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**FALSE DIVINITIES;**

OR,

**MOSES, CHRIST, & MAHOMET,**

AND

**OTHER RELIGIOUS DECEPTIONS.**

BY

*A FOREIGN THEOLOGIST.*

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LONDON:  
PUBLISHED BY E. TRUELOVE, 256, HIGH HOLBORN.

1870.

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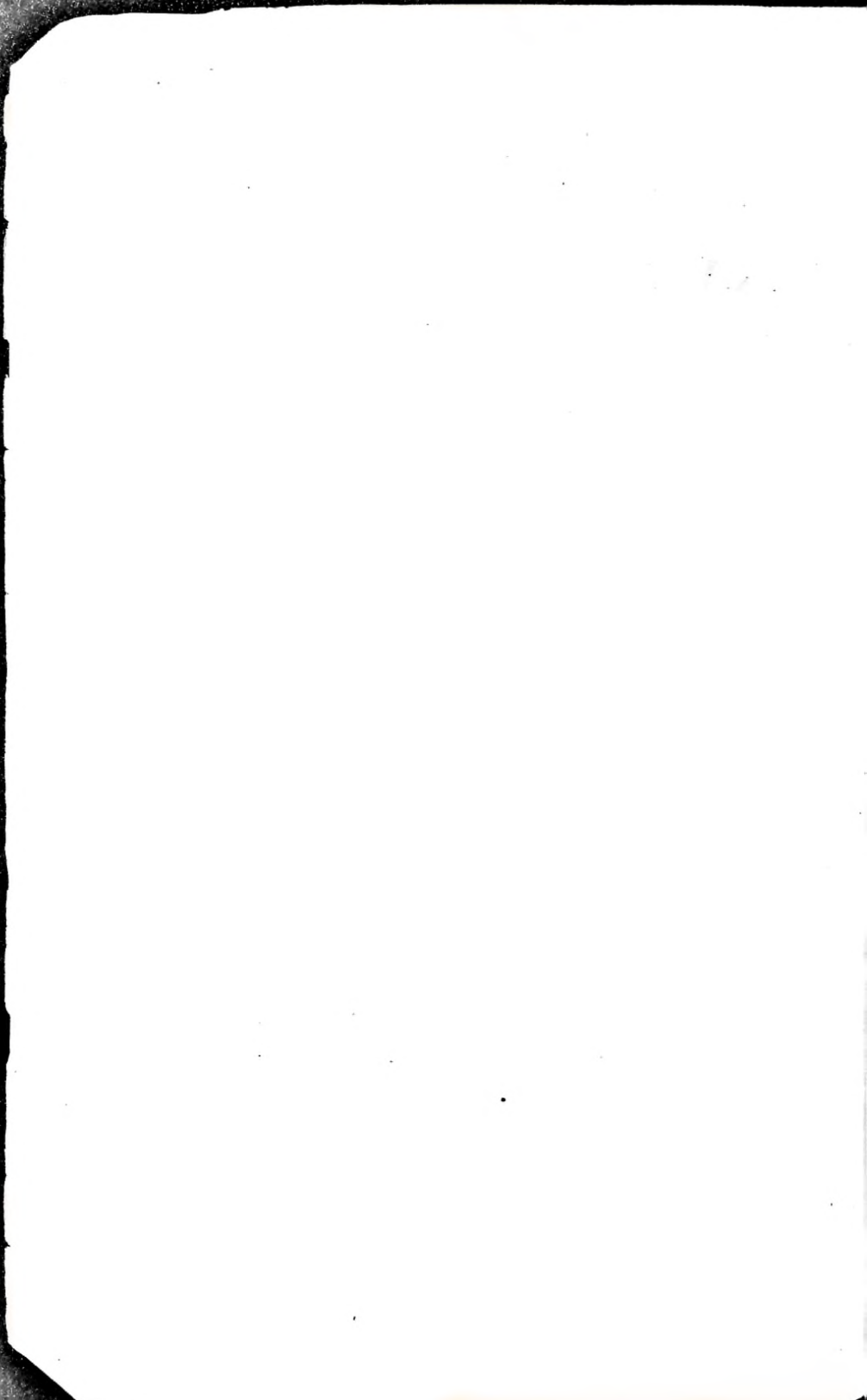
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*“ He who will not reason is a Bigot ;  
He who cannot is a Fool ;  
He who dare not is a Slave.”*

B.

## BRIEF INTRODUCTION.

In order to save the reader the trouble of going through a long and tedious preface, I shall at once explain (as well as my deficiency in English will permit) the real signification of *Deism* and *Atheism* in which lie one of my motives for writing this book; as for my other motives, alluding to religious doctrines and prejudices, my views will be developed in every subsequent chapter of this work, which must be read all through to the very end to be well understood, when it will be seen that my only aim is to remove, if possible, the absurd and ridiculous tendencies to fanaticism, partiality, bigotry, and intolerance, still so prevalent amongst the human race, notwithstanding the present high state of civilisation.

THE FUTURE

The future is a vast and uncharted territory, filled with possibilities and challenges. It is a landscape that we must navigate with care and foresight. The path ahead is not always clear, but it is one that we must tread with confidence and courage. We must embrace the unknown and seek out the opportunities that lie ahead. The future is not a destination, but a journey. It is a process of growth and discovery, one that we must embrace with an open heart and a willing mind. The future is ours to shape, and it is up to us to make the most of it. We must strive for excellence and seek to leave a lasting legacy. The future is a canvas upon which we can paint our dreams and aspirations. It is a world of potential, one that we must strive to realize. The future is a time of hope and optimism, one that we must cherish and protect. It is a time when we can make a difference and create a better world for ourselves and for future generations. The future is a time when we can reach our full potential and live our lives to the fullest. It is a time when we can make a difference and leave a lasting impact on the world. The future is a time when we can be the best that we are capable of being. It is a time when we can achieve our dreams and fulfill our aspirations. The future is a time when we can make a difference and create a better world for ourselves and for future generations. The future is a time when we can reach our full potential and live our lives to the fullest. It is a time when we can make a difference and leave a lasting impact on the world. The future is a time when we can be the best that we are capable of being. It is a time when we can achieve our dreams and fulfill our aspirations. The future is a time when we can make a difference and create a better world for ourselves and for future generations.



## PART FIRST.

### DEISM AND THE TWO SHADES OF ATHEISM.

An ordinary dictionary gives the sense of the words Deism and Atheism, but it does not define them clearly enough to be well comprehended by all classes of people, therefore I think it useful to expound these terms more clearly.

A Deist, for instance, is one who believes only in the single supreme divinity of God, but has not the least partiality for any peculiar religion or creed by which men worship other men as spiritual beings and heavenly mediums, that is to say, a Deist has faith only in one indivisible divine maker (who is, according to his opinion, the Almighty Creator, or Omnipotent, of the whole universe, called Jehovah), and in none else; nay, more, a Deist thinks that God never appointed any human, or earthly representative, whether called Moses, Christ, Mahomet, Pope, Mary, Son, Messenger, Saint, Prophet, or otherwise, and that all the said individuals enumerated in the Bible, including Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, Noah, Gabriel, St. Paul, and many others were merely human beings of flesh and blood, since they all died like every one of us does, either violently or peacefully; that they had no more affinity or intercourse with the Almighty than any other mortal of the highest or most humble condition; and that Moses, Christ, and Mahomet, were simply terrestrial pretenders who promoted their respective doctrines on their own authority, either with a moral or ambitious view, the result of which was unfortunately the origin of dissension, hatred, and strife, besides massacres of all kinds which have convulsed and separated the human race into many adverse, antagonistic, and inimical parties, instead of uniting them as friends, brethren, or children of the same family. Such is the signification of Deism.

Now for the theory of Atheism, which is divided into two shades or degrees. One of them denies the existence of a God altogether, and imagines that there is no spiritual being, no Supreme Creator, and no divinity of any sort whatever. That the whole universe with all that is in it was caused by chance, accident, or hazard; that there is no future life, and therefore no reward or punishment either in this or in any other world.

The second degree of Atheism does not exactly deny the existence of a God, but only doubts his existence, neither does

it believe that all things are here by chance, accident or hazard, but it remains in a state of uncertainty.

In my humble opinion, doubt is not very far from disbelief; however, the principle of justice ordains that everyone should be at liberty to think what he judges proper, therefore I do not wish to blame those who incline towards one or the other shade of Atheism, nor towards any religious persuasion, although I cannot fashion my mind to either of them. I only wish to discuss these various points freely, and without the least animosity, merely to see whether they are logical or not.

The first degree of Atheism says "there is no God." If this were correct, the theory (that everything is here by accident or hazard) appears to be very logical, because if a thing had no creator it must indubitably be here by accident, or by its own inherent existence. This point cannot for a moment be contested. So if the Atheists of the first degree are wrong, they are at least consistent and natural in their belief.

The second degree of Atheism does not, as I said already, deny the existence of a God, but only *doubts* his existence, it does not believe neither that everything is here by accident or hazard; this doctrine, according to my opinion, is not reasonable, for things must either be here by accident or they must have been created by some one or some thing.

The Atheists of this second degree hold, that neither God nor accident created all things, but that it is nature who brought everything into existence—granted, then nature is the maker or contrivance, to which *we* give the name of Creator or God, and if Atheism will not agree that nature is the maker or God, then it must allow that nature was created by some one else or something else; if not so, nature must be here by accident, namely, by its own inherent action or by itself.

I defy any man to give another solution to this problem than these two versions, *accident* or *Creator*.

Now let us examine, according to our human judgment (beyond which we are unable to go), which of the two said versions appears to be the most probable and most reasonable.

For instance, some celebrated Astronomers and Geologists assert that the earth and the other planets were formerly fluids which, in process of time (perhaps millions of years or centuries) became gradually solid, compact matter. Well, be it so, then the earth was not created as it is now, but derives from the said fluid; if so, whence did that fluid come? Was it created by a contrivance, or by another element, or by a maker? In such a case the said contrivance, element or maker, is what we call

God. And if on the other hand the said fluid was not created by a contrivance, element or God, then it has always existed, or came there by its own inherent action, or by accident, which is the same thing; and so it is with all the other planets, suns, stars, and so forth. Well, is it logical to think that the marvellous universal network we see before us, and which is organised and managed with such surprising, admirable, regular skill and harmony, can be here by hazard or accident? No, certainly not; because hazard has no regular uniform action, no purpose, no harmonious or given faculty, no will and no design: hence, if all these beautiful, clever, wonderful, and useful things are not here by hazard or by their own inherent action, they must have been brought into existence by a voluntary, all powerful, and intellectual agent, who is the creator or God. There can be no doubt or uncertainty about this incontestable fact.

Should the foregoing arguments not appear conclusive in the eyes of those who profess one or the other of the two shades of Atheism, it cannot be helped, because no human being can give them more convincing proofs, since no one has the power of seeing, touching, or approaching the Almighty, but everyone can behold his sublime works, which all testify his divine presence, although surrounded with great mystery, difficult to clear up with any certainty.

It has been asked, If there is a God who has created all things, then who or what has created God himself? To this question I answer, that God could not have been created, since he had no beginning; this of course is rather difficult to be understood. It is precisely in this difficulty in which lies the merit of God's greatness; could we understand his mysterious existence, the divine prestige with which he is surrounded, would be weakened, therefore he has refused us the faculty of penetrating the secrecy of his origin, which will remain by design a mystery to us for ever, at least in this world.

Should nature (which is in itself a great mystery) have alone produced everything we see, then that nature, I repeat, is the Creator, which we call God or Maker, who of course had no beginning; for if he had he must have been brought into existence by a superior authority, but not by hazard, as I have said already, so there must undoubtedly be a Maker or a God. There are three things which had no beginning and will have no end, viz., God, Time, and the immensity of Space or Vacuum.

## PART II.

## FALSE DIVINITIES OR MEDIUMS.

I shall now examine briefly (prior to more extended investigations) the third system, which is of a religious character, and admits, of course, the existence of a God, the divine power of whom has, however, been lessened by his alleged association (according to our scriptural reports) with human delegates as heavenly mediums.

The Bible tells us, that the Jewish persuasion was the first celestial institution on earth ; if this is true, Christianity and Islamism can only be human inventions, because if God is immutable as all religious people, and even all Deists, believe him to be, he would not have altered his laws, decrees, or commands, so he could not have sent Christ to supersede Moses. If, on the other hand, Christianity is, according to the New Testament, the real spiritual doctrine, Judaism and Mahomedanism must for the same reason be fictions ; therefore, either the Old or the New Testaments, as well as the Koran, are fabrications, and cannot be the holy works of God, who not only does not change his doings, but still less divides his institutions in different methods of an adverse character. Hence, no confidence can be placed in any religion promoted by human beings, whether called Moses, Christ, or Mahomet, who all three claimed to be divine mediums, although they must have been aware that no spirit of rivalry or variety could exist in God's edicts ; consequently there could only be one single real delegate, if delegate there was, and in that case Moses alone would have been entitled to this claim, since he was the first. But if God had really ordered Moses to propogate the Jewish doctrines, neither Christ nor Mahomet would have been permitted to modify, alter, or improve them. Hence, we must conclude that each of the three pretenders acted on their own account, and by their personal authority or inspiration ; this is why they were at variance on many points, and could therefore not have been entrusted with any celestial message.

Besides, no sensible being who will take the trouble to think the matter well over can rely on any man's alleged divine power, but can only trust in the sole supreme authority of a superior spirit or a Deity, the mediators of whom are our conscience and discernment, with which he has provided us by design. There can be no others, consequently the longer I live the more I feel inclined to adhere to the principle of Deism,

of which I shall speak again in the 9th Part of this book, and I shall refer also to Moses' laws and Christ's gospel in future chapters.

It has been said that my theory must be a wrong one, since it neither agrees with those who profess Atheism, nor with those who believe in the Bible. It is perfectly true that I only agree with those who believe in a universal Creator, or in the sole nature of God. If this is wrong I am sorry for it, but I cannot change my dispositions. At all events, if my belief in the single divinity of a Creator is a mistake, I am certainly as logical as those who believe in the divinity of his alleged mediators, and more logical than those who believe in nothing at all calling themselves Atheists, whether of the first or second degree.

It has been said also, as a contradiction to my remarks, that no Christian believes in Moses' nor in Mahomet's divinity, but only in the divinity of Christ and his mother. If Moses was in direct communication with the Almighty, or had personal intercourse with him as the Bible insinuates he had, we might well consider him a divinity, or a divine messenger like Christ. And if Mahomet went several times to heaven, and had private interviews with Jehovah, as the Koran says he had, and as three hundred millions of Mussulmans believe he had, he must also have been a divine delegate like Christ. I shall, however, come to this point again, as well as to the mother of Christ, in some subsequent chapters.

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### PART III.

From the preceding parts the reader will have seen that I profess the doctrine of Deism.

Now, I will explain more clearly in the following Parts the reason of my partiality for this doctrine.

#### REAL CAUSE OF SCEPTICISM AND BIGOTRY.

##### CHAPTER I.

Notwithstanding my disbelief in the so-called spiritual or preternatural characters of earthly mortals, represented in the Scriptures as Prophets, mediums, son, or messengers of God, I do not wish to dispute the terrestrial merit of these men who might have been endowed by nature with great human qualities



or legislative merits, like hundreds of other legislators and innovators who came after them in all times, and especially in our own century; but when the authors of the Bible and the Koran insinuate that those men were divinities, or had direct personal intercourse with the great Jehovah, my opinion is that such authors were either weak in their minds or hypocrites and impostors.

God, of course, could have sent some one on earth to teach people their duty towards himself, and towards each other, but in that hypothesis he would only have sent one messenger, and not three, to teach different methods in contradiction with each other.

Jehovah might undoubtedly have sent Moses on earth to teach the precepts he wished to infuse in the minds of all men, but then he would not have directed Christ afterwards to correct, or to improve the said precepts taught by Moses; because in doing so, God would have altered his own commands and destroyed the whole prestige or effects of Moses's mission, a thing of which our Creator was well aware. It is, therefore, hardly possible, and not even probable, that God, who knows and foresees everything, could have made such a blunder, which would have been rather discreditable to his wisdom, the more so, that he could have given at once to Moses all the instructions of morality he wished to introduce among men (see Part V., Chapter 10.) — X — *page 46 & 47.*

Besides, had God really directed Christ to improve the laws of Moses, he would never have allowed anyone to hurt or molest Christ; hence the so-called divine mission of Christ must be a fabrication. This very fact has created in the minds of thousands—nay, of millions—a complete heresy or scepticism, namely, a disbelief in all the other statements of the Scriptures, whether called Old or New Testament.

As for the Koran (which contains sophistries of the same description), I shall not refer to it often, since it has less importance for us than the Bible, which is so very incoherent, obscene, and equivocal that, instead of improving people's bad dispositions, it weakens the small degree of morality which many would perhaps have been inclined to practise had they not read it at all; and if a certain number of men are still simple-minded enough to rely on the Biblical rhapsodies and the fantastical trickeries registered in its pages, they fall generally into a sort of intolerant and fanatical bigotry fatal to all progress, which for that very reason has been retarded during so many centuries, in spite of the precepts advocated by Moses, Christ, and

Mahomet. This shows that these three alleged divines were only mortals, and had no celestial authority, since they introduced their respective doctrines about two and three thousand years ago, whereas the real civilisation of mankind is not two hundred years old; consequently the maxims and display of miracles by those three alleged delegates has had very little influence upon any of our progressions, which were all brought forward by more modern promoters in all branches, whether of a civil, political, religious, scientific, industrial, commercial, philosophical, or moral nature.

## CHAPTER II.

We all know that in the periods of the aforesaid three men it required very little dexterity to fascinate the ignorant and credulous multitudes; but in more recent ages, and especially in our days, no genius, however skilful he might be, could expect to be raised to the rank of a divinity unless he were able to compete with God's own ability and power, which is impossible, although Christ had some such pretensions, of which I shall speak in a future chapter.

We may easily discern that all the wonderful writings, together with the marvellous inventions and discoveries of recent epochs, would have been extolled as oracles, miracles, and divine inspirations in the times of the above three promoters, whilst in our days these things are simply called earthly contrivances of great merit, but their conceptions are only admired as productions of human intellects and nothing else. Now, as all the modern or recent eminent, moral, and scientific philosophers and clever men were evidently endowed with intellectual faculties emanating from the Almighty's nature (otherwise they would not have been able to come forward), they, according to the scriptural theory, would all be entitled to claim the character of God's representatives on earth; the conclusion of this would be, that if the authors of the Bible were still alive they would have to register a few hundred more divinities or mediums beside those already recorded in the columns of their documents.

If sense has any value we can easily discern that no man who died or dies on earth can be a divinity, because a spiritual being, whether disguised in a human or any other form, can never die or be killed by any terrestrial or even divine power, since it has no real corporeal existence; therefore whoever dies in this world cannot be supernatural: hence all those who perish on earth

must be classified in the ranks of mortals—consequently, as all the saints, prophets, son, mother, messengers, mediums, popes, apostles, evangelists, and so forth, passed away, as we all do, either peaceably or violently, it is obvious that they were nothing but mortals, and that there was no difference between them and ourselves. No divinity can perish except it wishes to deceive mankind and play tricks, which is not to be supposed, for if it does it is an impostor. Had the aforesaid three individuals been endowed with a celestial or divine nature, and been sent expressly on earth to guide our moral actions, they would still be with us and remain with us; but as each of them is gone, as we all go, the logical conclusion is that they were all, without exception, only human beings more or less clever, praiseworthy, and clear-sighted in their respective times, but nothing more.

These facts render the erroneous and deceptive reports of the Scriptures so flagrant that it would be idle indeed, if all men were gifted with a sound judgment or animated with frankness, to point out these errors to their notice, the less so that the very writers of the Bible have themselves taken great care by their exaggerated falsities to create such a spirit of incredulity and hostile schisms that scarcely any hope can be entertained of any religious concord amongst the variegated sects of the human race.

This perpetual religious division alone would be sufficient indeed to cause a formidable biblical infidelity in every sensible man's mind, for the obstinate opposition to each other's theological views is an evident proof of the Bible's equivocal versions which, had they been free from all ambiguity, would have been accepted willingly by every one on an equal footing, and would have formed a happy fusion of all nations and faith in the same single God's supreme omnipotence, and in no other.

But as each creed has adopted a separate and peculiar theory, their adverse systems have brought on a heinous disposition, which shows that some vicious principles must exist in the scriptural records which it will be useful to investigate in order to edify all those who have not been able by their own judgment to discern whether they are true or untrue; if they are true, the bitter antagonism prevailing between so many different creeds must be a ridiculous mania of spite or hypocrisy, if not a stupid mockery. On the other hand, if the scriptural statements are false, it becomes the paramount duty of every honest and clear-sighted man to contradict and expose them. This I shall endeavour to do, without any hesitation or partiality, to the best of my ability.



## PART IV.

## INVESTIGATION OF SOME RECORDS IN GENESIS, AND OTHER BOOKS OF MOSES.

## CHAPTER I.

The first verse in the book of Genesis runs thus, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Now, what can the real signification of the word heaven be? Does it mean the universe, or skies without the suns, stars, planets and so-forth? In such a—hypothesis it signifies the empty sphere, or immensity of space, that is to say, the firmament above and around us; for it cannot mean the universe including the suns, stars and planets, which, according to subsequent verses were all created after heaven and earth. Therefore, heaven must signify the ethereal and endless region of vacuum, or the infinite extent of emptiness; if so, and it cannot be otherwise, the statement of this verse falls already to the ground because heaven could never have been created and must always have existed like God himself who had no beginning and has therefore always been somewhere, he could not have been nowhere, he must consequently have resided or existed in the unlimited region of space or firmament. So heaven which, like God himself, had no commencement could not have been created, must always have existed, otherwise God, who had no beginning, could not have resided in it; hence the first verse of Genesis proves to be a fable. If the reader will think this point well over he will easily understand it.

Some ignorant people say, "the word heaven means paradise, or a better world." This cannot be, for if it did, God would not have called it firmament, as will be seen in the 8th verse, chapter 1st, of Genesis, where it is written, "God called the firmament heaven," &c. This shows clearly that to announce the creation of heaven can only be a fiction, which nullifies at once the first statement of this Book of Moses.

As for the creation of the earth, I believe that God created that planet, only (according to human sense) he must have created the sun first, because it is hardly reasonable to suppose that our little globe was brought into existence previous to this stupendous luminary more than a million of times larger than our comparatively small earth, which besides would have no value whatever without the splendid sun, its protector; therefore the latter must have been created previously, although the

Book of Moses does not say so, which omission proves either ignorance or falsehood.

According to verse 3, chapter 1, in Genesis, God said, "Let there be light, and there was light."

Then verse 5, same chapter, God called the light day, and the darkness he called night; and the evening and the morning were *the first day*.†

In verses 16 and 19 also (chapter 1) of Genesis it is said, God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night, and the evening and the morning were *the fourth day*.‡

Now let us verify the logic of these statements.

According to the above 3rd and 5th verses God made light on the **FIRST DAY**; † and according to the 16th and 19th verses God created the sun and moon only on the *fourth day*.‡ Hence, as there could be no light or day without the sun, which was not created before the *fourth day*, how could there be light on the **FIRST day**? Consequently this statement must also be a false one.

In the 6th and 7th verses of the same chapter we read that God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so."

The errors or fictions of these verses are so striking that they hardly require a refutation, because we all know, and see, that the waters are neither under nor above, but rather in the midst of the firmament, since the latter surrounds the waters as well as the earth, whereas the waters do not surround the firmament or heaven; consequently these verses are not only without foundation, but are inventions of unskillful and ignorant men, for, had they been clever, they would have insinuated that the *globe* divides the waters from the waters by immense portions or thousands of miles of earth. This would have had an appearance of reality, because the seas surround and cover enormous tracts or masses of land which lie evidently between the seas; but saying that the heavens or firmament (which is the same thing) divide the waters from the waters is downright nonsense, so much so, that the vapours of the clouds cannot be called seas, since they are only emanations from the seas of which they form a very small portion; besides, they fall again into the seas and are also absorbed by the earth.

Now let us proceed.

In the 2nd verse (chapter 2) of Genesis it is said, that God rested on the seventh day.

It appears he was tired; yet his work, although important, could not fatigue his hands, arms, legs, or body, because he did not labour like a human artisan. The universe, and all that is in it, was created by the sole contrivance of his will, not by the action of his body; he therefore required no repose. Hence the sabbath day is merely a human invention for the relief of men and animals who may want some rest when they have worked hard five or six days. But God, who is a spirit and not a corporeal being or a working man, does everything in a minute's time by his own desire. He could therefore not be in want of a day's rest; consequently it is childish to state that God made such a thing the first day, another thing the second day, and so forth, and then stopped the seventh day in order to take rest. The sublime Creator of all the wonderful and amazing things we see requires no repose; therefore the sabbath day, whether a Saturday or a Sunday, is simply a human invention for convenience sake.

I have been answered, that with God one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, intimating thereby that it might have taken six thousand years to create the world, &c. If this is so, I may ask in my turn why the Christians keep the seventh day of each week as a day of rest instead of keeping it once every seven thousand years.

The 7th and the 21st verses also (chapter 2) of Genesis state, that God formed man with the dust of the ground, and took afterwards a rib out of that man (Adam) and made a woman of it, or words to that effect.

Would it not be more natural to think that if God really created the first man out of dust he would also have formed a woman with the same substance? There was dust enough surely, and both man and woman being made of a similar material, their sympathy and fondness for each other would have been secured as well, and much easier than in the other way.

The Bible does not say in which way God created animals. Did he, for instance, form a cow from the rib of a bull? or a mare with the rib of a horse? We are left in the dark on this point.

Moreover, if God constructed the earth, sun, stars, moon, planets, &c., out of nothing, is it not more reasonable to suppose that he also created man and woman, as well as animals, with nothing rather than with dust? I leave this, however, to the opinion of the reader.

## CHAPTER II.

We shall now come to some other verses still more equivocal; but first, I must ask who has written the reports of all those events, whether true or untrue, and how the writer or writers could have had cognisance of these incidents, since no human being existed when they occurred; and should even some one have witnessed the mysterious proceedings of the creation (a thing which is impossible), how could that witness have recorded them? No writing, printing, engraving, or carving was known, so there could be no question of letters, signs, marks, ciphers, or any other figures whatever; nay more, no paper, ink, pen, pencil, nail, or any other instrument was invented, no slate, or marble was discovered in the time of the creation, no linen, calico, silk, leather, or parchment, to substitute paper was manufactured, and above all, no language existed. How then could all the said occurrences have been registered, or written down, or even transmitted verbally from one person to another?

If we fancy that God explained all these particulars to Moses, many centuries after they had taken place, he would certainly have spoken in a more lucid, logical, and eloquent style. Besides, had God really been inclined to acquaint men with all those mysterious doings, he would evidently have conveyed them at once to Adam, to whom such information would have been as useful and interesting, if not more so, than to Moses.

Some people assert that God, in fact did, reveal those things to Adam; if so, in which idiom did he speak to be understood by Adam who, of course, could not know any language? And in supposing that God, instead of uttering these details verbally, related them through the mechanism of dreams, it remains to be found out in which dialect Adam (who knew no dialect) transmitted them to his descendants? For if he was really the first man on earth, he could not have spoken any idiom whatever; and if he really spoke one, he could not have been the first man, unless God took the trouble to teach him one; a thing which the Bible does not mention in any of its pages.

## CHAPTER III.

In the 16th and 17th verses also (chapter 2) of Genesis, is written, "God said to Adam, of every tree in this garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it."

Let us imagine for a moment, that Adam and Eve had not disobeyed the above command; what would be the consequence

of that submission? The consequence would be, that men would act just like beasts; because they would not know the difference between good and evil. This was not the design of God, who unquestionably wished to establish a distinction between men and animals. This shows clearly, that the alleged interdiction of the mentioned fruit (whether allegorical or not) is a fabrication, inasmuch as did men not know how to distinguish good from evil, how could they be kind, charitable, or virtuous?

In the 6th and 7th verses (chapter 3) of Genesis, we are told, "when Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit, their eyes were opened and they saw their nakedness."

Were the contents of these verses correct, it would be very lucky that Adam and Eve had violated God's command, and had eaten of the mischievous fruit; otherwise they would never have noticed their respective nudity, and would therefore not have had any sexual intercourse with each other. Thus, no human being would exist, the earth would be a barren wilderness, of no use or value whatever, and the creation of the first man and woman would have had no object.

Is such a supposition reasonable? Would it not be the very reverse of God's design? Was the earth not created for the purpose of being inhabited and cultivated by millions of human creatures? Did God not say to Abraham and Noah, "thy seed shall increase and multiply like the stars in the heavens, and the grains of sand on the sea shores," &c.?

How could this wish of God be fulfilled if Adam and Eve had remained unconcious of their respective sex or nakedness? Such a blind ignorance would have impeded all conjugal connexion between them; the consequence would be, that no one would exist. So we must conclude that God never prohibited, and still less punishes, the cause which accomplishes his own wish of pro-creating and multiplying our species; therefore, the pretended interdiction, as well as the alleged transgression, and especially the punishment thereof, are nothing but ridiculous, foolish, and absurd deceptions. Moreover, every sensible man can easily understand that our death has nothing to do with the punishment of Adam's alleged sin, but occurs through other causes not very difficult to surmise. For instance, we all know that the frame and constitution of Adam (from which ours derive) were created previous to his sin, and are not robust enough to resist for ever the destructive action or influence of the atmosphere, which also existed previous to Adam's transgression. This atmospherical action does not only

destroy men, but animals, birds, insects, fowls, reptiles, &c., though it is not said that they had eaten of the forbidden fruit! The same atmospherical element corrodes even (in the length of time) iron, steel, and all other sorts of metal, as well as stones, wood, bones, etc. The fact is, nothing can withstand the destructive effect of the air or atmosphere.

Then another reason for our death must be assigned to the size of the earth, which (were it even a thousand times larger) would be too small to contain for ever the constant increase of our multifarious numbers; therefore each generation must disappear to make room for a new one.

Well, if the said remarks are correct, as every one can discern, the story of the serpent's perfidy, or Adam's sin, and the punishment of death thereof are absurdities too clumsy even for children of the present day, to whom we represent God as a merciful, just, equitable and magnanimous spirit, and yet make them believe that the same God has the cruelty to punish with death all the successive generations of mankind ever since the transgression of Adam, and that he will continue to do so as long as this world exists (thus he has already punished with death more than sixty thousand millions, or sixty milliards, of men) because one of his commands was violated by two feeble beings of his own creation, the offspring of whom must all be responsible and suffer for it, although they are innocent of the said offence, since they were not even born when it took place.

Do such ridiculous statements not vilify God's dignity, especially when we know that a paltry human being would blush and feel ashamed to punish a child for his father's deeds? Are we better and endowed with more fairness than our divine Creator, who has instilled in our hearts and minds the very sentiments of justice and generosity? Is it not a sacrilege, a blasphemy, to accuse our august Maker of such a tyrannical barbarity?

Do the authors of the Bible not degrade God's majesty by these indictments? Can they expect to inspire us with a veneration for him whom they describe as such an arbitrary, unjust, and cruel spirit? Is it a wonder that reports like those engender scepticism and Atheism? The wonder is, indeed, that we can find a single person willing to worship such an abominable God. But the greatest wonder of all is, that we can find a single individual silly enough to believe such falsehoods.

Some people say that there is nothing written in the Bible which authorizes us to think that God makes us die as a conse-



quence or punishment of Adam's sin. If those people had taken the trouble to read the 17th verse (chapter 2 of Genesis) they would have seen that God said to Adam, "Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat, for in the day that thou eatest thereof *thou shalt surely die.*"

Adam and Eve partook of the said tree and died, and we all die, so our death (if we believe in the Bible) must be the consequence of Adam's disobedience; nay more, in chapter 3, verse 16, God said unto the woman Eve, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception."

Now, as this is the case with every woman—for they are all subjected to the same suffering—and that furthermore we all die, it shows that God has not yet forgiven Adam and Eve's transgression.

We can easily notice that those reports are erroneous, for, as I said before, our death can have no connection whatever with Adam's alleged sin, because if God did not wish that men should eat of a certain fruit (of whatever description it was) he would not have created that fruit, especially as he knew the weakness and curiosity of Eve's nature; so this prohibition would have been useless, and must therefore be a fiction on the part of the authors of the Bible; and if under the name of fruit lies another meaning or an allegory, alluding perhaps to an essay of obedience, or to some sexual or other occult transaction, the fiction would just be the same.

#### CHAPTER IV.

In the 14th verse, chapter 3, of Genesis, God said to the serpent, "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast in the field, upon thy belly shalt thou go," &c.

When God created the serpent, did he not know the mischievous dispositions of that reptile?—dispositions which he himself infused into the serpent's nature. Why, then, should he punish that reptile, which he has deprived, like all other animals, of a conscience and a discernment?

However, let us suppose here also that the serpent had not tempted Eve—would it be able to go otherwise than upon its belly? Was it not created without legs and feet previous to its malicious deed? It could, therefore, surely not go or move in any other way than on its belly. Why, then, insert such nonsense in a serious book called holy? Does a worm not equally

move on its belly?—has it also been guilty of some treacherous allurement?

Then in the same 14th verse God said to the serpent, “Dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life,” &c.

We know very well that serpents feed on many other substances, such as smaller reptiles, insects, birds, eggs, rabbits, hares, fruits, leaves, grass, plants, vegetables, and so forth: hence this account, like all the others, proves to be a fabrication.

It is idle to ask the adepts of the Bible in which dialect God lectured the serpent to be understood by that reptile; nor do we require to know in which idiom the serpent induced Eve to infringe God’s command. Such follies are too absurd to be discussed by reasonable or serious men.

#### CHAPTER V.

In verse 14, chapter 4 of Genesis, Cain said to the Lord God, “Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.”

To drive Cain from the face of the earth, God would have been compelled to bury him alive, unless he threw him into the sea, or launched him into another planet. Besides how could Cain apprehend being slain? he had no enemies to contend with, since there was no one on earth except his father and mother; yet if we believe the 15th verse, same chapter 4, “God set a mark upon Cain in order to protect him;” we are not told of what nature this mark was, apparently the authors of the Scripture did not know. However why protect Cain? against whom? besides did he not deserve to be slain?

In the 16th and 17th verses, same chapter 4, we read, that “Cain went out in the land of Nod, and there he knew his wife who bare him Enoch, and he built a city after the name of Enoch.

From whence did that wife come? there was no one in the world but Cain and his two parents, how then could he get a wife and a son? and how could he build a city or even a village single-handed as he was?

The writers of the Bible ought first to have brought a few thousands, or at least a few hundreds, of people into existence and have said where they came from, then the story might have had a certain appearance of reality, but not having done so they cannot expect us to give any credence to this laconic and ambiguous report.



Some complacent folks argue that the authors of the Bible could not decently relate all that occurred in those remote ages, for fear of revealing very scandalous events. If this is the case, it would have been better and wiser to abstain from writing the Bible altogether; because restrictions in religious documents inspire doubt and incredulity in the whole work. Moreover, such an excuse can hardly be accepted when we see that the Biblical writers did not shrink from disclosing the obscenities of Lot with his own daughters, and the repeated debaucheries of Abraham, Jacob, and others with their servant girls; and also of Solomon's lewd transactions with his numerous wives and concubines, and many other such indecencies. The authors of these reports might therefore have published all the rest without any hesitation.

## CHAPTER VI.

### NOAH AND HIS ARK.

Nearly all the verses in chapter 6 and 7 of Genesis, state that "God ordered Noah to build an Ark large enough to lodge himself, wife and family, together with a couple (male and female) of all the living creatures on earth, in order to save them from being drowned by the flood, which God was going to send for the purpose of destroying the whole human race, because he repented of having created them, on account of their wickedness," &c.

Now, I ask any reflecting man, is it natural, probable, or logical, that God (who is so immensely powerful, wise, provident, and above all, infallible) did not know beforehand, all the defects and vicious propensities of mankind when he created them? Is it likely that he could have made such a mistake, and then have humbled himself by confessing his error to Noah, a simple mortal? Besides, is it reasonable to suppose that he required Noah's assistance to construct an Ark, when he could so easily have produced one by his sole desire in an hour's, nay in a minutes time? Did he not construct the whole universe in a few days, if the Bible's report is correct? Why then burden poor Noah with the heavy task, not only of building the Ark, but of bringing together or collecting all those animals, birds, fowls, reptiles, and insects from one end of the world to the other, namely, from every part of the globe at such immense distances from each other?

It will be said they all came voluntarily to the Ark by the will of God; if so God could also by his sole will have saved a pair of each species from the flood without giving Noah the tremendous trouble of building an ark, the size of which, if the story were true, must have been so gigantic (although the Bible says it was only 300 cubits long) that the Great Eastern, which is the largest ship ever known, would in comparison to it not appear bigger than a rowing boat. Whoever has taken the trouble to read the natural history of all living creatures on earth, must be amazed indeed at such an ark's prodigious magnitude, to be able to hold a couple of each species, yet the art of ship-building was rather backward in the time of Noah, who must not only have been the most clever shipbuilder and navigator, but also the most famous hunter or sportsman ever known, to collect alive that fabulous number and variety of animals from all quarters of the world except from America (which was not discovered at that time), and how Columbus found many animals, reptiles, and birds there such a long period after the universal flood no one knows. They could not have been the offspring of those kept in Noah's Ark, from which they could not have been sent to America since that country was not known to Noah nor to any one else before it was discovered by Columbus. This mystery must naturally lead us to the belief that the alleged flood was not universal, though the Bible says it was.

It is a well-known fact that there could never have been a universal flood on our globe; this has been demonstrated by the most eminent astronomers, and also by the discovery of America, of which I just said a few words. There might have been a partial or great local deluge which inundated a portion of Asia, called the Land of Egypt or Palestine, to a large extent; if such a phenomenon occurred it will perhaps occur again, either in the same quarter or on some other part of the Globe.

It has been explained by celebrated astronomers that some planetary commotions take place every ten or fifteen thousand years, producing great local inundations; but according to the known laws of astronomy such overflows cannot be universal, and can therefore not have anything to do with our behaviour, or with the punishment thereof. Besides, whoever takes the trouble to consider this matter over can easily notice that the flood in Noah's time did not destroy wickedness, which still prevails, as it did before and immediately after the flood, only in our days we manage it with more secrecy or shrewdness, that is all.

So the said flood did not, as we can see, produce great effects, upon our morality, — This shows the falsity of the Old Testament's records.

Then how good-natured all those ferocious wild beasts serpents, &c., must have been to come quietly from such distances, and remain peaceably together during ten months without fighting. And when we reckon the enormous supply of provisions required to feed all those animals during 300 days, and the extensive store-room to keep all those provisions in, and also the large cask, or numerous small ones, or other vessels to hold sufficient fresh water (for no animal drinks seawater); when we reckon, I say, or recapitulate all these things, our astonishment becomes indeed a bewildering perplexity, if not a laughable mystification.

The adepts of the Bible assert that in Noah's time the species of animals were not so numerous as they are now. In supposing that this may in some degree be correct, the difference cannot be very important, because the most eminent geologists calculate that the creation of the earth dates more than a million of years or ten thousand centuries back, in proportion to which fifty or sixty centuries are mere nothings; so the number of animals in Noah's time could not be very much less than in our days. Moreover, in sparing Noah and his family, God must have been aware that the evil dispositions of the human race, could not have been annihilated by the flood since it was certain they would revive again from Noah's seed, and continue to be of the same nature as before. Do we not know that bad and criminal children issue frequently from virtuous parents? Therefore, had God really destroyed mankind on account of their perversity he would not have spared a single individual, because it would have been idle to produce new generations out of the old system, inasmuch as he could easily have created another description of mortals on an improved principle, whilst with Noah and his family he could scarcely expect any amelioration.

In addition to the above remarks, we may ask, is it likely that our kind and benevolent Creator would have barbarously drowned millions of innocent infants, together with all the poor animals on earth? What harm had they done to perish indiscriminately with the grown-up people? This is another cruelty put to God's account by the unscrupulous writers of the Bible.

Now, if any clergyman, priest, churchman, or rabbi would be good enough to clear up or justify logically, but plainly, all the foregoing rhapsodies and improbabilities, I should feel very

thankful for it; on condition, however, that he must not resort to the vulgar and stale argument generally used by every ignorant bigot and credulous simpleton, "that God can do everything he judges proper, whether natural or not; that no one must or can penetrate his secret designs; and that we ought to believe blindly all that is written in the scriptures without any remark, comment, or scrutiny whatever."

Such replies are easy, but have no signification; they put a stop to all discussions, but prove nothing, and have no influence on the minds of clear-sighted men. The writers of the Bible might as well have said, that by the will of God, an army, for instance, of a hundred thousand men was quartered comfortably in a nut-shell, or that an elephant flew as easily as a pigeon over the highest Pyramid of Egypt; and many other absurdities of the same description to which God never resorted, and never will resort, unless he gives a formal denial to the whole character of his creation and course of nature. There are things which God will not, and even cannot, do without destroying the essence or laws of his own universal system. For instance, he cannot cause two and three to make nine, nor fire to be cold, and ice hot, except, as I said before, he alters and reverses the whole nature of his sublime machinery; therefore, he never was, and never will be, so ridiculously inconsistent as the scriptures venture to assert.

In chapter 10, verse 13, of Joshua, it is said that the "sun and moon stood still until the people had avenged themselves," &c.

Those who wrote the said verses must have been totally ignorant of astronomy; this proves they were not inspired by the Almighty, for a child knows that it is the earth's rotation which gives the appearance of the sun's motion. So it must have been the earth which stood still, if the record were true; but it is a well-known fact, that if the earth stood still it would fall into the sun. A similar remark is applicable to the alleged immobility of the moon. So this report must also be a false one, especially as it would have been totally against the law of nature, which God has never yet disturbed, although the Bible says he has.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ABRAHAM'S CIRCUMCISION.

The 10th and 12th verses in the 17th chapter of Genesis announce that God ordered Abraham to promulgate a law by which all the Jewish families should be compelled to have their

male children circumcised, as a token of the covenant between God and him.

It requires very little discernment to perceive the falsehood of these verses, for, had God been desirous to distinguish Abraham and his offspring from other people, he would certainly not have required any mark, sign, or token, and especially not such a cruel one.

If God is such a kind spirit as we all believe him to be, how could he wish to subject all those poor little infants to an excruciating suffering of that description, when he could have so easily created them without foreskin? What gratification can the brutal torture of these helpless creatures afford God? This impudent statement is another cruelty put gratuitously to God's charge, whilst every one of sense can perceive Abraham's own scheme, the purpose of which is obvious; but as no father or mother would have consented to expose their sons to that painful operation, Abraham persuaded them that he acted under God's express orders, an excuse which the stupid and credulous dupes in those backward times so readily believed that they dared not disobey. This superstitious practice has been so strongly infused in the minds of all Israelites from their very childhood, that they keep it up even in our civilized days. I wonder the authorities of every country do not put a stop to this savage and unmanly practice, by inflicting a severe punishment upon every father and mother of each of these helpless little victims.

As for the female children, it appears that the great Jehovah did not wish to have anything to do with them, otherwise they would also be tortured by some bodily marks. We know very well that God is much too clever to be in want of any sign or token to identify the Israelites. Religious liberty, of course, ought to prevail in all civilized countries; but when such abominable deeds are committed in the name of God, the whole human race should unite and suppress them in the name of compassion and justice, which are the predominant attributes of God's divine character.

It will be said that the Jews practise that rite, not by any feeling of cruelty, but by the strict religious obedience enjoined in the Hebraic laws. I grant this; but then the Hebraic laws ordain also "that whoever breaks the sabbath day by making fire or otherwise shall be stoned to death."

Do they follow that law? No; for if they did, hundreds or thousands of Jews would be massacred. Why do they not enforce that law? Because the delinquents, being grown-up people, would certainly not submit to such a penalty, whilst

poor defenceless babies have no power to resist their painful treatment.

Yet I must give to the Israelites the credit of being the most humane, tender, and kind-hearted sect of all the other sects on earth. I do not think that a murder is perpetrated by a Jew once in a hundred years. I therefore can hardly account for their passive submission to that horrible circumcision, especially in our modern times.

We must suppose that the only reason to be ascribed for its continuation lies in the fear which works upon every father's mind of incurring the enmity and curse of all the other Israelites should he dare to transgress that baptismal ceremony.

There is not the least doubt that thousands of Jews would only be too glad and too willing to refrain from that useless absurdity, were they bold enough to defy the censure of the whole community. The terrible apprehension of being vilified and despised by his fellow co-religionists and relatives is so strong, that hardly any family man has sufficient audacity to brave such a consequence: hence the obstinate maintenance of that barbarous and ridiculous rite.

Were the civil authorities of each country to take the law in their own hands, this cruel practice would soon disappear.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### SARAH'S AND RACHEL'S STERILITY.

The 2nd and 3rd verses, chapter 16, and the 3rd, 4th, and 9th verses, chapter 30 of Genesis, contain other questionable reports about Abraham's and Jacob's wives (Sarah and Rachel). According to the above verses, these women induced their husbands to marry their maid-servants, Hagar and Bilha, in order to try whether they could not get any children by them.

This proceeding seems not only immoral, but rather unnatural, for although it is said, that sterility was in those times considered a misfortune, it is hardly credible, that married women would suggest, by their own free will, a conjugal change. The irresistible jealousy and pride, so strongly implanted in all female hearts, must indeed never have been felt by Sarah, Rachel, or Leah, if they really did propose such an experiment. The abnegation of their connubial affinity is incredible, so much the more, that, if they were not inspired with sufficient affection or love, to be really jealous of their husbands, they must at least have been provided by nature with that womanly feeling of pudicity,



shame, and self respect, which is so powerfully inherent in the feminine heart, that such a voluntary sacrifice seems hardly possible. It will be said, that God can do every thing, and that he reversed in Sarah, Rachel, and Leah, the very dispositions of their nature, I repeat here what I said before, that God never reverses or alters the character of his creation, besides in the above case, it would have been a trouble quite useless because instead of changing the feminine inclination of the women, it would have been easier for him to render them prolific, a thing which in fact he did if the records of the 10th verse, chapter 18, the 2nd verse, chapter 21, and the 22nd verse, chapter 30, of Genesis are correct, for in one it is said, that Sarah shall give birth to a son, in the other, that she gave birth to one, despite her old age, and the other verse states, that Rachel also bare a son, &c.

As for Leah who had four sons with her husband, I cannot see why she also advised him to take her servant girl Zilpah for a wife. Hence the recourse to these servant maids for the alleged purpose of obtaining children was groundless since Rachel, Sarah, and Leah, got children themselves.

The consequence of all this, is, that either one or the other of these records must be a fabrication, and if one or several of them are false what confidence do the other reports in the Bible deserve? However, whether true or not, the conclusion to be arrived at is, that Abraham and Jacob contrived in some way or another to get a sexual change either with or without their wives' consent.

As for the trick of Laban (verses 23 to 30, chapter 29, Genesis) who substituted Leah for Rachel on the wedding night, it is an action still less worthy of being inserted in a sacred book brought under the eyes of young people.

## CHAPTER IX.

### LOT AND HIS DAUGHTERS.

The story of Lot and his two daughters is another disgraceful and incongruous gallimatia, which for its immorality and indecency ought to have been left out of a document called holy. What utility can there be in inserting such obscenities in a religious book read by every one?

Moreover, how can we give credit to a report intimating that Lot, on account of his utter drunkenness, had no consciousness of his lascivious transactions with his daughters?

Are we not all aware that men strongly intoxicated are unfit for sexual actions? Wine of course, when taken moderately, strengthens and excites our muscular powers, but when taken in excess produces the contrary effect and destroys not only our mental, but also all our physical faculties; this is a notorious fact, easy to be verified by experiment. The consequence is, that Lot was either conscious of his double incest, or the whole statement is a falsehood.

## CHAPTER X.

### INTERDICTION OF SWINE FLESH BY MOSES.

In the 3rd Book of Moses, chapter 11, it is written that God urged Moses to forbid the flesh of various animals, among which the swine is predominant. Wishing to close my investigations of the Old Testament with the next chapter, I shall not here mention all the animals prohibited in the above 3rd Book, and shall merely refer to the said swine flesh, which was and still is in many quarters of the globe one of the chief articles of nourishment for the millions.

We cannot deny, however, that pork is rather unwholesome, especially in a hot country like Egypt, and even in all other warm climates.

Moses (who had hygienic and perhaps medical notions) knew the unsalubrious nature of pork, so he deemed it prudent to interdict the use of that food; yet in spite of his solicitude for his co-religionists' health, he would have failed in his attempt had he not coloured his decree of prohibition with the prestige of God's command. In those remote and ignorant ages such a *sable* — subterfuge or fascination was indispensable, otherwise the superstitious multitude would never have consented to adopt any religious regulation promoted by a mortal.

In our more civilized era (although backward yet) such a sham would be of little avail, because very few of us believe now that God interferes in our manner of feeding. We all think that nature produces everything for our use and comfort in some way or other; if this were not so, God, according to our present opinion, would not have created those things; therefore we are, as it were, convinced that he leaves us entirely free to eat anything we choose proper, and to find out by our own study or experience what is good or bad for our health: hence he cannot be offended with regard to any nourishment we may venture to take.



If this is correct, Moses (although praiseworthy for his care of the people's health) made an artificial declaration by ascribing his own prohibition to the express order of Jehovah, who had certainly nothing to do with it, for if he had he would have cautioned us also (through the medium of Moses) to abstain from many other dangerous things much more obnoxious than swine flesh ; but having made no allusion to them, it shows that he leaves the discovery of their pernicious effects to our own discernment.

The conclusion of all this is, that the above interdiction originates from Moses' own authority ; therefore the use of pork, although unwholesome to a certain extent, cannot be a violation of God's command, as the Jews erroneously believe it to be.

There is another point in the Jewish maxims which must be an absurdity, and which I do not think emanates from the brain of Moses. I allude to the practice of addressing prayers once every month to the moon in the nights when that planet shines brightly, whereas no such devotions are bestowed upon the sun, although this great luminary is evidently more useful to men than the other.

## CHAPTER XI.

### PHARAOH'S ALLEGED CRUELITIES.

According to the statements of Exodus (2nd Book of Moses) God punished the cruelties of Pharaoh by divers sorts of penalties or plagues enumerated in chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, &c.; of the said Exodus, where it is mentioned also that God hardened Pharaoh's heart after each punishment, &c.

Now I ask any man of sense, Can such ridiculous reports be true ? Is it probable that God was so unjust as to punish a tyranny which he would not allow to be suppressed or modified, since he constantly hardened Pharaoh's heart ? Had the latter been left to his own inclinations he would have deserved to be chastised each time he refused to comply with Moses' entreaties ; but as God hardened the king's heart repeatedly, how could that poor monarch act otherwise than he did ?

Perhaps Pharaoh would have liberated the Israelites after the first request of Moses, or at least after the first correction inflicted upon him, had he been permitted to become kind or magnanimous ; but as the Almighty did not wish to bring him to a sense of kindness (since he stimulated and encouraged his cruelties by hardening his heart), how could he punish him ?

Is it likely that our benevolent Creator, who is so equitable and just, could have subjected Pharaoh to all those plagues for deeds which he had no power to mitigate, or which his hardened heart could not modify, if even he would have been willing to do so? Really such absurdities are too burlesque to be inserted in a serious document, the writers of which must either have been lunatics themselves, or must have assimilated mankind to a set of blockheads, to make them swallow such balderdash. If we read the 19th to the 20th verses in Genesis we can see that Pharaoh was endowed with great kindness by his behaviour towards Abraham and his wife.

It appears also, if we believe the contents of Exodus, that the magicians of Pharaoh were almost as clever as God himself, for they could perform nearly all the wonders enacted by the Almighty through the medium of Moses or his rod.

I say nearly, because it is stated that these magicians were unable to produce lice or flies, &c.; yet we must acknowledge (if those statements were correct) that the magical powers of mortals in those dark periods were much greater than in our days, for in the present era no man could transform a rod into a myriad of real serpents, or create thousands of real frogs with nothing, and still less turn rivers of water into blood, like Pharaoh's magicians did, although we imagine that fantastical and magical tricks or legerdemain have in our time reached the highest pitch of perfection.

I cannot, and I dare say no one can, believe that Pharaoh's magicians could not produce flies and lice with the same facility as they produced serpents and frogs; the creation of vermin or insects is surely not more difficult than reptiles, &c. However, I leave the reader to judge this point as he thinks proper.

As for my own impressions, I think that Moses was simply a little more clever than the wizards of Pharaoh, since they could not exactly imitate all the wonders it is said he performed.

We know very well that all centuries produce men possessing different degrees of capacity. We meet every day some dexterous men superior to other dexterous men; but this does not prove that the predominant or more talented individuals are the chosen mediums of God. If this were the case, we could point out hundreds of such mediums or divinities every century. It follows, therefore, that Moses had no more supernatural power than the magicians of Pharaoh, only his adroitness was superior to theirs, that is all.

Mahomet also, according to the Koran, accomplished miracles even more striking than those of Moses, for it is stated in the

Koran that he went up to heaven and conferred with Jehovah as easily as a simple mortal confers with an earthly king. In this report no Christian or Jew has any faith, but two or three hundred millions of Mussulmans are, so to say, convinced of the Koran's truthfulness, and would all swear to it, and perhaps even die for it. Why so? Because they have all been indoctrinated ever since their infancy with the records of the Koran just as we ourselves have been indoctrinated from our childhood with the reports of the Bible.

Recent centuries, and especially the present one, have produced men who performed such amazing phenomena that they would have been called God's delegates, in the dark periods of Moses, Christ, and Mahomet. In future times still superior men will appear. This is easy to predict, so if the stories inserted in Exodus are true they only confirm the assertion I just ventured on above, that every century produces clever men more eminent than other clever men. This will be the case in all times, as long as the world lasts, for according to the regular course of God's nature, its essence or characteristics lie in the infinite variety of its astonishing features or properties called phenomena, whether in physical, moral, or scientific matters in which no more divine interference occurred in former periods than in our own; everything takes place by the inherent and variegated action of the said God's nature which has always borne and ever will bear (sometimes in a more and other times in a less degree) the stamp of the same wonderful, extraordinary and mysterious character or variety.

I could point out many other doubtful and ambiguous reports in the Books of Moses, ascribed to the voluntary action of the Almighty, but having, I think, said enough to edify any one on this point I shall now examine sophisms of greater moment (registered in the New Testament) and see if they deserve more credence than those inserted in the old one. As for the erroneous statements recorded in the Koran, I do not think it necessary or of any use to investigate them in this book, which I have only written for Protestants, Catholics, and Israelites, who all three are adverse to Islamism, and have therefore no faith nor interest in the contents of the Koran, so they do not require any edification about its falsities.

N.B.—Wishing to impress my meaning upon the minds of the millions, I think it useful in the following parts to repeat often the same terms, names, and ideas, which I have already expressed in former pages, so as to be well understood by every one.

## PART V.

## DENIAL OF CHRIST'S DIVINITY.

## CHAPTER I.

The New Testament relates all the circumstances of Christ's birth; and the majority of Christians not only believe that he was the Son of God, but that he was actually God himself.

Everyone, of course, ought to be at liberty to think what he pleases; in my turn I may perhaps be permitted to think that (if Christ was God himself) the New Testament could not relate the events of his birth since we all know that God had no beginning; he could therefore not be born anywhere, nor in any form, whether human or divine; and if he had really transformed himself into the form of a man, in whose shape he came on earth for a short time, he had recourse to a false personification or a disguise. This is not very likely on the part of our great Jehovah. I shall, however, come to this subject again further on.

The New Testament relates also, the barbarous and brutal crucifixion of Christ; this (although it occurred as far back as 1800 years ago) we may readily believe, because it was the natural consequence of a fanatic animosity (prevalent in those antique ages of heinous superstition and savage intolerance), of which we have had even many specimens in more recent periods, by other fanatic sects who unmercifully slaughtered their fellow creatures for the sole desire of religious domination. We may also believe that Christ was an enlightened man, (especially for the dark periods in which he lived), and that he wished to propagate the moral precepts of his Gospel with a view of improving people's mental condition. All this may be correct and does not challenge any comment.

It is likewise presumable, that Christ imagined, perhaps, that he was performing a sacred duty in risking his life for the moral welfare of mankind. We have had many other men who had similar fancies in former centuries. Even in recent times, many missionaries have sacrificed their lives to some such ends; they even run that risk this very day, by preaching the Gospel in Africa, Asia, or China, in which countries many of them have died, and still die martyrs to their religious pursuits. Therefore, we may well credit the records of Christ's martyrdom, or death for the same cause.

But a thing upon which we cannot rely with the same

readiness is, that God accepted Christ's sacrifice, and will on that account forgive our sins.

Another thing which we cannot so easily credit either is, that Christ is the divine Son of God; and still less, that he is God himself, as the adepts of the Bible insinuate; an insinuation which can be nullified without difficulty, the more so, that Christ himself gives a formal denial to that denomination by calling God his heavenly Father, and by addressing prayers to him.

Hence, if he is the son, as his prayers seem to indicate, he cannot be the Father, for if he were, the devotions he addressed to God would have been mockeries. On the other hand, if he is the Father, his devotions to himself would be a ridiculous farce.

Christ could, of course, as we all can, be called the Son of God, who is the heavenly Father of everyone; but then he cannot be God himself, no more than anyone of us can. So the allegation, that Christ was no other than God in a human shape, is undoubtedly a falsehood; although he often assumed in his preaching, a celestial self-authority which in some degree discredited his apparent modesty or sincerity, and might perhaps be taxed as a fraud, if not a sacrilege; but having to deal with a fanatic and mistrusting mob, he was compelled, like Moses and Mahomet, to have recourse to all sorts of subterfuges in order to be listened to.

Now, whether the above account is true or false, it is at all events, not likely, that God desired Christ's awful agony and shocking death for the sole purpose of pardoning our sins, and to show by that cruel butchery how kind and merciful he is towards men, and how ardently he loves them. Would this dreadful process not have been rather a strange way of showing mercy and kindness to men?

## CHAPTER II.

If we judge all things according to common sense, is it not more reasonable and more natural or logical to think that God, had he been inclined to pardon our sins (irrespective of any exertions on our side, to deserve such a blessing) would have done so without that atrocious execution? inasmuch as if Christ really redeemed our sins by his excruciating death, it would disgrace the merit of God's mercy, because it would show

that Christ's horrible sufferings and shocking death were indispensable to bring God to a sense of clemency, or that he would not have forgiven our sins without a victim.

The contrary view would be more logical and more reverential indeed, for in conformity with the opinion we form of our Creator's generosity and goodness we ought to be convinced, that if even Christ had offered his life on our behalf, God's magnanimity would have rejected that kind offer, and would not the less have pardoned our sins had it been wise to forgive us without our own efforts (as I said before) to deserve that favour; but this would have been a bad policy to which God's wisdom was not likely to resort, for if he did forgive us on account of Christ's death, none of us would apprehend any ulterior punishment, since Christ by his agony settled all our liabilities. It is written in the 5th verse, chapter 1, of Saint John's Revelations, that "Christ washed us from our sins in his blood."

This statement evidently encourages crime, because, a great number of simple-minded people believe it to be true, and imagine that any mischief they might choose to perpetrate will be forgiven in favor of Christ's expiation.

In our time sensible and clear-sighted persons are of course too reasonable to be imposed upon by foolish arguments of such a description, they all think, that God must make a distinction between good and evil, if he does so, he will undoubtedly punish crime and reward virtue despite Christ's death, which for that very reason had not the least connexion with our sins. ✕ But unhappily all men are not clear-sighted, if they were they would easily understand that our magnanimous Creator would not have caused his own son (if he had one) or even any other man of his creation, to undergo such unmerited and horrid tortures, for the sole purpose of exhibiting his mercy, when he could so easily have forgiven us without the cruel agony and sufferings which Christ manifested so strongly by the groans he uttered when on the cross, in the words of "Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani." If these groans were real they would prove again, that Christ could not be God himself, otherwise such complaints would have been affectations, because God cannot suffer corporally since he is a spirit; Christ could not even have suffered as God's divine Son who must also be a divinity or a spirit, therefore if he really suffered agony he could only be a mortal, I mean a real mortal and not an assumed one. Besides, if Christ was no other than God, how could he utter the above expressions which mean "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" God could not forsake himself. So these groans must either have been a hoax,

\* for if they was they would never Peteranize the  
 Imposure Practised by Ethes Monks Priests Bishop or Pope



or Christ must have been a real human being and not a temporary or a disguised one.

I am well aware that Christ often assumed a divine character, or heavenly authority, but this he did, as I have already said, in order to fascinate his credulous auditors; yet many people deny that he ever assumed such an authority. If these people will take the trouble to read

Verse 37 and 39, Chapter 10	} Of the Gospel by Matthew,
" 25                      " 16	
" 29                      " 19	
" 18                      " 28	

they will see that Christ often assumed a sort of celestial investiture.

Now to return to my above remarks, I must ask, had the Almighty no other means of showing his love for man than the savage process of the abominable crucifixion? Would such an ignoble performance (concocted intentionally by the Great Jehovah) not disgrace his august dignity and celestial character? Was there no other way of exhibiting his divine clemency? Has he not given us proofs enough of his kindness and benevolence (long before Christ was even born or heard of) by bestowing upon us the enjoyments of affection, love, comforts, and luxuries of all kinds? Are those favours not sufficient evidences of his kind solicitude for men? Ought these blessings not to convince us that the excruciating sufferings and shocking death of Jesus (whether real or feigned) were an entirely useless and idle exhibition of a barbarous character unworthy of God's greatness? the more so that if Christ was God himself such a sanguinary display would have been (as I have said already) an absurd sham, making the Jews believe in the title of Son when in reality he was the Father, and affecting sufferings which he did not feel, and death which he did not suffer, because a spiritual being like God can neither suffer nor die. No earthly power will ever be able to hurt, and still less kill, a divinity, whether in a human or supernatural shape; the temporary form makes no difference, since the real nature remains the same.

Hence all the said enactments would have been frauds and impostures to which God's dignity never resorted, unless he wished to pretend being murdered by the Jews, a thing which he unquestionably could have done; but an exalted spirit like that of our sublime Creator does not play such comedies, especially as they would have been useless, and we know that every one of his actions has its utility. Had God really desired

to reform the Hebraic doctrines through the medium of Jesus, he could have left aside that disgraceful bloodshed, worthy of a tiger but not of a divine spirit.

Were Luther and Calvin crucified for having reformed the Catholic doctrines? No, certainly not; yet their reforms have been accepted by an enormous number of people. So the odious homicide of Christ was unnecessary; and the story that it was instigated by the Almighty himself is a falsehood, and another cruelty put on God's shoulders by the unscrupulous authors of the New Testament.

Had these authors intimated that God had perhaps devised this frightful execution as a punishment for Christ's audacious assumption of a divine personification without authority, the story might have a certain degree of probability because the 5th verse, chap. 20, in Exodus, says "God is a jealous God," therefore it would be natural to suppose that he was offended at Christ's arrogant pretension to be his equal; but to argue that God ordained the brutal murder of Christ for the sole purpose of showing his love and mercy to mankind appears to be such a ridiculous monstrosity that it is indeed superfluous to refute it.

Another statement, at least as foolish as those already mentioned, is that Mary, Christ's mother (who, according to the Bible, was also a divinity, since she was the mother of God), married Joseph, a human being of flesh and blood.

To this remark it will be answered, "that all the circumstances about Christ's earthly nature were only of an apparent and temporary character, which God desired to assume merely for appearance sake." If this is so, it would prove that God made use of false means to delude mankind. Is this probable? Is it reasonable to suppose that the august monarch of the universe had recourse to such undignified, burlesque, and cruel deceptions? Decidedly not.

The partisans of the scriptures, whether candid men or hypocrites, may construe these stories in whichever way they choose. No sensible or reflecting being will believe that God condescended to play such mummeries. It is shameful impudence to accuse God of having transformed himself into the shape of a mortal for awhile, in order to exhibit the sanguinary tragedy of the crucifixion, and then return to his heavenly abode. Such an insolent calumny can only vilify God's greatness and engender Atheism.

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## CHAPTER III.

Now, before going farther, I must ask some questions.

If Christ's death gave a favourable opportunity to God for manifesting his love and mercy towards men, why do we believe that he punishes the Jews for this cruel deed, which was so serviceable and convenient to his wishes?

Then, if Christ's death proves to be so immensely beneficial to Christians as to expiate their sins, why do they nourish such a heinous feeling towards the Jews who have rendered them the important service of crucifying him?

And, finally, why is Christ's chastisement by the Jews (for having reformed their doctrines) so strongly disapproved and condemned by the Catholics, who have themselves waged a protracted war of extermination against the Protestants for having reformed Catholicism?

I should be glad to receive logical answers to these questions.

## CHAPTER IV.

The adepts of the New Testament should take the trouble to think the matter over, then they would clearly perceive the non-likeness of Christ being the divine Son of God, and still less of being God himself, otherwise he would have demonstrated his heavenly power by more striking illustrations than those he exhibited. The meagre and ephemeral wonders he performed were rather poor testimonials for a spirit who had created the whole universe with all that is in it in six days, and who could surely offer more important and more lasting phenomena than those he produced, it is said, in presence of the people.

For instance, a single star created before the eyes of the multitude, or the creation of a high snowy mountain, a living being, a volcano vomiting fire, or the impediment of his arrest and crucifixion, would have been more convincing proofs of his divine nature than all his other miracles united; but alas! he was unable to perform such marvels, or else he would undoubtedly have done so, because the little he exhibited was done for the very purpose of showing his heavenly power.

It is said that Christ was quite willing to expose his life on behalf of his fellow creatures' moral welfare. This may be so, yet it may also be that he expected to be rescued from the hands of his enemies by the mob, to whom (the Bible says) he had rendered so many eminent services, and for which they continually surrounded and applauded him; yet if he entertained that hope he was greatly disappointed, for none of his partisans

came to his assistance,—they all remained passive spectators of his horrible execution.

The conclusion to be drawn from the indifference of these people is, that the stories of his miracles are either extremely magnified and exaggerated, or altogether unfounded, like those of his birth *from* a virgin, and his ascension to heaven a few days after his death, &c.

The fact is, had Christ really performed the alleged marvels (although not very important) extolled in the New Testament, the multitude would evidently have revolted in his favour and crushed down his persecutors. It is not credible that superstitious and fanatic folks like those of such dark ages would have maintained such a cold attitude towards Christ had they been deeply impressed with his celestial authority and divine origin.

The remark of the Jews that Christ would have prevented his arrest, and especially his crucifixion, had he been able to do so, is an argument of great logic, and when the partisans of the New Testament assert that he did not wish to impede his shocking death, it is downright nonsense, for we all know that he displayed his cleverness with the view of showing his supernatural power; therefore, had he been able to hinder his awful execution, he would unquestionably have done so, inasmuch as by allowing the Jews to accomplish this barbarous deed, he destroyed the whole prestige of the wonders he was credited with, and which he had performed, if they were true, for the very purpose of proving his divine character and skill, but which were altogether annihilated by his impotency to save his own life.

#### CHAPTER V.

Although it is patent that many of Christ's precepts are very meritorious, it is evident also, that others are unsound and impracticable dogmas. In some of them he is even in contradiction with himself: this proves again his mortal fallibility like that of all other men.

Many unbelievers in Christ's divinity call him a lunatic, but I do not think they are justified in their estimation on this point. I think, on the contrary, that he was a good and sensible man, who saw the backward and stupid character of the people in his time; only he was too enthusiastic in his endeavours, and carried his principles too far. Excesses are never good, not even in virtue.

For instance, in the 5th chapter of the Gospel, by Matthew, the four following verses 39, 40, 42, and 44, all recommend unlimited mercy and forgiveness; nay more, they advise us to love our enemies as much, if not better, than our friends; they tell us besides, to give to our enemies nearly everything we possess, or at least more than they ask. Such maxims are very fine in a lecture, or in a book, but to practise them is another thing altogether; human nature, which is the work of God, does not allow us to act in such a way. Christ himself did not follow the directions he gave to his listeners.

Did he not say in verse 33, chapter 10, Gospel of Matthew, "whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father in heaven."

This threat evinces a feeling of revenge or retaliation, but not of mercy.

Then in verse 34, same chapter, he says, "think not, that I came to send peace: I came not to send peace, but a sword."

Do such utterances elicit a disposition of forgiveness?

In one of the verses (chapter 5), Christ says, "whosoever smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."

Where is the fool who, on receiving a slap on one side of his face, would present the other side to receive a second slap? Such forbearance does not exist in the human heart.

It will be said, that this style of speaking was only figurative, &c. Whether figurative or not, such dispositions are not in our nature; no man will suffer an insult, or even a wrong, without resenting the offence, and without attempting, or at least wishing, to be revenged; and if he does not always retaliate immediately or openly, for some reason or other (either from fear or interest), he does not feel the less hurt, and is only waiting for a good opportunity to act accordingly. Such is the law of nature, or of God.

The Pope himself, and all Cardinals, Bishops, Prelates, or other churchmen, whether Catholics or Protestants (who all profess to represent Christ and his principles), will not stand the least insult or wrong, without having the delinquent punished if they can get at him.

In order to make us obey Christ's theory of mercy, God must first extirpate from our hearts and minds the feelings of sensitiveness, pride, susceptibility, shame, and self-respect, which are all so strongly implanted in our hearts. Thus he would be compelled to change the laws of his own system, a thing which (as I said before) his great wisdom will never do, because he never alters the essence of his nature; besides, punishment is,

so to say, necessary for everyone's safety. Without the penalty or chastisement for evil deeds, no one would be secure in his own house.

Of course, if all men would practise virtue and kindness, no offence could be known, and punishment or revenge would have no object. In that case, Christ's unlimited theory of mercy could easily be practised; but then the rules of God's system would be subverted. This is impossible! those rules were not established to be overturned. That is why penalties for all degrees of misdeeds were instituted by the laws of every country, otherwise the strong and bad men would be the masters and the others the slaves, therefore Christ's precepts of unlimited mercy are unwise and impracticable; hence they are insignificant and have been reversed by all nations, therefore they cannot be divine inspirations. Had Christ intimated that little trespasses or trifling offences should be forgiven when repented of, and apologised for, but great ones punished, it would have had a certain colour of reason; but he did not say so, and probably not even meant so, because his mind was impregnated with exaggeration, although well-intentioned.

#### CHAPTER VI.

In the 19th verse, chapter 6th, of the Gospel by Matthew, we read thus: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth;" then the 25th verse says, "Take no thought for your life, nor what you shall eat;" and verse 34 says, "Take no thought for the morrow which shall think for itself."

Any man of sense and experience is aware that the very contrary to the above maxims must be practised, or every one of us would perish of hunger; and no one would have anything to live upon to-morrow did he not provide for it to-day, therefore all reasonable men teach or advise their children to work, to be economical, and to think of the future. Moreover, every reflecting being recommends foresight, in order to obtain an easy station in life, or to guard against destitution. What would become of us were we to neglect this vital point? The 26th verse of the same chapter states that Christ pronounced the following sentence: "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them; are ye not much better than they?" We all know that fowls or birds can live on a few grains of corn, blades of grass, or on some tiny morsels of

fruit which they are even compelled to get at the risk of their lives, but men could not subsist on such scanty portions; they could still less rob them so easily as the birds do by the facility of their wings, therefore men must sow, plough, or work the ground, and do some other labour, either with their hands or their brains, in order to get their living; in fine, if we did not endeavour to procure something to-day we should starve to-morrow. The same remark can equally be made on the 28th verse, chapter 6th, referring to our raiments or clothing, which could not be had either without the trouble of manufacturing them; so, were we to follow Christ's precepts on this point, we should be naked and perish of cold in winter.

It will be said that Christ's object was to make us think only of a future life, and to take no notice of the present one. Were we to follow this advice what would be the use of our coming on earth where we could not exist if we did not contrive to get our living? Christ might as well have told us to destroy ourselves by suicide.

Every one can see, that our Creator did not cause us to come into this world for the sole purpose of torturing us constantly with the dismal thought of death. He did certainly not grant us the enjoyment of life with the sole view of keeping us in a continual state of anxiety and fear, otherwise he would not have given us so many luxuries, pleasures, and comforts of all descriptions. Does this not prove clearly that God desired us to be happy during our earthly stay?

Had Christ given us to understand that we should think now and then of our future life, his advice would have been acceptable, but what he says is so extravagant, that all men, whether clerical or laic, must acknowledge (if they are not imbued with bigotry and prejudice) that the foregoing sentences of the Gospel are futile and illogical, not to say more; therefore they show that this so-called holy document, although highly moral in many other respects, is only the work of a mortal, and is far from being perfect. This very imperfection brought me to say, in some other pages of this book, that many eminent moralists and celebrated philosophers of our time, and even of recent centuries, could have written a Gospel not only as well but a great deal better, and, above all, more intelligible, for I cannot possibly see why Christ delivered his sentences in such an obscure and enigmatical style; he seems to have been afraid of being inconsistent, or perhaps he did not wish to be well understood; yet he ought to have been aware of the great number of antagonists he would have to contend with, and that



his mystic and allegorical expressions gave them a too easy task of contradiction.

Had he not been so superficial and exaggerated on many points, or had he propounded his theories more intelligibly and plainly, the ignorant multitude (who of course could hardly comprehend the half of them) would perhaps have been disposed to accept at least the sound ones, and would, in all probability, have opposed his crucifixion. Christ's aim was of course to enlighten his fellow-creatures, yet his harangues were so puzzling and parabolical for people of those times, that he could hardly expect to produce any important effect upon their minds. All this gives weight to my impression, that he was only a mortal, otherwise he would not have made those faults; even in our time thousands of persons cannot understand all his meanings. For instance what could he mean by this saying, "let the dead bury the dead." No one knows. I have asked the meaning of that parable of several churchmen. None of them could give me a satisfactory answer. Christ has pronounced many other such obscure sentences.

It has been said that he was afraid of speaking too plainly, for fear of provoking the wrath of the Jewish authorities; this was a useless apprehension, since his parabolic language did not prevent his incarceration, condemnation, and execution. Besides, if he was a divinity and came purposely on earth to preach his principles, he had nothing to fear, and could therefore have spoken out clearly so as to be comprehended by every one.

## CHAPTER VII.

Another evidence of Christ's human or earthly nature can be found in the non-accomplishment of his prophecies registered in the 29th and 34th verses, chapter 24, of the Gospel by Matthew, where we read as follows:—

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."

Then in the 34th verse, same chapter 24, he speaks thus:—

"Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled."

Well, every one knows that more than eighteen generations have already passed away, and the above predictions have not happened, and never will happen, because the stars cannot fall from heaven, for in whichever direction they were to fall they



would always be in heaven or in the firmament, which has no end nor limit whatever, so one part of this prognostic did not occur, and the other part cannot occur. This shows again that Christ was not a divinity, and not even a clever astronomer.

Some people affirm that the generation Christ spoke of did not mean a hundred years or century. How many years then did he mean by a generation? did he mean a thousand years? No, this could not be, for if we read the 17th verse, of chapter 1, of the Gospel by Matthew, we see that Christ's pedigree consists of forty-two generations, namely, about four thousand two hundred years, not forty-two thousand years, since the world according to the Bible is only about six thousand years old. A generation could not even mean five hundred years, so it must have meant, as we all know, one century, or the life-time of a man in those periods.

In the verses 5 and 6, chapter 6, of the Gospel by Matthew, Christ forbids public prayers, but not the least notice is taken of that injunction by any christian, whether Catholic or Protestant.

He says "We should not pray in the synagogues, nor in the streets, nor in public," which certainly means also churches and chapels, he requests us to pray in secret, in our closets, with the doors shut, &c.

No christian ever obeyed this command; they have built and still build churches and chapels in every important street of each town, and even in villages, for the very purpose of delivering their prayers in public, namely, in the presence of thousands of bystanders, and in the Catholic countries, besides the public devotions in the churches, they exhibit religious processions and jubilees in the open streets and fields, attended by immense numbers of people.

If Christ is a divinity or God himself, why do we not obey his precepts? Why do we not practise our devotions and prayers in secret closets with doors shut, as he ordains? Why—why? Yes, why? Because not many have any serious faith in his divine character. But very few have the courage to confess their scepticism on this point, for fear of being rebuked or despised by others.

The announcement of Christ's resurrection is also a story devoid of authenticity. No one witnessed it—and his alleged ascension to heaven was only seen, it is said, by a few of his friends or disciples, who could easily spread such a report in those backward and credulous ages; so this heavenly voyage is merely a rumour invented by Christ's own partisans, and by no

one else; and as I have already shown that Christ was not a divinity, his bodily ascension to heaven must be a falsehood.

Mahomet also, according to the reports of the Koran, made heavenly voyages, in which no one of us is inclined to believe.

Moreover, when Christ's alleged resurrection from his grave took place, why did he not appear before the eyes of his murderers to show them his celestial power, instead of appearing only in the midst of a few of his disciples at another place far off?

Do such records not justify us in doubting—nay, in denying—the reality of that resurrection? Had his persecutors, or even strangers, witnessed his revival and ascension and had spoken to him, then we could in a certain degree believe it; but reports spread by his own disciples, and by no one else, are rather suspicious.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

Christ's contrivances to fascinate the credulous people of his time would have been useless in recent centuries, and especially in our days, in which all things have gradually improved. Scores of enlightened and clever men in moral, philosophical, scientific, and other branches, along with dexterous conjurors, wizards, necromancers, &c., have come, and still come, forward; but people's minds have made such great progress that no one, or very few, believe now in the supernatural power of men who themselves dare not any longer assume a divine character; all they desire at present is to impress us with their respective ideas by natural persuasion and illustrative terrestrial demonstrations, but seldom with spiritual inspirations, unless used as a mercenary mania of speculation, like Brigham Young, or the Brothers Davenport and others.

For instance, if in the times of Moses, Christ, or Mahomet, some one had invented a telescope like that of Rosse, or a clock, steam-engine, gunpowder, electric telegraph, the application of chloroform, gas, photography, and many other such astonishing wonders of our actual and recent centuries, the inventors would evidently have been worshipped as divinities, especially if they had surrounded their clever discoveries with some mysterious manœuvres. Where, then, is the wonder that the above three men (who were men of some distinction among the ignorant people of their dark epochs) bear in the Old as well as in the New Testament, and in the Koran, a celestial character?

Were these three men living amongst us to-day, they would not create more sensation than any other celebrated philosopher,

and would certainly not inspire a shadow of adoration; and if they claimed the ambitious title of divinity, we should of course not crucify them (we are too lenient now to act so barbarously), but we should laugh at them or lock them up in a lunatic asylum, and once there call them impostors for their impotency to prevent their incarceration.

It would, however, be wrong to slight any of those three pretenders, who, notwithstanding their artful contrivances, acted probably in the interest of their ignorant brethren. This indicates that in all ages nature produces some men superior in mind to others, just as it produces greater physical beauty, corporeal strength, and higher intellectual faculties in some than in others. Thus, we can hardly refuse a certain terrestrial merit to Moses, Christ, and Mahomet; and putting aside the fantastical delusion of their pretended heavenly nature (useful perhaps in their own times, but ridiculous in ours), their human eminence remains, chiefly that of Christ, who, being more modern than Moses, and having reformed some of the latter's barbarous doctrines, would perhaps have been listened to by all the Jews had he spoken more plainly or clearly, and had he not taken the arrogant attitude of God's divine Son.

Had he given to his theories a more reasonable feature and a more modest varnish, the majority of the Hebrews would undoubtedly have paid more respect to him; but having assumed a direct relationship with the mighty Jehovah—whom the Israelites worship beyond any authority, and so fervently that no earthly power could make them believe in any other divinity, or in any terrestrial medium than that of Moses—their religious feelings were scandalized and offended, as it was very natural they should be, particularly in those remote epochs.

Christ, in spite of his moral qualities, could hardly expect to eclipse the deeply rooted, and immense influence of his predecessor Moses, who had gained such great ascendancy over the minds of the Israelites (by adroitly surrounding his precepts with fantastical displays), that no one could obtain any predominance over him. Yet Moses's sense of prudence told him to limit his heavenly pretensions; so he contented himself with the modest vanity of God's messenger, and was successful in his efforts to propagate the Ten Commandments, with other laws; which, we must acknowledge, are (if we except some of them) the foundation of virtue, though they derive, so to say, from the source of an artifice, which to a certain extent, might be called a piece of religious diplomacy in those dark periods.

Christ, who came many centuries after Moses, knowing that the successes of the latter had chiefly been obtained by illusionary performances, endeavoured to practise a similar method, which he even increased, by decorating himself with the pompous dignity of God's divine Son, in lieu of his delegate. He, of course, failed in the attempt; because the Jews could not believe that a celestial spirit like that of God, had a son of flesh and blood; an idea exceedingly rational indeed; besides, the footing of Moses's authority was too strongly implanted in the minds of the Hebrews to be displaced; consequently, this preposterous and daring assumption became fatal to Christ, although his views were as meritorious as those of Moses; but they could not prevail in those fanatical times; they were only appreciated by a certain number of Christ's adherents after his death, like the paintings of a good artist, which usually reach a higher price when the painter is no more.

#### CHAPTER IX.

The merit of Christ's doctrines (save those I pointed out in a preceding chapter) can hardly be disputed, although their chief characteristics are to be found in the Ten Commandments, and other laws of Moses. But since the time of Christ, many axioms, or works of high morality, have been written and published by eminent men, and many more such axioms will be written; but none of these men ever did, or does expect to be worshipped as a delegate, or son of God. Holy titles of that description could be conferred on mortals only in those backward and credulous times, from which the tradition of Moses, Christ, and Mahomet's alleged divinity originates.

In the present, and even in recent centuries, no man, of whatever ability he might be able to boast, would be deemed worthy of a supernatural character. The Pope, it is true, claims something akin to a divinity; but all his flock (as he calls them) know his human nature well enough.

Smith and Brigham Young, the chiefs of the Mormons, have also borrowed a spiritual pretension; yet their followers are certainly not ignorant of the earthly nature of these men, upon whose principles I shall comment further on.

Luther and Calvin, who reformed the catholic doctrines, have never been looked upon as divinities.

Christ, did he exist now, would not be worshipped as a spirit; and if a great number of people venerate him still in our days, nearly as much as in olden times, it is because he was the victim

of his theological preachings, for which he suffered cruelly. We all know that the blood of a martyr will nourish any fanaticism, and create such an intoxicated admiration for the sufferer, that millions of people will fall into a prejudiced and frenzied adoration for him. Yet, in spite of the credit or homage his death attracted, we cannot deny that his assumption (to be the divine son, or equal of God) was the principal cause of his destruction; because such an ambitious usurpation is not likely to be tolerated by the Supreme Monarch of the universe who, we must presume, wishes to be the sole divine authority in his endless kingdoms; therefore, he perhaps never permits mortals (however virtuous they may be) to clad themselves in a spiritual dignity. A Divine Omnipotent like God cannot allow earthly beings to claim a supernatural character; no one can expect him to abdicate his high station in favour of a mortal, or to share it with a rival.

Neither is it likely, that God ever alighted amongst men in any form, nor, that he ever will alight amongst them ere they have all given a positive proof of deserving to behold his sacred presence in a spiritual, but not in a human shape; hence the story that God came on earth in the guise of Christ, his Son, must be false, because God, being essentially spiritual and not corporeal, can have neither son nor daughter; if he had any such offspring he would not be a divinity; besides, his offspring themselves would be spirits and would not come on earth in a human form, unless as I said before, God had recourse to a subterfuge to which his august dignity is not likely to resort.

The consequence of all this is that Christ could only be a mortal, and was therefore not entitled to call himself the chosen Son of God, who was probably offended by that bold denomination, in consequence of which he permitted or perhaps even instigated Christ's awful execution and sufferings, in order to give a terrible example for the future, as a warning to those who might be inclined to emulate such an audacious assumption; it is not reasonable to suppose, that the great Jehovah, in spite of his infinite kindness will tolerate such a familiarity.

It may be said that Jesus as well as any one else is the Son of God; true, in a mortal point of view he is, but he did not act in that character. His aim was to be looked upon as the chosen representative of his divine father, who ordered him to come amongst men and to return to heaven, after having sacrificed his life with the view of redeeming our sins, and to show God's mercy or love for men. Such are the assertions of the New Testament writers.



Furthermore, had Jesus been a real spirit, his death could not be a sacrifice; because, having only assumed a temporary human form, the loss of that form was no offering. A real human being might risk his life; but a divinity in disguise cannot do so, since it has no real earthly or corporeal existence. It is therefore, evident that Christ (if he really was a spirit) could not have redeemed our sins by his bodily sufferings, or sacrifice of his blood. And if on the other hand, he has really suffered agony, and lost his life, he could only have been a mortal of flesh and bone, as we all are; but certainly not a divinity, and still less God himself, as the partisans of the New Testament so foolishly assert.

The conclusive fact of all this is, that in whichever light we look at the statements of the Bible, we find hardly anything but inventions and deceptions.

In former pages I omitted to point out another foolery, inserted in verse 8, chapter 4, of the Gospel by Matthew, where we read thus, "Again, the devil taketh Jesus up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them," &c.

This is another ignorance of astronomy; for if the author of this verse had had the least knowledge even of geography, he would have been aware that no one can see the whole world, which is round, even by standing on the highest mountain of our globe, upon which the farthest distance reached by any human eye cannot be more than about two hundred miles, and in supposing the devil meant to speak of the kingdoms upwards, or in the heavens, then they could have been seen as well on the flat, or level earth, as on a mountain.

## CHAPTER X.

### PARTIAL SUPPRESSIONS OF MOSES' DOCTRINES.

Before concluding my commentaries on Christ's divinity, I must make another remark.

None of those who believe in the two testaments, can deny that Moses was the first chosen messenger of God, spoken of in the Bible. This messenger, if messenger there was, was ordered by the Almighty to propagate amongst the Israelites, the doctrines we know, together with the Ten Commandments inserted in the Old Testament.

The consequence is, if the said laws were promulgated by the express command of God, they must be eternal and unalterable;



they can therefore not be changed, transformed, or improved. Why then, have many of them been altered or reversed by Christ?

Some adepts of the Scriptures deny that Christ changed any of Moses's doctrines; if this were correct, how is it that Christ recommended a different mode of baptism than the circumcision, which is the baptism practised by Moses and his adherents?

I call it baptism because no Israelite believes that he will be admitted into the kingdom of heaven if he is not circumcised. Such is also the argument of the Christians with regard to christening.

Moreover, Moses strictly prohibited the use of swine flesh, whereas Christ said in verse 11, chapter 15, Gospel of Matthew, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man."

Consequently either the doctrines of Moses or those of Christ are false and cannot emanate from God's desire.

Then also the laws of Moses command the punishment of all misdeeds, whilst Christ advocates mercy and forgiveness for bad actions.

Now, if the foregoing dogmas are not contradictory, I really do not know what contradiction or alteration means.

I could point out other maxims of Moses which Christ transformed and depreciated or abolished, but the above points are quite sufficient to prove the ignorance of those who advance the contrary.

I do not wish to contest here the more or less merit of one or the other of those opposite doctrines; I wish only to show that Christ altered or disapproved of many of the laws God promoted through Moses. It will be answered, that God sent Christ for the very purpose of rectifying and improving his former commands, which were not any longer required after Christ's appearance.

I persist in the firm belief that God never rectifies nor improves his decrees, which are everlasting and remain invariable. Human laws issued by men may require improvements, but divine laws never. So Christ could not have been intrusted with the mission of altering them; he must therefore have acted on his own account, or by his own authority, like all men who introduce innovations and ameliorations in human laws, institutions, habits, and manners of living, &c.

Christ undoubtedly introduced several changes of great wisdom, for which he deserves the praise of all men. He had the merit, firstly, of abolishing the vandalic absurdity of uselessly

sacrificing myriads of valuable animals. Secondly, of suppressing the cruel rite of circumcision invented by the unfeeling brutality of Abraham, and continued by the shrewd but barbarous diplomacy of Moses, who, like Abraham, wished to impress on the credulous minds of his co-religionists that these maxims were ordered by Jehovah himself, although the sublime wisdom of God could certainly not have had any hand in such ridiculous theories, which are diametrically opposed to his natural laws.

Christ's rectification of the above barbarities gave him (despite the many unnatural features of his own precepts) such a transcendant superiority over his predecessor Moses, that (if we put aside the preposterous adornment of divinity with which his enthusiastic friends have so foolishly decorated him) he had a terrestrial merit as great as those men who abolished in more recent times the abominable Inquisition, the injustice of feudalism, and the curse of slavery.

Therefore no impartial or reasonable being, whether he is a Jew, Mussulman, Buddhist, Sceptical Christian, Deist, or even an Atheist, can deny him great ability. So it was with Moses, who in spite of his brutal practices of the above dogmas, was a man of great merit and sagacity in many other respects: hence let us admire and applaud both Moses and Christ on account of their many praiseworthy human principles, but let us worship God alone, who is undoubtedly superior to any celebrated men, whether called messengers, mediums, son, prophet, saint or otherwise.

I have been told, that God ordered Christ to change some of Moses's laws, because they were not suitable for the period of Christ, in which people were of course more clear-sighted than those who lived 1200 years previous, under Moses; if this were correct, God would have to send new messengers every 1200 years to rectify the old maxims.

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## PART VI.

### CHAPTER I.

#### DIVERS CREEDS COMPARED WITH OTHERS.

The Turks or Mussulmans, who are very numerous, have as much faith in Mahomet as the Christians have in Jesus, or the Jews in Moses.

The Mussulmans believe fervently in Mahomet's heavenly mission, and assert that Moses as well as Christ were mere impostors, just as the Christians and Jews believe that Mahomet was a mere charlatan, and so forth.

Now, who is to decide which of the three pretenders was the real delegate?

Are the three hundred millions of Asiatics (who don't believe in Christ or Moses) not as trustworthy as the three hundred millions of Christians or the few millions of Israelites? Are the religious laws of one sect written on more holy paper than those of the others? Where are the positive and substantial proofs that the Bible has a more sacred character than the Koran and the other religious Asiatic books? Are they not all theological documents equally supported by their respective and numerous adherents? Are they not all intermixed with miraculous illustrations and extolled as holy testimonials?

Then when we listen to the religious point of view of the above sects, do we not hear that they condemn our theories as much as we condemn theirs? Who is the neutral arbitrator able to pronounce between the adverse parties, namely, between them and the Christians? Is it a Jew? No, for neither the Mahometans nor the Christians would be willing to listen to him. Besides, were those antagonistic parties even disposed to accept the Jew's arbitration, what would his verdict be? It would be that both Christ and Mahomet were false prophets, and that Moses alone was invested with the mission of the Almighty, so the three opponents would never be able to agree, and the problem, which of the above three delegates was the real one, will remain a mystery for ever.

Let us suppose for a moment that it was Christ who was the real delegate of God—that is, that God came amongst men in human form for the purpose of preaching the Gospel—then we might suppose also that he came a thousand years previous in the form of Moses to preach the ten commandments, and likewise in the shape of Mahomet to preach the Koran, &c. Why, then, do the Jews and Mussulmans not call Moses and Mahomet the Lord God? They could certainly do so with as much authority and reason, if not more, as we can with regard to Christ. This, of course, the partisans of the New Testament do not admit; if they did it would at once show the weak side of Jesus' divinity; therefore they must cling to their system, whether right or wrong, so much the more that the vital interest of all the priesthood and clergy, who muster perhaps five hundred thousand members or so in Europe, depends on the continuance of that system.

We all know that Mahomet operated, like Moses and Christ, by the fascinating process of pretended miracles, in order to delude or to indoctrinate his fellow creatures, who, of course, are all persuaded of the reality of those miracles, just as the Jews and the Christians are persuaded of theirs. Yet Mahomet did not carry his claim so far as to usurp the dignity of God's divine Son; he contented himself, like Moses, with the title of prophet or messenger, and had no earthly rigours to undergo. His success was as great as that of Christ and Moses united.

However, the majority of Christians believe that the Mahometans, as well as the Jews and others, will either be forsaken or punished for their disbelief in Christ's divinity, although we know very well that the Jews, for instance, worship no other than the universal Creator himself, and believe that no one but Moses was his medium.

Now, what harm or sin can there be in such a doctrine? No man of sense can imagine that God feels offended with the Jews who worship him alone and no other, and who credit or accept only the mission of Moses, namely, the very record of the Old Testament, which at any rate must be as reliable (if not more so) as the New one, inasmuch as it is not likely that God replaced his first delegate by another one; therefore, if we have any faith in the reports of the Old Testament, Moses must have been the only real delegate, because God's doings are unalterable. This we can easily perceive by many evidences.

For instance, has he ever changed or altered, since the creation, the course and nature of the sun, of the moon, of the stars, of the earth, elements, trees, fruits, grass, flowers, vegetables; or of other products, such as stone, marble, and metal; or of men, animals, insects, &c.? Certainly not; why then should he have changed his first laws and theories, or mediums? Had he made any such alteration he would have repudiated his own doings, and shown that he was imperfect and subject to errors. Men are liable to mistakes because they are only mortals; but God, who is a divinity, cannot possibly err.

Hence, either the report in the Old Testament about Moses's heavenly message is true or false; if it is true, Christ's divine mission is a fabrication; and if it is false, the whole Bible proves to be a fable. So the undeniable and most logical conclusion is, that if God has really a certain predilection for any peculiar creed it must evidently be the Jewish, since it was the first, and, according to Moses, the Jews were the "chosen" people of God.

## CHAPTER II.

## IMPROBABILITY OF THE MIRACLES.

I must now ask another question. How does it happen that all the alleged miracles extolled in the Bible and in the Koran occurred only in the remote ages of antiquity, namely, 1800 to 3000 years back from our time, and that no more of these phenomena have taken place since those dark periods, and that neither God nor any of his angels appear or speak to us now as they are said to have done formerly? yet recent centuries, as well as the present one, have produced as many pious and virtuous men, if not more, than the olden times. We have also, like formerly, many mischievous people to whom some miraculous incidents would be as useful as they were in the respective ages of Moses, Christ, and Mahomet.

The answer to these questions is not very difficult. For instance, two or three thousand years ago the majority of the multitude were so backward, credulous, and simple-minded, that any clever conjuror, wizard, or dexterous and shrewd religious speculator could make them believe whatever he thought proper, and thus obtain great ascendancy over their blind simplicity; but since those superstitious, ignorant and servile epochs, men of all classes have become gradually more clear-sighted: hence, during the last few centuries, and especially in our own, no one could or can deceive people any longer by the display of magical delusions, or fantastical trickeries, inasmuch as the horrible chastisement of Jesus has put a stop to all those fascinating frauds, and has discouraged all those who might have been inclined to imitate them—therefore, since the fearful death of Christ the artful miracles are done with for ever.

It is the same with the alleged apparition of God or his angels, who never came amongst nor spoke to mortals. Had they done so they would do so again; and if some people imagined they had seen God or his angels in their dreams, it was only the nocturnal fancies or visions of some of those hallucinated brains which are met with in all times. The three principal religious leaders in the olden times were all compelled to have recourse to some mystic artifices in order to fascinate the minds of their weak-brained auditors; otherwise they would not have been listened to. This shows the equivocality of those three men's divine character.

In more recent, and of course, more civilized times, such mysterious displays would be useless; because no one would



believe in the supernatural quality of a man who stands on our terrestrial sphere. For instance, Luther and Calvin presented religious reforms without any magical fascinations, and although they affected to believe in Christ's alleged divinity, they themselves did not resort to any display of miracles, nor did they assume any spiritual attitude, and no one thought of looking upon them as heavenly messengers; their reforms were simply accepted as religious improvements and rectifications of burlesque mummeries.

Luther and Calvin were perhaps not the dupes of Christ's assumed nature; they probably knew well enough his mortal character, only perhaps they did not deem it wise to contradict the inveterate credulity of his adherents, for fear of hurting their religious feelings, and of creating a certain unwillingness amongst them to adopt their own reforms, which in Luther and Calvin's eyes were well worth that concession. Thus, they acted just like Henry IV., King of France, who said, "Paris is well worth a mass." Moreover, they ran no risk in patronising Christ's precepts, the majority of which are very moral, although somewhat exaggerated and impracticable.

The Mormon chiefs, Smith and Brigham Young, claim, it is true, in our time a sort of heavenly inspiration, unsupported, however, by any miraculous stratagems, which would not be accepted in the present day; and if these two men have been to a certain extent successful in enlisting a good number of proselytes, it was by the voluptuous attraction of polygamy, which gives a great charm to their doctrine; otherwise, they would undoubtedly have failed in their attempt; because the people of the present generation are too wide-awake to be enticed by religious allurements, if they do not get a peculiar interest or advantage by them. Even in Christ's time some people could not be dazzled by delusive manœuvres. Do we not read in verse 58, chapter 13, of the Gospel by Matthew, that "When Jesus came into his own country, he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief?" How can we account for those people's unbelief if Christ had really been able to perform *important* miracles?

### CHAPTER III.

Another point which is difficult to account for, is the appearance of Christ in such a small quarter as the Holy Land, where, in comparison to other countries, only a limited number of people could be met with, though that little extent of land



was perhaps densely inhabited. Christ, had he really been sent from heaven for the purpose of preaching the Gospel, would undoubtedly have emerged on the vast territories of China, Tartary, or India, where at least twenty times more inhabitants than in Palestine were living in a state of idolatry, or paganism. Those numerous tribes were more in want of moral precepts than the small congregation of Israelites, who had already been instructed in the principles of the Ten Commandments, which the very Bible acknowledges to have been proclaimed by Moses under the express orders of Jehovah. Therefore, the theories of Christ were hardly requisite to keep the Jews in a healthy condition of morality.

The chief value of Christ's doctrines consists only in the suppression of the two cruel absurdities of which I spoke in another part of this book. Without those two improvements, which were very important I agree, Moses's precepts would indeed have been as meritorious as those of Jesus, if not a great deal more so.

The Jewish Talmud, and other rabbinical dogmas (written a long time after Moses's death, by a bigoted religious coterie, composed of theological pedants), are somewhat exaggerated, and contain eccentric axioms brought on by the intolerance and fanatical antagonism so prevalent in those remote ages, but have hardly any connection with Moses's own laws, the principal merit of which cannot be contested; because it lies in the fervent belief, or faith, in only one unique celestial divinity, which is that of the single, great, Jehovah himself, and no other.

Christ, who came about fifteen hundred years after Moses, was, of course, more modern, and consequently more civilized; it is therefore, no wonder that he was able to improve many of the Jewish institutions of old standing; but those innovations do not entitle him to the dignity of God any more than other men who came before and after him, who improved, and improve daily, the civil, moral, political, and commercial institutions of every country without the assistance of any miraculous or fascinating displays, unnecessary and useless in our enlightened era, which has been reached by the gradual progress of reason and experience.

## PART VII.

PEOPLE'S SIMPLICITY—DISCERNMENT AND CONSCIENCE—  
THE TRINITY STORY.

## CHAPTER I.

In spite of all I have said in the preceding pages, many persons may ask how it is, if Moses and Christ were only human beings, that such a great multitude have manifested their belief in these two men's holy or divine character? It might as well be asked why greater numbers of people have professed such a great adoration for Mahomet's divine mission, in which none of us has the least confidence. Then we might ask also, how it happens that the majority of the Spanish, Austrian, Irish, and even a prodigious number of the French people would fall on their knees in the presence of the Pope, were he to come amongst them. Is the Pope a divinity? Evidently not.

The Protestants, who muster over a hundred millions, follow the reforms of Luther and Calvin. Were these two men divinities? Decidedly not.

The Mormons, who number at present over a hundred thousand, or perhaps two hundred thousand, are fascinated with the pretended spirituality of Smith and Brigham Young. Are these two promoters holy spirits? Of course not.

Well, when such demonstrations have taken place in recent ages, and in our own civilised century, where is the marvel that similar dispositions were exhibited in Asia or Egypt, two or three thousand years ago, by the backward and ignorant multitude, in favour of Moses, Christ, and Mahomet? Every one can discern that these three men acted in their respective periods exactly as Luther and Calvin have done in theirs, and as Brigham Young does now; therefore it is downright folly to profess the least religious devotion for any peculiar human eminence or earthly celebrity. Hence, the most natural and reasonable theory consists of the belief in only one sole divinity, which is that of God, the mighty creator of all things, who cannot have any competitor or rival, and who does not require other mediums than those we call Discernment and Conscience, to uphold his incomparable greatness. So, all the reported heavenly missions of men in the Scriptures and Koran, or in any other book, are invented either by these men themselves or by a host of blockheads like those who invented the Trinity story, which has not the slightest signification.

No reflecting being can fail to understand that God must be unique and indivisible, he can therefore not be divided in three different parts; we might as well divide him into twenty or a hundred parts, which would not make any difference, especially if the three denominations Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, mean only one. So this fractional division becomes a foolish and useless mystification, rather offending to God's dignity, the more so that many simple-minded people might fancy themselves under the control of three separate or various powers; consequently, this absurd trio lowers God's supremacy, because it seems, as it were, that he the Father is only one of the three managers in the heavenly firm.

God is either the sole spiritual omnipotent, or he is not; if he is, he cannot and need not be divided into fractions of any kind; and if he is not, he cannot be the almighty authority we give him credit for. So the childish and idle Trinity must be nonsense.

## CHAPTER II.

### REVELATIONS OF CHRIST.

Many theologians assert that without Christ's revelations mankind would have remained in a state of ignorance and barbarity, &c. In looking at this point carefully we soon perceive its weak side, for in comparing our own demeanour and theological institutions with those of the Jews and the Mussulmans, we can notice at once that these two sects are (from a religious point of view) as virtuous and as clear-sighted as we are ourselves, although both sneer at Christ's revelations and doctrines, of which they have never taken any notice, but on the contrary, laugh them to scorn.

We are well aware that the Israelites knew of the existence of a deity, and practised the moral precepts of the ten commandments long before Christ was even dreamed of. The better classes of the Hebrews and of the Mahometans are as honest, kind, and charitable, as the better classes of the Christians. On the other hand, the lower and even some of the middle classes of the Christians are as vicious and as mischievous (if not more so) as the corresponding classes of the Mussulmans and Jews; the only distinction between them and ourselves is a little more refinery in our manners, and a greater spirit of industry, or adventures, which originates from our higher degree of ambition and speculative dispositions. As for sentimental feelings and religious principles they are well able to cope with us. There is scarcely, as I have already said in a

former chapter, any instance or example of a Jew's execution for murder. It may safely be asserted that not two homicides can be brought to the charge of Jews in a whole century, whilst more than a thousand murders are committed every year by Christians in Europe alone; the other crimes are in the same ratio. I am aware of course that the Christians are more numerous than the Jews, but the proportion cannot balance the comparison.

The crimes among the Mussulmans and Asiatics are also much less in number than those among Christians, although the former are as numerous as the latter. Moreover, we are all aware that the people who profess Islamism and Judaism are each in their respective faith more united and friendly among themselves than Christians, who are divided by endless schisms, criticising each other so as to be unable to come to any religious harmony, though they all profess to worship Christ.

Should such sectarian variety not bring us to the conclusive fact, that the revelations of Moses and Mahomet were better instructions than those of Christ? which for that very reason were not wanted, so much the less that the Jews and Mahometans, who do not believe in Christ's authority, are as good as the Christians, and perhaps a great deal better in many respects. Does not this indicate that mankind would have attained the same degree of morality in the long run of two or three thousand years without Christ's appearance and revelations?

### CHAPTER III.

#### POLYGAMY AND OTHER HABITS COMPARED WITH OUR OWN MANNERS.

According to our opinion, one of the most important defects in the Mussulman's doctrines lies in their habit of polygamy or plurality of wives.

Well, I venture to assert that our depraved system of public prostitution, tolerated by our laws, has more fatal consequences than the officially adopted polygamy of the Mahometans.

No one can persuade me that we meet with so much venereal disease or so much secret debauchery in Orient as we do here.

Then a comparatively small number of women in Orient or Asia bear the brand of dishonour and shame like millions of wretched females do in our countries on account of their miserable and despised life of prostitution.

In Orient a certain number of females may, it is true, belong to one man, yet they all can boast of having a husband or a master, sanctioned by the law and custom of the land; they have therefore nothing to blush for, whereas in our part of Europe a great number of women belong to all men who think proper to pay them, but have no matrimonial fixed engagement or protective claim whatever, and lead a vagabond, loose, wanton life of degradation, vice, drunkenness, and miseries of every description, poisoning, besides, the health of our male generation as well as their own.

Many other Mahometan and Jewish theories are wiser than ours; for instance, the prohibition of wine and spirits by the religious laws of Mahomet is a very wise regulation. Had Christ recommended a similar abstinence we should perhaps not witness at the present day such a great amount of poverty, depravity, and crime arising from the deplorable vice of drunkenness, especially in England.

The religious decree of cleanliness, by frequent ablutions or bathing, amongst the Mussulmans is a very beneficial injunction, whilst upon Christians no such practice has been imposed in the New Testament.

Then the Jewish axiom of inspecting the healthy condition of cattle, as well as of fowls, after they have been killed, and before using them as food, is unquestionably a more hygienic system than that of the Christians. It would be difficult indeed to find a single ounce of unsound or diseased meat in a Jewish butcher's shop, whereas, in the Christian establishments of that description, many pounds of meat unfit for human food may be detected in every town each week.

The forbidden connection amongst the Jews of a conjugal nature during the female menstruum, and many other of their maxims, too numerous to be mentioned here, are better adapted for healthy purposes than those of other creeds.

All this proves that Jews, as well as Mahometans, both of whom the Christians affect to scorn, had much better teachers or revealers than the Christians. However, the best and greatest revealers, superior to the above three and all other teachers, are those we call time, experience, reason, necessity, and conscience: these five legislators are the most eminent guides and advisers of mankind. Have we not all learnt in process of time, and by meditation, the value of moral and physical happiness? Have not reason and experience taught us to appreciate the merit of virtue and progress? Do not necessity and conscience tell us that our welfare lies in justice,



humanity, and gratitude towards our Creator, and also towards each other—and that vice and crime lead us to wretchedness, destitution, and despair? Has the consciousness of all these miseries not brought thousands, nay, millions of us to amend our bad propensities, for our own benefit, without the assistance of any biblical or scriptural revealer?

When I said that the Mussulmans and the Jews did not take any notice of Jesus's revelations or teachings, I might as well have added that the Christians themselves do not much care for Christ's precepts of unlimited mercy, otherwise they would not have continually waged wars of extermination not only against other persuasions, but also amongst themselves.

Jesus has preached many other theories to which the majority of Christians do not pay any attention; if they did, there would not be so many ungrateful and selfish people amongst them. See verses 40, 41, and 42 (chapter 5), of the Gospel by Matthew.

All the above remarks lead us to the logical conclusion that it is neither Christ nor Moses, and still less Mahomet, but the advantage of moral and physical comfort or happiness, which has caused gradually in the great lapse of time the progress of civilization.

If it were not so, if it were men who had alone evoked the blessing of moral light, Moses would have the first claim to our gratitude, since he revealed, previous to Christ, the existence of God, together with the moral precepts of the ten commandments, and other useful laws, which are undoubtedly the best foundations of virtue.

Mahomet also propagated amongst his followers many moral maxims. This shows again that Christ was not the sole moral teacher or revealer of merit on earth.

Moreover, many other enlightened men of different creeds have elicited virtuous theories in their respective epochs; therefore no one is really justified in attributing to himself alone the special privilege or merit of having revealed morality, which has only been brought to light gradually, one century after the other, ever since the creation to our very days, and will continue so by the constant exertions of human contrivance for the purpose of our welfare. Hence, the intimation that without Christ's revelations we should all have remained in the dark, or in a state of barbarism, has no ground whatever.

Had the Almighty sent Christ on earth for the purpose of our moral happiness, he would not have taken him back to heaven after such a short stay amongst men, but would have



ordered him to remain with us, in order to direct constantly our destiny, inasmuch as we are more numerous to-day than we were formerly, and are perhaps more in want of a divine leader fit to rectify and regulate the many religious contentions which divide the human race at the present moment, than in the period of Christ's alleged ascension to heaven.

## PART VIII.

### CHAPTER 1.

#### WHO WAS THE REAL DELEGATE ?

When we reckon that Jesus appeared only about 1800 years, Moses about 3000 years, and that the world, according to the Bible, was created over 6000 years ago (some celebrated geologists and astronomers say 100,000 years, and others a million of centuries, &c.), is it likely that God deferred such a long while ere he took the resolution to send mediators amongst men? Had this been so, it would evidently prove that he was unwilling to have anything to do with the human race all the previous ages before Moses?

Is such a supposition reasonable? Is it probable that God (had he really been inclined to send delegates on earth) would have left mankind in the dark so many thousand years or centuries? Decidedly not. Thus we are brought to the logical fact that Moses, as well as Christ and Mahomet, came all three forward on their own authority, with the view of accomplishing either their ambitious aims or their kind solicitude for their fellow creatures, just like Luther and Calvin, or Brigham Young and Smith, who were and are unquestionably only mortals more or less clear-sighted, covetous, or praiseworthy in their respective attempts, but were never entrusted with any heavenly or special mission by the Almighty, who (according to all the signs of nature, together with common sense) leaves every one of us free to act as we choose best conformably with our own judgment, with which he has gifted all men in a more or less degree, whether brought up under the guidance of one or the other of the above mentioned promoters, who were themselves beings of a human essence, like all the eminent men who continually appear and disappear every century, and who have no more divine connection or direct affinity with God than I have myself in writing this book. In sending Moses first to give us his laws,

and then Christ or Mahomet a long time afterwards to supersede Moses, the Almighty must have been aware of the dissension and discord such substitutions would create, and as schisms or divisions must indubitably be adverse to God's conciliatory spirit, the whole story of these three men's preternatural character falls to the ground.

## CHAPTER II.

### BOUNDLESS MERCY OF CHRIST.

The adepts of the New Testament, when questioned on the impracticable and exaggerated theories of Christ's unlimited mercy and forgiveness, say that these were, in fact, God's own principles.

We all know that the very records of the Scriptures announce God's unwillingness to forgive sins, for he punishes every one of us with death on account of Adam's transgression.

Then, according to the same Scriptures, he destroyed also, in the time of Noah, the whole human race on account of their perversity. If all these statements are correct, God shows no mercy to sinners. Why, then, should we be better than God himself, and be more merciful towards those who offend us than he is towards them?

## CHAPTER III.

### GOD'S ILL-FEELINGS TOWARDS JESUS.

The Bible relates the sublime abnegation of Abraham, who was going to cut the throat of his beloved son Isaac, because the Almighty (it is said) ordered him to do so.

The obedience to such a command would be viewed in our days as a barbarous violation of a father's natural feelings, which are instilled in his heart by the very will of God, who therefore (according to our present notions) could not have had any concern in the said cruel request. It might consequently be supposed that this questionable story, was invented as a mere hint, to show that our duty is to sacrifice our most tender feelings when God commands.

On the other hand, if this incident were true, it would show also how little the Creator desires any one to be victimised on

account of the devotion he feels towards him, since he prevented Abraham from perpetrating that savage butchery. This proves, moreover, that the great Jehovah did not grant so much sympathy to Jesus as he granted to Isaac, otherwise he would also have hindered the cruel crucifixion to which Christ submitted, equally to obey the wish of God, like Isaac submitted to the wish of his father—influenced, it is said, by the will of God.

## CHAPTER IV.

### BAPTISMAL THEORY.

The believers in the New Testament say they are convinced that no one can be admitted into the kingdom of heaven unless he has been christened according to the rites commanded by Christ and St. John the Baptist.

This assertion can be contradicted with more facility than all the others, because when we compute the number of mankind we find that the earth is peopled with about twelve hundred millions of human beings, of whom hardly three hundred millions are christened in the above manner. So, if we accept the said believers' opinion, the majority (namely nine hundred millions of mortals) will be forsaken or repulsed from the bosom of God, if even they behave as well, or still better, than the minority of three hundred millions who are christened.

Is such an allegation probable or logical? No, certainly not; for if it were, God would be an unjust being. Besides, in what lies the merit of the Christian's baptism? It lies in the sprinkling of a few drops of water in the face of the infant, and in delivering at the same time a few prayers, the text of which alludes to the occurrences of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, and the promulgation of the Ten Commandments.

Well, the Jews, who were the most benefitted by the said crossing, and especially by the Ten Commandments, laugh at the above mode of christening, notwithstanding the silly persistence of the Christians in the belief that in this mock immersion lies their salvation, or their hope of going to heaven.

The Mussulmans also slight the Christian's system of baptism, and have adopted (though in a more simple and a less painful way) a part of the Jewish folly, consisting, as we all know, in the operation of the cruel circumcision, which the

Christians in their turn condemn upon very judicious grounds, although the Old Testament (in which they believe as well as the Jews) intimates, that God commanded that barbarous rite to Abraham; this alleged command was subsequently abolished by Christ on his own authority, or rather by his humanity, for which he had unfortunately to suffer, a suffering greatly to be deplored, for it was one of his best reforms.

It is also to be regretted that Moses, who established so many admirable institutions, maintained Abraham's hard-hearted practice, which he knew well had nothing to do with God's own desire. When we look at the great genius of Moses, we can hardly account for his folly in continuing Abraham's atrocious scheme, unless we trace it to the fear of giving a bad example, in suppressing a law which the credulous multitude of his adherents believed to emanate from the express orders of the Almighty himself, the revocation of which would have destroyed the prestige of Moses's own doctrines, all of which he had presented as deriving from God's special command.

This is the only logical reason to which we can ascribe his resolution to maintain that absurd cruelty, more painful than many people imagine, since it consists in a twofold chirurgical operation. It is not only the foreskin which is cut off, but the second skin, or epidermis, is also torn off with the operator's nails. One may judge what torture the poor little infant must experience. The Mahometans content themselves with cutting off the foreskin only.

In one of my former chapters I said, "If God had really wished to identify or distinguish the Israelites from other people, he would have created them without foreskin, in order to spare them the suffering of the painful circumcision." I have been answered, that this remark is not conclusive, because on looking at things in that light, we might as well say, why does God make us suffer agony when we die? could he not spare us that cruel suffering and let us die without pain? No, he could not prudently do so; for if he did thousands, nay millions of people would perhaps kill themselves for the purpose of obtaining freedom from any anxiety or trouble they might be subjected to, and would thus destroy God's design of keeping us alive for a given time, in order, we must suppose, to let us fulfil a certain duty which he had evidently in view for our own interest when he created us.

## PART IX.

## THE MESSIAH.

## CHAPTER I.

A great deal has been said about the prophecy reported in the Jewish documents concerning the expected arrival of the Messiah. I have often been told by many partisans of the New Testament that the said Messiah had arrived, and was no other than Christ himself.

The Jews positively deny this, and persist in the belief that their Messiah has not yet made his appearance, but is expected every day, and that his coming will be the immediate signal for the end of the world, and also the end of all evil.

Now we shall let these two opposite opinions stand as they please (since they cannot or will not agree), and shall examine the opinion in which both concur, which is, that the two testaments can be interpreted in various ways; we can therefore not be astonished that the religious impressions of men are so greatly divided, and that no definite understanding can be arrived at. Had the scriptural records been written in a plainer and more intelligible style, we should be able to comprehend their real meanings; but as nearly all the biblical sentences have a more or less allegorical and enigmatical construction, we are reduced to the necessity of guessing, and must therefore model our surmises according to our personal impressions or sense, whether right or wrong. So each of us must either rely on his own ideas, or must profess blindly those in which he has been brought up, however erroneous they may be.

Some strong-headed men, and great thinkers have, it is true, emancipated themselves from the yoke of their paternal influence or primitive religious training; but those enlightened men are few in comparison to the masses, the plurality of whom follow mechanically the course of their youthful instruction, either from lack of mental faculties, time, or want of inclination to trouble their heads about the obscure perplexities and intricacies of theological controversies, or religious questionabilities, so they prefer to let things go on as they are.

It is of course easy to say that the Messiah was no other than Jesus; we may as well assert that he was no other than Moses, or Mahomet, or Luther; for I do not see why Christ should have more claim to this title than the three others, who were as



great reformers, in their respective spheres and times, as Jesus was in his; therefore no one can affirm positively who the real Messiah may be, and as the coming of Jesus and the other three above-mentioned reformers, *did not* deliver mankind from all evil, nor bring on the end of the terrestrial world (as the Jews' prophecy said it would), we must conclude that their Messiah is still wanting, and can therefore not be Christ.

It is even probable that no such a being as a Messiah ever came, or ever will come, and that the whole story is a hoax of a religious description, like many others of the same character. Besides, if the Messiah was Christ, and Christ was God, then God must be himself the Messiah who consequently came at the time of the creation; if so, we must make an addition to the trinity farce, and call it *God, Son, Messiah, and Holy Ghost*, or a quadruple foolery.

## CHAPTER II.

### PROPHETS' PREDICTIONS.

It was not so very difficult to foretell the coming of a man who should be persecuted and ill-treated, although he was as meek as a lamb, &c., because everyone of experience knows that innovators will step forward in all ages, and if of a religious nature, they must show kind dispositions, or else they would not be listened to.

We are aware also, that the plurality of such innovators have often to pay dearly for their bold attempts to rectify people's inveterate errors, especially in the remote, barbarous times; although these innovators may, on the other hand, become the idols of those who accept their reforms, and who, of course, look at the victimized reformer as a martyr to his solicitude for mankind. This was the case with Christ, who was the victim of intolerance, superstition, and fanaticism.

However, had Christ been a legislator instead of an innovator, namely, had he been the first to promote a religion in lieu of being only a reformer of a religion, he would, perhaps, never have been molested; but in encroaching upon doctrines of long standing, it was easy to foresee that he would perish in the attempt, especially in such backward times as his; even in our present days, a reformer of Christianity or Islamism would be roughly handled. Hence this prophecy so much talked of had certainly no supernatural merit.

Many more predictions of Isaiah and other Prophets can be traced to some such natural causes, although they did not all occur. Besides, where is the positive proof that the real dates of all the Biblical predictions are correct? Who can tell whether many have not been written a hundred years after their occurrences, namely, about 1700 years back from our present time? This would be a period still long enough, indeed, to leave us in the dark about their real dates; the more so, that during those seventeen centuries many records must have been inserted in the Bible, consequently they could easily have been classified in a so-called anticipated manner.

Another thing which is said to have been foretold, is the triumph of Christianity. Any man endowed with some perspicacity could have foreseen this triumph, for several very obvious reasons—

1st. When the life of a religious reformer is at stake, and has been sacrificed on behalf of his improvements, he will naturally (as I said already) be considered as a martyr, and be idolised by millions of admirers, who will, therefore, become his partisans.

2dly. The sole suppression of the horrid circumcision aroused the gratitude of every father and mother.

3dly. The abolishment of the barbarous and vandal practice of holocausts or sacrifices of innumerable animals, obtained the approval of every reasonable being.

It is, therefore, not surprising that these improvements have given to Christ, or to Christianity, a certain predominance, in spite of the incontestable merit of all the other Jewish precepts. Brutal theories, like those just mentioned, cannot flourish for ever, they must sooner or later be revoked; such is the inevitable consequence of all cruel or barbarous doctrines; this could easily be foreseen. Moreover, if the propagation of Christianity is more prevalent than other religions, it is because the Jews and the Mahometans never send any missionaries to preach their respective doctrines to the people of other nations; whereas, the Christians send forth their missionaries to every quarter of the globe; this, of course, gives the Christian religion a greater chance of being spread over the world than any other. After all, Christianity is nothing else than Judaism reformed, just like Protestantism is nothing but Catholicism improved, so in accordance with the prophecy—a time may come when the whole world will, perhaps, be composed of reformed Jews or Christians, which is the same thing; yet they will always be divided into two or three shades, namely—Catholicism, Protestantism, and Deism.

Another reason why the Christians will be predominant, is their superior tactics in warfare and their clever inventions in guns, cannons, and maritime constructions; as well as in their mechanical discoveries for manufacturing all kinds of useful articles. These superiorities give to Christianity a greater prestige than the gospel of Jesus, which has certainly nothing to do with any machinery; and still less with gunpowder, fighting, destructive arms, or scientific instruments of any description.

### CHAPTER III.

#### RELIGIOUS CREDULITY AND PREJUDICES.

How often have I been puzzled and rather surprised in conversing with people who appeared to be so shrewd and clear-sighted in commercial, social, political, scientific, or other topics, and yet so credulously blind in religious matters. I said to myself, such a contrast cannot be natural, and hypocrisy must evidently lie at the bottom of it; but when I investigated this contrast more closely, I discovered that other causes, besides hypocrisy produce the same results—this I will explain.

The biblical reports having been constantly rung in our ears during the time of our childhood and youth (during which time our discernment is so weak, shallow, and careless, that we are unable or ill-disposed to judge, and still less to scrutinize the questionable occurrences in the said reports), our juvenile imaginations were gradually familiarised with, and accustomed to, the daily repetitions of those ambiguous statements which were, so to say, forcibly instilled into our minds, and became constant companions of our mental impressions.

Hence, the power of that scriptural or religious influence grew up with us imperceptibly in the same ratio as our physical habits, tastes, and manners. This is why so many of us cling obstinately to our long indoctrinated religious fancies. Habit is a second nature. Everything which has taken root during our tender years is difficult to dislodge, or to extirpate, from our thoughts when we are grown up. Were the Bible only introduced to us when we are twenty-five or thirty years old, which is the age of reason, the ranks of its partisans would be very thin indeed. Even many enlightened men who are strongly opposed to biblical records, have often been so beset themselves by the reminiscences of their boyhood that they have really experienced some difficulties in overcoming the early influences of the Scriptures.

The impressions received at the time of our training are so tenaciously adhesive that it requires all the moral vigour of manhood and reason to banish or to rectify them. Moreover, the apprehension and terror of committing a sin, nay, a sacrilege, by calling in question any scriptural statement, has so strongly been inculcated in our minds when young, that thousands of people dare not venture to utter a biblical contradiction, for fear of being damned.

Many other causes can be brought forward, producing the same effects. For instance, millions of men are so busily engaged in their mercantile pursuits and daily labours that they have not a moment left for ruminating over the contents of the two Testaments, which they accept mechanically without troubling their commercial brains about the correctness or falsity of those statements. Other millions are too heedless, or too indifferent, to enter into any theological investigation, preferring to continue their old ways, taught them by their parents. Then an immense number of others affect to believe in the Bible, with a view to personal interest, or in fear of being censured by their friends, neighbours, or customers. And, finally, many others, not being able to judge by themselves whether the religious reports are right or wrong, remain as they are by sheer mental indolence or lack of judgment.

Had everyone the faculty, time, or the will, to look at things in their real light, and banish the precarious influences of his early age, a very small number, if any, of the scriptural adherents would remain. The religious doctrines infused into people's minds during the days of their childhood, produce the same effect as all the other mental sensations which we receive when we are young and green. For instance, ghost or haunted house stories, related to us during our early days, remain so strongly impressed on our imaginations, that we can hardly expel them before we reach the ripe age of thirty or forty, when we discover that these stories were invented either by superstitious and weak-minded people, or by rogues who had a venal reason for taking advantage of our credulity.

These facts are so notorious that it is idle to dwell upon them. I should not even have mentioned them here had it not been with the view of demonstrating the similarity of their character with the sensations received during our youth from the biblical supporters, who were either moved by a superstitious bigotry, or by a sordid view of interest in order to indoctrinate the multitude, the majority of whom fall only too easily into the snare from want of perspicacity, firmness, or sense.

## CHAPTER IV.

## RELIGION AND MORALITY.

All the partisans of Christianity assert that there can be no morality without faith in the scriptures. When we peruse the annals of the abominable crimes and barbarous atrocities perpetrated in the name of Christ during so many centuries, by the orders or instigation of the very heads of the churches, and other chiefs of christian religious institutions, it requires very little comment to contradict the above assertion.

Then when we look at our present heretical or sceptical era, in which people are far less religious than they were in former ages (although prejudiced enough still), we find that the majority of them have reached a higher degree of civilization, and enjoy more humane and liberal institutions to-day than in previous centuries. The proof of this can be found in the very fact that no more religious murders, or very few, if any, are heard of in our time.

Does this not show that the less scriptural faith there is, the better men are? So if religious dispositions diminish daily, and people's feelings improve, as is actually the case, are we not justified in concluding that the Bible has little to do with morality, and that on the contrary, moral qualities have as much chance of flourishing without the assistance of the scriptures as with their aid?

I do not wish to insinuate that real religious inclinations are incompatible with virtue. I am aware that religious principles and morality can easily harmonize, and that many pious people are endowed with kind, honest, and generous sentiments; but I am aware also that the greater number of men who appear sincerely devoted to their creed (amongst whom are even many members of the church or clergy), are tinged with hypocrisy, selfishness, intolerance, meanness, ingratitude, arrogance, and other defects, too long to be enumerated here.

All this proves clearly that biblical belief, as well as disbelief, may be practised by both moral and immoral persons, and that one is not more consistent with morality than the other; the less so that the religious precepts, intermixed as they are with fantastical delusions and questionabilities, have seldom produced great effects upon the minds of sensible men, and still less upon those of vicious and mischievous people.

Many persons affect to patronize the Bible with the view (as they assert) of maintaining order in the ranks of the lower



classes; this opinion, in point of theory, may appear correct, but in point of practice it is a mistake. Kind and virtuous people are generally so by their own natural inclinations, and require very little religious teaching, if any. On the other hand, people of corrupt principles hardly ever follow virtuous examples, and accept still less any religious doctrine promoted by men who assumed doubtful qualifications. Strict penal laws have more influence upon the minds of the lower classes, than any religious discipline.

Bad and vicious people may sometimes become better by hard trials, or by great moral and physical suffering; that is to say, by passing through the sorrowful school of adversity, but scarcely ever through reading the Bible, the contents of which are too full of improbabilities and obscenities to inspire confidence in those who are not imbued with superstitious credulity; therefore moral qualities must generally originate from our own natural dispositions or judgment, but cannot often be inculcated by religious teaching. Reading ambiguous writings has very little effect upon wicked, unprincipled men, and still less upon sensible men and great thinkers. Instructive and interesting books, or good novels containing fine examples of morality and generous actions, may sometimes improve such men's dispositions, but the scriptures are of no avail whatever; besides, virtue obtained by exhortation and fear is rather precarious.

Kindness, justice, and benevolence (which all belong to virtue) cannot easily be taught; they must spring from the source of our own inherent feelings. Naturally good and honest people have very little need of moral instructions like those drawn from the Bible, unless they are simpletons. On the other hand, naturally bad men hardly ever listen to scriptural advice.

I repeat again here, before ending this chapter, that the reading of philosophical works, written by eminent men, and other interesting books, in which elevated sentiments of delicacy and liberal or generous principles are described and advocated, will produce better effects than all the biblical reports, of which such a great many are so immoral, doubtful, and obscene, that they do more harm than good. The ten commandments of course are excellent precepts, and so is a great part of the Gospel; but those precepts are surrounded by too many ridiculous and deceptive accounts, therefore no intellectual man, and especially no freethinker (of whom there are such great numbers in every country), will take any serious notice of the scriptures.

## CHAPTER V.

## MERIT OF DEISM.

The majority of the human race belong to Islamism, Buddhism,, and Brahminism; the minority to Judaism, a certain fraction to various other creeds, and a great number to Christianity, which is itself divided into two sects called Catholicism and Protestantism, both of which are again subdivided, one into two or three, the other into ten or twelve, different shades.

All these diversities, divisions, and subdivisions convinced me of their equivocal or ambiguous character, and aroused in my conviction a determined inclination towards *Deism*, which cannot be divided, and conveys therefore to my mind a certain moral comfort I never experienced before. I adopted that doctrine, to which I cling every day more sincerely, because it cannot be wrong, and it is superior and more natural than any other theological theory on earth, for it can never be disputed logically.

We know besides (and those who do not know it will learn it in time) that out of the above diversified creeds hardly twenty real virtuous or honest men can be found in a hundred; yet the majority of them read the Bible, frequent churches, chapels, mosques, synagogues, &c., but when they come out of these places of worship they resort again to their usual habits of roguery, selfishness, jealousy, ingratitude, hypocrisy, malice, spite, and so forth.

What is the cause of all this? The cause is that the morality to be gathered in those places of worship derives from the rhapsodies inserted in the two testaments and in the Koran; as long as this system does not change, the same state of things will continue.

These conclusive facts induce me to persist in the doctrine of Deism, in which lies the utility of this book.

Were Deism universally accepted, it would evoke a better feeling and a more sympathetic, fraternal spirit of harmony between all men, every one of whom is the child of the same single Deity, who must evidently be displeased with all those earthly rivals or competitors, and especially displeased with their ridiculous schisms from which derives the heinous animosity prevalent amongst their different supporters, hence the promoters of the adverse doctrines called Judaism, Christianity, Islamism, &c., cannot possibly be the chosen delegates of God, since they are in contradiction with each other, and have

engendered by their contrary precepts the very scepticism and Atheism I mentioned at the beginning of this work.

Hence, every reasonable man should not only shun the Old as well as the New Testament and the Koran (since they are obstacles to our friendly intercourse), but should also hide these pernicious documents from the view of his children, who should be brought up in the moral theories of justice, uprightness, fraternity, and faith in only one single Creator, so as to be agreeable to him and likewise to each other, as it becomes all reasonable beings. This would be a doctrine most in accordance with virtue, and would most probably form good men.

Had such a system been practised in the olden time, the progress of morality and civilization would have taken place one or two thousand years sooner, without the introduction of the Bible or the Koran. For instance, had Moses, Christ, and Mahomet not have come forward with their mysticisms, other men would in some subsequent periods have elicited sounder and more reasonable theories than theirs on many points. This can easily be evidenced by the more recent progress of science, art, civil and political institutions of all descriptions, which have come to light gradually through the contrivance of modern enlightened men, without any scriptural interference whatever, and without any fantastical or miraculous displays.

Did the above three men ever teach us any mathematical, geometrical, or astronomical facts? Did they instruct us in the precious science of chemistry? Did they find out the sublime power of electricity in use at the present moment? Did they know how to manufacture optical instruments? or to utilize the power of steam? or to produce gas out of coals?—and many other such wonderful and useful things. No, certainly not. These discoveries were made by more modern and more clever men in recent centuries, and especially in our own.

The alleged divines represented in the Bible and in the Koran never had any idea of calling twelve jurymen together in order to judge prisoners, as we do now.

The fundamental institutions in the time of the above alleged heavenly mediums were not organized on such popular and beneficial bases as ours. The legislative and national laws or rules were not established by delegates chosen through the instrumentality of the intelligent classes, like ours.

It is consequently not very difficult to discern that the elements of morality would also have been brought to light without the aid of any pretended saint or holy document, but

simply by the gradual progress of reason and human contrivance, the most important features of which emanated from the memorable epoch of the first French Revolution, 1793, from which time social, political, and other reforms have made such rapid and surprising progress, that they have, as it were, been the signal for emancipation in all parts of Europe, and will in process of time find an echo in all other quarters of the world, because this signal was given by modern philosophers who had not the slightest connection with the so-called heavenly mediators mentioned in the ambiguous reports of the Bible. Although these alleged mediators had some earthly merit in their respective ages, none of them (any more than the above modern philosophers) had the least right to the title of God's special delegate or to any other celestial qualification whatever.

The intellects of the Chinese and Japanese better classes are wonderfully developed, yet they have never taken any notice of the Scriptures. Their own religious leader, whose name was Confucius, flourished twenty centuries before Christ.

I am well aware that a great number of nomad tribes in distant countries are still in a backward and barbarous state; they will, however, ultimately become clear-sighted (as we ourselves have become) in process of time, because necessity and experience will teach them the value of reforms or improvements, and engender in their minds a desire for moral regulations in order to enjoy a more comfortable and secure life. So it was with us, who ten or fifteen centuries ago were as ignorant as these tribes are at the present time, although the religious precepts of Moses, Christ, and Mahomet were known amongst us long before the said periods, during which, however, such a barbarous fanaticism prevailed, that the respective adherents of those three men perpetrated all sorts of atrocities against each other in the very name of God, whom they affected to worship under the separate and opposite leadership of these alleged heavenly representatives.

These execrable atrocities and persecutions (instigated by the iniquitous and prejudiced religious heads) opened at last the eyes of the hitherto credulous multitude who, by the sudden awakening of a long slumbering despair, threw off the unbearable yoke of their unscrupulous and bigoted oppressors, and emancipated themselves by the power of their own determined will. Then, and then only, began the real era of civilization which the Bible never had the power to promote during any time of its propagation, for this unexpected act of enfranchisement occurred only towards the end of the last century, and was brought on by courageous modern enlightened men, who all sprang from the ranks of the

people, and purified the tyrannical pestilence of religious strife (kept up so many ages by the priesthood and the clergy).

This beneficial inauguration of more liberal and more equitable institutions in all branches, was so warmly received by the numerous friends of progress that it reached in the course of our own century a higher pitch than was ever expected (although it is somewhat backward still in many points), and will undoubtedly ere long attain a more perfect organisation, of which we have new proofs by the last war in America, and the recent revolution in Spain, as well as the present liberal concessions of Austria, France, &c. Well, to return to the distant tribes I referred to, we may venture to anticipate that Time will ultimately produce the same effects, although the teaching of the Bible has not been of the least avail amongst them, since it has had no other result than the murder of a great many missionaries, who have nearly all fallen victims to their hazardous attempts to impress their ambiguous doctrines on the minds of those people who will only reach a certain point of civilisation in course of time, as I said before, and by their own requirements or reflection, just as it has happened with ourselves from the desire of comfort, liberty and security, &c., but certainly not from the records of the Bible, which never had the power to improve people's condition in any country, since all nations remained in a state of fanatic barbarity, not only from the beginning of the world, but even from the time of Moses and Christ, until the last century or two. This shows clearly, that the efforts of these two alleged heavenly messengers (to whom we may join Mahomet) never succeeded during their long sway, in bringing mankind to any reasonable degree of progress, which has, on the contrary, been retarded, since it was only inaugurated by modern philosophers who will, I hope, continue to emerge and flourish in all parts of the globe, where the scriptural reports have always been a hinderance, but never an encouragement, to any progressive steps; although the Biblical adepts assert that civilisation only began with the era of Christianity, an allegation so erroneous that it is hardly worth contradicting, because we all know that the most sanguinary religious wars only began on a large scale, after the appearance of Christ, and lasted almost to our days, or at least 1,700 years; it is only since the end of the last century, or about eighty years, that the abominable religious massacres and tortures have been quelled by the strong arm of popular will.



## CHAPTER VI.

## LIFE AND DEATH.

Having evinced in all my foregoing parts a firm belief in one single Deity, and in his justice or equity, and having besides shown that our death does not take place on account of Adam's sin, many people may ask, how it happens (if God is so very just) that he allows us only a brief period to remain in this world, when it would be so easy for him, and more magnanimous, to let us live for ever on earth, the more so as we did not ask to be born? This question is rather a delicate one, but being very natural, it deserves to be investigated as far as our human intellect is able to reach.

Well, trusting in God's divine justice, we must suppose that he does nothing without design. Let us see if he can have a reason for making us quit this earthly life in the short time of about seventy years or so. The interesting problem, why we are born, and why we must die, has always been, and ever will be, a mystery difficult to solve in a formal and positive way; yet the faculty of discernment with which we are endowed may perhaps clear up to a certain extent the profound obscurity which surrounds this great question.

For instance, may we not presume that the mighty monarch of the universe, unwilling to be alone in his vast kingdoms, desired perhaps to people his celestial abodes with immense numbers of virtuous souls deserving that favour? Hence, in order to recruit such a select company of worthy spirits, he had recourse to the well-known method of procreation called life in this temporary world.

When this process is accomplished, God surveys every one's behaviour so as to ascertain how they use the gift of judgment he has bestowed on them, and which, according to all probability, will lead many of us to an everlasting spiritual existence, and others to an eternal death, conformally with our good or bad conduct on earth.

Had God granted to men an everlasting terrestrial life, he could not have made them go through the above ordeal. Moreover, did none of us die, our numbers would increase so enormously, that this globe would be too small, and food would become too scarce; it would therefore not have been wise to favour with an indefinite existence all our successive generations, the majority of whom do perhaps not deserve such a blessing. Only not wishing to reveal to men his secret views, God

ordained the continual disappearance of all, without exception, so that he might afterwards grant a spiritual immortality to those who deserve that privilege, whilst all the others will perhaps be forsaken or made to undergo a new trial in some other planet.

With such a system God's august divinity may at some future period be attended by innumerable legions of virtuous spirits, of whom he has perhaps already a formidable congregation. This is most likely the cause of our birth and death.

## CHAPTER VII.

### RETRIBUTION, OR RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SOUL.

It might also be asked, why we must be responsible in a future life for our behaviour in the present one, since it is not our fault if we are born with bad dispositions?

This question appears to me less problematical than that of the preceding chapter, because it is easy to perceive that the sublime Creator of all things has laid before us two different paths; and though he has not communicated his real designs in an official way (a thing which he never does), he has not less favoured us with a certain degree of discernment, in order to enable us to surmise which of the two roads might be the best.

Those who think this subject over will have very little trouble in understanding the reality of that maxim, which is, that God gives us full liberty to manage our actions as we judge proper; therefore he does not interfere, nor induce us in any particular direction. For instance, if God were to incite us to be virtuous, our merit would deserve no reward whatever; and if, on the other hand, he were to entice us to be vicious, we should deserve no blame, for we could not act according to our own inclinations, so he could not equitably award any recompense, nor inflict any punishment. Hence, it is easy to conclude that God leaves us free from all influence, and has given us a self-will in addition to an intellect, and a conscience with full power to direct them as we choose best, consequently if we are virtuous we may hope to be rewarded, and if vicious we must expect to be punished, since it is our own will which acts.

Besides, did God influence us in good or evil he would not do so with a certain number of us, but would influence all, indiscriminately, in the same way. Consequently, the whole

human race would either be good or bad ; such we know is not the case.

This testifies the independency of our behaviour, and answers the question, why we must be responsible for our deeds, and expect either happiness or misery in a future world?

Now who or what will be happy or miserable in a future life? Is it our dead body, an inert matter of flesh and bones? No, that cannot be ; consequently it must be our soul, or the spirit of our mind, which will enjoy either the benefit or suffer the penalty of our actions during our terrestrial life, because the soul or mind alone has the will to act as it judges proper ; besides, should the body, which is connected with the mechanism of the soul, influence the latter, then we are of course induced to infer that the body as well as the soul must be responsible. Many philosophers assert that this is actually the case, and even the Jews believe in bodily suffering after death, during corporeal decay, although it does not seem probable. This of course is surrounded with great mystery, which no human being can boast of being able to solve in a positive way ; it is a guess, like many other mysteries in nature, but for my part I think that the soul alone will be responsible for our actions, and be either rewarded or punished. I do not pretend to assert that my opinion is more correct than that of others, I only wish to present my personal impressions—that is all. Here, however, I must make a remark which I think will prove that the idea of bodily suffering after death is erroneous.

When an accident happens to any one by which a limb is broken and amputation is thought necessary, the surgeon administers chloroform for the purpose of relieving the patient from the suffering occasioned by the operation, which is effected without the patient having experienced the slightest pain, or having even the least consciousness of what has taken place.

Well, when it is notorious by numerous instances, that we do not feel any suffering during the time we are only in a temporary state of insensibility caused by chloroform, how is it possible that our bodies should feel the least suffering during the period of decay when we are stone dead?

## CHAPTER VIII.

## PREDESTINATION.

We can hardly be surprised at meeting with such a great number of people imbued with the credulous belief in predestination, when we consider that looking at things superficially, our imagination is apt to lead us very often astray, either from lack of meditation or want of experience, although we may in some other points be endowed by nature with a certain amount of intellect. I say lack of meditation or experience, because it requires indeed a long study of circumstantial occurrences and no moderate degree of perspicacity, to discern the real causes from which derives the greater part of our vicissitudes, or turn of fortunes.

It is a well-known fact, as I said in the preceding chapter, that all human beings are created with a free will; they are therefore at liberty (when grown up) to choose between good and evil, or between vice and virtue, and to do as they like. Had this not been so, had every one of us been predestined by a superior authority to undergo an irrevocable verdict of misery or happiness, a virtuous or vicious behaviour would make no difference, for our fate would have been sealed beforehand. In that case our will would not be free, because there could be no possibility for us (whatever we might do) to avoid the pre-ordained or settled sentence of providence; if so, how could we be responsible for our actions, and be punished for our misdeeds, or rewarded for our good behaviour, since we had no choice and could not act according to our wishes? It is consequently evident that our lot, whether good or bad, is not stipulated and written in the book of destiny before our birth, or when we are born, but can only be the result of our own voluntary behaviour.

Experience has shown, by millions of examples, the correctness of my opinion about our destiny, which follows so closely our inclinations and conduct, that the majority of men are themselves the very authors of their personal misery or happiness. Every one of us becomes either the victim of his follies, or is benefited by his wisdom.

For instance, all those who adopt industrious, prudent, honest, sober, economical, and punctual ways, are pretty sure to attain a prosperous station in life; whereas those who allow themselves to turn lazy, careless, dissipated, and dishonest, are liable to be assailed by all sorts of troubles and wretchedness.

We may therefore safely conclude that it is not predestination, but our own doings, which bring on our good or bad circumstances, inasmuch as we can master our propensities if we are really willing to do so.

An isolated exception might sometimes happen, in which a wise man may be visited by some tribulations or reverses through sheer accident or hazard, but certainly not by any calculated and peremptory or pre-ordained design of the Almighty.

We all know that gamblers, drunkards, and spendthrifts are usually plunged into the gulf of ruin; yet we have seen a few instances where fortune has favoured some of them; but the majority are undoubtedly the dupes of their foolish passions. This is notorious, and can every day be verified. Hence the opinion of those who believe in predestination can certainly not have the least foundation.

There are also some steady and sober men who are now and then afflicted with the pangs of adversity through their want of foresight, or excesses of ambition, but evidently not by an anticipated decree of providence.

I am personally acquainted with people who, as they confess themselves, had not the strength to control their passions, and were ruined by them; afterwards, seeing and feeling the folly of their weakness, they mended, became wiser, more reasonable, and firmer in their dispositions; the consequence was, that some of them restored gradually their means and health. Does this not show that we are able to direct our own destiny if we are determined to do so? A great many examples could be brought forward in confirmation of my opinion on this point.

## CHAPTER IX.

### MISSIONARIES.

A few years ago I became acquainted with a gentleman who had travelled in China, and who related to me the following occurrence which happened during his stay in Nankin, and which runs thus—

In 1859 a missionary presented himself at the palace of a mandarin, to whom he was recommended by a relative of the English Consul, for the purpose of inducing the Chinese dignitary to embrace the Christian religion, which, according to the missionary's saying, was the most genuine of all creeds, &c.

The mandarin, who appeared to be a shrewd and learned man, replied, "that he had no objection to adopt the Christian



faith, if it could be shown to him that Christianity was superior to his own persuasion." To this remark the missionary took out of his pocket a Bible, offered it to the mandarin, and said, "this book will tell to your highness all the advantages of our religion." The mandarin took the book and placed it to his right ear, in order to hear what it would say, but it said nothing. He then placed it to his left ear, but it still remained dumb. "Well," said his highness, "your book is silent and says nothing." "Yes," replied the other, "it cannot talk; but your highness may read what is written in it." "Oh! what is written in it?" "Yes, your highness." "Then, sir, this book has been made by men, for God neither writes nor prints; and as I have no spiritual faith in the work of men, I cannot believe in the reports of your book, because I have only confidence in the works of God." "Yes, your highness, but all that is written in this book has been ordained and sanctioned by the will of God." "Ah! how do you know that, sir?" "I know it, because it is written so." "But, my dear sir, I just told you, that I do not believe everything written in books, since they are only written and printed by men. Come here, sir, and look out of this window," added the mandarin, "what do you see far off in the heavens, which shines so brilliantly, and gives light and heat?" "The sun," said the missionary. "Well," rejoined the mandarin, "is it made by men?" "No, it is made by the Almighty," answered the missionary. "Just so," said his highness, "and that is why I believe in it; but the works of men have no divine power. Everything that certain men can do other men can do; but what God has made no man can make. You call your religion Christianity, because it was promoted by a man, the name of whom was Christ. Could this Christ make a sun, a moon, or a star? Did he even produce water, fire, air, &c? No, certainly not. He could talk, of course, so can I. He could, perhaps, write, so can I. He pronounced many moral sentences, so have I. It is said he could cure many diseases, so can I, because I am a medical man. It is written in your book, that he performed some miracles, and went up to heaven a few days after his death, this I doubt, for it is only related by men who were his friends."

"Now, sir, please sit down," continued the mandarin, "and in about half-an-hour I will introduce you to one of your countrymen, who happens to be here since last month," so saying he rang a bell, and a servant made his appearance. "Go over to the Chief Office of the Town Police, and tell the secretary that I wish Mr. Diebold to come here immediately."

In about half-an-hour the servant came back accompanied by a respectable-looking gentleman, to whom the madarin offered a seat. Then he said to the missionary,—“This gentleman, sir, is like you, an Englishman, and a missionary, the only difference between you is, I believe, that he is a Catholic, whilst you, sir, are a Protestant. Now tell me please, gentlemen, which of your systems is the best?”

“Mine, of course,” said the Protestant. “Oh, no,” replied the Catholic. “I can prove the contrary, and show that mine is the real one.” “Nonsense,” said the other. “Well, well,” rejoined the mandarin, “I shall leave you together for a while, and when I come back you will, perhaps, inform me who is right or wrong.” He then disappeared, and sent the two Englishmen some sherbet and coffee by a servant, who said that his highness would be back in half-an-hour or so.

At the given time the mandarin returned and asked how the matter stood. “Your highness must please excuse, for we cannot agree,” answered the first missionary. “And never will agree,” said the second one.

“Well, then,” began the mandarin, “if you cannot agree and do not believe in each other, how dare you ask me to believe in either of you? If you cannot persuade each other in your own country, what hope can you have to spread your theological follies among people in foreign lands? Were I not more reasonable and more tolerant than either of you, I would have you flogged and kicked out of this kingdom, where you have no business to meddle with our religion, since we never meddle with yours. The only thing you could do is to go among the Red Indians or other savages, where you might perhaps be of some use, for they have no laws or morality of any kind; but then you will be very much exposed to be roasted alive and eaten unless your Christ is able to protect you against those cannibals, a thing which is not very likely, because several of your brethren have been there already and have been burnt, so you had better mind what you are about, and ask first the advice of your religious promoter ere you risk such a perilous journey, for those savages will never listen to your doubtful arguments unless you compel them to do so by physical force, or by the assistance of an army well organised of about fifty thousand men; but as you cannot do this, it would be wiser to leave those backward people alone until they find out by their own wants the necessity of good institutions, to which they will resort in time, but never by your preachings, especially if you Catholics and Protestants cannot come to a

proper understanding previous to going amongst those savage tribes." So the missionaries went away greatly disappointed, and left China the following day.

## CHAPTER X.

### CONFESSIONAL SYSTEM AND THE POPE.

Nearly all those who profess Catholicism hold the confessional system in great veneration, and the majority of them believe it to be a very good remedy against crime, and other misdeeds.

It does not require a superior intellect to understand that the reverse of this thesis would be more logical; because this confessional doctrine cannot fail to encourage evil dispositions, since forgiveness is expected after disclosure; and as absolution is indeed often granted by the priest who officiates, thousands of bad characters, or simple-minded rascals, might perpetrate all sorts of misdeeds in hopes of being absolved by confessing them. Hence, it is easy to comprehend that such a method is not only inefficient, but dangerous; for it must evidently do more harm than good. I say inefficient, because if the annals of crimes among the Protestants and Catholics are carefully reckoned up, the balance will certainly not prove to be in favour of the latter.

Moreover, how can a sound-brained being believe that a man who confesses to another man, a murder, or any other bad action, is likely to be forgiven? or that a simple mortal has the power to grant pardon for a misdeed? What authority, or right, has a priest, who is himself a sinner, to act in the name of God? Is it because he represents the Pope, who himself claims to represent Christ?

We all know that the Pope is only a mortal, so we may ask, who has invested him with the holiness he boasts of? Was it Jehovah? No. Was it a celestial party composed of angels? No. Was it a powerful congregation of other divinities? No. Who was it then? It was a man, a mortal, called Peter, who, it is said was a disciple of the mortal man Christ, then Peter was afterwards joined by another man called Paul, both these men undertook, on their own authority, to establish a church in opposition to the Jewish synagogues, and for the initiation of that new institution their adherents conferred upon them the pompous title of saints, in order to give a greater weight and more solemnity to the character of that inauguration, which was

subsequently extended or gradually increased by a host of other adherents, equally decorated with the varnish of saints, who joined the same organisation.

Had all those men really been saints, or holy spirits empowered by the Almighty with any special heavenly mission or divine protectorate, they would (as I said already in a former chapter) still be living amongst us, to direct our moral welfare; but having died, like all other men of their time, and those of all times, it is evident that they were only simple mortals, just like ourselves; and that the pretended sacred character of the Pope, which originates from the brains of Peter and Paul, has no more holy consistence than any other earthly dignities, or institutions of old and new standing; the less so, that Christ, who is said to be the head of the Church and of the Popish establishment, was himself only a human being, and was, besides, adverse to churches or to public prayers, which is the same thing (see chapter 6, verse 6, Gospel of Matthew.)

Not long ago a remarkable article appeared in an important and popular English newspaper called the *Manchester Guardian*, which runs thus:

#### “ PAPAL BENEDICTION.

“ An Italian journal, the *Pimgalo*, says:—

“ ‘In 1848 Pius IX poured forth his benediction upon Italy, and from the Alps to the Adriatic everything went wrong. At Gaeta he blessed the old Bourbon and his dynasty, yet we all remember the disgraceful death of the one and the miserable end of the other. Several noble Neapolitan families who went to him at Gaeta for his benediction, were afflicted by every possible calamity on their return. At Ancona he blessed three large merchant vessels; on their first voyage all three foundered and perished. He blessed Lamoriciere and Pimodan when he sent them to fight against the Italians (his dear children in Christ), at Castelfidardo, the one fled dishonoured, the other fell by the bullet of the excommunicated. He blessed the lawyer Boggio for his passionate eloquence in defending the servant of the Lord—a benediction but too fatal to him in the waters of Lissa. With all his heart he blessed the most Catholic Empire of Austria; Austria was conquered and humiliated by heretical Prussia. He now has bestowed his paternal benediction on the Empress of Mexico, and she, unhappy woman, has lost her reason. In the name of charity, let him refrain from blessing Italy for the future.’ ”

Now, to close all my arguments, I venture to repeat my former remark, that the propagation of the Scriptures not only proves useless but does more harm than good, for when a book (called holy) relates such ridiculous, improbable, and unnatural statements, intermixed, moreover, with immoral and obscene incidents, the majority of those who read them will scorn all religious feeling, and allow their bad tendencies full play without the least scruple, whereas, had they not perused the equivocal records of the Bible they would perhaps have acted according to the good side of the conscience and sense with which nature, or God, has provided them.

The Ten Commandments of Moses, and a *part* of Christ's Gospel, contain human precepts of great merit which should be printed separately, with some plain prayers and thanksgivings (addressed to God for all his kindness to us), but excluding the names of *Christ, Saviour, Virgin Mary, &c.*, for as long as these *prayers* are mixed or coupled with the rhapsodies of the Bible, they will never produce any favourable effect.

END.

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## GIORDANO BRUNO'S MARTYRDOM.

As the Pope has carefully removed the records of the Inquisition from the Holy Office to the Vatican, probably with the view that they shall never be used save in the Papal interest, and as some Protestant papers here have fallen into the Jesuit trap of saying it is not quite certain that Bruno was burnt to death, it may be well to preserve the following summary of evidence given by Mr. C. E. Plumtre in the *Antiquary* for April. He points out that the evidences for the execution are the following :—

1. A letter from Scioppius, giving a full and detailed account of the execution of Bruno which took place on Thursday, February 17, 1600, in the presence of Scioppius himself. This letter having been conclusively proved to be genuine from internal evidence by Mr. R. C. Christie.
2. Mersenne's mention of Bruno as *un athée brûlé en Italie* in a work printed in 1624.
3. The Imperial Ambassador, Wacker, residing at Rome in 1600, informing Kepler of the event.
4. The full detail of the trial and sentence contained in the Archives of the Inquisition.
5. *The Avvisi di Roma* (contained in the manuscripts of the Vatican, a sort of newspaper in those days) of February 19, 1600, records the execution of Bruno as having taken place on the previous Thursday, the 17th.
6. The Archives of *San Giovanni Decollato*, containing a notice of the execution of Bruno, given in all its details. The day of the week is said to be Thursday; the day of the month February 16; the year 1600.

Against this there is only the fact that the last mentioned archives gives the date as the 16th, instead of the 17th, of February, a mistake that might easily have occurred through a misprint, or from careless writing or copying. Yet, on so slight a foundation as this, the apologists of Rome endeavor to explain away this instance of her infamy.

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The Age of Reason and his Life and Genius, here and there obscure holes, which were windows, gazed at me like blind eyes. 0

"Why should I stay there? Had I any business in that place rather than another? I knew not, yet I sat still, as though I were before the hell where the devils that came out of Dianom had carried my Jacquinet and my Bertrande.

"Holy Virgin! How the goddess had deceived me! Hideous, with horns and claws, they swarmed out of her, the demon ravishers! Ah! in the pretty little rosy neck of my child, their claws were fiercer than the talons of a goshawk seizing a lark.

"A cry!—you know how terrible it is, for just now you heard it—no, not a cry, but a rising and ever redoubling clamor, rent the black silence; and I recognised the voice of my Bertrande!

"Where did it come from? From one of those towers; yes, alas, from the highest!

"Certainly a man's skull is harder than the stones of a wall, for like a maddened bull I charged with my forehead, as in the hope of making an entrance for my body. I fell, bleeding at the mouth.

"When I awoke, from a sleep like death, it was in a vast paved court, surrounded with high buildings; and a circle of furious monks, pointing at me, cried:

"'The devil's worshipper! There he is! His house was the abode of evil spirits, he adored a pagan image, he has carved an imperial image of the enemy of Jesus! the image of Dianom!'

"Another with a white beard, added:

"'He should be burnt at the stake, and I would willingly set fire to the faggots.'

"I cried:

"'Where is my wife?'

"I sobbed:

"'Where is my child?'

"And those men, all speaking at once, disclosed to me that they, and not the devils, had carried off Bertrande and Jacquinet. Yes, listening to them, I learnt that they had brought into their abbey the weeping mother and the astonished boy. Ah! if I had been there when it all hap-

