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# BLASPHEMIA:

A METRICAL ESSAY.

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## BLASPHEMIA.

What time the judges and the servile mob  
Of Athens, moved by superstitious hate,  
Compelled the wise and virtuous Socrates  
To drink the fatal bane, the imputed crime,  
For which he thus unjustly suffered death,  
Was blasphemy against the Grecian gods;  
A crime extinct, or all are criminals,  
Since Jupiter, Apollo, and the rest  
Of that divine assembly are, in these  
"Our more enlightened days," by all blasphemed.

For many nations, swayed by antique Rome,  
And still, in her decadence, following her,  
Have changed their deities, and worship, now,  
The Jove who haunts the rock of Sinai,  
Rejecting him who, on the Olympian mount,  
Once reigned supreme o'er all the lesser gods:  
The heavenly father and the sovereign lord  
Of that heroic race of men which stands  
Superlative, in olden history.

And banished too, or but retained by name,  
To mark our weekly days, are Thor, the son  
Of Odin, and the other deities  
Of Scandinavian birth; but, yet, from them  
The Teutons and the Saxons derivate  
The Pagan title which, in spite of all  
Our borrowed Judaism, still maintains  
Its ground against the very ELOUHIM  
Of Moses and of Christ.\* In fine, throughout  
The land called Christendom, this Hebrew name  
Is never uttered, and the terms in vogue,  
Profane and heathenish, although they be,  
Are DIO, DIOS, DIEU, GOTT, and GOD.

In records, said to be divine, and known  
To be inscribed in that same tongue, wherein  
The Greeks to their almighty Zeus prayed,  
We come to Jesus, from whose history  
We learn that when he claimed identity  
With his celestial parent, named by Jews:  
"Jehovah, Lord of Hosts," and "Man of War,"  
The wrathful zealots of the chosen race  
Took stones to stone him, as of old they stoned  
To death, the impious wretch who gathered sticks  
Upon that consecrated day whereon  
The Elouhistic gods† of making worlds  
Grew tired, and rested from their marvellous work.

Albeit this christ his holy mission proved,  
By deeds miraculous, yet still, amidst  
The sacred people, there were they who said:  
"He hath a devil," or "Beelzebub,  
"The prince of devils, lends him aid;" and, when

\*"In the beginning the Elouhim created the heavens and the earth." (*Genesis.*) "Eloi, Eloi, why hast thou forsaken me?" (*Mark.*)

†In the common English version of the *Bible*, the word ELOUHIM, (or ELOHIM), in spite of its plural termination, is translated by the singular: *God*; and, in the same unscrupulous manner, JEHOVAH is rendered by the inapposite title: *Lord*, belonging equally to English noblemen, the mayors of London and York, and the bishops of the Established Church; but, as, of course, neither of these translations are used, where they do not suit the context, we do occasionally meet with *Gods* and *Jehovahs*.

He uttered words, as having power men's sins  
To pardon, "Who is this," they asked, "that speaks  
"These blasphemies? For, who can pardon sins,  
"Save God alone?"

But Jesus, though the meek  
And lowly, sometimes, in an angry mood,  
Flung back these bitter taunts, and stigmatized  
His enemies in no mellifluent terms:—  
"O race of vipers!" he exclaimed, "ye fools  
"And hypocrites, from hell's damnation how  
"Can ye escape? For though indeed ye be  
"The seed of Abraham, your father is  
"The devil, from of old a murderer,  
"And father, too, of lies; his foul behests  
"Ye all obey!"

The perilous result  
Of these contentions, with the cunning Scribes  
And self-applauding Pharisees, drew near.  
The priestly council, or Sanhedrim, of  
The Israelites, "defenders of the faith,"  
As taught by Moses and the prophets, soon  
Brought Christ before the Roman magistrate,  
Who found him guiltless; but, in mockery  
Of justice, priests and people cried aloud,  
As with one voice: "Let him be crucified!"  
And, having reached "a place called Golgotha,"  
They hanged him there, upon the accursed cross,  
Between two thieves, a martyr for the truth,  
Whereto these spiteful Hierosolymites  
Could give no other name than "blasphemy."

In after time, confessors of the faith  
In Jesus, surnamed Christ, both burned and hanged,  
For "blasphemy," their fellow Christian men:  
Giordano Bruno, burnt in Papal Rome,  
Girolamo Savonarola, hanged,  
Between two "brethren in the Lord," and then  
Consumed by fire, in Christian Tuscany.  
But time would fail to tell of all who fell  
Beneath the cruel torture and the sword  
Of ruthless persecution, for a crime  
Unreal, whose very name is pilfered from  
The Greeks, "blind worshippers" of deities  
We now call "false" and "mythological."

And what is "blasphemy," that dubious guilt,  
For which the best and noblest of mankind  
Have borne these ignominious penalties?  
The Athenian sage and Galilean christ,  
Besides philosophers of later days,  
Are there, in clearest evidence, to show  
That "blasphemy" is oftentimes the truth,  
Before it penetrates the reflex minds  
Of multitudes of men. In sooth, it is  
An imputation which is ever by  
The many urged against the few; and, hence,  
Perchance, to countless flocks of hissing geese,  
The nightingale's melodious canzonet,  
In sylvan solitude, is "blasphemy."

We know that all new verities which things  
Affect, that long have been esteemed and held  
In reverence, are doomed to bear the brunt  
Of opposition led by enemies



Whose strongest argument and loudest cry  
Is "blasphemy!" But even the simplest truths,  
If they indeed be truths, invincibly  
Withstand attacks more terrible than this.  
For recollect, believers who, by law  
Or custom, take the name of "orthodox,"  
That never yet hath blasphemy prevailed  
Against the truth that two and two make four;  
But, in your desperate attempts to prove  
That one is three and eke those three are one,  
(As in the doctrine of the "Trinity,"  
Invented, probably, by Brahmin priests,  
You reach the lowest depths of senselessness,  
And lose yourselves in crass absurdity.  
Yet, like the stolid saint of olden time,  
You all are ready to exclaim: "We grant  
These mysteries to be impossible,  
When scanned by reason and by common-sense,  
But therefore we believe them to be true."

And this credulity unlimited  
Is founded on dogmatic sophistries  
Which gained the day, in theologic strife  
Of early times, and these again are based,  
In part, upon a heterogeneous mass  
Of Hebrew, Greek, and Chaldee manuscripts,  
Commencing with a strange cosmogony  
And some illusive genealogies,  
Which, taken at the utmost, barely give  
The lapse of sixty centuries since man  
First came on earth, created of its dust;  
And, then, the narrative proceeds to say,  
The gods (on running short of dust, perhaps,  
Made woman of a solitary rib  
Of man, extracted deftly from his side,  
The while he lay asleep in Paradise.  
Thence follow chronicles which, page by page,  
Reveal, in horrible detail, the most  
Atrocious and obscene iniquities  
Whereof humanity is capable,  
Committed by a race which claimed to be  
The chosen of Jehovah-Elouhim,  
A god superior to all other gods!

But touching these old books, ignored, until  
Translated freely in more modern days,  
The obvious question that presents itself  
Is this—If they, amongst their manifold  
Abominations and absurdities,  
Contain enunciations from the gods—  
If there the Lord Omnipotent of all,  
The gods, hath deigned to reason with mankind,  
How happens it that, in the course of time,  
A thousand and eight-hundred years have passed  
Away, and still mankind is unconvinced?  
Or this—Why rests for ever unfulfilled  
A certain prophecy, devoid of all

Obscurity, that "knowledge of the Lord,  
"Jehovah, should extend throughout the earth  
"As water fills the sea?""

To search again

The later portions of these scriptures, there  
We read that Jesus to his followers  
Declared that every kind of blasphemy  
Should be forgiven unto men, by God,  
Except that mystery insolvable,  
"The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost."  
Moreover, Paul, or Saul, of Tarsus, placed  
On record, in his own behalf, the plea  
That notwithstanding all his blasphemies,  
Committed prior to the miracle  
Of his conversion to the Christian faith,  
Yet mercy he obtained, because his deeds  
Were done in ignorance and unbelief.  
But, now, in unbelief and ignorance,  
Or else in utter heedlessness of what  
These great exemplars said, no blasphemy  
Will any Christian Scribe or Pharisee  
Forgive his fellows, though his Lord commands  
That he shall "love his neighbour as himself,"  
And never offer up his prayer to God,  
For daily bread, for pardon, and for grace.  
Without absolving all his enemies.

In their imperfect image men have made  
The weak, revengeful, and repentant gods  
Of their idolatries, and supplicate  
Them in a thousand forms; but here ensues  
An orison sincerely breathed by him  
Who pens these humdrum metres, and which brings  
BLASPHEMIA to a pious end.

"Spirit of Infinity!

"Father of the Universe!

"Called Theos, in Hellenic climes,  
"And God, in countries of the North,  
"To thee I pray that if by me,  
"Thy hallowed name hath been profaned,  
"In mercy thou wilt condescend  
"To plainly manifest thy wrath;  
"And not permit that men, alone,  
"With all their fallibility,  
"Should task themselves to vindicate  
"Thy power eternal and supreme.  
"Thou knowest I cannot choose but think  
"That either knaves or fools are they  
"Who vent on me their feeble rage,  
"Because I will not bend the knee  
"To some wild phantom they conceive  
"Of Thee, the Inconceivable."

17th April, 1871.

OLIVER SHERLOCK. \*

\*Since these lines were placed in type, a preacher of Jesuitical chicanery, in one of the numerous clap-traps of a sermon, has publicly declared that this prediction really has been, or was being, fulfilled, referring, for proof, to "the knowledge of Jehovah," and of a few other things, at our antipodes; thus, in the coolness of his effrontery, setting aside more than 600 million people, or nearly three-fourths of the population of the globe, including Buddhists, Brahmins, Mohammedans, and other "infidels."

But, the odd thing is that, only a few hours afterwards, there appears, in the newspapers, the intelligence from Australia that, at Paramatta, Mr. William Lorando Jones has been sentenced by Judge Simpson to be imprisoned for two years, with hard labour, and to pay a fine of one hundred pounds, for speaking disrespectfully of Moses—the identical offence with which the Jews charged Jesus of Nazareth.

This antipodean judge, to compare whom with Pontius Pilate would be a piece of gross injustice, to the Roman, has delivered himself of the above malicious sentence with a view "to check infidelity," unconsciously imitating those who once tried, by similar means, to check christianity—that christianity which inspires Dogberry Simpson with the "charity" which doth behave itself unseemly, which is puffed up, which is easily provoked, which thinketh evil, which beareth nothing, which endureth nothing, and which, by pretending to be otherwise, is the greatest sham in the whole world.

alias \* W. B. Collins Esq.  
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