upon. The ethical degeneracy of those brought up in a Christian church or school is mainly the result of human weakness. It is often *corruptio optimi pessima*, I admit. But the moral forces can be rallied; reform can be effected so long as faith in Christian principles remains intact. But how can you reform society that has no fixed principles or belief—no real moral law? Now what Rationalist dare impose a law or a system on another? What sanction can he give his system?

Rev. Mr. Frothingham is the Melancthon of American Rationalism. He is sweet-tempered, not sarcastical. He is poetical and moderate. He is laudatory, not vituperative like Mr. Ingersoll nor dull like Paine, and although he may not be more gifted than Dr. Adler, still his words will always carry greater weight, owing to his mildness and modesty. Indeed, Dr. Frothingham has quite a respectable following in New York, and some Catholic gentlemen who know him, and who from motives of curiosity have attended some of his lectures, express themselves as much pleased with his tone and manner, especially in treating Catholic subjects. In what we are about to write we shall, there-

fore, dwell principally upon that form of Rationalism to be found in the teachings of Mr. Frothingham, because they contain all that may be found in Dr. Adler's sermons.

That Mr. Frothingham has a numerous and respectable following is proved by the names of those who were present when he gave his farewell sermon in the Union League theatre in this city. We find that upon that occasion rationalistic addresses were made by the Hon. Frank Fuller, George Haven Putnam, George William Curtis, Dr. Felix Adler, the Rev. John W. Chadwick, Colonel Thomas W. Higginson, Edmund C. Stedman, the Rev. Samuel Longfellow, the Rev. Joseph May; while congratulatory letters were sent by Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Lloyd Garrison, George Ripley, Oliver Wendell Holmes, the Rev. Charles G. Ames, the Rev. Samuel Johnson, Joseph H. Choate, and the Rev. William J. Potter. Certainly here are numerous and respectable names enough of men distinguished in all the walks of life and letters. And who were in the audience? Can any orthodox preacher in the country point to so distinguished a class of parishioners as those whose names are printed on pages 8 and 9 of the "Proceedings at a Reception in Honor of the Rev. O. B. Frothingham"? Bankers, brokers, merchants, lawyers, and men of letters were all there.

Now what is the charm in the doctrines of this rationalistic leader which brings to him the sympathy and co-operation of so distinguished a following? This is the question which naturally presents itself. It will be best answered by a manifestation of what his teaching is. In order to find this out, after reading his works, we proposed a certain number of queries to

a clever gentleman who had many opportunities of knowing and hearing Mr. Frothingham, and the following were his answers:

1st. "I do not think that he admits of a supernatural order in the sense of theologians. He believes in God, and that is about as much as I ever heard him say about God. He impresses me as not believing in prayer or grace, or other than natural means in aid of human progress and man's happiness."

2d. "He does believe in the freedom of the human will most emphatically. His great argument has been to teach men self-reliance and independence, and the efficacy of their own powers. In other words, he is a Pelagian and not a Calvinist."

3d. "His rule of ethics is not the Ten Commandments alone, but all that is good, and true, and noble, from whatever source it may come. The leading feature of his teaching has been to insist on the dignity and power of the *individual* man, denying all church authority and all priestly power.

"I don't think Mr. Frothingham can be properly said to have a system. He never assumes the rôle of a master. He prefers that of an eloquent literary gentleman."

If he has any system, it is "the rejection of all creeds and all church authority, so that he stands on human and individual intelligence. In a word, it is the supremacy of the individual instead of the supremacy of the Church. He says beautiful things of the Church, admires its beautiful symbolism, but considers it all poetry."

This analysis of the doctrine of Mr. Frothingham chimes exactly with his public sayings. Thus we read

that on one occasion he said: "It is a great mistake to suppose that the Church of Rome alone represents the idea of ecclesiastical authority. There has been no despot of a spirit more despotic than Luther and Calvin. Had Martin Luther ever dreamed that in the course of time men would come to appeal to him as being the personification of intellectual liberty, he would have burned his books and gone back into the arms of the old Church which he had left."

The by-laws of the Third Congregational Unitarian Church, which were prepared by a committee of which Mr. Frothingham was the most influential member some four years ago, contain the following passage in section 4: "It is expressly understood that no subscription or assent to any covenant or formula of faith shall be required of any member of this society." The society accepts "neither church nor Scripture as arbitrators of belief," but freely "judging both by enlightened reason, carry their appeal to knowledge, experience, and the primary laws of the human mind, as revealed by science and philosophy wisely interpreted." "The two Protestant sacraments, communion and baptism, have from the beginning been omitted, for the reason that they were so closely, habitually, and universally associated with the older faith as to be valueless for practical benefit, and it has never been possible to devise substitutes for them. The ceremony of christening, or the dedication of childhood, as a social right of poetic significance, is performed by the pastor when requested." This is homœopathic infidelity.

An epitome of this pure Rationalism would be, that as every man's house is his own castle, so every man's hat should be his own church steeple. This Paine and

Ingersoll assert, this Dr. Adler preaches, and this is the burden of all the speakers' remarks at the reception given to Dr. Frothingham prior to his departure on a European tour. But let us see what he has to say for himself in his own account of "twenty years of an independent ministry," which is printed as an appendix to the "Proceedings," etc.

In this interesting report he tells us that he "had been and was a believer in the spiritual philosophy—was what was in New England called a Transcendentalist"—of the school of Theodore Parker. This was twenty years ago. But he had always "found fault with the theology of Unitarianism as being fluctuating, uncertain, and vague." Thus "he found fault with the Unitarian doctrine in respect to the unity of God." Here Mr. Frothingham is not clear, and seems to be a Pantheist. He writes that Unitarianism "had asserted until it was out of breath that God was numerically one and not numerically three; but that God was one, that there was but one Spirit ruling, pervading, and regenerating the world—a spirit of art, of beauty, of intelligence, of heroic will, of aspiration, of progress, had never been apprehended—but one Spirit, omniscient, omnipotent, ever present," etc. Is this a denial of the personality of God? Is it a revival of the old pantheistic error that God is the *spiritus mundi*? From a comparison with other passages in Mr. Frothingham's writings the inference seems to be legitimate that he is a Pantheist; yet few things are certain in his system. He is so undogmatic.

Mr. Frothingham, like "Endymion," denies the existence of a personal devil.* He denies the Unitarian doc-

* Proceedings, etc., p. 74.

trine that Christ is a deified man, and makes him a mere ordinary sinner.* He maintains man's immunity from original sin.† Thus cutting loose from even orthodox Unitarianism, if it be not a contradiction in terms to apply that epithet to the system, "for the last ten years and more this ministry has been a purely *independent* ministry, connected with no sect, associated with no denomination, but simply conditioned on fidelity to the principles of free speech and free thought in all questions that concern religion."‡ He seems to hold that even the unity of the Supreme Being cannot be proved by reason; for he says: § "The Unitarianism of a generation ago never voiced itself clearly on this great article of the unity of God. We do not comprehend it now. Science is throwing light upon it; philosophy is helping us to interpret it; the advance of the human mind is unfolding it, and we see its separate bearings. But it is only through imagination; it is only through faith and hope that we can really rest in a doctrine the deepest, the highest, the noblest, the sweetest," etc. ||

Those who desire to see a specimen of Mr. Frothingham's best style should read his sermon on "The Holy Ghost, Lord and Giver of Life." In this discourse he takes for text the article of the creed, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," and asserts that He is not a person at all, but merely a poetical personification of air, light, and love. The grace of his poetic style is only equaled by

* Proceedings, pp. 75, 76.

† Idem, pp. 76, 77.

‡ Proceedings, etc., p. 77.

§ Proceedings, etc., p. 75.

|| Id. p. 75.

the self-complacent assumption of that which he does not even undertake to prove. The Holy Ghost, according to him, is air, light, and love, and it would be absurd to hold a contrary opinion! Indeed, a distinguishing trait in all these leading Rationalists is the absolute disdain with which they treat all the dogmas of orthodoxy. They are treated as if they were beneath the dignity of an investigation, although the fact that men of brains do believe those dogmas should entitle them to some respect. In this regard they are entirely different from the old Rationalists, who tried to prove their theories by arguments from reason and authority.

But we are growing prolix in making this expose of his Rationalism. Let us now proceed to show some of its defects.

We certainly agree with him in his rejection of the horrible Calvinistic doctrine of total depravity. We can readily understand the reaction that set in, in New England, from the days of Channing, Edwards, and Parker, against the old Calvinistic creed and its detestable estimate of human and the divine nature. We can sympathize with Ingersoll's denunciation of it, and pity him and others whom it has made infidels by the very force of mental reaction. No doctrine has done more to make men unbelievers in this country than Calvin's theory of predestination, and if to-day the country is full of spiritual "tramps," who have left the Christian sects and are roaming about with no fixed religious principles, and if the taint of rationalistic unbelief is on the best minds and on the press of the country, Calvinism is chiefly to blame for it. We have already said that the Catholic Church teaches that the human will is free; that man's nature is not

depraved even by the fall, and that no man will be damned save by his own free act. In the assertion of these fundamental doctrines we are one with all true Rationalists. The Catholic Church teaches that there are natural virtues, and that human reason is capable of knowing by its own force the fundamental truths of God's existence, providence, and the immortality of the human soul. To hold the contrary opinion is to be a heretic.

We further agree with the Rationalists,* "that Protestantism is at best a bundle of complicated sects." "It is simply a conglomeration of various interpretations of Scripture. It is nothing more than a misrepresented Bible. Protestantism is only three hundred years old. It is a schism, a departure from the old Church, and it owes the savor of its piety, its nobleness, its grandeur, its sincerity, to the ages that lay behind it in the old Church, from which it came. Protestantism has two fatal weaknesses—all Protestantism, every form of Protestantism—from that of Calvin to that of Channing and Buckminster. It builds on the Bible. Its foundations are a book. It constructs all its ideas upon a more or less shadowy theory of an inspired letter—a book that for the last hundred years has been open to the assaults of learning, knowledge, criticism, and scholarship, which have riddled it through and through so completely that we are not sure of the genuineness of a single chapter of it."

"Another fatal weakness of Protestantism is that it is neither of the old nor of the new. The past and future struggle in its bosom, as they have struggled from the beginning. It gave out that it had faith in

* Proceedings, etc., p. 83.

reason, in free thought, but it stopped. It never practiced reason; it never believed in free thought. It has set up an iron-bound creed, and it has denounced science, and philosophy, and learning, just as vigorously and absolutely as if it had stated all these things and knew what they meant. Tradition and truth, authority and liberty, law and progress, the reign of the idea and the reign of the creed, have lain side by side unreconciled in its mind. These two powers are tearing Protestantism to pieces. They are always struggling together visibly every Sunday."*

This is better said than we could have said it. Mr. Frothingham should have added that he himself and other Rationalists are the only true Protestants. Once admit the principle of private judgment in religious matters, and pure INDIVIDUALISM must be the logical consequence. The very charge of uncertainty, wavering, and doubt, which he brings against Protestantism, is found in the answers written to Ingersoll's *Mistakes of Moses* by such eminent Protestants as Professor Swing, Dr. Ryder, Dr. Herford, and Dr. Gibson. They are apologetic, timid, and vacillating. The only writer who answers the arch-Rationalist with firmness and logic is the Jewish Rabbi Wise. No Protestant can answer a Rationalist unless by falling back on the Catholic Church or the Jewish synagogue.

INDIVIDUALISM is, therefore, the logical outcome of Protestantism, and individualism is pure Rationalism. But is Mr. Frothingham content with his own system? He is not. After "twenty years of an independent ministry" what have he and his colleagues done for

* Proceedings, pp. 84, 85.

the amelioration of the human race, for lifting it up and making it more intelligent and moral than Catholic Christianity makes it? "The Society for Ethical Culture in New York establishes and conducts a kindergarten for poor children, institutes a workingman's lyceum, and offers lectures weekly during the winter by able men, who speak to the working people directly, as man speaks to man."* We do not like to laugh at an honest and benevolent gentleman. But really is there not something ridiculous in this statement, that after twenty years of an apostleship, instead of founding churches, schools, and orphan asylums, and preaching the Gospel daily to the poor "as man speaks to man," as the Christians have done, and are doing daily, all that the new Messiah and his followers have accomplished is the establishment of a "kindergarten!" Is Mr. Frothingham content with his INDIVIDUALISM? No! After "twenty years" of laboring in its propaganda, he writes: "To-day, as it seems to me, the last word of dogmatic individualism is spoken from this place." "We must have intelligent *organization*."† Then why not take the Catholic *organization*, since you have shown that the Protestant one is defective? Why are you discontented with "Individualism?" Because, "when individualism becomes rough, and rude, and contumacious; when vagaries, and whims, and notions calling themselves inspired, and a coarse kind of self-assertion take possession of the holy place and utter their diatribes in the name of prophecy, then individualism becomes questionable. Then a destructive

* Proceedings, p. 65.

† Id. p. 87.

process begins. Then institutions are assailed in an intemperate spirit. Then the great creeds of the world are assailed by vulgar hands, are pulled down in promiscuous ruins, never to be built up again."* But what logic is this? What a religion is this? A logic for gentlemen, but not to be applied by *sans-culottes*. Who will prevent your refined individualism from becoming *sans-culottism*? How can that be religious truth which is not of universal application? How can that be an ethical system which will hold good only in the case of fine ladies and gentlemen, but must never be applied by peasants and washerwomen? Can Dr. Adler tell us what is there in the Society for Ethical Culture, what principle of authority to prevent its *individualism* from becoming "rude" and "vulgar"? As I write there lie before me on the table three copies of a Parisian weekly print, which practically refutes the whole system of this refined *individualism*. They are editions of *La Lanterne de Boquillon*, par A. Humbert; low, vile, immoral, and communistic publications, yet circulated and read by thousands in civilized France. They are the logical outcome of refined individualism, as it is the logical outcome of Protestantism. Communism, free love, and Mormonism, are the natural children of individualism, and it will not do for these refined gentlemen Rationalists to deny the paternity of their own offspring.

The *reductio ad absurdum* is a most powerful argument against the theory of individualism. Let the theory be applied to the poor, the ignorant, to the dull, and stupid, who form the majority of the human race, and how will it work? A system which would make only a few

* Proceedings, 79.

enlightened gentlemen the predestined inheritors of truth and morality is as bad as Calvinism, which damns the greatest portion of mankind without their fault, and makes the elect a select few without any merits. A creed to be true, to be of God, must be as universal as his paternity, and as he is the loving father of all, in all times and stages of civilization, it must make no exception in its application between learned and unlearned, between genius and natural stupidity. The blockhead and the boor have as much right to the means of salvation as the man of refinement, or he who, clothed in purple and fine linen, discusses metaphysics in the hall of the Society of Ethical Culture.

Ride at five o'clock in the evening, in these lovely autumn days, along the avenues that lead from this region* to the Central Park, and you will meet two processions, one a long line of carriages, with well-conditioned horses, carrying the wealth and luxury of the city out for the fresh country air; the other a line of ill-clad laborers, tired after the day's toil, carrying the implements of their work, their spades, shovels, and pickaxes home to their hovels. Stop them on the road and let Mr. Frothingham, Mr. Ingersoll, Dr. Adler, or any other member of the Society of Ethical Culture preach to them. The line of carriages may move home, their inmates finding comfort in the doctrines which at leisure they may discuss over the sparkling champagne and the dessert. But how will the others act if they be converted to the views of the refined orators? Let

* To the reader who is not a New Yorker, we may say that it is the custom of the fashionable portion of the citizens to drive out on the upper boulevards in the early evening in fine weather. The two processions alluded to are interesting studies.

these laborers but once believe that there is nothing true in Christianity, that each man must be his own church, that the self-sacrificing life of Christ is a myth and he an impostor, that there is no place of future punishment for evil deeds, or of reward for good ones, and what will become of these poor hardworking men? You will turn them into wild beasts. Their pickaxes and spades will become daggers to stab the rich, and the community will become a prey to human savages with unchained passions and unbridled lusts. This is the logical consequence of individualism. How can a system be good or true which logically leads to disorder and excess?

But let us show the fallacy of Rationalism from higher ground. That reason is self-sufficient in all things, especially in all matters of religious truth, is an untenable proposition, for whose complete refutation I send Dr. Adler and the Society of Ethical Culture back to an abler man than Parker, Channing, or Emerson, although he lived in the thirteenth century. I mean the greatest genius of Christianity, Thomas Aquinas. These gentlemen who dabble in metaphysics know not how much they lose by neglecting to read, I shall not say his immortal *Summa Theologica*, but his equally excellent though shorter work the *Summa Contra Gentiles*.* They would learn from its perusal, not the graces of style which they do not need, but how to reason logically and soundly, which they certainly lack.

How different in method is the inquiry into the perception of the infinite by natural reason in the

* What scholar will give us a good English translation of this work?

modern work of Max Müller, who may be called the Moses of Adler and Frothingham, and the more ancient composition of the Angelic Doctor. Muller mopes through Sanscrit roots, fetishes or *gru-grus*, through the Vedas and Upanishads in quest of the infinite. He reminds one of a man following a marsh-light through a bog in which pitfalls abound. He is not certain. His science of language is not yet perfect. He has a number of facts from which he deduces probable conclusions, but not certainties. "I thought it right to warn you again and again," he writes towards the conclusion of his work, "against supposing that the foundations which we discovered beneath the oldest Indian temples must be the same for all temples erected by human hands. In concluding I must do so once more.

"No doubt the solid rock, the human heart, must be the same everywhere; some of the pillars even, and the ancient vaults may be the same everywhere, wherever there is religion, faith, or worship.

"But beyond this we must not go, at least for the present." * * * "I hope * * that the science of religion, which at present is *but a desire and a seed*, will in time become a fulfillment and a plenteous harvest," *

Thus the result of all his erudition, of all his research, is that he is certain of nothing in regard to the origin of religion or the perception of the infinite. Thus the erudite meets the speculative Rationalist on the same shaky ground. Max Müller can find no *δὸς πού στῶ*

* The Origin and Growth of Religion, p. 363. Published by Charles Scribners' Sons. This work of Müller is the fountain of that form of Rationalism, which has arisen from the study of the ancient languages and their oldest religious works the *Vedas*, *Avesta*, etc. Adler and Frothingham have drunk copious draughts from it.

any more than Mr. Frothingham or Archimedes. Reason let loose from the control of the supernatural, like the bird of good omen which flew from the ark, finds no rest for the sole of her foot till she returns to the bosom of the infallible Church.

But let us hear St. Thomas: "A wise man," says he, "is one who directs all things to his last end." This end is the good and stimulus of the intellect, that is, *Truth*. Wisdom, therefore, consists in considering truth and meditating on it! * But truth concerning God is twofold. Some things reason knows by its own force, and some things it is unable to know unless it be assisted. We know that God is and that he is one; but we do not know his inner nature. Yet it is quite proper that even things which we know by the natural light of reason should be made articles of our faith for the following reasons: † Because few men take the trouble to investigate truth. Some are prevented by natural stupidity, so that without aid they could not understand even simple things; others are impeded by their business avocations from spending the necessary time in the investigation of truth; while others are prevented by indolence. Much labor and time are required, and few are willing to give them. We find children unwilling to study a simple catechism. Therefore it would not be kind or paternal on the part of God to leave each individual to himself to find out the truth, especially that which concerns his immortal destiny. Unless the knowledge of even simple truths had been made easy for mankind by the teaching of author-

* Summa Contra Gentiles, caput i., *passim*.

† Id. caput i., ii., iii., and iv.

ized masters, most men would remain in profound ignorance, since the knowledge of God, which makes men especially perfect and good, would be obtained only by a few cultivated minds, and by these only after a long period of time and hard study. The weak-minded, left to their own resources would know nothing.

Moreover error is continually mixed up in human investigations, on account of the weakness of the human intellect and the intermingling of *phantasms* with our judgments.* And, therefore, many would remain in doubt concerning those things even which had been truly demonstrated, because they could not understand the force of the demonstration, especially since they would see contrary things taught by so-called philosophers. Besides, sometimes that which is false and not probable is mixed up with many things that are true and that have been properly demonstrated, the error depending upon some probable or sophistical reason which passes frequently for a demonstration. It requires a strong, clear intellect, which only the few possess, to sift truth from error.

Divine clemency has, therefore, wisely provided that in order to give us absolute certainty and make the paths of truth easy for us, many truths of reason should at the same time become articles of faith. St. Paul taught this truth before St. Thomas, when he wrote: "This, then, I say and testify in the Lord, that henceforth ye walk not as also the Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding obscured with darkness." †

* Summa Contra Gentiles, caput iv.

† Ephes., iv. 17.

As we are not giving a mere school refutation of Rationalism or Individualism, the reader will not expect us to give him a long paraphrase of the Angelic Doctor's masterly arguments on the subject. If it is necessary for the great majority of mankind that even simple truths should be revealed to them by teaching, and that after such revelation many of them still remain hopelessly ignorant, it must follow, *a fortiori*, that revelation is necessary in the case of the more sublime and abstruse truths, some of which, as we know by experience, are above the natural grasp of even such minds as that of Plato and Socrates in the past, and transcend the genius of discordant American Transcendentalists in the present. A Rationalist who must admit that he never saw a substance, and that he does not understand its nature; that he cannot comprehend the relation between cause and effect; between the laying of the egg and the hatching of the bird; the planting of the seed and the uprising of the stalk, or the action of his own will upon the nerves and muscles of his body, should learn to be humble in the investigation of higher truths and higher forms of being and of life, such as the mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation, and the sacramental system of the Christian Church. *Scrutator majestatis opprimetur gloria.*

In fine, let us say that the lesson of humility, and there is such a thing as even natural humility, is what Rationalists need to learn. The refutation of their system from the moral standpoint is most striking. If they were but honest they would admit that there is nothing in their system of the all-sufficiency of human reason that will make the individual curb his evil passions, and that in their own case the system of

natural ethics is an ethical failure. That they may not be public rogues or malefactors we are willing to admit. Few men are, even among the fetish worshippers of Africa. But are there no vices but these atrocious ones? Let us take up the "Examination of Conscience" as we find it in any Catholic prayer-book, and ask the respectable gentlemen who form the *clientèle* of Dr. Adler or Dr. Frothingham to study the list of sins in it. We pass by, through courtesy, the grosser offenses and sins of act. But how is it with regard to all those internal imperfections of the mind, sins of envy, jealousy, vanity, rash judgment; interior sins against charity and purity? Will reason alone suffice to conquer them? What remedy will the "Society for Ethical Culture," with its "kindergarten," apply to them? It tells us to be respectable and refined; to be gentlemen of culture, to admire works of art and the beauties of nature; to be good, honest, honorable and truthful; but what means does it give us to enable us to be all that it desires? None but nature and reason. But experience—the experience of every honest man—shows that they are not sufficient, and this experience is more powerful than all the syllogisms of the school.

Do these gentlemen Rationalists expect us to make an act of faith in their sanctity while the hermits, anchorites, confessors and martyrs of the Catholic Church who had besides the advantages of nature all the auxiliaries of grace, who did violence to their appetites, and who practiced every species of mortification, attest that they found it at times exceedingly difficult to control their passions? The Society of Ethical Culture may preach morality; but experience, the best teacher, proves that in the end its morality will be

Spartan, its only crime discovery. The most refined Rationalism, as history attests, by the contrary of the Darwinian theory of Evolution, does not terminate even in a Brahmanic or Buddhist state of ecstasy, but degenerates into individual *sans-cullotism*. How different the result of faith in the true and full supernatural; a faith which has produced the sublime doctrinal asceticism of St. Paul, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Theresa, Tauler and Blessed Henry Suso—whose works, by the way, we advise our refined Rationalists to read. The practical fruit of this faith is the grand army of canonized apostles, self-sacrificing confessors, dauntless martyrs and white robed-virgins, whose names emblazon the pages of the Church calendar and who are the glory and models of the human race.*

* The most extraordinary record of human intelligence and virtue, of virtues which even the Rationalists admire—such as philanthropy, benevolence, self-sacrifice for the good of others—is the Hollandist "Lives of the Saints." It makes a history of fifty-five volumes in folio, and the admirers of reason should note that there is not one St. Blockhead among the number of those models and benefactors of mankind.

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