

Van Smith on Vanshardware.com did a lot to help bring this out into the open but I think he underscored the importance of Thomas Paine being repeatedly mentioned in R. C. Christian's book. R. C. Christian didn't just mention Thomas Paine's books for nothing. I believe it is a very important clue.

Unlike Van Smith I don't think that they have anything to do with some satanic cult. It is important to keep an open mind on things like this but I think they were meant by R. C. Christian to be an ancient form of Druid sun worship. The core points of druidic religious beliefs reported in Roman sources was their belief in reincarnation and their reverence for the natural world. It is very similar to the beliefs in the New Age movement. If you want to know what part Thomas Paine's books had to do with the Georgia Guidestones I would start with the book "The Age of Reason".

Every single copy of "The Age of Reason" in book stores today only have the first two parts in them. Most people don't know that there is a 3rd part of the book that is always left out. I managed to get a hold of the 3rd part that I have included in this torrent. Thomas Paine and the other founders of this country were actually Deists instead of Christians. In my opinion Deism is the only belief system not tainted by man and is the only path in knowing who and what god is.

There is a section in the third part of "The Age of Reason" called "Origin of Freemasonry" that I think shows the link between the Georgia Guidestones and Thomas Paine were not just a coincidence. You can find it on page 250.

Here are some quotes from it.

"Masonry (as I shall show from the customs, ceremonies, hieroglyphics, and chronology of Masonry) is derived and is the remains of the religion of the ancient Druids; who, like the Magi of Persia and the Priests of Heliopolis in Egypt, were Priests of the Sun."

"The christian religion and Masonry have one and the same common origin: both are derived from the worship of the Sun. The difference between their origin is, that the christian religion is a parody on the worship of the Sun, in which they put a man whom they call Christ, in the place of the Sun"

"In Masonry many of the ceremonies of the Druids are preserved in their original state, at least without any parody. With them the Sun is still the Sun; and his image, in the form of the sun is the great emblematical ornament of Masonic Lodges and Masonic dresses."

"Masonry is the remains of the religion of the Druids"

"The emblematical meaning of the Sun is well known to the enlightened and inquisitive Free-Mason; and as the real Sun is situated in the center of the universe, so the emblematical Sun is the center of real Masonry."

"The Lodges of the Masons, if built for the purpose, are constructed in a manner to correspond with the apparent motion of the Sun. They are situated East and West."

"The high festival of the Masons is on the day they call St. John's day."

"The case is, that the day called St. John's day, is the 24th of June, and is what is called Midsummer-day. The sun is then arrived at the summer solstice."

“the 24th of June is always taken for Midsummer-day; and it is in honor of the sun, which has then arrived at his greatest height in our hemisphere, and not any thing with respect to St. John, that this annual festival of the Masons, taken from the Druids, is celebrated on Midsummer-day.”

“The religion of the Druids, as before said, was the same as the religion of the ancient Egyptians. The priests of Egypt were the professors and teachers of science, and were styled priests of Heliopolis, that is, of the City of the Sun.”

“The natural source of secrecy is fear. When any new religion over-runs a former religion, the professors of the new become the persecutors of the old.”

“the christian religion over-ran the religion of the Druids in Italy, ancient Gaul, Britain, and Ireland, the Druids became the subject of persecution. This would naturally and necessarily oblige such of them as remained attached to their original religion to meet in secret, and under the strongest injunctions of secrecy. Their safety depended upon it. A false brother might expose the lives of many of them to destruction; and from the remains of the religion of the Druids, thus preserved, arose the institution which, to avoid the name of Druid, took that of Mason, and practiced under this new name the rites and ceremonies of Druids.”

"The Age of Reason" was suppressed a long time after it was made and many of the first copies were destroyed. It is very interesting to me that the only part that is still being suppressed today is the third section of the book.

Van Smith claimed to have come across Evidence suggesting that R. C. Christian was in fact Ted Turner.

Here is some information about him:

Robert Edward "Ted" Turner III (born November 19, 1938) is an American media mogul and philanthropist. As a businessman, he is known as founder of the cable news network CNN, the first dedicated 24-hour cable news channel. As a philanthropist, he is known for his \$1 billion gift to support UN causes, which created the United Nations Foundation, a public charity to broaden support for the UN. Turner serves as Chairman of the United Nations Foundation board of directors. In addition to donations, Turner has devoted his assets to environmentalism and capitalism. He owns more land than any other American. He also created the environmental animated series Captain Planet and the Planeteers.

-Turner created CNN in 1980. He said: "We won't be signing off until the world ends. We'll be on, and we will cover the end of the world, live, and that will be our last event... and when the end of the world comes, we'll play 'Nearer, My God, to Thee' before we sign off."

I suggest reading "Reflections on God and Religion" on page 82 in "Common Sense Renewed" first. I think it will help you get a better understanding of R. C. Christian and a better understanding about the book in general as you read the rest of it.

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**Common Sense
Renewed**

by
Robert Christian

Common Sense
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by
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No. 96 of 100

Robert Christian

Common Sense Renewed

Robert Christian



The Georgia Guidestones

Common Sense Renewed

By Robert Christian

Graphic Publishing Company, Inc.
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Contents

Preface	vii
I. Common Sense Renewed	1
II. The Georgia Guidestones	6
III. Cultural Evolution	16
IV. Guiding Human Reproduction	25
V. Suffrage in the United States	30
VI. Prospects for the American Economy	37
VII. Proposals for Improving Our Society	50
VIII. A Beginning for the Age of Reason	66
IX. On Revolution	75
X. Reflections on God and Religion	82
XI. On the Conversion of Russia	91
XII. To Make Partners of Rivals	103
Epilogue	124

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Preface

At harvest time primitive farmers separate their grain by beating the stalks with flails on a threshing floor. They remove the loose straw, leaving a residue of grain, chaff, and dust.

This mixture is purified by winnowing—tossing it into the air to permit the empty husks and useless debris to be carried away on the wind. The grain kernels fall back where they can be recovered and put to use by the community.

I was privileged to be born an American at a time when our nation had achieved high levels of political liberty and material comforts for our people. I have enjoyed the benefits of our society and have had opportunity to observe the passing scene from a vantage point which has exposed me to human beings in all walks of life, representing a wide spectrum of political, religious, and economic views.

Having reached the harvest time of my own life, I feel a duty to share with you a few thoughts gained in my brief existence as a member of the human family.

Like primitive farmers, I place these ideas on the threshing floor of the public forum where that which is useless or in error—the straw, if you will—can be separated by the flails of critical discussion. I am hopeful that when the residual chaff has been winnowed away there will remain a few kernels which can be added to the store of human wisdom in a manner that will contribute to the general welfare.

I have no pretensions to authority. I am a plain citizen, without scholarly stature or political experience. I present herein certain views dealing with a variety of subjects. Some of these thoughts, particularly those which relate to my private concepts of the cosmos and of our role within it, may offend certain of my readers because of seeming conflicts with their own cherished beliefs and traditions. It is not my intent to stir up controversy. Each of us is entitled to private views gained through personal experience. I do not challenge the opinion of anyone in these matters. I simply present my thoughts for

those who seek to review a variety of opinions when dealing with controversial matters. Others may ignore them. I have attempted to seek Truth beginning from a starting point in space, and time, and cultural immersion which was determined for me by the accidents of human history. Each life is unique. We follow individual pathways to the grave. We cannot control many of the elements which determine our destinies and simply do the best we can with the opportunities which come our way.

I seek that degree of toleration and understanding which you would grant a family member whose philosophical views seem at first glance to be outlandish or out of step with the beliefs of others.

If you cannot agree with my views I ask only that you will base your contrary opinions on solid evidence and common sense, and that you will not permit your judgment to be overwhelmed by unreasoning faith in a manner that ignores honest evidence.

Collective human intelligence is capable of discovering acceptable solutions for the problems which confront us. We must work together to direct political and moral influences through channels of wisdom, not channels of brute force, or ambition.

Using common sense as our guide we must unite with the entire human family in establishing a *limited* world government capable of settling international disputes through a system of law. We must establish as a parallel objective the building of an enduring balance between human activities and the world of nature.

These will be first steps in creating an enduring Age of Reason.

Robert Christian

I

Common Sense Renewed

OVER TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO a perceptive Englishman, Tom Paine, arrived in America in the early stages of our struggle for independence. He came with the encouragement of Benjamin Franklin, who shared with him a desire for peaceful resolution of the frictions which had developed between the Colonies and Great Britain. Paine became incensed by the autocratic aspects of British rule. He summarized his beliefs in a tract entitled "Common Sense," which brought the issues into focus for the general public. He appealed to reason as the proper tool for resolving our problems peacefully. Unfortunately, human intransigence made war inevitable.

Today the world is confronted by increasing portents of nuclear war. It is essential more than ever before that we explore every means for rational, nonviolent resolution of wordly frictions. Once again we must look to common sense to find new pathways to peace.

These essays are addressed to open-minded citizens of all national, political, and religious persuasions who are willing to review our problems in the light of collective reason. Let us end once and for all the ultimate abomination—war. Let us stamp out politically motivated terrorism and assassination. I speak as a private citizen of the United States, professing neither great wisdom nor prophetic power. I do believe that human prob-

lems can be solved through nonviolent means. The difficulties which hamper our search for peace are rooted in our natures.

My personal religious beliefs are based imperfectly on those of Christ, as adapted to my understanding of reality. I can easily live in peace with others who hold quite different views, for I recognize the uncertainty of all human knowledge and the disparity of opinion which often marks appraisals by different individuals who view a common subject from widely separated viewpoints. Even our most dogmatic beliefs may prove to be in error when viewed against a background of new understanding. History is replete with human suffering which has resulted from inflexibility of belief, especially in the areas of religion and politics.

For more than 60 years I have benefitted from the American political system which was built through the labors and sufferings of our forebears. Some of my ancestors participated in the major wars which forged and preserved our liberties. They were represented in the armies of George Washington, and of both the North and the South in the period of our Civil war. I voice my views from a sense of obligation to them and to all who have helped to make our nation a stronghold for freedom and a home for democratic principles.

Like all human beings, I entered this existence without my volition or consent. I share the gift of life with you and with myriads of other forms. We humans open our eyes and behold a universe, with mysterious and vast dimensions which range beyond our understanding.

Questions about our role or purpose find only tentative and uncertain answers. Most of us are content to accept on faith the teachings of religious leaders that we are significant agents of a Supreme Being. We sense an obligation to live in accord with natural "laws" we discern in the world around us. We observe within our nature certain talents and a small degree of intelligence. We accept an implied obligation to pursue goodness and truth.

Instincts acquired in more than two billion years of evolutionary struggle for survival live on within our physical natures. They impel us to continue and to further improve our own species. Inborn curiosity and dynamism stimulate us to explore our world, seeking out challenges and answers. Imagination and altruism inspire us to envision a future in which we will

govern our animal nature and assume a guiding role over all living things in accordance with our best spiritual and intellectual capacities.

We live in a time of great peril. Humanity and the proud achievements of its infancy on earth are in grave danger. Our knowledge has outstripped wisdom. We have controlled disease, but have not regulated our numbers. We have advanced our understanding in the natural sciences but have not adequately controlled our baser animal instincts. We have begun to accept the rule of law but have limited its application, permitting it to regulate the affairs of individuals and of small political divisions while we neglect to use it in controlling major aggression. We have outlawed the use of murder and violence in resolving individual disputes, but have failed to develop procedures to peacefully settle conflicts between nations.

Meanwhile, we have made the world an atomic tinderbox. We cannot permit the present condition to continue. We must change our traditions. Devising effective political mechanisms to control the conduct of nations is not an impossible task. It should be viewed as a scientific and social challenge which demands the immediate attention of the wisest human heads in all the family of nations.

The world is devoting intense effort and lavish funding to developing ever more sophisticated weapons in an arms race which at this moment shows little prospect of ending in peace.

We and the Soviet Union are directing vast resources and intense intellectual effort to the exploration of space. This is not intrinsically wrong, but it diverts attention from much more pressing problems. We must all rearrange our priorities to reflect a logical appraisal of the more urgent *political* dilemmas which confront us.

Nowhere do we observe proper concern for devising political arrangements that will assure international peace and the free flow of commerce and knowledge while preserving for each nation reasonable autonomy within its borders. Surely this is not an insurmountable task for our collective intelligence.

There *must* be alternatives to war which will be acceptable to and welcomed by the mass of humanity. We must now make an organized world-wide effort to find them and to apply them to the affairs of mankind. *This* is the greatest challenge facing us in the atomic era.

The Soviet Union and the United States are both powerful nations. Differences in political philosophy have divided the family of nations into two large camps, and these have gathered around the two major powers, sharing to some degree the views which make those powers rivals. The rivalry is rooted in the momentum of historical behavior patterns which date back to another, far different era. But those patterns, passively accepted, become chains which prevent rational behavior from meeting the challenges of today. The leaders of our two countries can cast off those restraints and direct our affairs to establish new political mechanisms capable of logically resolving the frictions which presently characterize our mutual relationships.

Is it unthinkable that America and the Soviet Union could unite as political partners? Can we not assume the role of wiser and stronger elders in guiding the family of man through the present dangers into a future ruled by human reason? Is not this prospect an appealing alternative to nuclear war? Achieving that partnership is vastly more important than exploring the moon. It will be immeasurably more productive of good for humanity than all the futile, frantic preparations for war which now distract us.

Human intelligence is capable of devising solutions to all of our problems—war, population control, justice under law, and the progressive improvement and perfection of our species as the shepherd of life on earth.

I recognize the differences which separate my understanding of reality from that of religionists who interpret the Bible and other ancient documents in a literal fashion. If we had lived identical lives and reviewed the same evidence together we would probably agree on most things. But we have come to this moment by different paths. Let us set aside our disagreements and focus our minds and ideals on the urgent task at hand: to resolve our mutual problems as citizens of a shared but troubled planet.

Truth will prevail when we seek it honestly. We can discover agreement in many areas even while we mutually respect our rights to disagree.

Let us challenge the citizens of the Soviet Union and other nations to join with us in seeking the common ground upon

which all nations can achieve an enduring and peaceful partnership.

Open and verifiable cooperation between the major powers can provide a beginning for the coming Age of Reason.

II

The Georgia
Guidestones

IT IS PROBABLE THAT HUMANITY possesses even now the knowledge needed to establish limited but effective world government. That knowledge must be propagated in the consciousness of all mankind. The hearts of our human family must be touched and warmed to welcome a global rule by reason.

The group consciousness of our race is blind and perverse, and is easily distracted by trivia when it should be focused on fundamentals. We are in a critical era. Population pressures are creating political and economic crises throughout the world. These make more difficult the building of a rational world society.

A first step will be to convince a doubting world that such a society is possible. Let us keep in view enduring appeals to the collective reason of humanity. Let us draw attention to basic problems. Let us establish proper priorities. We must order our home here on this planet before we reach for the stars.

Human reason is the most powerful agency on earth. We must make humanity aware that compassionate, enlightened reason can control our destiny within the limits inherent in our natures.

It is difficult to seed wisdom in closed minds. Cultural inertias are not easily overcome. Unfolding world events and the sad record of our race dramatize the shortcomings of traditional

agencies in governing human affairs. Increasing crises may make mankind willing to accept a system of limited world law that will stress the responsibility of nations to regulate their internal affairs, and assist them in the peaceful resolution of international frictions. With such a system we could eliminate war and provide every person an opportunity to seek a life of purpose and fulfillment.

There are alternatives to Armageddon. They are attainable. But they will not happen without coordinated efforts by millions of dedicated people in all nations.

I am the originator of the Georgia Guidestones and the sole author of its inscriptions. I have had the assistance of a number of other American citizens in bringing the monument into being. We have no mysterious purpose or ulterior motives. We seek common sense pathways to a peaceful world, without bias for particular creeds or philosophies. Yet our message is in some areas controversial. I have chosen to remain anonymous in order to avoid debate and contention. Our guides must stand on their own merits.

Stonehenge and other vestiges of ancient thought arouse our curiosity but carry no message for human guidance. The Guidestones have been erected to convey certain ideas across time to others. We hope that these silent stones and their inscriptions will merit a degree of approval and acceptance down the centuries, and by their silent persistence hasten in small ways the dawning of an age of reason.

Two interested citizens of Elberton, Georgia, have been instrumental in bringing this project to completion. They are not sponsors, but have given invaluable assistance. They have served without compensation through motives of public service, even though they may not necessarily agree with the author in all his beliefs. Mr. Wyatt Martin, who has an interest in Georgia's history, served as the project's fiscal agent. He assisted in selecting a site for the monument that would provide public access while remaining within budgetary limits. He enlisted community support for a small public park as a site for the monument.

Mr. Joe Fendley, presently the mayor of Elberton, quarried the massive stones, engraved on them our message, and erected them on the site about eight miles north of Elberton.

The monument has been named the Georgia Guidestones. It consists of four large upright blocks of granite, each two meters wide and five meters high. They are arranged to mark the limiting positions of the rising and setting sun in summer and winter. They surround a central stone which is oriented north to south. A channel through this stone is aligned with the celestial pole. On its south face is a sundial marking noontime throughout the year on a closed curve figure which reflects the equation of time, correcting the variations between solar time and time as recorded with uniform human hours. The capstone is inscribed with an appeal to reason in four archaic languages. The monument is intended to combine certain attributes of the Rosetta stone and many of the standing stones which are to be observed throughout Europe as remnants of past human societies.

We believe each human being has a purpose and a significant place in the Divine plan of the universe. The celestial alignments of the stones symbolize our need to be in harmony with eternal principles manifest in our natures and in the universe around us.

The two large faces on each of the four central stones are inscribed with ten precepts or guides, the eight faces carrying the same text in a different language. The English version has fewer than one hundred words. The languages were selected for their historical significance and because of their use by people now living. It would not have been possible for us to represent each of the three thousand languages known to exist in the human family today.

It is hoped that as time passes other stones can be erected in outer circles to mark the migrations of the moon and possibly other celestial events. These stones would carry our thoughts in additional languages. Perhaps the stones will be copied in other lands by those who share our hope for a peaceful world based upon shared ethical values and a common respect for human reason.

The Guidestones are not intended to have sectarian appeal. They are a reminder of the challenges that face present and future generations of humanity. They are intended to encourage efforts to meet those challenges rationally, without favoring particular religions or political systems. We believe our

thoughts are rational proposals for dealing with the problems that confront us. They are intended to stimulate discussion and logical, compassionate action.

Humans are special creatures. We are shepherds for all earthly life. We are players in the eternal struggle between good and evil—the forces which build and those which destroy. We must strive to optimize our existence, both for ourselves and for those who will follow. We must accept the guiding role which we can infer from our observations of the human situation in the complete mantle of life on earth and in the universe of struggle, conflict, and endless change. Perhaps these phenomena reflect eternal turmoils in the very soul of God.

We appear to be the major agency through which good and evil qualities of the spirit become active in our world. Within us there are elements of love, mercy, and compassion. There also are hate, cruelty, and cold indifference. We appear to be the only agents capable of consciously working to improve this imperfect world. It is not enough for us to simply drift with the current. The rational world of tomorrow lies ever upstream.

The most pressing world environmental problem is the need to control human numbers. In recent centuries technology and abundant fuels have multiplied humanity far beyond what is prudent or long sustainable. We can foresee the impending exhaustion of certain energy sources and the depletion of many vital raw materials.

To control our reproduction is crucial. This will require major changes in our attitudes and customs. Unfortunately, the inertia of human habits can be extreme. This is especially true when those for whom custom is a dominant force are uninformed of the need for change.

Nearly every nation is overpopulated in terms of a perpetual balance with nature. We are like a fleet of overcrowded lifeboats confronted with an approaching tempest. In the United States we are seriously overtaxing our resources to maintain our current population in the existing state of prosperity. We are destroying our farmland, and have grown dangerously dependent upon external sources for oil, metals, and other non-renewable resources. Nations such as Japan, Holland, and Haiti are even more seriously overpopulated and therefore in greater jeopardy.

Reproduction is no longer exclusively a personal matter. Society must have a voice and some power of direction in regulating this vital function. The desires of human couples are very important, but they must not neglect a consideration of society at large. The general welfare of this and future generations must be given increasing consideration as we develop plans for rational guidance of our procreation.

No person should be brought into the world unwanted and unneeded. No child should be conceived through carelessness. If each life is to have value, every conception must be part of an ordered plan of two parents who are aware of their responsibilities to that child and to society.

It is vitally important that each national government have a considered "Population Policy." The need is urgent and should take precedence over other problems, even those relating to national defense. Population control is a global problem. The actions of one nation have far reaching effects on others. Overcrowding human beings in conditions of squalor and ignorance is dehumanizing. It is an evil which must not be tolerated.

Each nation must consider the present and future availability of all resources required for its long continuing survival. With proper allowances for the interchange of commodities that are overabundant in some areas and scarce in others, rational estimates must be made of the *optimum* population which can be sustained by those resources on a perpetual time scale. Each nation must make this determination for its own people. It may give assistance to its neighbors as it chooses and as its assistance is requested. But in the final analysis each nation must determine its own population goals and must formulate plans that will achieve them. No nation, having regulated its own population, should be expected to burden its citizens with the unwanted surplus of improvident neighbors.

Nations with optimum populations can provide comfort and education for their own citizens and can give assistance to others. They can be good *world* citizens. Nations which are overcrowded and poverty stricken are problems for the entire world community.

There are still significant reserves of fossil fuels and mineral resources, sufficient perhaps for a century of adjustment. But

time is running out. Immediate action is required to avert disaster.

A few generations of single child families will make possible dramatic improvements of living standards in even the most impoverished countries. In all nations a major determinant of living conditions will be the ratio of available resources to the number of citizens who must share them.

Irresponsible childbearing must be discouraged by legal and social pressures. Couples who cannot provide a decent home and support for a child should not produce children to be a burden for their neighbors. Bringing unneeded children into an overcrowded lifeboat is evil. It is unjust to those children. It is harmful for the other occupants and for all living things. Society should not encourage or subsidize such behaviour.

Knowledge and techniques for regulating human reproduction are now in existence. Moral and political leaders throughout the world have a grave responsibility to make this knowledge and these techniques generally available. This could be done with a fraction of the funds now devoted to military purposes. In the long run, such action could do more than anything else to reduce the tensions which lead to war.

Of the many means already available for controlling human fecundity, some are acceptable to most cultural groups; others are not. Better, safer, and more easily mass-applied techniques are urgently needed, especially in under-developed nations which are experiencing major reductions in death rates through basic medical and sanitation practices. Much controversy now rages over the acceptability of abortion as a last resort for eliminating unwanted pregnancies. Heat engendered by these discussions may subside somewhat as we better understand the nature of life, and discuss further the philosophical question of "ensoulment," or the acquisition of human nature by a fertilized ovum. We know that the human "zygote" perpetuates a flame of life which began on earth more than two billion years ago—a flame which has been transmitted from generation to generation in a continuous unfolding of the potentials for variety which were present in the first living cells. We cannot point out the precise moment in that ongoing succession of living things when life was transformed from something definitively less than human into a new form represent-

ing a higher order of life, awareness, and intelligence. Much evidence suggests that we are still very close to the anthropoid apes, not only in our general body structure and physiology, but also in the very precise patterns of the genetic coding within our chromosomes. It has been estimated that the several billion letters of our genetic alphabet differ in fewer than two percent of their sequences from those of a gorilla.

We do know that the fertilized human egg is "totipotent"—capable of developing into a complete individual, or even into several identical individuals. But it has also been learned that all living cells in an individual human being—even skin or white blood cells—have within them identical potentials. Each is, in theory at least, capable of reproducing the individual from which they derive. Many plants and animals multiply asexually, reproducing themselves from body cells that are not a part of the reproductive organs. Fruit trees and many plants have been cloned in this manner for centuries, each generation duplicating the genetic nature of the original twig or bud from which the entire succession was derived. In recent years similar cloning has been achieved with certain animals, including some vertebrates. In theory a human being could be reproduced in like fashion.

A human body sheds millions of cells from its internal and external surfaces every day. Each of those cells appears capable of reproducing the complete body from which it falls.

Some dedicated and sincere opponents of abortion believe it is murder to destroy an early human embryo—even at the single cell stage of development. How these individuals will regard the implications of cloning human beings from skin cells is yet to be learned.

In the light of conventional wisdom and traditional morality, abortion must be considered an evil. But there can be even greater evils. Consider a pregnancy resulting from rape or incest—especially in a young girl whose body may have been invaded in a manner more repugnant than the military invasions of mere geography that result in wholesale killings of innocent young men drafted against their will into military service to fight against equally unwilling young men on the opposing side. Which killings are murder?

Sometimes we must choose the least evil within an array of evils. Certain abortions may be lesser evils than available alternatives and thus be morally defensible. Hopefully the development of absolutely effective methods for avoiding unwanted pregnancies will make these questions irrelevant. Our reproduction will become fully controllable through humane and rational means. Failure to utilize those means may ultimately be the greatest evil of all.

In these delicate areas of moral judgment humanity must rely on the collective conscience of our race. No single individual or group should impose its position on others until a consensus has been developed from the best informed and most compassionate spokesmen from all groups.

Each bird in a migrating flock has in its nervous system mechanisms for guiding its course to the north or to the south in a manner which depends upon faint perceptions of star patterns, magnetic fields, and solar motions. Yet those perceptions are so feeble that a single bird, relying upon its own impulses, might go astray. Nature has evolved patterns which group thousands of individuals into great flocks within which the tendencies of individuals are combined into a unified guiding force for the entire assembly. Perceptions of the larger group, although still susceptible to failure, are in most cases successful in bringing all the members safely to their goal. There may be safety in causing our larger moral issues to be resolved through informed deliberations by the best informed minds of the entire human family.

A diverse and prosperous world population in perpetual balance with global resources will be the cornerstone for a rational world order. People of good will in all nations must work to establish that balance.

We must have confidence in the informed judgment of humanity. The problems of population control can be solved before mass starvation or conflict destroys the earth. Human reason can meet the challenges thrust upon it in future ages. Let us and those who come after us apply that force in all areas of our lives.

A world language need not eliminate national languages. Every spoken language is useful, for it helps to segregate its unique segment of humanity from the general mass, permitting

it to develop its potentials in its own environment, influenced by its own traditions. Variety is intrinsically good and must be encouraged. Literature and all the arts flourish under the sheltering protection of a language which has developed in a common culture. But national languages may also be devious, and can permit islands of misunderstanding to develop and grow into sources of major difficulty.

No language in general use today has been consciously designed by human effort. Attempts to create a designed language have been adaptations from existing patterns. They have not been based on fundamental analyses of our speech mechanisms and thought patterns. Widely spoken languages throughout the human species reflect our inner nature as it has evolved on the tree of life. They share many common features, but continue to change and to evolve as if they too are living creatures.

We suggest that scholars throughout the world begin now to establish new bases upon which later generations can develop a totally new universal language for men and machines. It will be adapted to our speech mechanisms and to the language faculties and patterns impressed in our nervous systems. Its spoken and printed forms will be capable of accurate interchange by electromechanical means.

Properly designed and stabilized, a common tongue for all nations may some day span chasms which would otherwise divide the human family. It will make possible the accurate transferral of thought down the long reaches of time. It need not be spoken by all. It will be most useful for those who bridge international barriers, and for scholars in the remote future who interpret the past. It will help maintain unity in diversity.

When the central cluster of the Georgia Guidestones was completed our small sponsoring group was disbanded, leaving the monument in the safekeeping of the people of Elbert County, Georgia. If the inscriptions are dimmed by wind and sun and time we ask you to cut them deeper. If the stones should fall, or be scattered by people of little understanding, we ask you to raise them up again.

We invite all who share our goals to extend the monument with other stones to carry its thoughts in languages not already represented. Added stones oriented with celestial phenomena

can continue the central theme of the Guidestones: the acceptance of universal, eternal principles in directing the course of human affairs.

The guides are not religious. They are not commandments. We have no authority to command. Affirmation of our thoughts can only occur as they are endorsed and supported by the reasoned judgment of this and future generations. We invite human beings of all persuasions to consider them with open minds, adapting them to the changing circumstances of unknown future centuries.

LET THESE BE GUIDESTONES TO AN AGE OF REASON

1. Maintain humanity under 500,000,000 in perpetual balance with nature.
2. Guide reproduction wisely, improving fitness and diversity.
3. Unite humanity with a living, new language.
4. Rule passion, faith, tradition, and all things with tempered reason.
5. Protect people and nations with fair laws and just courts.
6. Let all nations rule internally, resolving external disputes in a world court.
7. Avoid petty laws and useless officials.
8. Balance personal rights with social duties.
9. Prize truth, beauty, love . . . seeking harmony with the Infinite.
10. Be not a cancer on the earth . . . leave room for nature—leave room for nature.

III

Cultural Evolution

THE HUMAN SPECIES NOW NUMBERS nearly 5 billion individuals. Stripped of our acquired knowledge, we would be helpless, naked, ape-like creatures, totally ignorant, and incapable of survival in all but the most favorable circumstances.

Each of us enters this world in a completely dependent condition. Fortunately, of all the warm blooded animals we have the longest childhood. This permits us an interval in which our minds become programmed with a share of the information inherited by our family and society from hundreds of past generations of our species. The knowledge of humanity has been painfully accumulated over many thousands of years. There have been infrequent additions and changes, and occasional losses. But the central enduring core of survival wisdom has been sufficient to enable our ancestral lines to endure to the present.

Our minds have an enormous capacity for receiving and storing information. Even with the increasing pace of new discoveries in the past 300 years, no human brain has ever become totally saturated with knowledge. The collective capacity of our racial intelligence is far beyond our present level of accomplishment.

We share many anatomical and chemical features with other creatures, not only in the structure of our bodies, but also in the basic design of our central nervous system. Our most significant anatomical feature is the expansion and elaboration of our brain. Here is centered our capacity for storing and manipu-

lating information. Here also are the neural circuits which mediate our ethical qualities, our consciousness, our ambitions, and our awareness of the high goals which are ours to achieve. These features, together with our biological adaptability and our prehensile hands, have raised our species to a new level in the evolution of life and have given us the capacity to establish dominion over the earth and all other living things.

The science of genetics has provided us with rudimentary understanding of the manner in which a human body and brain develop from a single living cell, the fertilized ovum. That tiny miracle combines contributions from two parents in approximately equal portions. Its central nucleus contains a genetic blueprint which spells out the general characteristics of our species, together with the minor variations which determine our racial and individual features.

The 46 chromosomes which identify the cell from which a complete human being will develop contain 3 billion pairs of cross-linked chemical bases. These bases are of only 4 kinds, yet they comprise an alphabet which spells out the patterns of life for each of the millions of species and all their individual variations which are to be found on earth today.

Provided with a suitable environment within our mother's womb, the fertilized ovum from which each of us springs becomes a fantastic chemical factory as it begins to divide and multiply, fabricating trillions of descendant cells, each of which contains a duplicate of the genetic documentation which identifies a specific individual. Each cell also contains modifiers which are precisely triggered to establish detailed changes in form and function as the embryo undergoes growth and development. The immensely complex and coordinated sequence of cell divisions results in the formation of a perfect machine, a human body, a living miracle. Each cell takes its proper place and begins its specific functions within the composite whole. Collectively the trillions of cells which compose each of us are orchestrated by intrinsic checks and balances to establish the ongoing symphony of chemical interactions which constitutes our human lives. Each life may continue for four score and ten years, gradually accumulating the flaws of wear and senility which lead relentlessly to somatic death, the ultimate fate of all living things. Only the germ cells endure to

carry on the phenomenon of life in a potentially endless chain of survival and further elaboration, extending onward in earthly time to limits beyond our ken.

We human beings and our genetic blueprint bear close resemblances to other living things. Structurally we are very much like the larger apes. Some of our proteins and cellular details are almost indistinguishable from those of other warm blooded animals. Certain enzyme systems within us can be traced across the spectrum of living things in patterns which suggest interrelationships and sequential modifications that have occurred over long periods of evolutionary time.

Viewed objectively, our physical structure is not impressively different from some other living forms. We are not the strongest, nor the fleetest, nor the largest of the animal kingdom we have come to dominate.

Our greatest distinguishing feature is invisible and intangible. It is our total *cultural* heritage, the composite of acquired *knowledge* which is maintained and transferred in our libraries and in the information stores of our arts and sciences, our trades, traditions, and all the complex living patterns of human society. The capacity for assimilating that heritage and enriching it is mysteriously contained in the trillion or more cells which constitute the living brain in each of us. Collectively these features determine our national and individual awareness, and our character.

Instinctive patterns of behavior that are prominent in other creatures are less dominant in our own species. Without acquired knowledge we cannot build a nest, or sing a song, or migrate with the seasons, as do the birds. We do experience the drive for survival which millions of years of evolutionary competition has instilled in us. We have strong intrinsic impulses which motivate our reproductive behavior, our acquisitiveness, and our social and antisocial tendencies. But in our daily lives these are restrained and guided by the exigencies of our communal existence.

Only at birth do inborn patterns completely dominate our behavior. As newborn infants we know without instruction how to nurse, to cry when in distress, and to recoil from a painful stimulus. Beyond that we are at the mercy of the elements unless protected and cared for by our family and friends.

Very soon after birth we begin a life-long process of acquiring the knowledge and life patterns of our human environment, assisted by many social agencies, the most important of which is our family unit. Here we are sheltered and nurtured while our minds are most receptive and plastic. Here are molded and crystalized the basic attitudes and fixed response patterns that will shape our character.

The process of knowledge transferral or mental programming is ruled more than we realize by the powers of habit. Patterns of living which have proved successful are passed down through the ages surprisingly unchanged. Transmittal of these patterns from one generation to the next is accomplished more or less unconsciously through a multitude of interhuman relationships and agencies, including language, custom, manners, tradition, literary legacies, legal systems, and many others. Religious philosophies and organizations have long been important in shaping the behavioral attitudes of human beings. They will continue that role in future ages as religious teachers adapt their doctrines to the ever changing human condition.

We are immersed in the myriads of social and cultural elements which surround us. They become a part of us as we take our place in the larger world of human affairs. They shape our attitudes in all that we see and feel and do. The particular cultural heritage into which we are thrust becomes almost as indelibly a part of our nature as our genetically determined physical features. Our cultural birthright is what makes one person an American, another a Russian, and still another a primitive tribesman in New Guinea.

Unquestioning acceptance of prevailing values can be a good thing. Guidelines that have preserved our lineage have proved themselves by surmounting past hazards; they should not be discarded casually.

As each newborn baby enters its particular niche in human society it begins to accumulate the patterns of understanding and behavior that prevail in its family and nation. With further growth and learning, each child takes its place in the human story, a never ending tapestry that began in the remote past, far beyond the dawn of history. Each life becomes a thread in the tapestry, interwoven with the life threads of others to outline a minute segment of a cosmic design which extends across the

endless reaches of time, revealing complex variations, innovations, and mysteries.

We seldom question the attitudes, beliefs, and values which we absorb by cultural osmosis during our lifetimes. Change makes us uncomfortable. We are slow to challenge the opinions of our elders. Our instinctive reluctance to change customary living patterns may have developed in our evolutionary past as a survival mechanism.

Toleration of established routines is neither good nor evil per se. Conformance with proven standards inherited from past generations has often sustained human societies through perils that otherwise might have proven fatal. Cultural inertias can be beneficial. A thousand people welded together by common principles can be more effective in the world than a thousand individuals going their separate ways. Yet a thousand individuals forced by tradition to follow the wrong path may be destroyed if they fail to heed warnings from nonconformists who perceive dangers unrecognized by the general mass of humanity. Changes in our collective behavior standards are sometimes necessary, although prudence requires that they be made with proper deliberation.

At any moment in history our cultural institutions display a wide variety. Each social group is unique. Different tribes and different nations have their own combinations of cultural features. Review of the worldwide store of knowledge and custom from one millenium to the next suggests what has been aptly termed "cultural evolution"—the progressive modification and adaptation of the "flora and fauna" of social elements similar in many ways to the ongoing modifications of genetics in living things. Human institutions and beliefs are selected for survival by overcoming challenges encountered in the changing circumstances of life as we move down the long river of time.

In the struggle for survival among competing human groups, cultural traits inherited from ancient forebears will often determine which group, or tribe, or nation will survive, and which will fall by the wayside.

Biologically, the ancient Romans differed little from their contemporaries. They built and maintained an enduring empire because on balance their laws, patriotism, ideals, military organizations, and traditions made them stronger and more

dynamic than their neighbors. They prevailed because of their *cultural* endowment. They extended their dominion over most of the civilized Western world. Some features of their society survive today in *our* laws and traditions. And their cultural heritage has endowed succeeding generations with a fitness for survival which persists unto this day.

The social institutions, religious philosophies, and other agencies that now exist have proved their fitness simply by surviving. That fitness continues to be tested as the human carriers are confronted with endless new challenges.

Unfit or outmoded cultural elements in earlier societies often have weakened or destroyed the very people who were their bearers.

Rapidly changing times test the social adaptability of our cultural heritage. Excessive rigidity or unwise flexibility can have equally disastrous consequences. We must accept change, but do so thoughtfully, with appropriate regard for the larger framework of life. We will be wise to maintain great respect for traditional values. Human nature has not changed in historical times. Traditional attitudes of society dealing with the family, sexual conduct, integrity in personal and business relationships, and with countless other ethical principles that have survived the tests of time should not casually be discarded simply because technology has modified human living conditions in the modern world. Increasing knowledge has not changed our fundamental biological nature.

In America today we are witnessing a number of social changes that are causes for concern. The first has to do with widespread instability of the family unit. The second relates to an increasing dependency of many citizens upon government agencies for their financial support through a philosophy of "entitlement," fostered by elected officials, which assumes that Americans with financial problems are automatically endowed with the right to preempt from tax paying fellow citizens funds to support them in idleness and comfort. The third cause for grave concern relates to the widely apparent dependence of many potentially productive citizens upon drugs and alcohol as a means for narcotizing or avoiding the stresses of life's realities in our industrialized society.

A stable and secure family unit is a characteristic of the most enduringly successful nations. In recognition of this fact most societies have established strong legal and social sanctions to promote family stability, protecting the role of parents, and particularly that of the mother. In most cases, marriage has been a binding legal and social contract, supported and interwoven with laws relating to parental responsibility, children's rights, and the ownership and inheritance of property.

In America no other contracts are entered into with so much ceremony and public display as a modern wedding, complete with rented finery, impressive religious services, and large receptions. Few other legal agreements take place before such assemblies of witnesses. No others involve such solemn public avowals of lifelong obligations to be terminated only by death.

Yet, despite the fanfare and promises, no other contractual arrangements are so flagrantly and quickly abandoned when one or both parties grow tired, or disillusioned, or merely bored with the obligations assumed under the marriage agreement. Today, nearly half of American marriages end in divorce, disrupting the lives of the partners and causing untold social and psychological consequences for the innocent children conceived in the emotional sunshine which has warmed the relationship in its early phases. Divorce shatters the home environment and disrupts the family relationship—a social arrangement that has proven most successful in nurturing children through their formative years, producing stable, well adjusted adults. How much future damage will stem from society's tolerance of the present wholesale abandonment of marital and parental obligations by so many of our citizens? What will be the social and civic character of children whose fathers have abandoned their families, very often with inadequate financial support, nearly always depriving their children of the psychological reinforcement of a strong father figure of integrity?

Marital stability is a legitimate concern of society as a whole. Our national character and strength are threatened when we permit without effective protest today's widespread abandonment of marital obligations. We can deal with the problem by devising a formal code of social behavior, and enforcing it with effective legal and economic supports. Children and adults must be made aware of the obligations as well as the benefits of

citizenship. Irresponsible parenting must not be tolerated or encouraged.

Mankind's need for moral guidance is now greater than ever before. The threat of nuclear war clearly calls for the application of ethical principles in international affairs. It is not too late. Let us hope that religious and philosophical leaders will soon join in guiding human behavior in a manner which will be acceptable to the people of all nations.

American self-reliance is another virtue that needs renewal. Nearly half of our citizens receive government support. Distant officials take the earnings from some citizens and give them to others through a variety of entitlements and through direct and indirect subsidies. Such programs invariably stem from good intentions, but seldom are of lasting benefit and too often have unexpected consequences in hampering productive efforts by the public at large. While collective action is no doubt required for specific social problems, it is likely that greater overall advantage would accrue from tax incentive programs that stimulate private initiative in the generation of economic activities and in the creation of full employment for all citizens capable of productive labor. A properly tuned incentive economy will provide greater benefits for all and will bring the added advantage of maintaining our personal liberties.

The present epidemic of drug and alcohol abuse raises many grave questions. We are confronted with a great array of social, economic, and military problems. Solving them will require the conscious efforts of us all, guided by our brightest and most innovative minds. When potential leaders become fogged with drugs, society loses the advantage of their initiative and abilities. We become deprived of our most powerful tools in the forging of future progress. More must be done to educate our people to the miserable effects of toxic substance abuse. We must reach young minds before they are lured into the fantasy world of chemical nirvana, from which many, once trapped, will never return. Let us provide better role models for impressionable young minds than we now permit in the form of entertainers and other influential public and private citizens who openly or covertly endorse the use of chemical escapes from unpleasant realities.

Society today is undergoing great turmoil and change. Many traditional cultural agencies are being rigorously tested and challenged as they encounter modern needs.

Conscious planning and intelligent control of the cultural evolution now in progress around us will hasten the establishment of an enduring Age of Reason.

IV

Guiding Human Reproduction

THE MOST IMPORTANT FUNCTION of every species is the procreation of its successors. This is especially true for humanity. We must perfect the ethical and legal constraints that regulate our conduct in this vital area so as to safeguard the long range interests of society. Careless or purely self-centered actions by some must not be permitted to injure others.

Industrialized nations are increasingly burdened by the social and monetary costs of raising children produced by irresponsible and inadequate parents. This is a grave injustice for those children and for the taxpayers who are burdened with the expense of providing them with food, clothing, education, and housing. No society can remain strong and productive if it tolerates wholesale irresponsible parenting.

No longer is reproduction exclusively a personal matter between two individuals. More than any other human action, it affects all of society, now and in future ages.

Society can provide practical incentives and disincentives to guide individuals in their child-bearing so as to protect the legitimate, long term welfare of the larger social group. This must be done, even though at times the wishes of individuals must be made subordinate to the needs of the state. Reasonable compromises can achieve a balance between the individual's rights and those of other citizens.

The plants and animals around us have survived because nature endowed their ancestral lines with superabundant powers of reproduction. For all but the few species we directly manage, this function is carried out reliably and automatically, like the changing of the seasons. Vital forces cause living things to reproduce in excessive numbers; but competition for food and living space, and hostile natural conditions weed out the weak and the defective, thus relieving excessive strains on the sustaining environment. Ultimately, there results for each species a dynamic balance with its surroundings and its competitors.

The earthly role of humanity has undergone great changes in the past few thousand years. Our mental powers have transformed us from small, scattered tribal groups of primitive hunters into a global society of five billion. We have mechanized farming and industry; we harness vast amounts of energy to operate a global industrial-agricultural complex which has changed the face of the earth. We have revolutionized our way of life. We must now accommodate our reproductive behavior to our altered status.

In our early history we developed complicated social codes and economic arrangements which adapted our childbearing function to the needs of society at the time. Large families meant that high death rates would not end the existence of tribal and national groups.

Patterns suited to past circumstances still exist without proper modification or rational control. We are neglecting a major responsibility: to improve our species by sensibly controlling and guiding our reproduction.

Because we have controlled disease and many other life-threatening dangers we need no longer depend upon high birth rates to assure the survival of our species. Excesses in childbearing often result in degradation and poverty. It will be extremely difficult, even in the short term, to provide five billion human beings with the material living standards typical of technically advanced societies today. A reduction in total numbers is essential to maximizing the potential of every human being. We cannot foretell the exact "climax" limit for human numbers. Providing even 500 million people with current American living standards may exceed that limit on a perpetual time scale.

Common sense would suggest that we make the reduction in a selective fashion. Yet we are devoting more attention to the production of improved plants and animals than to the selective continuation of our own species. World-wide, human conception is still governed principally by biologic and social forces, with little conscious guidance. We establish social environments in which many talented and productive individuals are constrained to limit their reproduction, while at the same time we provide subsidies that encourage childbearing by the indigent, the lazy, the irresponsible and the inadequate.

We fail to apply controls now available by which we could produce a succeeding generation of healthier and more productive human beings than those who live today. Our most valuable legacy would be a posterity that is the product of responsible parenting.

Superior human intelligence, compassion, and drive are complex qualities. Although they are not inherited in a simple Mendelian fashion, they are to a large degree genetically determined. And they are reproducible, just as are the complex qualities we seek to enhance in the lesser life forms under our control and direction. Our own intricate natures are based in chemistry, and that chemistry can be shaped to a considerable degree by human intelligence.

Desirable mental and physical qualities can be enhanced in future human populations by encouraging their reproduction and by discouraging the reproduction of their opposites. Talents which are considered to be marks of genius when they occur infrequently today can be made to occur more frequently in the world of tomorrow if we increase the contribution of gifted persons to the total gene pool through 10 or 20 generations.

Over 3,000 human disorders have now been identified as genetically determined. We can reduce their frequency in the human population of tomorrow if we discourage childbearing by known carriers.

Responsible parenting will consider both genetic and environmental factors. We must seek to produce healthy children, and then to mold their characters and to develop their potentials as socially worthwhile adults who will in turn carry the process indefinitely into the future. Few human beings ever

approach their maximum potentials in society. The cultivation of talent is a proper subject for study and conscious intervention.

Some human beings are temperamentally unsuited for parenthood. Yet they may have qualities which ought to be reproduced. Perhaps such individuals should transfer their natural children to the care of others capable of nurturing them into well adjusted adulthood.

We have a grave duty to use all available knowledge in perfecting the forces which guide our procreation. It is within our power to leave behind us a new generation of humanity slightly superior to our own in intellectual, social, and physical capabilities. In the remote future no child should be born with congenital handicaps which could have been avoided by rational actions of his ancestors.

Humanity has successfully applied practical genetic principles in developing domesticated plants and animals. It is now within our power to begin the domestication of our own species in a parallel fashion.

Our animal nature is only thinly disguised by a shell of civil behavior. Our tendencies to cruelty, selfishness, sloth, and lack of concern for others often overpower their opposite qualities.

Yet each of us possesses at least in latent form what Abraham Lincoln referred to as the better angels of our natures. We all share a degree of altruism, love, compassion, ambition, and a concern for our family, our nation, and our species.

Docility, loyalty, and other desired qualities have been selectively augmented by human intervention and control over the breeding patterns of "man's best friend," the dog. We could one day achieve comparable but much more important modifications in our own nature if we were to begin a conscious and sustained effort to direct our own genetics.

No baby should be born by accident. Every child must be wanted, needed, and loved. Every child should be nurtured in an environment favorable for developing latent talents and fulfillments.

In future ages, the evolution of living things will be increasingly guided by human intelligence. It is essential that we improve our own nature concurrently so that we can better

perform our shepherd's duty. Through our intervention love, compassion, and enlightened foresight can permeate the mechanistic world around us.

Nations which fail to guide childbearing and child rearing will not only suffer the effects of overpopulation, they will also be represented in the world of tomorrow by citizens of sub-optimal capabilities.

The enhancement of intelligence and ability by guided reproduction is not a simple matter. The inheritable aspects of superior mental powers are not well understood. It is probable that they are conditioned and modified not only by genetic factors, but by nutritional and toxic influences which may be active from conception until death. They are also strongly affected by other environmental and cultural influences, especially in the first few years of life.

Tom Paine observed over two hundred years ago that "... wisdom is like a seedless plant; it may be reared when it appears, but it cannot be voluntarily produced. There is always a sufficiency somewhere in the general mass of society for all purposes; but with respect to the parts of society, it is continually changing its place. It rises in one today, in another tomorrow, and has most probably visited in rotation every family of the earth, and again withdrawn." It does appear probable, however, that certain harmful abnormalities of an hereditary nature are directly controllable, and that behavioral patterns of an environmental nature tend to repeat themselves from one generation to another. Illiteracy and poverty are often examples of the latter.

Workers and leaders of tomorrow are in their cribs today. It is prudent that we apply to their nurture the validated knowledge available to us.

We are agents of the Infinite. Nations which succeed in applying reason and compassion in the conception and rearing of their children will have guiding roles in the coming Age of Reason.

V

Suffrage In The United States

IN OUR COUNTRY TODAY nearly all adult citizens may vote. Although in a strict sense we are a republic, with selected individuals chosen to enact and administer our laws, we are democratic in that we derive the powers of our government from the consent of the people.

Yet there are many different channels through which power may flow from citizens to government. The lines of transfer may of themselves greatly modify the nature of government and the relationship it bears to those who are ruled. Channels that respect individual liberties, wisdom, and long term objectives may have effects quite different from channels that are concerned only with immediate results and popular approval. The mechanics of government require constant review and occasional careful revision.

American history has already witnessed many changes in the structure of our government. We began our national existence as a part of the British Empire—a monarchial system with concessions to representative principles extending back to the Magna Carta. Political power in our original 13 Colonies was generally vested in a chartered company or in a group of proprietors appointed by the Crown. Each Colony developed a degree of representative government in the form of an

assembly in which the lower house was elected by qualified voters. But there were many restrictions on the right to vote, including some relating to religious beliefs. As a general rule, property ownership requirements and poll taxes limited the vote to a minority of adult males. Governors and other high ranking officials were appointed by the sponsoring company or by the proprietors. Approval of appointments by the King was also needed. Women, slaves, and many free male citizens had no vote. Political power granted to the elected legislative bodies was limited. Actions of the assemblies could be overridden by the governor or by a small group of officials who surrounded him. There were, however, elements of representative principles in our colonial governments which conditioned our forefathers to the concept of democratic rule.

When Americans recognized increasing abuse of their liberties by Great Britain, the seeds of revolution were sown. They grew resentful of harassment by Parliament and by petty royal officials. Political discontent increased and culminated in the war which won our independence. Our forefathers then established a new government in a pattern calculated to make it eternally subject to the will of the people.

But social inertias and attitudes tended to continue the established system of suffrage. Voting remained a restricted right. Requirements for property ownership prevented many citizens from access to the polls, even many former soldiers who had fought to win our political freedom.

For a time U.S. senators and state governors were chosen by the state legislatures. Our president was chosen indirectly through an electoral college rather than by popular vote. Some local officials were elected directly by qualified voters.

Most Americans accepted the view that voting was a special privilege and that it required some evidence of knowledge and judgement to participate in the selection of public leaders.

Requirements for literacy and for financial responsibility were thought to be reasonable, even by many who did not qualify. America was a land of opportunity, however, and men who could not vote were free to exert themselves to become qualified. The Bill of Rights in our Federal Constitution eliminated the more flagrant evils of the Colonial era. Our election system did work. It carried us through periods of turbulence, conflict, and territorial expansion.

In the nineteenth century, property and taxpaying requirements were gradually relaxed. The right to vote was progressively extended to include most of the adult white male population. In the twentieth century came further liberalizing of voting qualifications. In 1920, the 19th amendment brought suffrage to American women, and in the following 50 years the voting privilege was extended to include nearly all adult citizens, regardless of education, race, literacy, military service, or economic status. Each extension of the vote was instituted in the belief that it would make elected officials more responsive to the populace.

Nearly all legislative and executive officials are now elected directly by popular vote. Their subordinates are appointed, or simply hired, sometimes with the approval of a legislative body.

This universal suffrage is a mixed blessing. Our founding fathers believed it wise to restrict citizen control of government to individuals who had demonstrated superior abilities, as in the acquisition of property, or through dedication to public service.

Our republic has changed in ways undreamed of by those who first shaped it. They were a small nation of farmers living in a belt of land along the Atlantic coast. We have become an industrial giant, occupying a large share of the continent. We once had an abundance of nearly all natural resources. Today our expanding population and extravagant demands have consumed many of our non-renewable minerals and fuels and have made us increasingly dependent upon external sources. Our society has become complex. Government has multiplied and expanded until it has become directly or indirectly involved in all phases of our daily life. We have replaced the minions of George III with hordes of petty officials who entangle our lives and commerce in webs of regulations. They have burdened us with taxes far heavier than those which prompted us to throw off British rule. They have handicapped our economy with thousands of petty laws and bureaucratic rules which have become a cornucopia for more than half a million attorneys. Litigation now complicates and clogs the arteries of commerce and entangles most aspects of our private and professional lives.

Our government structures have developed lives of their own, growing beyond the effective control of the legislative bodies which spawned them. Monstrous bureaus in our national and state capitals have become almost independent of citizen influence, resisting all efforts to eliminate or control their activities. Employees of some government agencies are insulated from the people by barriers of regulations and layers of divided responsibility. They have feathered their nests with guaranteed pay raises, special financial benefits, and generous pension programs with automatic inflation-indexed increases. They have excluded themselves from the social security burdens which they have inflicted on ordinary citizens, and have assured themselves job security by a maze of Civil Service regulations which are impervious to outside challenge. Nearly one in six American workers today is employed by government. National and state agencies have become directly involved in housing, rent control, power production, agriculture, and all aspects of medical care.

Numerous direct and indirect subsidies, grants, and "entitlement" programs have made many citizens dependent upon civil servants—who dispense only tax revenue—for a significant part of their livelihoods.

Our personal lives and commercial enterprises are entangled in the webs of bureaucracy. Its pernicious effects seriously handicap us in competing for world markets.

Unrestrained government growth has begotten unrestrained government spending. Enormous public debt threatens our economic survival.

It is dismally evident that we do not always elect the best qualified public servants. Some are outstanding, but all too often their views are diluted by less well qualified colleagues. Wiser legislators and administrators could have avoided many of our present problems. Prudent changes in our electoral system can result in public officials who are better suited to our needs.

"Universal" suffrage may not be a wise principle upon which to base representative government. In truth, we do not have universal suffrage even now. Children, and individuals who are obviously insane, do not exercise the right to vote. And many who do meet the legal requirements for voting fail to

exercise that privilege, either through indifference or ignorance.

We should consider making the right to vote conditional. We might, for example, impose certain educational requirements. In a society which provides tax-paid educational opportunities for everyone, we should require proof of understanding of our government and its history and problems as a prerequisite for voting.

It would undoubtedly improve the quality of government if voters were required to pass a simple test covering the structure of our government, our history, and our general economic system. Our citizens must now pass a comparable examination to qualify for driving on our streets and highways.

The level of difficulty of the voter-qualifying examination should be high enough to exclude political illiterates, but not so high as to eliminate individuals of average understanding and education. If at the same time we provide all citizens with access to schooling that will enable any mentally competent person to qualify, our democracy will be strengthened.

Mark Twain once suggested that our voting system should be modified to permit additional votes for selected citizens, based upon objective qualifications. These might include age, military service, and other indicators of civic responsibility.

It would be reasonable to require evidence of economic productivity as a qualification for voting. Citizens who long remain on public relief rolls, performing no services to compensate for their financial support by the taxpayers, should not vote. Any resulting injustice would be outweighed by the long term gains. The purse strings of charity should be controlled primarily by the giver, not by the recipient. In this land of free education and economic opportunity, it is shameful that some families remain on relief rolls generation after generation. Wise legislators elected by responsible voters would find ways to interrupt this endless chain. Productive labor of some kind must be made a basic requirement for full citizenship. Elimination of minimum wage laws, combined with income *supplements* from tax funds, and mandatory work requirements for able-bodied welfare recipients would be logical starting points for correcting the shortcomings of our present welfare arrangements.

All citizens should be reminded at election time that "government" means tax-paying citizens, taken collectively. Our elec-

tions have become popularity contests in which candidates out-promise one another as they seek support from various factions in the electorate. Politicians often conceal the fact that government can only give "benefits" to one group by taking money from others. Candidates skillfully promise to render many kinds of assistance from the public treasury; they avoid the painful subject of higher taxes for funding their promises.

Another improvement in our electoral process would be to require higher standards for the candidates themselves. Present qualifications list little more than citizenship, residence in the area served, and a minimum age.

Candidates for public office should be required to demonstrate a basic understanding of world and national history, and some grasp of economic principles. In this country members of the learned professions must demonstrate competence in their chosen fields before they can serve the public. Not only must they pass rigorous licensing examinations, but they must devote prescribed hours each year to continuing education to qualify for re-licensing.

Legislators enact laws which have profound impacts on every phase of our economy and our personal activities. They and those who administer their laws have much greater power over our lives than do any of the licensed professions. Yet they have kept themselves excluded from legal provisions that would require them to demonstrate measurable qualifications for the jobs they seek on election day. Candidates should be required to pass an examination for the award of a "Certificate of Qualification for Public Office."

The examination should be appropriate for the type of office being sought. Thus there might be corresponding certificates for sheriff, for county auditor, and for other local offices requiring specific skills. Other certificates might qualify individuals to seek legislative or administrative offices on the local or state level. Examinations of a higher level of difficulty and covering a broader range of economic, political, and historical subjects might be required for all who seek national office. It might be helpful to indicate for the voters' information the record of the candidates in their qualifying examination.

The needs of our people will be better served by officials who meet certain basic qualifications than by others who may or may not be intellectually qualified, but who rely primarily upon the arts of demagogery and salesmanship to gain public office. It would be prudent to restrain promotional efforts and to limit campaign spending in some rational manner, making it more difficult for special interests to buy and pay for the election of any public official. Reasonable standards for voting and for holding public office need not impair participation in our democratic process by any segment of our population. Such standards will make public office more appealing to those best qualified to serve, and will help to assure that every social and economic division in our society is represented by those best able to speak and act for its members.

Higher standards for voters and for candidates will result in better government.

Wiser and better informed legislative bodies will establish a proper order of priorities among the many problems facing society today. Truly pressing problems, such as the need for controlling our borders, regulating human population, and limiting government spending in a sensible manner, will be considered with appropriate urgency. And better qualified administrators will hopefully avoid many of the abuses which have developed in our governmental machinery since 1776.

VI

Prospects for the American Economy

THE FIRST FOUR CENTURIES of American history have unfolded a remarkable record. In 1600, the territory which is now the 48 contiguous states was a wilderness. It contained an abundance of undeveloped resources and was sparsely populated by Indian tribes whose members depended to a great extent upon hunting for their subsistence. Their limited agriculture caused no permanent damage to the environment.

About 1600, a trickle of European colonists began to arrive on our eastern shore. In the next 200 years immigration increased steadily as millions crossed the Atlantic to this land of opportunity. The trickle became the greatest mass migration in human history.

During the eighteenth century the Industrial Revolution was taking shape in Europe, with new technologies in metal working, mining, and the harnessing of coal with the steam engine. The age of machines advanced most rapidly in England, which was well supplied with coal and iron. The new knowledge was soon exported to England's former colonies in North America. Steam power supplemented water power along many eastern streams. Steam engines were also adapted to boats and then to railroads. Improved roads, an extensive network of canals, and a proliferating web of rail lines soon covered our growing nation. Coal and wood provided cheap fuel, making possible

the rapid development of diversified industries, especially in the northeastern states. The steel plow, the cotton gin, and the reaper were invented, and revolutionized American agriculture. Production, bolstered by western expansion, increased exponentially. Resources were being discovered that seemed unlimited.

As the population grew, the frontiers pushed across the continent. The prairies of the Midwest were converted to farmland. Swamps were drained, roads and railroads proliferated, and towns and cities sprang up like mushrooms.

Major deposits of high grade iron ore were found in northern Minnesota and transported on the Great Lakes to eastern steel mills near abundant coal supplies. We entered the Iron Age with enthusiasm and energy. Americans devised machines for every imaginable purpose and produced them in vast quantities.

In 1859, oil was discovered in Pennsylvania. Initially, it was used only for lamps, but when the internal combustion engine was developed late in the century, oil became a compact and portable fuel for transporting goods and people, accelerating industrialization throughout the Western world.

America possessed all the ingredients needed for an explosion of production. Mills and factories appeared across the land. Machines multiplied human productivity. Low-priced products became everywhere available. Entrepreneurs were restricted neither by antitrust laws nor by concerns for the environment. Pittsburgh became a city darkened by perpetual smoke, but low cost steel poured from her furnaces. The income tax had not been invented. Our expanding industrial and agricultural complex provided wages sufficient for Americans to become a market for the products of their own labor.

"Profit" was not a nasty word. Enterprising businessmen were given a free hand to exploit the cornucopia of natural resources that surrounded us on every side. Virgin forests were converted to lumber and fuel with little concern for waste and no thought of replanting. Large fortunes were made. "Robber Barons" flourished. However, much of their immense profits became additional venture capital, to be reinvested again and again in expanding a growing production base.

Soon, Americans were not only supplying their own needs, but they were exporting a surplus to nations not yet industrial-

ized. America became the world leader in nearly all fields of technology. We produced notable scientists and inventors, and attracted many others from abroad. European economies shared in the general prosperity, but lagged behind us, in part because of their less plentiful natural resources. Meanwhile, much of the world remained at a rather primitive economic level.

By 1900, our fortunate combination of resources, capital, labor, management, machines, an enterprising spirit, and a large free market had made us the most powerful and most prosperous nation in the history of mankind.

Progress was not without interruption or turmoil. There were wars, panics, and labor disputes. In the 1930s, the Great Depression disrupted our economy until the stimulus of a major war brought about another surge of economic expansion. After World War II we experienced a leveling off process, and the pace of production began to slow. Our population had increased to 200 million and was continuing to grow by natural increase and through immigration. It was difficult to maintain both full employment and high wages for all our citizens.

Meanwhile, the technical and financial ideas and expertise that underlie modern industrial societies showed no respect for national boundaries, but were shared, utilized, and steadily augmented by other nations who successfully followed pathways blazed by the industrial pioneers in America and Europe.

The industrialization of America was associated with great social change. In our early history, 19 of every 20 Americans were farmers. Their simple needs were met with locally available resources. After the Civil War, emancipated slaves began the difficult process of assimilation into a competitive society. Some joined the millions of white citizens moving to the cities and factories, attracted by the bright lights and the promise of better paying jobs. Others remained for a time as poor sharecroppers on southern farms. Urbanization of our society continues even today. Now fewer than three percent of our workers are engaged in agriculture. Yet with the help of powerful machines they provide food for all of us in greater abundance than can be comfortably absorbed by the marketplace. The toll of intensive modern farming methods on our topsoils is serious, and we are only now becoming aware of the contami-

nation and depletion of the underground water table which our shortsighted efforts are causing for our descendants.

In the 20th century we are witnessing other fundamental changes as the common pool of knowledge is disseminated throughout the world. Human populations continue to grow rapidly, due in large part to advances in medicine and sanitation. Formerly backward nations have developed educational systems that in some cases are superior to our own. They have adopted and are improving the technology of the Western world, often to a level beyond what has been achieved here and in Europe.

Other nations—not least, Japan, Taiwan and Korea in the Far East—have learned from the Western nations and in some areas of technology, are surpassing them. They have dramatically increased their consumption of raw materials as they have educated their people, and have provided them with factories and distribution facilities that incorporate the most recent technical advances.

Their workers enter the job market with skills equal to or better than those of Americans, but with wages far below customary American levels. Their managers are competent and aggressive. They streamline and perfect the productive process, demonstrating great talent in securing resources in the world market. They are producing sophisticated manufactured products and marketing them with great success throughout the world. They are actively assisted at all times by their governments, who demonstrate an informed and cooperative attitude in promoting their efforts at home and abroad.

Japan, Korea, and Taiwan are causing revolutionary changes in the roles of the older industrialized nations. Unfortunately, the rulers and work forces of some Western nations are unwilling to accept and appropriately adapt to those changes.

Americans have grown accustomed to the comfortable living standards based upon our once abundant resources. We are inclined to take them for granted. As our reserves dwindle we make futile attempts to restore our primacy in per capita income through legislation, ignoring the fact that laws do not produce nuts and bolts and other consumer goods. We are losing some of the competitive spirit of our earlier successes. A growing segment of our population is becoming dependent upon govern-

ment at a time when government is approaching insolvency.

Over the past 50 years we have legislated a system of direct and indirect payments and subsidies to support citizens who are not gainfully employed. Costs of such programs are borne by the segments of our society still engaged in productive work. We have established minimum wage standards which do not recognize honest market values for the labor of marginal workers. We thus unintentionally mandate idleness for many citizens, who then become tax burdens for their neighbors. Government assistance programs are by no means restricted to the poor. There are subsidies for farmers, for small businesses, for large corporations, and for cities and states. We have payments for the elderly, for veterans, for the physically handicapped, and for the socially blighted. We use tax funds to provide medical care, legal assistance, rent subsidies, educational grants, and home insulation. Federal "benefits" require volumes to simply list and describe them. We have other federal regulations and court opinions that require our state and local governments to provide specific assistance for the "economically disadvantaged," for "minority groups," and even for prisoners. In many instances, courts have broadened the coverage of federal and state laws far beyond the intent of the legislators who enacted them.

If a factory worker with a family should break one of our many laws, he personally must pay for the services of a lawyer to defend himself. A chronically unemployed habitual criminal who has similar problems will have the services of a court appointed attorney. That attorney, paid by the taxpayers, may carry appeals all the way to the Supreme Court if there is a slight chance of overturning a conviction on some technicality. A private citizen paying his own way might not pursue the matter with such determination.

In some cases the monetary value of tax-supported benefits for an unemployed person exceeds the income of other citizens who are working full-time at modest pay. These self-respecting citizens must contribute a part of their small earnings to support the idle, sometimes with amenities that are unavailable to their own families.

The cost of welfare programs is a growing addition to the other handicaps which must be faced by our manufacturers as

they seek to underprice foreign competitors, whose societies require that all citizens work.

American businessmen are further hampered by the complexity of our laws—federal, state and local. Legal considerations have become concerns of the first order in determining business decisions. Laws dealing with environmental impact, zoning, labor, and "minorities," although well intentioned, are a direct cause for increased costs. Several thick volumes are now required to "clarify" the federal income tax code. Skilled accountants are essential for businesses and many private citizens in computing their taxes.

Outside the arena of direct legislation, regulations are promulgated by many government agencies with authority delegated to them by enabling acts. These may change from day to day. Failure to comply with them can cause serious financial losses, so American businesses find it necessary to employ costly legal staffs simply to conduct day-to-day operations. Corporations in other nations have their share of government meddling, but seldom with the degree of complexity which has become the lot of managers in America. In some cases effective control of critical business decisions is given indirectly to government officials who might have little practical experience, and who might be more concerned with the political impact of their performance than with long range economic effects.

Some officials show little concern for our negative balance in foreign trade. They minimize the significance of our debtor status in the international world, and take comfort in the naive belief that America can prosper as a "service" economy, with our people simply waiting on one another. They do not tell us how we will pay for the expensive consumer products that are the core of high material living standards, and which in their scenario will be manufactured abroad. If we consume at high levels, we must produce at high levels, not only for our own use, but for world markets. It will be difficult to purchase Japanese electronics, Brazilian steel, and Arab oil with personal services.

Sooner or later, a day of reckoning will come. Our continuing federal deficits, combined with interest payments on the accumulation of past deficits, and our ongoing foreign trade im-

balance combine to exceed the total annual savings of the American economy. There is no surplus to replace worn-out production equipment or to build new factories.

There is no immediate shortage of most raw materials in world markets. Some commodities are available at lower prices than in the past, thanks to the modern production methods now being used to exploit reserves in some foreign lands. But this is a part of our problem: We Americans already have consumed our most accessible oil, iron, and other resources. We must now use foreign exchange funds to purchase some of those essentials abroad, bidding against other users.

America is no longer the leader in most fields of technology. The Japanese and others have pushed ahead in electronics, automobile production, cameras, petroleum refining, metalurgy, machine tools, computers, office machines, robots, and other products required by modern industry. We now buy a large share of our shoes, clothing, and textiles from abroad simply because they cost less. Hundreds of thousands of American jobs are lost as a result.

Many other nations now practice the self-discipline necessary to excel in science, technology, manufacturing, finance, and international trade. Markets formerly dominated by the United States and Western Europe have been taken over by newcomers. Brazil has become a major producer of low cost steel. Japanese steel undersells Pittsburgh steel in that city, notwithstanding shipping costs from Japan.

The day of the unskilled day laborer is rapidly becoming a memory. Most simple and many complicated tasks will be performed by robots, which do not get sick, take vacations, or get overtime and fringe benefits. Our schools continue to operate only 180 days a year, a schedule dating to pioneer days when children also worked on the farm. This schedule is inadequate for teaching the skills required in an increasingly sophisticated world.

We are inclined to gear academic standards to mediocrity, while more enlightened foreign societies stress excellence, competition, and performance. We give too much attention to competitive sports at all grade levels, diverting funds and emphasis from scholastics, which are more important to our country in the longer view.

Every year we graduate a plethora of attorneys, occupying the talents of good students who, in other societies, might become engineers, scientists, and managers capable of advancing the interests of our society in this competitive world.

Nearly half of American high school graduates go on to college. Many have no specific goals and no strong motivation to acquire a liberal education or to excel in a particular field of study. Some of these students would be better employed in technical schools, acquiring skills our nation must have to prosper in future years.

In many countries, a college degree is difficult to achieve. There is intense competition for college admission; poor students are rejected, and good students are pushed to maximum achievement. Many disappointments and frustrations are associated with this educational competition. Yet we live in a cold world which rewards excellence and punishes failure. It is folly to proceed on any other premise as we plan our national goals and devise programs for achieving them.

An unavoidable burden of America in the closing years of this century is our role as the primary defender of the non-communist world. We have not sought out this responsibility. It has devolved on us because we are the most powerful of the Western nations. It occupies a large share of our manpower and consumes our resources as we maintain military forces and sophisticated weaponry to prevent the expansionist forces of world communism from overwhelming the entire world.

We spend nearly seven percent of gross national product for defense, much more than Japan, Taiwan, Western Europe, and Latin America. This additional burden has aggravated our inability to compete in world markets against our adversaries and against the very nations who gather under our military umbrella for protection.

Our problems are complex and interrelated and are interwoven with the traditions and expectations of American labor. As more and more foreign workers acquire the skills and facilities which were formerly restricted to only a few industrialized nations, there will be increasingly strong downward pressures on real wage levels. If America cannot compete through further mechanization of production, a process which demands great capital investment, wages will move lower and more jobs

will be lost to foreign workers. Capital is mobile. Billions of dollars can be electronically transferred in a twinkling from our economy to foreign nations where profits are greater.

Meanwhile, we hamper our productive efforts with labor regulations which once may have been necessary but which now are counterproductive. We tolerate strikes which might be avoided by compulsory or voluntary arbitration. We fail to inform our work force of the impact which well capitalized, low wage foreign workers have had on our role in a dynamic and ever-changing world.

American auto workers receive higher wages than their Japanese counterparts. At the same time, the Japanese have nearly twice as much invested capital behind each job, in the form of robots, modern machinery, and advanced engineering. Japan makes a car in a fraction of the man-hours required in America, and sells it in America at a profit for a lower price.

But the Japanese have competition, too. Korean workers build cars for lower wages, and threaten Japan's advantage. The Koreans, in turn, face Mexicans who are eager to work in plants built just across our border, accepting subsistence pay rates in their depressed economy. Competition, change, and shifting flows of trade are facts of life which we must face with logic and realism if we are to continue to prosper as a free nation.

In summary, America is handicapped by high labor costs, shrinking domestic raw material reserves, an insufficiently educated work force, excessive litigation, burdensome debts and demands on government, short-sighted legislators, and an electorate which has yet to manifest sufficient awareness of the magnitude and complexity of our problems.

Yet all these problems have potential solutions. Dealing with them will demand changes in our attitudes, expectations, and work habits.

One root of our present dilemma is government—too much government. Not only have we permitted it to grow without restraint—we have encouraged it to develop irresponsible spending habits, habits which would never be permitted in a sensible family budget. The mountainous federal debt overhangs our economy.

There are parallels between our federal finances and those of Germany in 1922. Her national debt at that time was primarily reparations claimed by the victorious allies after World War I: One trillion marks, payable in gold.

Our national debt is in the form of government bonds, held to a large extent by financial institutions and insurance companies, and in vast commitments for future obligations of many kinds. We owe large sums to foreign investors, and are adding to the debt through deficit spending and an international trade deficit. The ratio of our debts to assets is roughly comparable to that of Germany over 60 years ago. And, we have not been treating our debtors honestly. We have continuously defaulted on our bonded indebtedness through the ruse of monetary inflation—repaying borrowed dollars with cheaper inflation dollars. In the meantime, bond owners pay taxes on the interest. Americans who buy bonds are short-changed on their investment.

As the dollar erodes in value, so do savings accounts, life insurance policies, pension reserves, and all other dollar denominated funds.

So far, we have avoided a collapse of the dollar. But today our federal debt is increasing so rapidly that we are vulnerable to the explosive inflation that is ravaging Brazil, Israel, and other spendthrift nations.

In 1923, Germany reacted to its impossible debt by printing more and more paper money of less and less value until it finally became worthless. Within a year, all "old" debts, public and private, became meaningless. The monetary system collapsed, wiping out the accumulated savings, pensions, and insurance values of the citizens. A total financial reorganization became necessary. A new mark was issued, with one new mark equivalent to one trillion old marks. This did not solve Germany's many problems, but it did restrain spending by politicians in the next few years.

America may have passed the point of no return in its present monetary course. We now have two apparent alternatives: We may continue the present pattern of rising deficits, a steadily eroding dollar, and an increasing inability to compete in world markets. Or we can follow the example of Germany in 1923 and

abruptly flood the world with paper dollars, thus defaulting on our present debt burden in a shorter period of massive adjustment.

Even this drastic action will have no lasting significance if not accompanied by a change in attitude of the American people toward government and its role.

Permanent stabilization will require a sound new fiscal policy. If we can muster the wisdom and resolve to minimize intervention by civil servants in economic affairs, there will be hope for preserving our personal liberties. Prudent policies relating to income and inheritance taxes can encourage widespread capital formation, identify capital ownership, and prevent an unhealthy concentration of economic power in a few private hands. Under capitalism wealth equates with political power. That power must be controlled. Ownership of capital must be public knowledge. Excessive hereditary concentration of wealth is incompatible with democracy.

Constitutional limitations on government spending—mandatory balanced budgets at every level of government—are the only reliable means for controlling public servants in their tendencies to tax and tax, and spend and spend. All appropriations must be financed from current revenues. Taxpayer resistance will provide the needed restraint and will compel legislators to make compromises between competing needs.

Reducing the size of government by stripping it of the unwise activities it has assumed in the past century will be a gargantuan and complex task. Our republic is a democracy of factions, each reflecting special social, economic, and political interests. Prevailing circumstances have caused politicians to respond to pressures from these factions with insufficient regard for total costs and long-term effects. Mandated spending limits will permit elected representatives to respond to the needs of each group, but with appropriate restraint and compromise. Many state governments are operating in this manner quite successfully.

Compulsory balancing of the federal budget will require give and take and political compromise. Many government activities will have to be discontinued and their armies of employees forced to seek work in the private sector. Elected legislators and heads of government must reassert a controlling role for the

common people, ending the petty tyrannies and entrenched hegemonies of marginally useful government workers.

Wise planning must give appropriate consideration to our military and strategic situation. Until the world is absolutely assured of universal peace enforced by joint actions of the major powers, it will be necessary for the United States to compromise the ideal of universal free trade. So long as foreign powers threaten our internal security and our access to essential external raw materials we must retain a strong defense industry, even though this increases the costs and reduces the availability of consumer goods. Painful choices will be forced on politicians restrained by constitutional spending limits.

America must remain strong—strong enough to safeguard our liberties, but not so strong as to threaten the existence of other nations who seek a peaceful world.

We still are a wealthy nation. We have sufficient resources to feed, clothe, and house our people. Thanks to the multiplication of human labor by machines, we can continue to achieve a comfortable standard of living for each family unit, but it will require all of us to work, even those who have partial disabilities. We no longer can afford to support able-bodied citizens on the public dole, perpetuating poverty from one generation to the next.

Our social security system has become severely strained by the many obligations which have been thrust upon it without adequate funding. It requires drastic remodeling. Benefits must reflect the premiums which have been paid, just as with privately funded insurance and retirement programs. Welfare functions must be separated from Social Security and be funded by direct appropriations.

Some citizens will work beyond customary retirement age when the needs of society require their assistance.

"Mature" or long established social insurance programs in many industrialized nations require roughly one quarter of the paychecks of the working population to adequately fund reasonable benefits. Faced with the need for this kind of expenditure, many citizens might choose private insurance for their retirement programs. Few government officials have demonstrated sufficient financial skill and acumen to warrant

giving them the responsibility for managing this large fraction of the national income. Because of this, it would be wise to grant citizens the option of selecting approved private carriers.

During the next few decades there will be a leveling of living standards throughout the world. Whether it is a leveling up or a leveling down will depend upon the wisdom with which humanity acts. Nations that prudently oversee capital formation and use will be in the forefront of economic progress. Nations whose citizens are industrious, educated, adaptable, and productive will prosper, even though they may not be abundantly supplied with domestic natural resources. *People* will continue to be the most important resource of all in the competition for material, intellectual and spiritual progress.

We in America are blessed with a large share of the world's riches. We are a diverse and talented people. We have at our disposal effective means for transforming our collective will into sensible structuring of our government and our society. We must strive to excel in wisdom and compassion, and build a better world for our children and the children of all the world.

We can be the masters of our destiny.

VII

Proposals for Improving Our Society

THERE ARE MANY AREAS in American society which deserve planned improvement. Simple proposals for solving complex problems are often inadequate, but they may suggest new approaches which deserve consideration. I offer here the thoughts of one citizen relating to some of our more pressing problems.

1. EDUCATION

A nation's people are its most valuable resource. Like other resources, it is worthless unless it is developed and put to work. In the modern world, a nation of illiterate and undereducated human beings is unable to compete. Nations that are most successful in rearing children to become knowledgeable, responsible, and dedicated adults are destined to prevail in the world competition for goods, markets, and intellectual achievement. Even though we spend vast amounts on education, our country is falling behind in this vital race. Nearly 20 percent of American workers are functionally illiterate—unable to comprehend simple written instructions. Many who have received high school diplomas are almost devoid of understanding in the

fields of science, history, and mathematics. Yet these are workers who will staff our economy as we attempt to meet increasing foreign competition.

Our schools are not doing an adequate job. Neither are our parents. Academic standards are geared to mediocrity, not to excellence. Great emphasis is placed on sports, music, and other pleasant, extra-curricular activities. Our schools consume a major share of local tax revenues, yet they operate for only 180 days a year. Schools in Japan operate 240 days a year, with eight-hour days, five-and-one-half-day weeks, and extra work and tutoring after school hours for promising students. Japanese students out-perform Americans in most subjects in all age groups. In our schools, competition is stressed on the athletic field, but neglected in the classroom. We give little emphasis to the teaching of basic etiquette, especially in those schools where students are most in need of it. We often permit slovenly habits in work, dress, speech, and decorum. Teachers are sometimes abused by students, and fail to achieve the necessary authority from parents and taxpayers to assert appropriate discipline and attitudes in the classroom. Disruptive student behavior by some hinders the educational process for others. Teachers are not well paid, often receiving less compensation than the janitors who sweep their hallways. Administrative staffs are top heavy with marginally useful assistants, coaches, coordinators, and counselors. Many of these employees hold jobs which have been mandated by legislators through well meaning but inappropriate measures designed to aid the handicapped, to promote racial equality, or to administer redundant rules and regulations imposed from outside the local school system. Paying their salaries hinders efforts to increase compensation for those who are the backbone of good schools: the teachers.

Major advances in human understanding are made by bright young minds that have been well educated and properly directed. The outer borders of knowledge are so far advanced that many years of intensive study are required for a student to reach the frontiers, retracing the steps of those who have gone before. Isaac Newton, Darwin, Einstein, and many others made their major discoveries as young adults, and used their advancing years to elaborate and apply the insights achieved in

their youth. The early years of schooling are critically important.

It would be prudent to develop a two-track system in American schools—letting the most capable young students enter a curriculum that is more intense, far ranging, and demanding than that for average young minds. Separation of the two tracks could be at the second or third grade level, with provision for crossovers in either direction at later stages, as indicated by individual student progress and desires.

All students should be challenged with a curriculum designed to prepare them to enter the competitive world. Excellence should be stressed for *all* occupational levels—from boot-black to corporate officer. Pride in performance should be instilled in all Americans. The course of study should be flexible, permitting some students to proceed with college preparation while others are directed into specific occupational fields.

The array of courses offered should be based upon realistic appraisals of the job market, as reflected in the recommendations of potential employers and a survey of "help wanted" columns in major newspapers. Depending upon their aptitudes and desires, students may be encouraged to become chefs, clerks, domestics, mechanics, or hundreds of other performers in our society. Maximum effort and performance must be stressed at all times. Chefs must think of themselves as *good* chefs, mechanics as *good* mechanics, and executives as *good* executives. Certificates granted after completion of specific courses must honestly reflect student performance so that employers can rely on the significance of the certificate.

Foreign language study has long been neglected in our schools. It was not essential to our prosperity in the past, but times have changed. Many Americans must become fluent in the languages of our trading partners so that our interests are properly served. We must develop language studies in our schools, beginning in the early grades and continuing through the university level. We are fortunate in possessing many immigrants who are fluent in the languages of their homelands who can assist in teaching our children.

Many students come from socially inadequate homes, frequently with only one parent. Very often that parent is educationally deprived, unable to teach the child courteous behavior,

good grooming, proper grammar, and the other social graces that are so helpful in occupational and social advancement. Important early training is neglected. Our schools must serve "in loco parentis," making up deficiencies that otherwise will handicap ill-favored children for life.

Our schools *must* establish certain standards. There is a legitimate place for "dress codes," despite objections from rebellious students who in their immaturity believe that such rules are an abridgement of personal freedom. Cleanliness and general appearance *are* important in the real world, and this fact must be taught to all our children.

We are sending too many of our young people to institutions of higher learning. Many are impelled by social pressures rather than by a genuine desire for intellectual advancement.

Our homes and schools are our most valuable productive machinery, for it is within them that we prepare our future citizens for their productive lives. Yet it is here that we fail our children.

Some of our failings result from social handicaps present in American society, and not found in nations such as Japan. These include widespread divorce, illiteracy, sexual permissiveness with its associated unmarried and teenage parenting, and extensive social diversity and fragmentation, without generally accepted standards demanding that all citizens must work.

Much can be said for those Japanese traditions which keep mothers of young children in the home, especially during the early, formative years in which basic attitudes and characters are formed. Achieving this goal in modern America will require a return to older patterns which protected the economic interests of mothers who thus sacrifice their own selfish interests to serve family and social needs. These women cannot be tossed aside by divorce or abandonment. Fathers must be required to fulfill their obligation to the family unit. Wandering fathers must be forced to support their children.

We are in need of a fundamental reevaluation of our goals and a sweeping reorganization of our entire educational system. The planning group should include not only teachers and school administrators, but representatives of business and the professions. Educational methods employed in other na-

tions should be studied to discover approaches which might be of use to us. Promising methods from their societies should be adapted to our own.

The presence of numerous poorly motivated individuals in our universities hampers educational effectiveness. Higher education should be made more competitive, restoring genuine prestige to the possession of a college degree. There should be conscious planning in the allocation of student talent to specific fields, such as law, medicine, engineering, business administration, and others. Class size should be regulated in an enlightened manner. Smaller student bodies, higher faculty salaries, and longer learning sessions can produce better educated graduates.

We waste millions of man hours and vast stores of human talent when we train lawyers and doctors to enter overcrowded fields. We should consciously encourage students to enter occupations in which their abilities will help us face increasing technical and economic competition in the world. Limiting admissions to schools that train students for overcrowded fields will control the problem. Society does not have an obligation to provide an education in a specific profession for every student who wishes to enter it. If requirements are based upon honest competition, there will be little injustice. Reliable information concerning opportunities in other fields will assist students in applying their talents where they can be most useful and properly compensated.

Our failings within American homes are not easily corrected. We have problems which are not often encountered in nations such as Japan, where long established traditions stabilize human behavior more effectively than in the United States.

Wholesale reorganization of our educational system is essential. But that will not solve all our training problems. It must be accompanied by legislation which will effectively encourage socially acceptable behavior, including responsible parenting, by all our citizens.

Our present social chaos can be significantly corrected through rational actions by our elected officials if supported by an informed electorate.

2. MORALITY

Morality and immorality are forbidden subjects in our public schools, in large part because of efforts by misguided "liberals" to prevent the teaching of any identifiably religious doctrines. Yet we permit *antireligious* philosophies to be presented in a variety of courses, and leave blank those pages which could tell the admittedly imperfect story of religions as they have attempted to conquer our animal nature in the course of history.

Our present situation is paradoxical. Since the birth of our nation, we have accorded to religion a recognized, if nonsectarian, role in the workings of our government. We acknowledge shortcomings in our religious beliefs and understanding. We observe great diversity in the creeds and ceremonies of our citizens. Yet we manage to open each session of Congress with an appeal to the Almighty for guidance. We include the phrase "under God" in our pledge of allegiance. We recognize the deity on many of our coins. We have provided chaplains of every denomination as spiritual guides for our military personnel.

Yet we strain the doctrine of separation of Church and State to such an extreme in our public schools that we prevent any mention of God in the classroom.

Morality, ethics, and religion are closely intertwined. Early Greek philosophers delighted in pondering questions relating to "causality," "ultimate ends," and "eternal values." The Stoics who lived 500 years before Christ believed that our impulse to do good stemmed from a spark of Divinity that burned within each human mind. Studies of these basic questions in the past 2,500 years continue to occupy the attention of philosophers of every description, their expositions endlessly crisscrossing the intellectual territory of the world's religions. Final answers and absolute truths are forever beyond the reach of mortals. But we do need guidance, and can seek partial answers which we hope will be sufficient for our needs.

Because of traditions that have associated moral standards with specific religious beliefs, it has been difficult to establish practical behavioral standards within our schools.

As a general rule, children and most adults are more effectively guided by simple, understandable rules regarding right

and wrong than by complex philosophical discussions. We observe the social ills resulting from dishonesty, sexual promiscuity, divorce, drug abuse, and other socially harmful behavior. Yet we fail to provide our youth with effective guidelines. By implication, "anything goes." Even the Boy Scout Laws, which attempt to provide young men with a code of honor, cannot be taught in our schools because they make reference to God.

No nation can endure without practical standards for human conduct, in the home, in business, in society, and in international relationships. These standards need not be copies of the rules of any particular religion, but they must be standards to which we can all attempt to conform.

In view of long traditions which have persisted without serious challenge in our courts since our nation was founded, it should not require a constitutional amendment to permit *elective* courses in religion in our public schools. It should be no more contrary to public policy to offer a prayer at commencement exercises than it has been for two centuries to offer prayers in the halls of Congress.

Students in our schools are taught modern concepts in chemistry, biology, history, and other secular subjects. They learn to question conclusions that are not supported by facts. It will therefore be essential that religion teachers are prepared to present their subject matter in a manner which will be acceptable to enlightened minds.

From a harmonious blending of religious belief and tradition with an awareness of social needs it will be possible to generalize rules of morality which can be accepted by society at large as guides for personal, corporate, and governmental conduct.

3. REGULATING OUR NATIONAL BORDERS

A nation that cannot control its borders is like a house without walls. Its citizens and commerce are in constant jeopardy.

Although Americans have traditionally favored liberal immigration policies, and our citizens are of immigrant stock, our present circumstances now demand major changes. We are straining our resource base to provide our citizens with a comfortable standard of living. Several other nations now exceed our per capita income, and we are losing out in the international

competition for industrial production of many kinds. Millions of Americans are unemployed, a situation further aggravated by the entry of many women into the work force. Nearly three of four mothers are now employed outside the home, a situation made necessary by economic and social pressures.

Nearly ten percent of Americans are not working, and are supported by public charity of one kind or another. Paradoxically, employers are unable to recruit enough workers to fill many openings in certain less than glamorous fields.

While thousands of Americans are supported in idleness in New York or Detroit, foreigners are smuggled across our borders by the hundreds of thousands each year to take jobs that our own people reject. In cities such as Chicago, hundreds of thousands of illegal aliens are driving taxis, staffing hotels, working in factories, and doing other work rejected by idle but able-bodied Americans.

We can no longer afford to tolerate this ridiculous situation! An illiterate Mexican or Jamaican citizen will travel thousands of miles to eagerly seek such employment; unemployed Americans should be *required* to make similar efforts. So long as we continue to provide a minimum income for our lazy or unskilled non-workers, they will continue to be non-workers. Changes must be made, and promptly. If a farmer in Florida or California needs field workers, unemployed Americans in other parts of the nation must be required to accept such employment, even if this involves re-training and relocating them. When necessary, we should assist citizens in moving from areas of high unemployment to areas where jobs are available. Inconvenience and readjustment are a necessary part of the process and must be accepted as a matter of course. Most of our ancestors crossed an ocean to come to this land of opportunity, usually in poverty, and without government assistance.

Proposals to require proof of citizenship are sometimes criticized as being "unAmerican," or akin to regulations of a police state. Actually, most Americans are quite willing to prove their identity when seeking employment. They do not object to this requirement when cashing a check, or settling a minor traffic violation.

Everyone should have a non-forgeable identity card, with name, address, social security number, and a single thumb

print. The original would be kept in a central office. A copy would be carried by each citizen when seeking employment or government-provided benefits. It would not be necessary for employers to ask for any additional proof of citizenship from job applicants. It would not be necessary to employ additional federal workers to police our borders. Foreign workers could not enter our country without prior approval for employment in jobs which cannot otherwise be filled. Americans who hired "undocumented aliens" (those without this simple proof of citizenship) would be heavily fined. Americans who refused to accept employment reasonably within their capability would be denied unemployment benefits, food stamps, and the like. We have been able to tolerate their behavior in the past simply because we were so prosperous, but now we have become a debtor nation. Financial strains on our economy will make it necessary that all able bodied citizens work, even if this requires some to accept employment which they feel is below their social station, or is esthetically distasteful. Requiring productive labor will strengthen our civic values, not weaken them.

4. TRANSPORTATION

Predictions of any kind are uncertain at best. Anticipated trends are often reversed or modified by new discoveries and altered circumstances.

An industrial society scattered over a territory as large as ours must have a distribution network for raw materials, finished goods, and people.

Our present transport system depends almost entirely upon internal combustion engines fueled with petroleum products. We are rapidly depleting our own reserves of crude oil, and are increasingly dependent upon foreign sources. Even those reserves are finite, and will not last forever.

Efforts are being intensified to develop alternative energy sources. The direct conversion of sunlight to electrical energy, or the indirect use of sunlight to generate hydrogen from water, both hold promise. The use of vegetation or of oil shale and oil sand may some day provide affordable fuels, but it seems likely that America's vast coal beds will supply much of our energy for a long time to come. This source will be supplemented for a

time by fissionable materials fueling electric generation, and some day in the future may be replaced forever by atomic fusion. In the meantime, coal can provide much of our power.

We have a vast network of highways and superhighways. These are public property, are not taxed, and can be used by all

But times have changed. Our highway system is now subsidized so intensely that trucking has become the dominant means for transporting many raw materials and most manufactured products. Although trucks pay significant taxes in the form of licensing fees and fuel levies, they do not pay their share of highway costs. Highway engineers estimate that 90 percent of the vehicular damage on our roads is the result of heavily loaded trucks. Our interstate system might double its useful life if it carried no trucks. We have accepted the wear and costs of trucking because of the benefits it has brought us in providing door to door transportation. Yet from the standpoint of energy efficiency and national security there would be advantages in shifting much of the heavier long distance traffic to railroads, as is done in Western Europe.

Under present circumstances, this cannot be done. Our railroads must build and maintain their own lines, pay property taxes in every county and state, and compete at the same time with trucking operations which have access to publicly maintained highways, roads, and streets.

As a result, we observe railroad companies completely eliminating tracks which once served many small towns and hamlets, leaving these centers totally dependent on trucks and automobiles for all transportation needs.

Steel wheels rolling on steel rails, powered by abundant coal reserves, can still provide America with efficient, reliable, and economical transportation.

For reasons of military preparedness, if for no other, we should consider rejuvenating our railroads. When petroleum sources shrink, we still will have coal. Modern technology permits coal to be used with little pollution, whether in railroad engines or in central generating plants that service electric rail power.

It might be desirable for the federal government to establish a national railway network, maintained by government, but open

to privately owned railroad companies in much the same manner that now lets private truckers use our highways. The network would not be taxed, cancelling a major economic disadvantage. Heavy, double track systems could connect large urban areas, with single tracks once again serving every community. In some cases the median strip of the interstate highways could provide right of ways. Heavy, bulky loads could be shifted to the railroads for long distance moves. Trucks could continue to handle local distribution.

Monetary savings to our economy would be considerable, and our dependence upon foreign fuels would be lessened.

5. CITY PLANNING

Our earliest forebears were primitive hunters who moved from campsite to campsite. With the development of agriculture, they began to permanently occupy convenient sites. Homes and storerooms were constructed in clusters, establishing the first primitive villages. As agricultural production increased, some workers acquired new skills as metal workers, builders, and merchants.

There were inherent advantages in this arrangement. A variety of skilled workers in close proximity made their services available to large numbers of people. They could specialize and improve their efficiency. There were military advantages in population concentrations subject to a shared system of government and defending common interests.

Large populations favored many economic activities, giving the larger towns and cities advantages over the smaller. The pattern was followed world-wide in the evolution of urban centers.

The disadvantages of city living, however, also became apparent. Crowding thousands in small areas brought problems in providing water and food, in waste disposal, and in recreational opportunities. As early as 3500 years B.C., the Egyptians developed planned cities in attempts to relieve these shortcomings. Their example was later followed by the Greeks and Romans, with varying success.

In spite of constant warfare, and plagues and famines, human numbers increased during medieval times.

The industrial revolution caused another surge in human population. The economic advantages of large numbers of workers within walking distance of factories and mines caused a proliferation of slums and urban blight. Occasionally, voices were raised in favor of rational city planning, which would consider human needs beyond providing basic shelter and a survival diet. But in the face of intense economic competition, those voices were seldom heard.

Throughout the industrial world, production and marketing factors caused the development of mega cities. Large factories required large labor forces. Housing and feeding those populations could be accomplished at lower immediate cost if they were concentrated close to the productive facilities.

Today, it is not unusual for five or ten million souls to live and work in a single confluent area of streets, buildings, and other structures sprawled over perhaps 100 square miles, with here and there a park or a pond reserved as a gesture of reconciliation to an offended Mother Nature.

Certain economic principles cause central areas in large cities to develop extremely high land values simply because they are located along transport lines and are surrounded by large numbers of human beings who are both producers and consumers. Once set in motion, augmentation of central property values tends to be perpetuated. If transportation is available, merchandising and financial activities concentrate in those favored areas. Property owners increase their advantage by erecting larger and larger buildings. The process feeds on itself. Hotels and amusement activities develop in the neighborhood. Skyscraping towers are built, primarily for business activities, but increasingly for housing more affluent workers close to their places of work. Less favored workers, who compose the vast majority, are not helped by these trends. They are crowded to peripheral slums or to outlying suburbs, and must spend hours every day in the non-productive activity of commuting. To accommodate their travels, governments must spend billions of dollars to build and maintain vast highway and street networks. Citizens must buy and maintain automobiles and consume untold amounts of fuel in their daily travels, crowding the city centers and polluting the atmosphere. Buses and trains add to the expense and confusion.

Yet once it is in place, a megalopolis presents great attractions for new businesses. It provides resources and markets close at hand, with every conceivable sort of secondary support in the form of machines, transport, consultants, plus a large labor pool.

It is possible that a relatively small encouragement in the form of tax incentives and lower labor costs might lure future new enterprises to more rural settings. Such trends have become apparent in the shift of our textile industry and others from the Northeast into our sunbelt states in recent years.

The social rewards which would follow an expansion and general application of planned decentralization of business and industry would justify their costs many times over. Achieving that goal will require overruling purely economic forces that now dominate city growth.

Slums can be eliminated. Homes, factories, and commercial and retail centers can be spatially arranged with efficient internal travel patterns and with adequate separation of incompatible functions. Electronic intercommunications could compensate for the loss of physical proximity between specific urban entities. The savings in human hours and commuting fuel alone would pay a large part of the costs of decentralization.

An increased role for urban planning can do much for improving the daily lives of our descendants.

6. CONSERVATION

The gene pools of the plants, animals, and microorganisms which survive in the remaining wild areas of the world have required hundreds of millions of years to develop their present diversity. Expanding human occupation of the lands and seas is causing the extinction of many unique living forms every year. Here in America we have replaced much of the original wilderness with farms, cities, towns, and roads. Intensive farming is causing the loss of topsoil at a rate that threatens our long term ability to feed a large population. It is essential that we regulate our land use, prohibiting destructive farming practices, and encouraging the preservation of natural areas. Eventually, we may be able to restore expanses of prairie, forest, and wetland

to their primeval state, with re-established populations of their natural flora and fauna. It may even be possible to develop genetic manipulations which will "create" new life forms to enter the self-regulating processes of evolutionary selection. In future ages, our descendants may compensate in this manner for the harm we are causing today through unplanned excesses of our own reproduction.

7. MEDICAL COSTS

Americans now devote one tenth of their national income to medical, hospital, and nursing care. Costs continue to spiral upward, due largely to endless new developments in technology, drugs, and public expectations of immortality. In theory, there is no scientific limit to further advances, but from a practical and fiscal standpoint, there must be limits. We simply cannot afford to replace every failing heart with a pump or transplant. We cannot afford heroic measures to prolong by a few weeks or months the existence of every aging body. It is self-defeating to believe that we can continue to make these sophisticated services available, and to lower their cost simply by mandating lower prices. It will be necessary for well informed citizens to work with knowledgeable physicians in establishing guidelines that will make possible a reasonable allocation or "rationing" of the care we can collectively afford, favoring those individuals whose continuing lives are most valuable to society at large.

8. LITIGATION

We have become a nation of litigants. Millions of civil suits choke the court system, causing endless delays, vast legal expenses, and the defeat of justice.

A system of mandatory third party arbitration as a pre-condition for formal courtroom trials could do much to relieve the congestion in our present system, while at the same time reducing wasteful legal costs and promoting prompt justice in the resolution of disputes.

Arbitration panels could be provided at tax-payer expense. If all parties to a dispute accept the decision of the arbitration panel, the matter would be closed. If one or both parties persist

in seeking a jury trial, that service could be made available to them on condition that they agree to pay the full cost of such litigation if they fail to win their case.

In addition, there should be legislatively determined limits to jury awards and legal fees. Life is full of risks. A single human life is priceless. Yet under our present system, persuasive attorneys can convince juries that awards of millions of dollars are appropriate penalties to assess against citizens whose actions resulted in loss of life or limb for injured clients. Those attorneys then pocket a large fraction of those generous awards for their legal services.

As a result, liability insurance carriers are unable to provide financial protection at affordable prices for citizens or companies or agencies of government whose activities expose them to risk of litigation. Analyses of the financial records of many large insurance companies indicate that only a small fraction of liability premiums is paid to injured parties; the lion's share is consumed in the expenses of litigation.

America is almost alone in this pattern. It is time for us to follow the example of Great Britain or New Zealand, where liability insurance is far less costly, and where certain disability and death costs become a burden of the national social insurance programs.

9. A NEW LANGUAGE

The human species comes in a wide variety of sizes, shapes, colors, and facial features. That variety is matched by the more than three thousand languages which have evolved in our long past history.

Studies of diverse languages reveal wide differences in grammar, word variation, sound patterns, and syntax. They also reflect neurological and cognitive patterns shared by our entire species, which appear to shape all languages in a common general mold.

The human larynx, throat, and mouth differ from those of other creatures, and permit us to vocalize more than two hundred distinctive sounds, or phonemes. These we combine in endless variety to form the words and phrases which symbolize our thoughts, and which permit us to transfer

information from one to another in spoken or written form. Even primitive languages which pass from generation to generation without the aid of writing may contain more than 25,000 words.

Designing a universal human language for future generations will require discovery of the most efficient combinations and sequences of phonemes to most clearly express our thoughts with all their subtleties and nuances. Our esthetic sense will require its symbolic forms in sound and in letters to be pleasing to the ear and to the eye.

Phonemes will be arrayed in patterns which reflect variations in function. Each sound will correspond precisely with a single visual symbol. Inflections, pauses, rhythms, and other modifications of intonation will be indicated by accent symbols.

The visual characters will permit ease of writing by hand in the same form used in type so that both can be "recognized" by the seeing eyes of machines. In this way it will be possible for words to be spoken in the presence of an appropriate electromechanical device and to be transcribed in printed form by that device. Conversely, the machine will be able to "read" the printed version and "vocalize" it as clearly intelligible speech.

Development of the alphabet-syllabary of approximately 200 symbols will facilitate constructing a totally new language *de novo*, unlike the many previous efforts which have attempted to build upon existing language patterns (Esperanto, Interlingua, and others). The new language will reflect consideration for the sound patterns in the most general—and presumably most efficient—use within the languages which exist today.

The new language could evolve to become a universal tool for serving the communication needs of humanity.

VIII

A Beginning for the
Age of Reason

ALTHOUGH WE HAVE IDENTIFIED the probable lines of our descent from ancestors who were less than human, the precise origins of humanity are lost in the remote past. We share with our forebears and with other creatures living today many anatomical and behavior features. We do not know when and how the spark of primitive reason grew sufficiently bright to transform us into what we audaciously claim to be: *Homo sapiens*, Man, the wise. The arrival of our species was not an instantaneous event. Very likely it occurred gradually over many thousands of years. We have not yet completed the transition. Our evolution continues even now as our emerging altruistic qualities struggle to gain dominance over the animal fires which stubbornly smoulder in our nature.

Our species has always been divided into competing factions. Even today, race, national loyalties, and many cultural values conflict with the more positive impulses which might otherwise make us a single harmonious family.

We feel menaced by neighbors who do not share our religious and political philosophies. Fears caused by these and other differences trigger animal-like responses. Suspicion and competition, rather than friendly cooperation, continue to dominate international relationships.

Modern societies have outlawed murder as a means for settling disputes between individuals. I cannot take the life or property of another simply because he offends or threatens me. I cannot join with others to attack and destroy an adjoining neighborhood. If marauders enter my home to pillage and destroy, society will attempt to protect me with police and military forces. We provide elaborate means for settling civil disputes in a non-violent manner, but we fail to provide similar mechanisms for resolving conflicts at the international level, where the stakes are much higher and the evil effects of conflict far more destructive.

We have given token attention to this problem with the United Nations, but we have made it ineffective by permitting certain nations to veto its decisions.

We spend vast sums for weapons and military personnel to defend our interests and those of our allies, but are miserly and unimaginative in seeking substitutes for war.

Even now, the world is weakened and disgraced by preparations for possible wars. This condition could be avoided entirely if we and our adversaries would rationally address the underlying causes for conflict. We permit the threat of war to divert us from devising means for regulating international conduct. Meanwhile, we neglect to rationally attack ignorance, poverty, and exploding human populations, which cause enormous misery and threaten thousands of other living species.

Nations are simply large groups of individuals. They should be bound by the same moral and social restraints that apply in interpersonal relationships, but here our standards have gone completely astray. We still accept the willful murder and destruction of warfare when governments declare that a state of war exists, or when with real or contrived justification, they set out to invade and conquer other nations.

War's causes are usually complex; it is often difficult to determine who is the aggressor, and which actions threaten world peace. In general, however, international problems are simply large scale versions of disputes between individuals, which are usually resolved by courts of law.

Society has failed dismally to establish practical and acceptable rules of national conduct. It has failed equally to provide collective means for enforcing any such rules. We therefore

continue to live in semi-anarchy. We now have the opportunity and the grave duty to establish a limited rule of law covering all nations in resolving their disputes with one another.

The family of nations has become polarized around the United States and the Soviet Union. The teachings of Karl Marx continue to influence the Soviet bloc. Like all Utopian dreams, Marx's vision was appealing. But like Plato and many others, Marx ignored the imperfections of the human condition and the failures of all previous attempts to establish Utopian societies that presupposed an idealized view of human nature.

Marxian morality holds that the end justifies all means when the end is world communism. This tenet is inconsistent with reason. Dialectical materialism has little concern for the intangible but real forces of the spirit, which include love, religious faith, altruism, and other prime movers of human behavior. Any rational basis for international cooperation must consider human nature in its entirety. Law without an ethical basis cannot endure.

Many communist leaders are no doubt idealistic in their own fashion. They believe they are serving their people when they slavishly follow the dictums of Marx and his modern successors. But too many, particularly those who reach the upper levels of leadership, are selected by the same processes which brought to power Josef Stalin, whose cruelties to his fellow citizens were unmatched even by the Czars.

Russian leadership is strongly influenced by more than 60 years of Party rule. Many Russians believe that the United States is plotting their conquest. But many others recognize that we and our allies proved our peaceful intentions at the end of World War II when the United States alone had the atomic bomb and could have conquered the earth. Instead, we assisted friend and foe alike in rebuilding their shattered economies.

Even then, the followers of Marx were infiltrating and subverting our open American society, buying and stealing technology, and covertly influencing our domestic and foreign policies in many ways.

Internationally, the communists have continued to follow the tenets of Marx and Lenin. They have gained some degree of control over one third of the human family. Their grip is not

secure; it is based upon forced conformity, controlled information, and closed national borders. No doubt there are many pent up tensions within communist societies which could, under proper circumstances, violently erupt.

The communist nations deprive their citizens of material comforts in order to continue a massive military buildup. We can only conclude they still have as their goal revolution and world conquest. They continue to export money, arms, military forces, and "political advisors" to other nations, some of them struggling democracies, in attempts to overthrow their governments. Some non-communist governments, it must be said, are corrupt; many of them are dominated by self-serving dictators. But many small nations have reasonably open and honest governments. Yet most must contend with serious economic and social problems on the one hand while plagued by wholesale communist-directed sabotage and assassinations on the other. It is extremely difficult to make democracy work under these conditions.

When communist minorities seek control of a nation they have targeted for "revolution," they usually boycott elections. They know they cannot peacefully win over the "masses" they profess to serve; they *must* use force and violence. After they seize power, elections become a sham. No rival parties are tolerated.

Elections consist simply of endorsing a slate of candidates nominated by the Party elite. Membership in the Party is limited to a small number—rarely more than six percent—of the citizens. Members accept Party discipline and policy in all matters.

Expansionist activities by communist nations tend to bring into prominence individuals who are inclined to use force more than persuasion. The impact of their activities often has a similar effect within the target nations. Efforts by Russia to export revolution have prompted us to give military assistance to threatened nations. A vicious circle has been established.

Political evolution did not die with Marx and Lenin! If only the world's leaders would devote at least 10 percent of their military and research budgets to peace! Surely they could devise political means for resolving their differences. If Karl Marx were alive today, he might enter such a dialogue will-

ingly, with views quite different from those he enunciated a century ago.

War between America and Russia is both unthinkable and unwinnable. The minds and hearts of humanity can be won only by rational means, and not by violence. Leaders in both countries should jointly develop an international philosophy whereby a variety of political and economic systems can coexist in friendly competition. The human condition permits an infinite variety of social adaptations. Political patterns will undergo endless change in the future. We should not attempt to fit all nations to one pattern. No system is suited to all future time.

If America and Russia will agree on this basic premise, together they can lead the world in a new, nonviolent, revolution that will make reason and compassion the guiding forces of humanity.

Americans seek a peaceful world. We resent having to maintain large military forces. But we are determined to preserve our political freedoms. We observe Russia, our recent ally and now our self-proclaimed antagonist, building awesome forces for war. Both we and they know that such forces are far greater than necessary for self-defense.

We will not unilaterally disarm when confronted by a nation pledged to our conquest. We are not fools. We cannot accept claims of disarmament from self-declared enemies without absolute verification of those claims. We are prepared to reduce our military forces and to grant Russia the same rights of verification that we ask for ourselves. They reject any such proposal.

We must, therefore, continue our efforts to block Russian expansionism, for a century if need be, even as we appeal to Russian thinkers to seek political solutions for international frictions.

Teachers advance, soldiers impede the progress of third-world nations. Answers to our problems will be found in knowledge and cooperation, not in warfare and subversion.

We cannot *compel* our potential friends in Russia to abandon the rigid teachings of Marx, nor can they *compel* us to modify the less pleasing features of Capitalism. Thinking people in both nations must soon realize the futility of continuing the "cold war" and its attendant arms race.

Surely we are capable of stabilizing national boundaries by cooperative actions of the family of nations. The difficulties are no more complex and no less amenable to analysis and solution than were the problems of placing men on the moon, or of decyphering the genetic codes of life. What we must now provide are the desire and the will to achieve that goal. Minds capable of discovering solutions can be found in all the major nations if only we will seek them out.

Let us join with Russia in establishing a World Congress of Human Reason, to be located in Russia so as to balance the United Nations location in New York. Let us finance it with funds taken from the military budgets of all nations. Then let us gather in its halls the brightest and best minds from every corner of the earth, to concentrate on the major problems of the human family with absolute freedom and objectivity. Its members will have access to all human knowledge. They will review the present state of humanity and its future prospects. The Congress will define and rank our major problems, and attempt to provide solutions for them. Its discussions will be open and vigorous, its studies unhampered by excessive political loyalties. Its conclusions and proposals will be published for the considerations of citizens everywhere. Nations will be free to accept or to reject its recommendations and to advance new proposals. Eventually, a consensus can be reached on specific subjects.

The first and most pressing assignment will be to expand and perfect international law so as to assure the territorial integrity and political independence of all nations. Boundary disputes must be resolved in a world court. Information must be freely exchanged and commerce encouraged, worldwide. Freedom of the seas must be assured. Assistance and advice can be offered in addressing thorny domestic problems, such as those which plague nations in the Middle East.

Collective intervention in the internal affairs of a nation can be permitted only when it is clearly demonstrated that its government is tyrannical or otherwise oppressive. Censure in the form of public condemnation or the application of economic penalties may be invoked when a nation is abusive to a minority of its citizens or to its neighbors.

Periodic open elections coupled with reasonable voter qualifications are the most reliable means for confirming citizen approval of a government. All nations should be encouraged to accept the discipline of periodic free elections.

On the world scene, humanity must accept that level of international control as will achieve these limited goals. Basic international law must be interpreted and applied through an impartial court system which can act without fear of veto, and with the support of the major nations and their moral, economic, and military forces. In extreme cases, decisions of the world court must be enforced by collective military action. Only in this way can world peace be assured.

All nations need not immediately accept this proposal. If the United States and Russia will give it their wholehearted support and by their example convince others of the wisdom of their decision, the rest of the family of nations will sooner or later join in this rational alternative to war.

Any nation may supplement the international police force with its own internal security forces, provided that these military organizations are incapable of posing a threat to others. Confining national armies within their own territories is a duty which must be assumed by the larger family of nations. This alone will prevent most wars.

Atomic arsenals should be dismantled and their warheads converted to peaceful uses. It may be prudent for the collective international military command to maintain a minimum array of atomic weapons during the transition period to discourage the secret deployment of similar arms by any individual nation.

In the political field, the peaceful interchange of ideas should be encouraged even though this cannot be mandated. But terrorists, political "activists" and assassins or subversives who seek the violent overthrow of established governments must be prosecuted. Minimum standards for freedom of speech should be encouraged universally to enlighten government on the informed views of their citizens.

Neither we nor the Russians have perfected our political and economic machinery to provide the "greatest good for the greatest number." Our enterprise economy can be modified in many ways so as to maintain economic incentives while avoid-

ing an unhealthy concentration of wealth through inheritance or monopolistic practices.

Russia may find it advantageous to bring into the political process a larger and more diversified segment of her population. She may find it helpful to adopt certain "capitalistic" incentives for stimulating economic efficiency. Increased personal freedom for her citizens may be beneficial for all.

As we have seen, all who share the human condition are captives of inherited cultural attitudes. Therein are rooted the frictions which divide the free and communist worlds.

Debates in the United Nations Assembly, and discussions in Geneva seeking the regulation of military weapons, although of some value in temporarily reducing tensions, are premised on continuations of the faulty attitudes of history. They do not recognize or address the *sources* of our conflicts.

The abolition of war will require a fundamental change in national *philosophy* of all nations. The atomic arsenals of the major powers provide sufficient and obvious cause to accept that change universally. Collective human reason—Common Sense—can be the ultimate weapon with which this goal can be achieved.

Extreme nationalism and fanatic political and religious faith can be tamed through persistent appeals to informed reason. Excessive reliance upon our rational powers can be tempered with a respect for tradition and by our acknowledgement of the fallibility of all that is human.

Traditional "patriotism" consists of an unswerving loyalty to the principles and interest of one's nation. It is a strong social force in welding dissimilar individuals and parties into effective, unified forces in the arena of international relationships. But excessive parochial patriotism has caused great human suffering and conflict, which applied reason might have avoided.

Today, the entire world is confronted by *common* problems of overpopulation, resource depletion, and threatened atomic conflict. These overshadow the continuing but less cataclysmic traditional frictions which still play their historic role in unsettling the tranquility of the family of nations.

We must develop a new patriotism on a larger base that will reflect the shared interests of all humanity, and all life on earth.

A World Congress of Human Reason can provide leadership in reshaping basic human attitudes. Its recommendations must reflect the collective Common Sense of humanity, tempered with appropriate respect for our religious faiths, our ethical awareness, and all our emotional and spiritual needs.

Bold initiatives by Americans and Russians can establish this new agency and help it resolve the philosophical conflicts which plague our species.

A vigorous and ongoing World Congress can hasten the dawning of the era foretold by the biblical prophet Isaiah, "... and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

IX

On Revolution

"On what shall man found the order of the world which he would govern? . . . Shall it be on justice? Man is ignorant of it. . . . Certainly had he known it . . . We would have seen it set up in all the States on earth and in all times. . . ."

"The art of opposition and of revolution is to unsettle established customs, sounding them even to their source, to point out their want of authority and justice. . . ."

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)
from "Pensees, On a Foundation
for Ordering the World"

THE FLOW OF TIME is associated with endless change in all matter of energy. Where life is present the pace of change is vastly increased. We humans undergo continuous remodeling in mind and body. We are born, we grow, we mature, age, and die. Our bodies begin as dust and water. After a brief span of perhaps 70 earth years we revert again to our elemental beginnings. Our lives are animated by a vital flame transmitted to us through an unbroken sequence of generations which can be

traced to a spark struck over two billion years ago on this planet.

Our life flame is shared with myriads of other forms which have evolved with us over the eons as powers of the Infinite have become manifest in the revelations of nature. We alone on earth have been gifted with brains that provide perception and reason sufficient to recognize at least dimly the ultimate majesty of a Supreme Being reflected in these manifestations.

We are beginning to understand our potential for guiding future evolution in a conscious and integrated fashion. Today our species continues a long pattern of strife and warfare. Divisive forces within us overpower other impulses which might unite all of humanity in concerted opposition to ignorance, misery, and discord. We are endowed with accumulations of knowledge and error inherited from the past. We often confuse one with the other and interpret reality in contrary ways.

The human family remains divided by multitudes of differences. Our world society is a seething cauldron of conflicts, bustle, and motion.

Yet our daily affairs require a degree of order. Social structures and codes of behavior must undergo periodic modification in order to meet changing needs within the body politic. History suggests that these changes occur by fits and starts. An established social pattern or government tends to remain stable for extended periods, coasting along on the inertial tendencies of its component laws, customs, and institutions. Gradually accumulating stresses ultimately force adaptive changes. We are creatures of habit. We often tolerate outmoded life patterns to avoid the discomfort attendant upon adopting new ones.

Ultimately our societies must demonstrate sufficient adaptability to meet major changes in the conditions of life. Governments and other social organizations which exist today have demonstrated that level of flexibility in the past or they would not have survived to the present point in history. Today all governments in the family of nations face widespread change—change brought about by an explosion in human numbers and human technology of a magnitude never before encountered.

Existing social and political structures must meet the challenges of the next century. Those which most effectively

combine wisdom, strength, and determination will play guiding roles in bringing our species into the future.

Threats to social stability take many forms. Some are internal, and relate to increasing literacy, to altered economic circumstances, and to evolutionary changes in the social order. Other destabilizing forces arise from changes in the political, economic, or military activities of neighboring states. Major acquisitions of knowledge unsettle many traditional beliefs.

Both historical records and a view of the present world picture reveal a variety of successful patterns of government. They cover a spectrum from absolute dictatorships to complete democracies. Control of the affairs of a state resides in a coalition of power centers. These may be apparent and straightforward, or partially concealed and disguised. In an absolute monarchy authority resides at least in theory in a monarch. But that authority may be dependent upon support by lesser nobles and ministers of government. Ultimately it requires continuing acceptance by the populace.

A similar situation exists in nations ruled by dictators, and sometimes on a smaller scale, in a tribe or even in a family. Custom and asserted power may spawn an assortment of patterns of what may be termed "authoritative" rule.

At the opposite extreme societies may be "democratic," with each citizen, at least in theory, having coequal status with all others. Certain city states in ancient Greece functioned under conditions which permitted major state decisions to be reached in assemblies of all the citizens, even though they may have numbered upward of 30,000.

Our American institutions are democratic in principle but republican in practice. We delegate legislative functions to officials elected by the common people.

Communist societies are nearer the authoritarian end of the spectrum. They are ruled by a single "Party" which is self-perpetuating and elitist. Membership is offered selectively to citizens who meet criteria established by the party leadership. Conformity to party discipline is rigidly enforced. Debate within the party must be carefully structured to avoid challenging established leaders and hallowed doctrines.

Democracies have a stability of sorts which flows from the ability of the population to achieve changes in the social struc-

ture through open elections. Demands for reform or for new government policies do not accumulate to disruptive levels when the safety valve of the ballot box is available at regular intervals.

Communist societies have stability of another sort, with concentrations of economic, police, and military power under the control of the ruling coalition. By skillfully directing the flow of information, and by anticipating to reasonable degrees the physical and intellectual needs of the populace, such governments can survive for long intervals. They enjoy certain advantages of leadership if they have the wisdom and the will to use them. Wise leaders can sometimes foresee future needs which require stern anticipatory measures. If they demonstrate by their actions an apparent devotion to the service of their citizens they usually maintain themselves in power.

In democratic societies it is sometimes difficult for leaders to require sacrifice from citizens who are beguiled by other candidates for office who through ignorance or mere ambition promise unlimited "benefits" from the public treasury. It is difficult for leaders in democratic societies to seek changes in traditional attitudes which may have been made desirable by alterations in the human condition.

Revolutions are social upheavals in which an entrenched combination of power centers is forcefully deposed by new coalitions favoring doctrines of a radically different nature. Revolutions may occur in all societies, although they may come about in different manners, violent, or otherwise.

When social evolution has produced change to a level beyond the adaptive power of an existing government the stage is set for overthrow of the old order by new coalitions of power which offer promise of adapting society to its altered circumstances.

A "justified" revolution is one which arises when there has developed a marked disparity between the asserted right to rule of an established government and the combined political wills of its citizens. To be justified, a revolution must achieve in actual fact a better representation of the political will of its people than was provided by the deposed system.

A revolution that is simply a violent overthrow of one set of self-serving rulers by another is no more than a coup. Occa-

sionally even a coup can be considered justified if it results in replacing a tyrant with more moderate rulers who better serve the needs of the people.

Regimes installed through intrigue and violence are subject to overthrow in like manner.

Democratic societies are less inclined to takeover by factions because of their feedback mechanisms which maintain a degree of conformity between the will of the people and the actions of government.

But democracy is fragile, even when the electorate is composed of literate and reasonably informed citizens. When the people are uneducated and illiterate, democracies are extremely vulnerable to takeover by militants who achieve control of the police, the military, and public information forces. Skillful conspirators may seize power, suppress the populace, and use the resources of an entire nation to pursue their own selected goals, even in a culturally advanced nation. This occurred in Germany when Adolph Hitler seized power. It occurred in different circumstances in Russia when followers of Marx under the guidance of Lenin gained absolute control of the largest nation on earth by seizing the reins of power from the poorly organized leaders of an earlier revolution which had deposed the Czar.

Revolutions may be bloodless, or they may be terribly destructive of life and social institutions. They may improve the lot of nations, or plunge them into conditions worse than those which gave them birth.

Today the entire world is concerned with an ideological struggle between two general philosophies. On the left of the spectrum are communistic societies, theocracies, and dictatorships which contend that the affairs of mankind are too complex for citizen control. These systems function under the guidance of elitist ruling groups. In communist nations this is the Party. In Iran today it is a religious hierarchy. In other societies it may be a dictatorship, or rule by a military junta, supported by influential groups in the civilian sector.

In such societies individual rights are curtailed. Political and economic activities are controlled at least to some degree by the central authority. Freedom of discussion and dissent are often non-existent. Personal liberties are severely curtailed in these

authoritarian societies, whether they be communist, capitalist, religious, or otherwise.

On the right end of the scale are the democracies or quasi-democracies which attempt to function with elected officials while preserving freedom for all but the most flagrantly disruptive political activities.

Neither of these general types of government has succeeded in devising mechanisms which so clearly demonstrate superiority that all human beings everywhere flock willingly to its banner. No major power except China has indicated an awareness of the problems of overpopulation. No nation has proposed programs which will bring the entire world family into a perpetual balance with nature. No nation or alliance has proposed acceptable programs for freeing international commerce, maintaining universal peace, and establishing a stable world order in which there is no armed conflict, and in which individual nations are free to experiment with trials of new systems for self-rule and economic development.

Instead the major powers remain concerned primarily with their rivalries and with endless expansions of military forces, bleeding their societies and diverting attention and resources which might otherwise be serving the peaceful needs of all mankind.

The communist leadership remains committed to outmoded ideological concepts propounded by Marx and Lenin. They continue to make private capitalism a scapegoat for all the world's problems, ignoring the real contributions to human life which have been made possible by reasonably regulated capitalistic agencies coupled with prudent taxes on profits, property, income, and inheritances.

Enlightened people today recognize that humanity can adapt to widely divergent economic and social systems in different circumstances and in different times. It is possible for all to co-exist peacefully if nations will only determine collectively that peace *must* be preserved. World problems of population control, economic development, education, and the pursuit of justice and happiness can be dealt with in an infinite variety of ways.

We *are* in need of world revolution. But it must not be one of force and violence. It must be a revolution of human *attitude*, a

revolution that will outlaw the abominations of war, replacing it with judicial means for solving international frictions, with decisions enforced by a representative coalition, perhaps through a reinvigorated United Nations organization.

That peaceful revolution can begin with joint actions by dominant members of the world family to prevent the military forces of any nation from crossing the borders of another. Similar joint efforts can assure all nations the free exchange of goods and information throughout the world.

No one knows which way human institutions will evolve in future ages. There is strength and hope in diversity, exploring many pathways in efforts to achieve our maximum potentials.

Sensible people in all nations realize that an atomic war is unthinkable as a conscious policy for any nation. It would be suicidal and universally destructive.

It is time for a new generation of leadership in America, Russia, China, and all the nations of the earth to join in cooperative efforts to establish lasting world peace.

Achieving *this* goal will constitute the final revolution in world thought which will establish an Age of Reason.

X

Reflections on God and Religion

ATHEISM HAS BEEN MADE the official religion of Russia and other communist nations. In part this has been due to concepts which have become an essential part of religious doctrine in many of the world's established religions. Yet religious teachings are subject to evolution as they interact with expanding knowledge in other fields. No one can foretell the precise nature of the concepts which will characterize Christianity and other religious faiths 1,000 or even 100 years hence. It would be helpful in bridging the chasm which now separates the philosophical foundations of the United States and Russia if we could reinterpret our religious tenets in a manner which would appeal to self-proclaimed atheists. I present here certain reflections of a personal nature which seek to reach those minds. If they offend readers who hold to more traditional views I hasten to note that I am only a private citizen, and do not attempt to alter the convictions of those who sincerely hold contrary beliefs.

A human being is composed of perhaps 60 trillion cells, all working together to maintain a collective existence in this hostile world. Each of those cells, viewed alone, is a living miracle—a manifestation of vast intelligence and eternal energy. Our bodies combine many organs and tissues including specialized components capable of reproducing our species in an endless succession of increasing variety.

How matter begins the continuing phenomenon of life is beyond our understanding. We observe with wonder those features of living things which can be projected into our limited sphere of knowledge. Life appears to be an intrinsic potential of *all* matter, requiring precise circumstances to bring it into being.

We are bewildered by the marvels of the human brain, which combines perhaps one trillion interconnected cells in a central control mechanism for the body as a whole, receiving information from the environment, processing, reviewing, and storing it, and using it to guide its sheltering body through a brief existence here on earth.

We cannot know whether each of the multitudes of brain cells is aware of its own existence. We do perceive that all of them working collectively give rise to our individual awareness and to our thoughts, feelings, and purposeful actions.

We observe that each nerve cell or neurone is an entity unto itself, with filamentous projections which lead to other cells in the nervous system and throughout the body. Each neurone and somatic cell plays a special role in the concerted activities which give rise to our individual identities.

If each cell is self aware in some miniature manner, it is unlikely to be capable of recognizing its subsidiary role in the body as a whole.

We now understand that every living cell is an extremely complicated chemical factory. Each one is made of millions of component molecules—some small and others large and intricate. Certain of the larger protein molecules combine thousands of atoms in precise arrangements. All are suspended in a watery medium which permits the continuous motions and chemical interactions which together make up the dynamic equilibrium we recognize as life. Life *is* chemistry. It is a manifestation of potentials universally present in matter and energy. The coordinated reactions contained within the delicate membranes of each cell continue an ongoing struggle to maintain its integrity in opposition to contrary natural forces which appear to impel all things relentlessly toward disintegration and decay.

The trail of life on this planet can be traced backward in time for more than 2 billion years. The general pattern manifests a trend toward increasing complexity, with continuous adaptation to changing environmental conditions. There is evidence that all living earthly things have derived from a single begin-

ning, although it is possible that the spark of life may have been struck on several occasions, each time establishing simple beginnings from which similar sequential changes have evolved to manifest life forces until then dormant and hidden.

Once in motion the miracle of life has continued to unfold the increasingly variegated display of plants, animals, and microscopic forms now known to us. We observe the process of growth and differentiation advancing even now, creating new forms and adaptations within the mantle of living things.

Dissection of a cell beyond the molecular level reveals its elemental atomic components. We have learned that each atom resembles a miniature solar system, with planetary electrons whirling eternally in orbital patterns around a central nucleus.

In a limited way we understand some of the smaller structural features of the atomic world. We visualize electrons, protons, neutrons, and many other substructures of diminishing size and substance. Today it appears that the ultimate building blocks may be entities labeled quarks. These together with their energy equivalents make up what we perceive as reality. But we know that our perceptions are illusory, and that what seems solid is mainly empty space sparsely occupied by ghost-like foci of energy which are continuing even now an endless frenzied dance which began with the birth of this universe and which may have undergone transcendental changes in a pathway which extended back beyond time. When we attempt to understand reality beyond our present impressions we are groping in realms and shadows which are beyond our ken.

Every moment of our lives chemical processes are interchanging and replacing atoms, molecules, and complete cells within us. Although the general design and identity of our bodies remain relatively constant, the building blocks which comprise us are undergoing continuous rearrangement. Atoms now a part of one cell may in a few moments be part of another. Matter present in a human being today has been in existence for billions of years. Perhaps it was once interstellar dust. Then it became part of our earth, condensed into solidity with our solar system's birth. Yesterday it may have been part of a plant or a farm animal. Today it is human, giving rise to thought or action. Tomorrow it will again be dust. In the course of time it may undergo a series of deaths and reincarnations in the organic mantle of this planet.

We recognize in moments of introspection that our realities are illusions fashioned by our senses and cognitive function. They are rooted in eternal constants which we can never fully understand. Each quark, electron, proton, atom, and molecule is a manifestation of the Almighty. Our natures, thoughts, and actions are expressions of an eternal essence, reflecting for an instant the light of an infinite and eternal being as the plane of the present sweeps down the endless dimension of time. Each atom, molecule, and cell within us contributes to our identity and awareness. Our joys, pains, and strivings may embody turmoils existing eternally in the soul of the Supreme Being, the summation of all existence. Perhaps we are like cells in the mind of God, contributing to celestial functions beyond our ken, just as our own cells unknowingly fashion our thoughts and actions. Perhaps the laws of nature order and constrain even the living and eternal Deity from which they spring, and of which they are a part. Conflict and suffering may be eternally a part of the Divine Plan except as they can be resolved and eased by forces for good, working through us and other agencies. In our brief life each of us has a precious moment in which to exert our energies for good or evil. After death we may return to the infinite whole from which we spring, as a raindrop returns to the sea. We and all things are parts of eternal reality. All pathways lead finally to God, and are closed circles in and of God. It may have been in this sense that Christ said, "Before Abraham was born, I am." His life manifested in a perfect manner divine qualities which are imperfectly expressed in all of us. Mary, his human mother, played a unique role as the agency which "made him man." Christians believe that the divine nature of Christ remains with us, and that it is in some mysterious manner present in the physical form of the Eucharist.

Throughout human history religion has worn many costumes and played many roles. In an earlier age it was rooted in superstition and fanciful speculation, just as were our understandings in science and other domains. And like all human understanding, even today it remains childlike and primitive when measured on an absolute scale. We acknowledge that our powers are finite and that we can never grasp the true nature of the cosmos. However, it is likely that we will carry our quest for understanding to the limits our simple powers permit. Human

curiosity will ever consider ignorance a vacuum to be filled and a darkness to be illuminated. And this will be just as true for religion as for mathematics, physics, and chemistry.

In order to discuss religion objectively let us confine the term to include those human institutions and beliefs which seek to understand and to guide the relationships between humanity and the Infinite. All searchers for truth, including professed atheists and agnostics, can join freely in such a quest.

The major religious bodies in today's world crystalized their beliefs and rituals long ago when human understanding was even more limited than the childish perceptions of reality we hold today.

Yet most of those religions gathered and nurtured ethical standards and rules of conduct which strengthened and sustained their adherents in the struggle for earthly survival. In the long course of history the various religious traditions have accumulated many incidentals, some of which have outlived their usefulness. In the intellectual ferment of today some of these unessentials are being questioned and discarded. All too often the inappropriateness of ancillary doctrines causes some people to discard all religion, leaving a painful void which cannot be filled by a substitute.

Very often religious leaders become excessively concerned with trivia in doctrine and ritual. Like the Pharisees of old they fail to re-state valid beliefs in harmony with evolving knowledge in secular fields. Because of this failure religion has been subjected to much criticism, and sometimes to ridicule. Unthinking belief has sometimes replaced judicious evaluation. In religious controversy as in politics, fanaticism may displace reason, leading to vast human suffering. We forget that a complex subject can be viewed from many vantage points. This can lead observers to seemingly contradictory conclusions which can be reconciled by further study.

The quest for truth is not for cowards. Treasured traditions and comfortable beliefs must not be permitted to overpower solid contrary evidence.

Religious leaders should emulate their scientific contemporaries. Traditional understandings must be constantly revised and modified to incorporate new perspectives which appear as the total knowledge horizon of humanity is expanded through observation, experimentation, and reflection. Eternal and

absolute truths undoubtedly exist. Yet it is unlikely that human beings can ever totally and accurately encompass them with our limited and fallible understanding. Appropriate humility suggests that we regard all our knowledge as incomplete and tentative, ever subject to revision in the light of new information. Acceptance of this posture will eliminate most of the apparent conflicts between science and religion.

Truth cannot conflict with truth. Christianity can exist in harmony with many elements of Humanism, Confucianism, or Pantheism. Our understanding of philosophy is child-like and limited.

But not all philosophic questions are amendable to scientific analysis. There is a legitimate place for inspired teachings by religious leaders who may through intuition or inspiration perceive concepts which lie beyond the reach of human reason and scientific proof.

So long as those teachings do not conflict with our reasoned judgments and so long as they contribute to human happiness they can be accepted on faith which transcends reason.

The ceremonials, vestments, and practices of ancient religions are not without value. They lend beauty and an appropriate aura of reverence to religious observances.

The concept of prayer as a function of our nature can be accepted on faith. We may regard it as an effort to communicate in thought with the Supreme Being and with other non-physical beings, even including other-worldly projections of people now dead. The efficacy of prayer is not suitable for scientific study. Yet throughout history notable human beings have often made prayer a part of their lives. Even in our modern and stylishly Godless world many leaders in the quest for scientific knowledge have gained through their observations of nature an abiding reverence for the majesty and mystery of God. They acknowledge many differences between their views and the teachings of specific religions. But they do not find those differences necessarily unreconcilable, allowing for variables in viewpoint and levels of perceived certainty.

We cannot scientifically prove the existence of a life after death. For many people the concept represents a deep-seated hope for a continuation and perfection of our existence in another dimension-set in which the injustices and sufferings of this earthly life will be made right on the eternal scales of what

we humans perceive as justice. Throughout our history belief in an afterlife has been a source of solace and hope for many human minds.

In considering these and other areas of controversy we must not *reject* reason even though we openly acknowledge its limitations. So long as we do not permit faith to *override* our rational powers we should use those talents to explore the frontiers which lie at the outer limits of scientific observation. In death we may reach final answers to these questions. It is possible that we may disappear into an eternal oblivion in which no answers are needed or sought. Those of us who attempt to accept and to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ take comfort in the promise of a better existence which is to come.

On the outer perimeter of human understanding there are no boundaries between fields of study. Modern physics has advanced our imagery of reality to a level indistinguishable from the spiritual. Enlightened *religious* leaders of tomorrow must maintain a reasonable understanding of human knowledge as it explores new areas. They must continuously re-distill the beliefs and practices of their own special field of study to preserve and perfect the application of those enduring moral principles which can best guide humanity through the social hazards of the future.

Today it is apparent that no religion has a monopoly on truth. It is also demonstrably true that the traditional teachings of most religions are grossly inaccurate in their views relating to cosmology, and to the role and duration of human existence on the face of this planet.

Acclaimed religious teachers did not profess to be expert in science. Their appeals were directed primarily to the moral sense of humanity. They often spoke in parables to express in simple language the ethical message of their mission. Their listeners were more often than not simple, unschooled people.

Are we not all "children of God"? Physically we are children as members of the community of living creatures. And we are children in a spiritual sense as well. Each of us is endowed with understanding and with a limited control over our own actions. We possess a simple ethical sense to permit a choice between good and evil, and our lives provide many opportunities to exercise that choice. We are aware of our good, altruistic impulses, and are equally aware of another aspect of our nature

which is selfish, destructive, and antisocial. We have survived as social creatures in a hazardous environment because our ethical nature has never been completely overwhelmed by evil.

As our knowledge of physical reality increases it will become more and more important that we permit our altruistic instincts to *dominate* our behavior. The survival of an Age of Reason will depend upon this change in our living patterns.

We may review in this light the teachings of Christ as they apply to the nations of the earth today, even those whose present philosophies and goals are in most direct opposition to his non-violent message. Jesus Christ was an historical figure, although little is known about his humble life. It manifested mysteries which are not explainable scientifically. His coming was foretold by Jewish prophets centuries before his birth. They described certain details of his career and the genealogy from which he would derive.

Christ preached a message of love among mankind, and between mankind and God. He referred to God in the anthropomorphic terms of his day. He spoke often of "my Father" in heaven. He spoke of himself as the Son of God as well as the son of man. He spoke of humanity as the "children of God." He stressed spiritual values over material things. And he was largely rejected by Jewish leaders because the Messiah they were expecting was to be a powerful worldly figure who would free their people from oppression.

Christ spoke of his kingdom as "not of this world," yet promised to remain with his followers until the end of this world. He foretold a perfected kingdom "of which there will be no end."

Although he was a simple Jewish carpenter with little formal education he revealed from an early age a profound new understanding of humanity. He remained a simple citizen until he was about 30 years of age. He then traveled about the countryside preaching to ordinary people his other-worldly thoughts.

He foretold his own betrayal and execution, but predicted to his closest followers his early resurrection from death.

He gained attention by performing miracles, but gained even greater loyalties by his penetrating understanding of the simple human beings who followed him. He foretold that his teachings would ultimately prevail.

He could have avoided execution by the Romans, but freely accepted his death as a final fulfillment of the role he was to play on earth in some eternal divine plan. A few days after his death he did reappear to his closest disciples in what must have been a profoundly inspirational manner. In the course of a few weeks he was seen at close hand by large numbers of men and women who had known him personally.

Most of those believers had been in hiding since his execution, fearful that they might be subjected to similar treatment.

His presence inspired them in some mysterious way, wiping away their fears, and instilling in them a fierce resolve to go out into the Roman world to spread the message he had taught in his brief three years of public life.

Christ's appearance on earth two thousand years ago did not take the form which had been anticipated. Perhaps his predicted second coming will be as different from our expectations today.

He may be with us in a spiritual form even now as his teachings struggle to extend their permeation of our collective human awareness and subconscious. He did not see himself as the special prophet for a particular human group. He spoke in terms of universals, and addressed all the nations of the earth. He advanced concepts which can appeal to all people of all faiths.

Perhaps the second coming of Christ will take the form of a dawning of an age of collective human reason in which inter-human love and compassion will dominate our individual and national behavior.

We know that humanity is a new and highly adaptable species. Judging by the records of other living things our descendants should still be on earth several million years into the future. The cultural institutions and churches which accompany us today will undoubtedly undergo vast change in that long interval.

It is to be hoped that the spiritual message of the great religions will continue to thrive and to increasingly dominate and inspire the lives of a perfected human family until the last person fades and dies on this remote planet.

XI

On the Conversion of Russia

OUR COLLECTIVE AWARENESS is awakening to the master role we may play in guiding the affairs of this planet.

The past five centuries have witnessed a vast expansion of human knowledge. Generally the scientific world has accepted change willingly, even though this has sometimes required radical revision of traditional views. Scientists regard all human understanding as incomplete and fallible. They increasingly recognize no boundaries between fields of study. There is a growing awareness of the unitary nature of all knowledge.

Throughout the modern world pragmatism tends to displace faith—sometimes to our disadvantage. New concepts are tested rigorously against what is already known of reality.

As the scientific attitude is extended into the worlds of philosophy it is important that we do not destroy that faith which transcends reason as we attempt to reconcile traditional beliefs with our expanding understanding of the physical world.

If we consider the term religion to consist of *that field of human activity which attempts to relate mankind with the Infinite*, we observe in our past history a wide variety of institutions sharing that purpose. We see that they have developed a multitude of doctrines, rituals, and practices which attempt to express our

awe and respect for the ultimate source of all that we perceive. Most religions call that ultimate reality God. Through religious observances they attempt to demonstrate human acceptance of God's will. Our understanding of God continues to evolve as we slowly gain in knowledge and shake off the accumulation of superstition and error gathered in our misty past.

The major religions of today can be traced to primitive beginnings in the mythology and folklore of our remote ancestors whose archaic beliefs often characterized God as a man-like creature possessing on an infinite scale the thoughts and feelings we experience as human beings. Lacking words to represent God in an adequate fashion we have come to refer to the Almighty as a person, even as a person of the masculine gender. Jesus Christ referred to God as the Father of humanity. These concepts permeate our literature, our attitudes, and our beliefs.

There is general agreement that our understanding of God is distorted and inadequate. We continue to use ancient concepts because of habit and because we lack good substitutes. Many wise people concede that God is almost completely unknowable for human minds and senses.

Ancient writings which still play a prominent role in religions of the Judeo-Christian-Muslim tradition sometimes describe God as stern, righteous by human standards, vindictive, unforgiving, and tyrannical. At other times God is represented as all-wise, loving, solicitous for our welfare, and forgiving of our failings. These conflicting interpretations reveal the inadequacy and confusion of our attempts to describe the true nature of the Supreme Being.

Yet these ancient beliefs are often clothed in beautiful language and imagery. They are interwoven with treasured customs and concepts to such a degree that we question them only with mental distress and reluctance. We are slow to acknowledge error in honored religious teachings even when they clearly conflict with evidence in the secular world. Most human beings are unwilling to abandon emotional attachments to traditional beliefs and find it simpler to let faith override reason. When we consider these subjects we should utilize the time scale which science has established with reasonable certainty for our planet and for our species. Human beings have

existed here for at least 100,000 years. We will very likely continue to evolve for a longer span into the future. Certain of the myths developed by our primitive ancestors to explain our existence and our purpose can be traced backward in time for only a fraction of that interval. Many modern religionists accept these stories as allegories. Others of more fundamentalist creeds regard them as absolute and literal truths. "True believers" ignore contrary evidence and accept ancient teachings as direct inspirations from God which must be believed in every detail. Problems result when there are conflicts between such "sacred" beliefs and the observations and reasoned conclusions of secular students.

Clashes between faith and reason are especially distressing for faithful believers who have not had access to all the evidence. But religious convictions often defy reason even among educated individuals. If these people occupy positions of influence, great mischief may result.

Religion has been a powerful force in guiding human behavior. It has helped societies to regulate individual desires and needs for the benefit of the larger group. It has sometimes protected human rights by emphasizing the worth and dignity of every person in the larger scheme of existence. Such religions have served a stabilizing role and have justified their existence by assisting their followers to endure and to survive.

But religion has been a mixed blessing. Many crimes against reason and humanity have been committed in its name. Savage wars have been waged by zealous religious factions over doctrinal disagreements which must surely appear trivial in the mind of the Infinite God. Some of the most irrational struggles in human history have been fought by fanatics in the name of Christianity—actions diametrically opposite to the loving and peaceful views of Christ, its founder. Most of us who claim to be Christians have failed to fully incorporate Christ's teachings in our own behavior. Our collective record is not good. Animal forces deep within our nature are powerful and difficult to control.

Religious leaders are especially slow to accept advances in secular knowledge. Advancement through the hierarchy of religious organizations is more dependent upon orthodoxy than upon an innovative spirit. Sometimes centuries pass

before religious authorities accommodate their doctrines to demonstrated reality. From the earliest days of the Christian church through the Spanish Inquisition, the Reformation, the tribulations of Galileo, and the controversies which followed the publication of Darwin's theory of evolution, Christian zealots have repressed reasoned study. Even the ancient Greeks, while professing to honor reason, were guilty of its abuse. Socrates was executed for daring to teach new ideas to the young of Athens. All too often religious spokesmen fail to assume *leadership* roles in applying new secular knowledge to the practical problems of human existence.

Even now certain theologians ignore overwhelming evidence confirming that our species has become too numerous to maintain a perpetual balance with the environment. They view our sex drives as forces tinged with evil. They perpetuate ecclesiastical rules for the regulation of sexual behavior which are quite impractical as a means for achieving an optimum population equilibrium.

The most intense pressures of over-population, malnutrition, and resource depletion exist today in those geographic areas most dominated by traditions favoring high birth rates without regard for the consequences. In some of these areas religious forces play a dominant role in society and could provide leadership to improve the material welfare of the people. Yet they neglect their opportunity and by their failure foment conditions which make their followers targets for conquest by the forces of anti-religion.

Under the constraints established by orthodoxy many religious teachers fail to seek workable economic programs which could adapt their followers to life in an industrialized world. Very often their efforts are of the Utopian variety, suggesting only that the wealthy offer charity to the poor. They ignore their opportunity to educate the poor to become productive members of a social order in which there will be no poverty. They fail to provide the teaching and motivation required for their members to work, to study, to regulate their reproduction, and to properly utilize their material resources. They devote perhaps too much attention to an afterlife and neglect the duties of the living generation to use our talents and our intellects in the most fruitful manner here and now.

Religious leaders are not alone in their disordered priorities and orthodox thinking. Communism, which professes to serve the common man, is so preoccupied with its struggle to conquer the world that it neglects the temporal welfare of its citizens everywhere it has achieved power. Many communist spokesmen are completely saturated with the venom of anti-religion. They tend to repress religious activities rather than to encourage the development of needed reforms within religious movements.

Much of today's lack of respect for religion is fueled by clerics who refuse to accommodate ancient teachings to current problems. They may be so concerned with man-made accouterments of their faiths that they overlook the broader and more fundamental goals which have been enunciated by their spiritual forebears. Minutiae of religious law and ritual observance may overshadow human needs. This is often true in the Christian and Muslim religions today, just as it was in the Jewish religion when Christ criticized the Shammaite Pharisees for their legalistic excesses.

Ordinary citizens of this atomic age still yearn for the spiritual comfort that can be derived from religious observances. It would be helpful if spiritual leaders would emulate the questioning attitude of their scientific contemporaries. Material sciences are modified on a day-to-day basis to incorporate new knowledge from all areas of human investigation. The interchange of secular knowledge is immediate and ongoing. Truth does not change, whether in science or in philosophy. Our *understanding* does change as we gain in knowledge and as we change our vantage points. This is true for religion and for all things.

Now changes in understanding occur more rapidly than ever before. Laggards in knowledge are increasingly handicapped.

Today humanity is being divided into two political camps. On one hand are the imperfectly democratic nations which favor individual rights and a degree of freedom for economic activity. Most of these nations permit religious institutions to operate with few restrictions. Included here are a number of noncommunist socialist states which concentrate much economic power in a central government while preserving a degree of personal freedom. In the other camp are the militant com-

munist nations which severely restrict personal and economic freedom. They discourage the practice of religion because there is so much historical evidence of instances in which religion's faults have outweighed its benefits. They cite the many occasions when fanatics have gained control of human society in the name of religion, and have then abused their powers. Communist societies may also fear to share allegiance between the party and an invisible God. Yet communist leaders often substitute for excessive religious zeal an equally excessive political fervor which has the same shortcomings, and which has resulted in comparable abuses of human rights when fanatics such as Stalin have been in command.

Communist nations are presently engaged in a massive campaign to spread their political beliefs over the entire earth through propaganda, subversion, and military aggression. They are directed by ruthless, singleminded, but rational individuals who have concentrated in a few hands at the top of a controlled political pyramid all the reins of power. At this time they find no use for religion.

Certain Christian leaders are now seeking the conversion of Russia to a belief in God. There is at least a possibility that their program of prayer might be answered if it were bolstered by a companion program for material human guidance which outlined plausible suggestions for achieving universal peace, social justice, and the progressive expression of human potentials in an atmosphere of reasonable freedom.

Vast numbers—perhaps a majority of human beings now living—cling to at least an ill-defined belief in a Supreme Being—a supreme intelligence aware of our existence and concerned with our fate. Let us now call on all who acknowledge their dependence upon God, by whatever name God is known to them, to extract from their collective beliefs a universal code for human conduct which will be acceptable to most reasonable people of all persuasions. Let its tenets be sufficiently flexible that they may adapt to a wide variety of divergent—even conflicting human social backgrounds—while still requesting a level of behavioral conformance sufficient to control the conflicts which arise in human affairs. Adjudication of differences must reflect a consensus of informed world opinion. All parties must be sufficiently flexible and tolerant that they will accept decisions which may not fully satisfy all of their desires.

We cannot resolve in a century or in a thousand centuries all the discords which relate to religious doctrines and rituals. We cannot sweep away the variety of political systems developed through human experience throughout time. Yet we can assert our rationality as we face the coming years of crisis. We can agree to permit differences of opinion in these areas. At the very least we can substitute toleration and arbitration in place of warfare in settling our larger disputes.

Surely there are certain basic principles of *conduct* which could be accepted by most of humanity, especially when the alternative is war. Today each of the major religions includes among its dedicated members some who are well acquainted with specific fields of secular knowledge. There are also many fair and open-minded human beings of wide experience and compassion who may have no particular religious affiliation. Let us seek from all these individuals a basic moral code derived from the shared beliefs of all religions and philosophies, a code which will be pleasing to the largest possible number of human beings, now and in the future.

Can we not obtain general agreement that perceptive life has value? Is not just peace better for humanity than unjust war? Is unprovoked aggression ever a moral good? Is it not desirable that each human being should have an opportunity to seek a useful and rewarding life? Should not society collectively seek to establish conditions which favor the happy development of humanity everywhere on earth according to the reasoned deliberations of its best informed and most compassionate minds? Is it not a primary obligation of the individual and of the state to use rational and pacific means to achieve human happiness while respecting the rights of other human beings and our obligation to all other living things? Is it not wise to restrain individuals and public officials from abusing others? Is it not a good thing to encourage an unending search for wisdom and for spiritual insight?

These and other basic questions of behavior will have direct relevance to the design of a universal code for human behavior and its associated credo of basic principles and beliefs.

The accelerating arms race between the communist camp and its avowed adversaries threatens to erupt into a universal war which may set civilization back 10,000 years. Now is the critical

moment in history when religious philosophers should set aside their contentious differences and enter into a dialogue which can provide moral guidance for all humanity. If those who believe in God cannot agree on this need, how can we ever expect political authorities to resolve their differences in a way which will permanently avert war?

We can hardly expect to convert self-styled "godless" individuals to theistic beliefs if professed believers cannot extract from those beliefs at least a basic framework of moral guidelines applicable impartially to all of humanity. Let them now provide the world an appealing and practical summation of their common beliefs in a form suited to fairly resolving disputes within the human family. America and Russia in recent memory worked together to contain the aggression of Hitler. Is it not within the range of possibility that these two powers, as dominant members of the human family, could again join in leading the entire community of nations to the acceptance of basic international law, applied through world courts of justice, and enforced by the moral, economic, and military forces of the entire family?

Let us build for religion a useful role in the Age of Reason. Let us remember the past abuses of religion—not to condemn our efforts to know God, but to deter us from repeating those abuses.

Humanity possesses a resource quite capable of dealing with our major problems. That power is our collective reason. Properly used it can achieve two vital goals: the first is the abolition of war as an agency of human will; the second is the maintenance by each nation of a perpetual balance between its population and its available sources.

A World Congress which will bring together leaders representing the major religions and the fields of science and politics could begin the task of formulating basic ground rules which will permit the establishment of favorable conditions for the continuing, peaceful advancement of civilization.

The Christian contribution might consist of the basic teachings of Christ as contained in the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, and the further directive to render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God that which is God's. These concepts would be acceptable to most rational human beings and would be offensive to very few.

Other contributions would be sought from the Jews, the Muslims, the Hindus, the Confucianists, and from other philosophical branches of the human family to preserve and utilize concepts which have provided guidance and solace for human beings through past ages. Those legacies, selectively adapted to our present situation, will assist humanity in passing through the transition now leading to an enduring Age of Reason.

Human awareness is not exclusively a rational phenomenon. Powerful emotions are a vital part of our nature. Impulses derived from affection, altruism, ambition, and fear often provide stronger motivation than reasoned deliberation. We have a fondness for beauty, mystery, symbolism, and pageantry. These attributes of humanity have played an important role in the development of religious beliefs and practices. Our emotional and esthetic needs must not be neglected as we plan for the ongoing revitalization of religious institutions now and in future ages.

Previous attempts to rationalize religion have not achieved general acceptance. This is explainable in part by the tendency of those efforts to concentrate exclusively on matters of logic and cold doctrinal affairs when ordinary citizens had not yet had adequate exposure to the new vistas in secular knowledge which have been opened through scientific inquiry. Now perhaps a world-wide effort to rethink our religious heritage in a balanced fashion may meet with greater success.

Let us filter the best features of all religions through the fabric of contemporary secular understanding to sift out that which is faulty, discordant, and no longer relevant to human needs. The purified essence of religious experience which remains can become a foundation for a world society in which there will be no war, and in which the needs of humanity can be met through rational efforts.

Let us agree that there may be many pathways to a union with God. A universal concordance of ethical principles can permit each branch of the family of God to continue on its own route to future enlightenment. Doctrines, customs, and ceremonies unique to each religious tradition can continue to evolve in truth as truth is revealed to its believers. Toleration for differing views must be encouraged so long as activities taken in the name of religion respect the rights of others. Beliefs accepted as

direct revelations from God by members of a particular faith should not be disturbed by others so long as they cause no harm to non-believers.

Many theological concepts can be interpreted in manners which reconcile differences. If God is infinite, God can be conceptualized in diverse ways which can be in harmony even while appearing to conflict. A sculptor viewing a rough block of marble may visualize within it a specific figure which is invisible to others. He may be certain of its presence, and may prove his vision by using the tools of his art to release it to general view. Another sculptor viewing the same rough stone may envision a quite different form within it. Yet he may in like manner demonstrate the truth of his views. Both artists can be right even while appearing to disagree. So may it be with the conflicting views of God which have been fashioned by the many religions now in existence. We very often *believe* more than we know and prove with certainty. There is room for marked differences in belief in those areas which range beyond the reach of human reason. Christianity teaches that God is personal and is composed of three identities combined in a single infinite whole. Other religions perceive God in different manners. Like the sculptors, all may be right even while appearing to hold contrary views.

Much of the difficulty with religious beliefs and the frictions they cause stems from the manner in which they are acquired by successive generations. We are born with minds uncluttered by learned knowledge. Our instinctive patterns are less prominent than in most other animals. We are specially adapted to acquiring learned patterns of belief and practice from our surroundings. Each of the diverse human societies throughout the world imparts to its children its unique combinations of custom and understanding through life-long processes of active and passive learning. The most indelible coloring of our attitudes and values is acquired by passive immersion of our culture. We exercise very little conscious selection as we assimilate the language, attitudes, general knowledge, and the unnumbered cultural mind sets of our family and neighbors. The conditioning of our childhood and youth so saturates our natures with the beliefs and emotional patterns of our human environment that it becomes very difficult to drastically modify them later in

life. Stability of group attitudes is particularly evident in the areas of religion and party politics, where rigidly held positions have developed in a wide variety of patterns which reflect the unique historical experience of each nation.

Beliefs and practices acquired without selective choice become so embedded in our natures that it is not easy to uproot them through appeals to reason. Religious and patriotic convictions acquired early in life may become almost immune to contrary forces. It is these deep-rooted attitudes which cause most of the conflicts within and between religious and political factions of the human family.

Conflicts of this sort are quite apparent throughout the world today. If ordinary people everywhere can be caused to recognize the basic nature of our discords we may hope to apply reason and compromise to achieve tolerable, non-violent solutions.

Opposition to reasoned change is reenforced by many perversities. Among these is the concept of heresy—a notion that it is morally wrong to question beliefs clothed in the garments of sanctity. This can be true even when certain doctrines are in total disagreement with the evidence of our senses and the conclusions of our judgment. For many people heresy has its counterpart in politics, where traditional orientations of family and friends may be perpetuated without the active exercise of reason.

It is our cheerful hope that our species is on the threshold of a new age in which our collective intelligence will assert its destined role in guiding the future progress of all life on earth.

If we are to cross that threshold we must not permit reason to be overruled by tradition or by unsupported faith. To ensure for religion a vital role in guiding humanity through future ages society must provide means for its constant renewal and purification by its own ministers working with individuals who are well versed in the sciences and in the general spectrum of human knowledge. A narrow indoctrination in religious belief alone will not be sufficient education to re-think dogma in a manner adequate to withstand the rational testing which will be the lot of all knowledge in future ages.

Communist leaders within Russia today will not be won over to religious doctrines based solely on children's Bible stories or

on anthropomorphic concepts of God. They will not accept articles of faith which are clearly contrary to reason.

Religious teachers now living have a golden opportunity to join with scientific leaders who are theistically oriented to interpret from their treasures of traditional beliefs and practices those elements best suited for inclusion in a new appeal to enlightened human reason. The time is at hand for these spokesmen of all faiths to cooperate in formulating basic moral guides for the entire human family.

Hopefully those guides will include an absolute prohibition of aggressive warfare. That single tenet, supplemented by an impartial world court and by effective cooperative enforcement will win general approval by most of humanity. Hopefully, too, they will include other provisions to enhance international cooperation and the sharing of knowledge to address other problems which will confront our species down through the ages. The dawn of an enlightened relationship between humanity and God may be at hand if we will only assert the force of our collective reason.

It is a duty of religious leaders of all persuasions to become sufficiently knowledgeable in all fields of understanding that they can join with secular intellectuals in plotting our course into the future. In this way human intelligence can assure for every creature a suitable role in our earthly corner of this vast cosmos.

XII

To Make Partners of Rivals

FOR MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS American and Russia have been rivals in the arena of world politics. Citizens of both nations have inherited ongoing cultural forces which maintain that competition. The welfare of humanity will be better served if that rivalry can be transformed through rational behavior into a cooperative partnership.

Neither population wants war. Americans have no reason to attack Russia, and only a minority of Russians feel impelled to spread communism over the earth through violent revolution. If the question of war between us were presented to the citizens of both nations in an open plebiscite it would be rejected almost unanimously.

Political leaders on both sides have given primary concern to the military aspects of our confrontation. The world would be better served if they would accept a military standoff, and use their minds and their national resources in seeking non-violent solutions for the frictions which divide us.

Present tensions are rooted mainly in the declared goal of communism to achieve control of the world through revolutionary tactics. This traditional objective has never been convincingly disavowed. Communist revolutionaries continue even now to use violence and subversion to force their system on backward societies. The continuing military buildup of com-

munist armed forces contradicts assurances that they are intended purely for defense. Refusal by communist adversaries to permit verification of their claims of disarmament makes those claims suspect.

The devastation of war between us would be so catastrophic that there could be no victor. Clear heads in Russia and America must now make peaceful approaches take priority over further military preparations.

We cannot end the arms race which now burdens our two countries until we find ways to harmonize our differing economies and political systems. Only then can we establish mutual trust in our respective motives and goals.

When capitalistic societies escape control by monopolies and are not strangled by excessive regulation they tend to imitate the competitive world of nature. Productive enterprises are like living things. Those which arise in response to a need of society and which consistently meet that need survive and prosper. Those which fail to do so wither and die.

Under ideal circumstances there is a continuously evolving "survival of the fittest." Competition in the marketplace causes goods and services to be provided in the most efficient manner possible.

Capitalism usually permits the attainment of high levels of material prosperity for ordinary citizens provided there is access to an adequate resource base.

"Capital" can be defined as accumulated purchasing power. It can be spent for goods and services to gratify its owners, or it can be reinvested at risk in a variety of enterprises in the hope of profit. Owners and managers of capital are "capitalists." In most capitalistic societies the management of capital is subject to some degree of government supervision and regulation. Profits are taxed.

Frequently citizens of a capitalistic state will directly invest their savings in corporate stock shares, making them part owners of large corporations. Sometimes their savings are deposited in banks, or invested in life insurance companies. These funds are then loaned to entrepreneurs in return for interest payments. The loaned capital is applied in a variety of ways, usually productive. Capitalists using their own or borrowed funds endeavor by their managerial skills to harness capital with labor in generating goods and services for profit-

able sale in the marketplace. They may build factories, employ workers, and combine all the elements needed to develop a thriving business. If they are successful, society benefits. If they fail they may lose their capital, and their employees must seek other work. In this role capitalists can be viewed as skilled members of the work force. Their managerial talents orchestrate the complex processes of production and marketing. In doing so they provide employment for themselves and for others.

Historically, capitalistic societies have performed well, even though we have not yet learned how to stabilize production and consumption at high levels, avoiding periodic economic cycles of prosperity and depression. And we have not learned how to control capitalism without strangling it through regulatory excesses.

All advanced societies must have managers. A basic distinction between capitalism and socialism is apparent in the manner of selecting and advancing these individuals. Under capitalism forces of the marketplace strongly influence private owners, whereas under socialism managers are chosen by political figures who may not be directly answerable to the consumers.

In theory, socialistic societies make ownership of the means of production a public function. It is under political control. Very often socialism includes in the public domain other operations such as banking, housing, insurance, and the provision of medical care. Managers of these services are answerable to political officials rather than to the public.

Existing governments in the world display a wide variety of combinations of public and private ownership of the facilities which provide goods, shelter, and services. There are no purely capitalistic or purely socialistic governments. Even the United States has made concessions to public ownership in certain areas such as roads, the postal service, selected utilities, and the financing of social insurance.

Communist Russia and some of its satellites have made limited concessions to private ownership and enterprise in such areas as housing and agriculture.

Regardless of political labels, human beings vary to an extreme degree in their desires and abilities for achieving wealth and power. These traits, although valuable for survival

in a competitive world, are not the only qualities or the best qualities for establishing the social value of any individual. Many of our greatest advances have been contributed by human beings with little desire for material reward, or fame, or political power.

And conversely, the responsibility for much human tragedy and suffering rests upon the shoulders of other human beings who, through the accidents of history and heredity, have been afflicted with excessive endowments of those competitive and aggressive traits.

The ultimate strength of a nation derives from the total applied talents and energies of all its people. Different social systems and circumstances advance to positions of power a spectrum of human character types.

This is true today in a world dominated by the rivalry between communism and a variety of capitalistically oriented societies. In the race for power and influence both systems favor individuals who combine certain abilities with ambition. Our society rewards successful entrepreneurs in the economic field. In politics we advance individuals who consistently win votes, even though their true merit may fall short of the image they project to the voters while campaigning for office.

Socialism and communism display a variety of economic and political patterns. Ostensibly, both place ownership of the "means of production" in the hands of "the people." Marxist socialists, or communists believe that they must aggressively stamp out all competing systems. They rely on rule by the Party leadership, and use elections only as a technical formality for registering voter approval. Non-Marxist socialist states are "non-violent," and do not attempt to subjugate their neighbors. They also accept voter control through open and honest elections.

Both socialist systems give power primarily to those who are ambitious and who are adept at manipulating political forces within somewhat "closed" systems. Under communism in particular economic leadership positions are occupied by individuals who are first of all capable of using the system for their own advancement. Political considerations are more important than concern for the marketplace under both varieties of socialism.

Unregulated capitalism may witness after only a few generations the hereditary concentration of wealth (capital) and associated power in the hands of a minority of the citizenry. That power is in theory subject to voter control although in practice it can grow to unhealthy proportions.

Unrestrained communism may encourage a parallel concentration of political power in the hands of a self-perpetuating ruling class. And because of the monolithic structure of the state, political control gives virtually complete economic control to the political hierarchy. A ruling faction which also controls the police, the military, and the channels of public information is thus in a position of absolute power which cannot be matched by any combination of political and economic forces operating under existing capitalistic systems.

Without the safeguards of meaningful elections the communist system can lead to severe abuses of power, as occurred under Stalin.

A major problem facing theorists who would unite America and Russia in a friendly partnership approach to the future will be the devising of changes in our respective systems which will make them compatible while preserving the best features of each.

Under ideal democratic capitalism *all* citizens should be capitalists. Such a system is achievable, and could be brought about by structuring our laws and attitudes in appropriate fashion. Enlightened self-interest is a potent force. Properly stimulated and controlled, it can bring about maximum production by all members of society in both the material and intellectual spheres. And it can do so while at the same time it permits society collectively to provide adequate care for those individuals who are not capable of running the full competitive course.

Capital accumulation is not restricted to capitalistic systems. Socialist and communist societies also generate large stores of capital in the form of factories, farms, mines, housing, and other material things. Title to this wealth may be vested officially in the name of the people. Actual control, however, is in the hands of politically controlled managers. Their advancement is subject to political considerations and is only indirectly in compliance with the wishes of ordinary citizens. Under "democratic" socialism, as in Sweden, politicians are ultimately

answerable to the voters. It has not been demonstrated that managerial systems operated in this way are more effective than those in which forces of the marketplace are more directly applied.

In countries ruled by the Marxist variety of socialism political and economic power is vested in a small party "elite." Experience as well as a realistic view of human nature suggests that this arrangement fosters the development of an entrenched ruling class which is not necessarily responsive to the will of the people.

The existence of special stores, special hospitals, and special privileges for party members and public officials in many communist countries confirms this belief.

It is true that socialist nations ruled by oligarchic power groups can be effective in manipulating labor and capital. Such nations have demonstrated the ability to maintain large armed forces and to construct major industrial projects. They can do so with little regard for the prosperity and personal desires of ordinary citizens. There is no real concern for personal freedom.

But these nations have not been as successful as many capitalistic societies in improving general living standards or in advancing the frontiers of knowledge. Unelected oligarchies may move contrary to the will of their own people. So long as the leaders are wise and benevolent the merits of these systems may outweigh their faults. But when the rulers are uninformed or despotic the people and their neighbors suffer.

When the government of a powerful nation builds barriers along its borders to imprison its own people it reveals its illegitimacy. When it neglects the material welfare of those people and enslaves them in a military machine to extend its tyranny over the world it voids its right to govern. Both America and Russia have faults. We must correct the faults and devise means for making our two systems compatible.

In the United States we must control excessive concentrations of capital and power while we encourage total capital formation in widely dispersed forms involving all the people. By making a portion of a worker's wages completely free of taxation when it is invested in productive savings we can induce widespread participation by everyone in the risks and rewards of an incentive economy. Moderation in the taxation of corporations, and exemption of dividends from taxation would be further in-

centives to adequate capital formation. Workers would become interested owners of the corporations which employ them. These steps would assure the continuous renewal and modernization of productive facilities.

Prudent changes in tax laws dealing with the ownership and inheritance of corporations and agricultural land will assist in decentralizing ownership. Private social insurance backed by invested capital can be encouraged to assume primary responsibility for retirement and other insurable needs.

In this way a citizen who has devoted a lifetime to the production of goods and services for others will retire with financial security assured. Families deprived of wage earners by untimely death or disability will be cared for. The role of government can be reduced to supporting the truly indigent through general taxation.

Excessive concentration of wealth in the control of a privileged class can be avoided through prudent restrictions on inheritance. As a general principle society should not limit the wealth and property which an industrious person may accumulate in a lifetime if abuses are prevented. But the amounts of capital which can be inherited by others should be severely curtailed.

All citizens should feel the incentives of need. All should be stimulated by the promise of reward for effort. Wealthy individuals may be permitted to bequeath to their dependents a modest endowment of accumulated capital. Providing for one's family is a socially desirable function. And the tradition of continuous land ownership in a farming family, or the continuous participation of following generations in a family business can have positive effects so long as excessive concentrations of capital are avoided.

There should be provisions for wealthy individuals to endow charitable trusts or foundations serving the general welfare. But these agencies should have limited lives, perhaps 25 years. This will avoid the development of perpetual institutional concentrations of wealth which might fall prey to control by individuals who are not dedicated to the best interests of the public.

The ownership of real estate and other means of production should be a matter of public record. Owners of stock shares should be identified. Secret ownership through off-shore trusts

and other arrangements can be regulated through controls on the distribution of income.

A problem in capitalistic societies has been our inability to combine full employment, optimal sharing of wealth, and stable, high level economic activity. Socialism has also failed to achieve this goal, although unemployment rates are sometimes concealed by means of wholesale employment of citizens in menial jobs directly financed by the central government.

Capitalism depends primarily upon an appeal to individual interests. Socialism, at least in theory, caters to altruistic impulses. The apparent advantage of capitalism in the production and distribution of goods and services in the world of today may reflect the fact that self-interest is a more prominent quality of human nature than benevolence.

Minimum wage laws have attempted to establish the value of human labor by legislative fiat. If compensation levels could be so conveniently arranged, all citizens would be wealthy. In real life the marketplace is the final determinant for what will actually be paid for goods and services. Minimum wage legislation results in mandatory unemployment for the marginal workers it seeks to help. Individuals who are incapable of providing services which justify the established minimum simply do not work. In our society they are usually supported in idleness through "entitlement" programs paid for by taxes levied on other citizens who are at work. All too often, such subsidies are managed on an "all-or-none" basis. If the income of the recipient rises above a specified cut-off level, all benefits are lost. There are few incentives to stimulate ongoing efforts by the recipient to become self-supporting. All welfare programs should be *graduated*. Those who need a little assistance should receive a little. Those who are totally unable to provide for themselves should be supported by society. All programs of this nature should contain built-in features which tend to stimulate self-reliance instead of fostering greater dependency.

"Unemployment insurance" programs have been mandated by many states in an effort to support workers during times of economic stagnation. The costs of such programs have been levied against employers, even though it is the employees who are the prime beneficiaries. This situation should be reversed or modified. Employers with lost markets, idle plants, and un-

productive capital are not in a position to continue maintaining their work force.

In an ideal society *all* human beings should be motivated to develop and apply their talents and productive abilities. Only the very old, the very young, and the very handicapped are incapable of performing some useful work. No one capable of performing socially useful work should be supported in idleness.

Programs of public assistance must demonstrate a reasonable concern for true disability. Sound programs will require that citizens seeking financial help accept employment, preferably in the private sector, at wage levels determined by the marketplace. Families should not be permitted to live for successive generations on public doles.

In many instances wages available in the private sector for marginal jobs will fall below the level required for maintaining an adequate living standard. In these cases society should provide income *supplements* from tax sources. As a last resort government agencies should establish public works programs to keep all members of society productively employed during periods of economic depression.

Elimination of minimum wage requirements will open many marginal or entry-level positions. Young adults and partially disabled older workers can thus be encouraged to accept employment commensurate with their skills.

Overly generous programs intended to benefit employees sometimes result in unforeseen loss of jobs. Capital is easily transferred from country to country, and tends to seek circumstances offering the highest return and greatest security. Manufactured products can also be moved from country to country at relatively low cost. Unrealistically costly employee benefit programs such as Social Security, Unemployment Insurance, and Retirement and Disability Benefits may be paid for by both employer and employee. Yet they promise immediate benefits for only the employee. As the world becomes more industrialized, trade barriers are often reduced. Excessive "fringe benefits" can then result in widespread unemployment and can cause the export of capital and production facilities to countries with lower total wage levels.

An optimal balance must be sought between the conflicting interests of employers and employees. Supplemental benefits

are employee benefits and should be recognized as a part of employee compensation. At present the costly administration of these programs is borne in large part by the employer, who must maintain large clerical staffs to keep records and to complete numerous forms and reports. Employers are also required to withhold and pay federal and state income taxes for their employees, assuming the administrative costs as a part of their business overhead.

It would be appropriate for citizens of a free society to assume responsibility for financing and handling the programs which accrue to their benefit. All expenditures by employers for workers should be identifiable as wages. Clerical work associated with such programs should be done by private or government agencies at worker expense.

Further obstacles to full employment take the form of numerous regulations regarding safety, environmental impacts, and many other aspects of industrial activities. These are backed by large numbers of government employees. The objectives of such programs are noble, but it is quite possible that they could be achieved through means which stress private initiatives in meeting reasonable standards. Domestic service in past times provided useful work for a large segment of the population. Prudent planning could restore many jobs today for maids, gardeners, chauffeurs, butlers, mother's helpers and caretakers for the elderly. With proper training and motivation many citizens now living on welfare payments could be brought back into the work force in these positions. These tasks are very useful to society. Their performance could help develop a sense of pride in these individuals, and could lead to further advancement.

In America today a working mother who would like to employ a part-time helper finds herself handicapped by requirements that she regularly fill out and forward to government agencies complex forms dealing with social security and other purposes. The paper work alone makes the project unattractive to her. Many middle income families would benefit if they could employ a full-time maid, even though the household is well equipped with modern appliances. The same tangle of employer regulations in addition to minimum wage laws makes this very difficult. Yet there are in society many individuals who could be benefitted financially and socially if they could

obtain such employment as a starting point for their own advancement. *Creating jobs should be made easy.*

A strong inducement to maintain full employment would be a provision in income tax law which would *make all employee compensation a deductible item* for all employers. Such a condition bolstered by appropriate training programs would restore domestic service as a significant fraction of the national work force. Coupled with reasonable provisions for requiring acceptance of available job openings and with income supplementation where needed, this approach would do much to shrink present welfare roles. The same approach could be used in the case of certain agricultural occupations, which today must be filled by migrant laborers from other countries despite the existence of millions of American citizens living on relief or unemployment benefits while those jobs go begging.

We should experiment with methods for simplifying the role of the employer. When total wage packages have been agreed upon through collective bargaining or by mutual agreement, the employer's obligation should be limited to providing each employee with a single paycheck at appropriate intervals. This check should be made payable to the employee and to a designated fiscal agent. The agent might be a union representative or an employee of an approved private agency. The fiscal agent shall then withhold the total amount required for all employee benefits and taxes, and distribute the balance to the employee. A small amount should be withheld from each check sufficient to maintain the fiscal agency.

The employer's obligations shall be fulfilled when he forwards to federal and state revenue offices quarterly reports listing the employees and their total compensation.

The fiscal agent shall then remit the employee's taxes to the appropriate agencies, and allocate funds to various programs for health insurance, retirement programs, unions, and the like. Payments for "unemployment insurance" should be deducted from the employees' compensation since only they are beneficiaries of such programs. When legislators are tempted to expand costly benefit programs, they will be restrained by employee resistance. Employees should be given reports at regular intervals which indicate the amounts which have been withheld from their checks. They should also be provided an itemized report listing the disposition of the funds withheld. In this way

every worker will understand more clearly the total cost of his labor to his employer. At the same time, the task of the employer will be simplified by relieving him of the administrative costs of the fringe benefit program as a whole.

Paychecks could be forwarded directly to the designated fiscal agent if the employee desires, but they could not be cashed without the endorsement of the agent.

This approach will emphasize the distinction between the function of the employer and the employee. It stresses individual responsibility. It will make all members of society properly aware of the costs of benefit programs of all kinds, public and private. A payment system of this general nature will simplify the task of the employer. It will make it much easier for young workers to become gainfully employed. And it will enable the workers as a social group to make informed choices in establishing affordable limits for socially beneficial programs of all kinds.

Provisions should be made for surviving spouses of deceased citizens and for separated partners in broken marriages. The needs of children should be considered. But upon the death of those who have accumulated large stores of wealth the bulk of their estates should revert to the government for orderly sale in the marketplace to other workers who are motivated to purchase those assets by economic and tax incentives. In this manner all workers may become active capitalists.

With proper incentives to stimulate thrift and industry, and with these provisions for avoiding excessive concentrations of wealth in the hands of a few, a democratic society can be assured of the continuous generation and recirculation of capital in amounts necessary to meet all its productive needs.

By making citizens primarily responsible for their own welfare and by establishing a climate which will make this possible, all individuals will be encouraged to exert their best efforts. The role of government can be reduced. And society, being composed of strongly motivated individuals, will achieve high levels of accomplishment. Wealth will increase in magnitude, and will be made to serve the interests of all the people.

It will permit balanced budgets for governments, sound currencies, and stable savings programs for private citizens. It will eliminate the financial problem which afflicts most democracies when opportunistic legislators seek to buy the support of voters

by "benefits" from the public treasury. Such demands invariably outrun the ability of the economy to sustain them through tax revenues. Taxation increases to a point at which economic activity is inhibited. Expediency prevails. The benefits are voted, regardless of long-range effects, and are financed through increasing and unending borrowing. Government debts are then insidiously defaulted by debasing the currency with accelerating inflation. The debts are simply "monetized"—paid off with new paper money. All prices rise as the unit value of the dollar shrinks. Savings and life insurance policies are eroded away. Crisis follows crisis.

Objective observers in America agree that our system has many faults. While they may not agree with these specific proposals for corrective action, they will generally support the concept of experimenting with a variety of approaches which seek to reach the goal of the greatest good for the greatest number. Our system is based upon government which requires the consent of the governed. It does permit the will of the people the final choice.

Capitalism modified and perfected in this *general* manner will eliminate many of the faults which today justify criticism. It will serve as a model for other social systems which stress collectivism first, and which submerge the individual in nameless "masses." If these modifications in our system will encourage our self-proclaimed communist adversaries to match our efforts with parallel modifications in their *political* system, it will become possible for a wide variety of economic approaches to compete for the approval and emulation of the world in a peaceful manner. Finally, it will help preserve personal freedom.

Honest observers in Russia must be aware of certain shortcomings in their Marxist society. Perhaps we can suggest specific changes which will be acceptable to the rulers and ruled of Russia, and which will make possible a peaceful evolution into the future unmarred by military actions, and unburdened by excessive military spending in both our societies.

How Russia manages her internal *economy* need not concern us. The rapidly developing universal world market for raw materials and for finished products and foodstuffs will compel enlightened leaders in all nations to accommodate their actions to that market. In this regard Russia will enjoy certain advant-

ages, for her vast territories makes her almost self-sufficient in all areas except food production. Our problems with Russia are rooted in basic *political* differences, not economic ones.

Political and economic power in Russia and in other communist nations is vested in the Communist Party. Once in power that party tolerates no effective opposition. The party is elitist. Only a minority of the citizens, usually 5 or 6 percent, are admitted to membership. Members are chosen by the party, not by the general public. And all members are subject to party discipline. They must support policies officially promulgated as the party line. Dissent can be dangerous.

Within the party political progress is directed to a large degree by a few individuals who have managed to climb the difficult and dangerous paths leading from ordinary membership to the pinnacles of power.

As in many religious organizations, advancement in the party hierarchy requires a high level of orthodoxy in thought and behavior. It also requires skill in political infighting and, on occasion, a talent for physical survival.

For more than 60 years politics and economic processes in Russia have been controlled by leaders steeped in unopposed socialist traditions, and thoroughly indoctrinated by teachings extracted from Marxist gospels. Efforts to adapt to the sweeping social and industrial changes of the past century have been crippled by slavish devotion to a social prophet who lived in a world vastly different from the realities of today.

The views of ordinary citizens within Russia and the discoveries of multitudes of meritorious thinkers outside her borders have had little influence in redirecting Russian policy except as they have been filtered through the minds and prejudices of disciplined and often fanatic party leaders.

The lack of an opposition party, and the difficulties involved in advancing or debating contrary opinions within the party continue to compound the problem.

If there were a better means for introducing "feedback" from the common people and from other sources of new and contrary opinion into the upper levels of the communist power structure it might be possible for Russian communism to evolve peacefully into harmonious coexistence with other political systems.

The problems of continuing bellicose confrontation between differing political and economic systems demand rational solutions and new approaches, not fanatic loyalty to outmoded beliefs and methods.

There are undoubtedly many shades of opinion within Russian ranks which are concealed by official party pronouncements. This applies to all aspects of life: military matters, social targets and methods, industrial and agricultural organization, religion, and consumer needs of all kinds.

Today disagreements and open debate about these subjects are inhibited by fears of punishment for those whose views stray too far from the official party line.

Karl Marx has been dead for over a century. He was not a God. Efforts by doctrinaire followers to deify him have not changed that fact. He was not a good economist and was even worse as a prophet. World political and industrial evolution have not proceeded as he anticipated. His understanding of economic processes was based upon observations of the early industrial revolution in Western Europe. Trends apparent then have been replaced by others which he did not foresee.

His notions of class exploitation of "workers" by "capitalists" was simplistic. It did not anticipate the vertical and horizontal social mobility of modern societies. His concept of "surplus value" was incomplete, and did not consider the multiplication of labor productivity by inventiveness, mechanization, abundant cheap energy, and mass competitive markets composed for the most part of members of the "working class."

Marx believed that exploited workers in industrialized nations throughout the world would throw off their chains and rise up on a world revolution to seize the reins of power from capitalistic masters. He prophesied a world Utopia, to be achieved through violence and class warfare. He predicted a society without property, without crime, without police, populated by ideal human beings who would not require legal restraints for anti-social behavior when they had been liberated once and for all from their capitalistic heritage.

Communist leaders today excuse their failure to achieve socialist goals by citing outside influences, accepting no blame for their inadequate policies. They protest that communism cannot reach its destined flowering until the last vestiges of

capitalism have been forever destroyed, even if this requires universal world warfare of catastrophic magnitude.

There was no expectation in the dreams of Marx, or Engels, or Lenin for the economic "miracle" of modern industrial Japan, which has provided its overpopulated, resource-deficient, capitalistic islands with a living standard far better than exists today in Russia, a resource-wealthy state ruled for over 60 years by avowed disciples of their communist philosophy.

Although Marx failed as an economist and prophet, he was more successful as a political schemer and revolutionist, unhampered by what he regarded as outmoded codes of "bourgeois morality."

He was successful in devising strategies through which small groups of militant followers using force, violence, false labels, and appealing slogans could overthrow existing governments. Not hesitating to use murder and "political" assassination when it served their purposes, and acting always in the name of the "masses" but actually striving for their own narrow goals, his followers have successfully seized power in many nations throughout the globe. And having achieved power, they have consolidated their position by following the teachings of Marx in establishing absolute control over the police, the military, the schools, and the channels of information. When they have felt securely entrenched within their own borders they have consistently attempted to export the "communist revolution" to neighboring territories, posing as liberators and reformers while using violent and subversive means to conquer new victims who are in their turn armed, indoctrinated, and used as pawns in further militaristic and subversive expansions.

The revolutionary communist "morality" preached by Marx held that all actions were to be judged solely as they related to achieving world control by his followers. Treachery, deceit, economic exploitation, and military aggression were all to be regarded as "good" if they helped advance the cause of world revolution. Actions or thoughts which party officials decreed to be "counter-revolutionary" were considered "evil."

Today, even though the economic visions of Marx have been discredited, his followers throughout the world continue to incite revolution and war, successfully employing subversive tactics prescribed over a century ago, and modified and perfected by trial and error since then. Yet nowhere on earth have

his doctrines demonstrably improved the material welfare of their captive populations to the level which has been achieved in many capitalistic societies.

Communist reformers have demonstrated a remarkable ability for exploiting the economic shortcomings of capitalistic societies for their own purposes. There *are* unfortunately many situations today in which poor people are systematically abused by entrenched ruling classes allied with military leaders. They misuse the capitalistic system and show no interest in promoting effective corrective measures which would permit fair material rewards for those at the bottom of the economic ladder. Very often entrenched religious leaders oppose measures which are essential to long-range prosperity for overpopulated, poverty-stricken populations, such as prudent measures to control population. Because our political system, by its very character relatively open and democratic, has failed to pursue a policy of aggressive and subversive proselytism, we have not done all that we might have in assisting those nations to advance along democratic lines. We now find ourselves in the awkward position of having little choice between abandoning those exploited people to communist enslavement, or continuing to work with self-centered, short-sighted rulers who are very slow to accept needed social change.

In some instances we could do more than we have done thus far in applying moral and economic pressures to achieve needed reforms.

And when it is clearly apparent that this path is blocked we must be more open-minded in our dealings with "leftist" reform movements. Revolution probably *was* necessary in Cuba. It may be the only way to improve the lot of the people in certain other Latin American countries.

Cooperation with communist leaders is hazardous, but in selected cases may be a better long-range alternative than continued cooperation with the military-wealthy cliques now in control of certain small nations.

Castro was not totally without merit. He *has* accomplished much of value for his people. He is a rational man, although handicapped in objectivity because of his communist indoctrination and ties. He could be reached by proposals for rational cooperative approaches to the future if such proposals are clear-

ly demonstrated to serve the best interests of the United States and Cuba.

Many communist leaders and citizens still retain a capacity for rational behavior. Cautious cooperation with such individuals may facilitate a peaceful advance into the next century of human history.

Over 150 years ago a French traveler in America, Alexis de Tocqueville, foresaw the coming rivalry between two giants in the family of nations: America and Russia. Today we have an opportunity to determine that that rivalry will be conducted in peaceful competition. Hopefully, that competition will demonstrate for the world the best features of both systems.

Yet we must always bear in mind the record and the avowed purposes of the communist movement itself. People have been exploited and have suffered injustice under capitalism. But capitalism does permit evolutionary change. Communism has demonstrated an even greater ruthlessness in dealing with populations captured by its appealing slogans and manipulated revolutions. We must not forget the Kulaks of Russia, the many other victims of Stalin's purges, the extermination of Cambodians, and the intransigence of the communist oligarches in Korea, Viet Nam, and Afghanistan.

But while maintaining vigilant awareness of these dark aspects of communism, we must continue to deal with it as an existing reality in our world. We must apply what leverage we can to achieving changes in its philosophy, and must continue to appeal to the minds of its leaders. We must demonstrate that there are other effective remedies for the world's problems than those of revolution and war.

Today many Russian citizens are aware of the divergence between reality and the dreams of Karl Marx. Unfortunately the political machinery of communism does not permit them to advance their views effectively. The party leadership brooks no opposition. It continues to speak with one voice. Those who disagree are subject to accusations of reactionary or counter-revolutionary thought and are usually effectively silenced. But truth cannot be suppressed forever.

A few basic changes in party mechanisms in the Communist world would permit evolutionary changes which could lead to a common ground on which the entire world might advance to an Age of Reason. We should advocate those steps at every

opportunity, while at the same time we constantly monitor and improve our own system with open-minded objectivity.

It would be advantageous if our Russian friends would permit the development of two wings within their existing party organization. These might be designated as "conservative" and "progressive." Each wing would develop its own school of communist thought. Each would attract to its banner those party members whose convictions are in harmony with its professed philosophy and goals.

Party congresses could then consider and deal with specific proposals in a manner which would encourage meaningful choices. Orderly changes in course for the Russian ship of state could be effected in a manner which reflects expressions of organized opinion.

And because party members come from all walks of life and are in daily contact with "non-political" citizens, there will be a better opportunity for public sentiment to influence the direction of party decisions.

At the present time the party places on the ballot for national elections a single slate of candidates. Votes of ordinary citizens are limited to expressing approval or disapproval of that slate. Since there is no opposition, voting is little more than a ritual.

Ideally, each faction within the party would be permitted to name its list of candidates for consideration by the general public. But if this is too drastic a change, the party might continue to put forward a single list of candidates after the nominees of both wings have been voted upon with secret balloting by all members of the party as a whole.

The party might continue to be "elitist," selecting its own members from among interested applicants. But some memberships might be made *elective* through voting by non-members in factories, collective farms, and other divisions of society.

It is possible that such an infusion of democratic practice into the mechanisms of party rule will make Russia a more effective democracy than those western nations in which voting is open to all citizens and in which elections sometimes become popularity contests among candidates, with insufficient informed concern for fundamental issues by the voters themselves.

Many communist nations now call themselves "Democratic People's Republics." Adoption of these proposals will help them reflect in practice the nature proclaimed by their names.

A "selective democracy" sustained through suffrage standards of a high order, using the mechanism of the Communist Party may ultimately prove to be a superior form of government. If political power is transmitted from the people to those in ruling positions in a manner which reflects knowledge and understanding by those who participate in elections, government of the people by the best representatives of the people may become a reality.

Experiments with selective democracy may be more easily accomplished in Russia than in the United States. It is politically more feasible to expand voting privileges among a people long accustomed to severe restrictions than to establish restrictions of the suffrage among a people for whom it has long been universally available, even though it may have been neglected or abused.

These proposals for political and economic change are of an elementary and general nature. Wiser and more perceptive individuals can provide better plans for achieving a peaceful, cooperative family of nations through intelligent compromise and innovation. We must keep that ideal ever in mind. And we must encourage leaders in all nations to seek it with perseverance and imagination.

Our world is facing its most grave crisis in the crescendo of preparations for nuclear war. If human leaders fail to defuse this threat they abandon the gift of reason.

Rational planning and reasonable compromise can develop acceptable solutions. Russia and the United States have both experienced the evils of war. The Russian people have suffered grievously. More war is not the answer!

Our leaders must develop a common awareness as human beings. We must face world problems primarily as partners and only secondarily as friendly competitors advancing individual philosophies.

Acting together our two nations can advance the cause of knowledge and material prosperity for all the people of the earth. We can lead the effort to deal effectively with population pressure and resource depletion. We can eliminate nuclear weapons. We can confine national military forces within their native borders.

Above all, through our example and assistance we can lead all nations to an acceptance of rule by law in international affairs,

applied through world courts, and enforced when necessary by cooperative international military forces.

Together we can lead the world over the threshold of an enduring Age of Reason.

Epilogue

Every age has its problems. In these pages I have expressed the thoughts of one American relating to the problems which plague the world in the closing years of the twentieth century.

Intelligence is the capacity to know and to use Truth. Intelligence acquires Wisdom when it is well informed and compassionate.

Common Sense reflects the wisdom shared by ordinary human beings.

The Common Sense of collective humanity is sufficient to deal with the problems that confront us. We must apply it resolutely in our domestic and international activities, encouraging other nations and their citizens to join with us in building a rational world order—an Age of Reason.

And as we contend with our interhuman problems, let us be ever mindful of our shepherd's role in the larger world of Nature.

Robert Christian

PART THIRD
EXAMINATION OF THE PROPHECIES
AUTHOR'S PREFACE

To the Ministers and Preachers of all Denominations of Religion

IT is the duty of every man, as far as his ability extends, to detect and expose delusion and error. But nature has not given to everyone a talent for the purpose; and among those to whom such a talent is given, there is often a want of disposition or of courage to do it.

The world, or more properly speaking, that small part of it called Christendom, or the Christian world, has been amused for more than a thousand years with accounts of Prophecies in the Old Testament about the coming of the person called Jesus Christ, and thousands of sermons have been preached, and volumes written, to make man believe it.

In the following treatise I have examined all the passages in the New Testament, quoted from the Old, and called prophecies concerning Jesus Christ, and I find no such thing as a prophecy of any such person, and I deny there are any.

The passages all relate to circumstances the Jewish nation was in at the time they were written or spoken, and not to anything that was or was not to happen in the world several hundred years afterwards; and I have shown what the circumstances were to which the passages apply or refer.

I have given chapter and verse for everything I have said, and have not gone out of the books of the Old and New Testament for evidence that the passages are not prophecies of the person called Jesus Christ.

The prejudice of unfounded belief, often degenerates into the prejudice of custom, and becomes at last rank hypocrisy. When men, from custom or fashion or any worldly motive, profess or pretend to believe what they do not believe, nor can give any reason for believing, they unship the helm of their morality, and being no longer honest to their own minds they feel no moral difficulty in being unjust to others.

It is from the influence of this vice, hypocrisy, that we see so many church-and-meeting-going professors and pretenders to religion so full of trick and deceit in their dealings, and so loose in the performance of their engagements that they are not to be trusted further than the laws of the country will bind them. Morality has no hold on their minds, no restraint on their actions.

One set of preachers make salvation to consist in believing. They tell their congregations that if they believe in Christ their sins shall be forgiven. This, in the first place, is an encouragement to sin, in a similar manner as when a prodigal young fellow is told his father will pay all his debts, he runs into debt the faster, and becomes the more extravagant. Daddy, says he, pays all, and on he goes: just so in the other case, *Christ* pays all, and on goes the sinner.

In the next place, the doctrine these men preach is not true. The New Testament rests itself for credibility and testimony on what are called prophecies in the Old Testament of the person called Jesus Christ; and if there are no such things as prophecies of any such person in the Old Testament, the New Testament is a forgery of the Councils of Nice and Laodicea, and the faith founded thereon delusion and falsehood.*

Another set of preachers tell their congregations that God predestinated and selected, from all eternity, a certain number to be saved, and a certain number to be damned eternally. If this were true,

* The councils of Nice and Laodicea were held about three hundred and fifty years after the time Christ is said to have lived; and the books that now compose the New Testament, were then voted for by YEAS and NAYS, as we now vote a law. A great many that were offered had a majority of nays, and were rejected. This is the way the New Testament came into being. — *Author*.

the *day of Judgment* IS PAST: *their preaching* is in vain, and they had better work at some useful calling for their livelihood.

This doctrine, also, like the former, hath a direct tendency to demoralize mankind. Can a bad man be reformed by telling him, that if he is one of those who was decreed to be damned before he was born his reformation will do him no good; and if he was decreed to be saved, he will be saved whether he believes it or not? For this is the result of the doctrine. Such preaching and such preachers do injury to the moral world. They had better be at the plow.

As in my political works my motive and object have been to give man an elevated sense of his own character, and free him from the slavish and superstitious absurdity of monarchy and hereditary government, so in my publications on religious subjects my endeavors have been directed to bring man to a right use of the reason that God has given him, to impress on him the great principles of divine morality, justice, mercy, and a benevolent disposition to all men, and to all creatures, and to inspire in him a spirit of trust, confidence, and consolation in his Creator, unshackled by the fables of books pretending to be *the Word of God*.

— *Thomas Paine*

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

AN ESSAY ON DREAM

As a great deal is said in the New Testament about dreams, it is first necessary to explain the nature of Dream, and to show by what operation of the mind a dream is produced during sleep.

When this is understood we shall be the better enabled to judge whether any reliance can be placed upon them; and consequently, whether the several matters in the New Testament related of dreams deserve the credit which the writers of that book and priests and commentators ascribe to them.

In order to understand the nature of Dream, or of that which passes in ideal vision during a state of sleep, it is first necessary to understand the composition and decomposition of the human mind.

The three great faculties of the mind are IMAGINATION, JUDGMENT, and MEMORY. Every action of the mind comes under one or the other of these faculties. In a state of wakefulness, as in the day-time, these three faculties are all active; but that is seldom the case in sleep, and never perfectly: and this is the cause that our dreams are not so regular and rational as our waking thoughts.

The seat of that collection of powers or faculties that constitute what is called the mind, is in the brain. There is not, and cannot be, any visible demonstration of this anatomically, but accidents happening to living persons show it to be so. An injury done to the brain by a fracture of the skull, will sometimes change a wise man into a childish idiot, – a being without a mind. But so careful has nature been of that *sanctum sanctorum* of man, the brain, that of all the external accidents to which humanity is subject, this occurs the most seldom. But we often see it happening by long and habitual intemperance.

Whether those three faculties occupy distinct apartments of the brain, is known only to that ALMIGHTY POWER that formed and organized it. We can see the external effects of muscular motion in all the members of the body, though its *premium mobile*, or first moving cause, is unknown to man.

Our external motions are sometimes the effect of intention, sometimes not. If we are sitting and intend to rise, or standing and intend to sit or to walk, the limbs obey that intention as if they heard the order given. But we make a thousand motions every day, and that as well waking as sleeping, that have no prior intention to direct them. Each member acts as if it had a will or mind of its own.

Man governs the whole when he pleases to govern, but in the interim the several parts, like little suburbs, govern themselves without consulting the sovereign.

And all these motions, whatever be the generating cause, are external and visible. But with respect to the brain, no ocular observation can be made upon it. All is mystery; all is darkness in that womb of thought.

Whether the brain is a mass of matter in continual rest whether it has a vibrating pulsative motion, or a heaving and falling motion like matter in fermentation; whether different parts of the brain have different motions according to the faculty that is employed, be it the imagination, the judgment, or the memory, man knows nothing of. He knows not the cause of his own wit. His own brain conceals it from him.

Comparing invisible by visible things, as metaphysical can sometimes be compared to physical things, the operations of these distinct and several faculties have some resemblance to a watch. The main spring which puts all in motion corresponds to the imagination; the pendulum which corrects and regulates that motion, corresponds to the judgment; and the hand and dial, like the memory, record the operation.

Now in proportion as these several faculties sleep, slumber, or keep awake, during the continuance of a dream, in that proportion the dream will be reasonable or frantic, remembered or forgotten.

If there is any faculty in mental man that never sleeps, it is that volatile thing the imagination. The case is different with the judgment and memory. The sedate and sober constitution of the judgment easily disposes it to rest; and as to the memory, it records in silence and is active only when it is called upon.

That the judgment soon goes to sleep may be perceived by our sometimes beginning to dream before we are fully asleep ourselves. Some random thought runs in the mind, and we start, as it were, into recollection that we are dreaming between sleeping and waking.

If a pendulum of a watch by any accident becomes displaced, that it can no longer control and regulate the elastic force of the spring, the works are instantly thrown into confusion, and continue so as long as the spring continues to have force.

In like manner if the judgment sleeps while the imagination keeps awake, the dream will be a riotous assemblage of misshapen images and ranting ideas, and the more active the imagination is the wilder the dream will be. The most inconsistent and the most impossible things will appear right; because that faculty whose province it is to keep order is in a state of absence. The master of the school is gone out and the boys are in an uproar.

If the memory sleeps, we shall have no other knowledge of the dream than that we have dreamt, without knowing what it was about. In this case it is sensation rather than recollection that acts. The dream has given us some sense of pain or trouble, and we feel it as a hurt, rather than remember it as vision.

If the memory slumbers we shall have a faint remembrance of the dream, and after a few minutes it will sometimes happen that the principal passages of the dream will occur to us more fully. The cause of this is that the memory will sometimes continue slumbering or sleeping after we are awake ourselves, and that so fully, that it may and sometimes does happen, that we do not immediately recollect where we are, nor what we have been about, or have to do. But when the memory starts into wakefulness it brings the knowledge of these things back upon us like a flood of light, and sometimes the dream with it.

But the most curious circumstance of the mind in a state of dream, is the power it has to become the agent of every person, character and thing of which it dreams. It carries on conversation with several, asks questions, hears answers, gives and receives information, and it acts all these parts itself.

Yet however various and eccentric the imagination may be in the creating of images and ideas, it cannot supply the place of memory with respect to things that are forgotten when we are awake. For example, if we have forgotten the name of a person, and dream of seeing him and asking him his name, he cannot tell it; for it is ourselves asking ourselves the question.

But though the imagination cannot supply the place of real memory, it has the wild faculty of counterfeiting memory. It dreams of persons it never knew, and talks to them as if it remembered them as old acquaintance. It relates circumstances that never happened, and tells them as if they had happened. It goes to places that never existed, and knows where all the streets and houses are, as if we had been there before. The scenes it creates are often as scenes remembered. It will sometimes act a dream within a dream, and, in the delusion of dreaming, tell a dream it never dreamed, and tell it as if it was from memory.

It may also be remarked, that the imagination in a dream has no idea of time, *as time*. It counts only by circumstances; and if a succession of circumstances pass in a dream that would require a great length of time to accomplish them, it will appear to the dreamer that a length of time equal thereto has passed also.

As this is the state of the mind in a dream, it may rationally be said that every person is mad once in twenty-four hours, for were he to act in the day as he dreams in the night, he would be confined for a lunatic. In a state of wakefulness, those three faculties being all active, and acting in unison, constitute the rational man.

In dream it is otherwise, and, therefore, that state which is called insanity appears to be no other than a dismissal of those faculties, and a cessation of the judgment during wakefulness, that we so often experience during sleep; and idiocy, into which some persons have fallen, is that cessation of all the faculties of which we can be sensible when we happen to wake before our memory.

In this view of the mind, how absurd it is to place reliance upon dreams, and how much more absurd to make them a foundation for religion; yet the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, begotten by the Holy Ghost, a being never heard of before, stands on the foolish story of an old man's dream. *"And behold the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not thou to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."* – Matt. i. 20.

After this we have the childish stories of three or four other dreams: about Joseph going into Egypt; about his coming back again; about this, and about that, and this story of dreams has thrown Europe into a dream for more than a thousand years.

All the efforts that nature, reason, and conscience have made to awaken man from it, have been ascribed by priestcraft and superstition to the working of the devil, and had it not been for the American Revolution, which, by establishing the universal right of conscience, first opened the way to free discussion, and for the French Revolution that followed, this Religion of Dreams had continued to be preached, and that after it had ceased to be believed. Those who preached it and did not believe it, still believe the delusion necessary. They were not bold enough to be honest, nor honest enough to be bold.

Every new religion, like a new play, requires a new apparatus of dresses and machinery, to fit the new characters it creates. The story of Christ in the New Testament brings a new being upon the stage, which it calls the Holy Ghost; and the story of Abraham, the father of the Jews, in the Old Testament, gives existence to a new order of beings it calls angels. There was no Holy Ghost before the time of Christ, nor angels before the time of Abraham.

We hear nothing of these winged gentlemen, till more than two thousand years, according to the Bible chronology, from the time they say the heavens, the earth, and all therein were made. After this, they hop about as thick as birds in a grove. The first we hear of, pays his addresses to Hagar in the wilderness; then three of them visit Sarah; another wrestles a fall with Jacob; and these birds of passage having found their way to earth and back, are continually coming and going. They eat and drink, and up again to heaven.

What they do with the food they carry away in their bellies, the Bible does not tell us. Perhaps they do as the birds do, discharge it as they fly; for neither the Scripture nor the Church hath told us there are necessary houses for them in heaven. One would think that a system loaded with such gross and vulgar absurdities as Scripture religion is could never have obtained credit; yet we have seen what priestcraft and fanaticism could do, and credulity believe.

From angels in the Old Testament we get to prophets, to witches, to seers of visions, and dreamers of dreams; and sometimes we are told, as in I Sam. ix. 15, that God whispers in the ear. At other times we are not told how the impulse was given, or whether sleeping or waking. In II Sam. xxiv. 1, it is said, "*And again the anger of the lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go number Israel and Judah.*" And in I Chron. xxi. 1, when the same story is again related, it is said, "*And Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.*"

Whether this was done sleeping or waking, we are not told, but it seems that David, whom they call "a man after God's own heart," did not know by what spirit he was moved; and as to the men called inspired penmen, they agree so well about the matter, that in one book they say that it was God, and in the other that it was the devil.

Yet this is trash that the Church imposes upon the world as the WORD OF GOD; this is the collection of lies and contradictions called the HOLY BIBLE! this is the rubbish called REVEALED RELIGION!

The idea that writers of the Old Testament had of a God was boisterous, contemptible, and vulgar. They make him the Mars of the Jews, the fighting God of Israel, the conjuring God of their Priests and Prophets. They tell us as many fables of him as the Greeks told of Hercules. They pit him against Pharaoh, as it were to box with him, and Moses carries the challenge. They make their God to say insultingly, "*I will get me honor upon Pharaoh and upon all his host, upon his chariots and upon his horsemen.*" And that He may keep His word, they make Him set a trap in the Red Sea, in the dead of the night, for Pharaoh, his host, and his horses, and drown them as a rat-catcher would do so many rats. Great honor indeed! the story of Jack the giant-killer is better told!

They match Him against the Egyptian magicians to conjure with them, and after hard conjuring on both sides (for where there is no great contest there is no great honor) they bring Him off victorious. The first three essays are a dead match: each party turns his rod into a serpent, the rivers into blood, and creates frogs: but upon the fourth, the God of the Israelites obtains the laurel, He covers them all over with lice! The Egyptian magicians cannot do the same, and this lousy triumph proclaims the victory!

They make their God to rain fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah and belch fire and smoke upon Mount Sinai, as if He was the Pluto of the lower regions. They make Him salt up Lot's wife like pickled pork; they make Him pass like Shakespeare's *Queen Mab* into the brain of their priests, prophets, and prophetesses, and tickle them into dreams, and after making Him play all kinds of tricks they confound Him with Satan, and leave us at a loss to know what God they meant!

This is the descriptive God of the Old Testament; and as to the New, though the authors of it have varied the scene, they have continued the vulgarity.

Is man ever to be the dupe of priestcraft, the slave of superstition? Is he never to have just ideas of his Creator? It is better not to believe there is a God, than to believe of Him falsely. When we behold the mighty universe that surrounds us, and dart our contemplation into the eternity of space, filled with innumerable orbs revolving in eternal harmony, how paltry must the tales of the Old and New Testaments, profanely called the word of God, appear to thoughtful man!

The stupendous wisdom and unerring order that reign and govern throughout this wondrous whole, and call us to reflection, *put to shame the Bible!* The God of eternity and of all that is real, is not the god of passing dreams and shadows of man's imagination. The God of truth is not the god of fable; the belief of a god begotten and a god crucified, is a god blasphemed. It is making a profane use of reason.

I shall conclude this Essay on Dream with the first two verses of Ecclesiastics xxxiv, one of the books of the Apocrypha. "*The hopes of a man void of understanding are vain and false; and dreams lift up*

fools. Whoso regardeth dreams is like him that catcheth at a shadow, and followeth after the wind.”

I now proceed to an examination of the passages in the Bible, called prophecies of the coming of Christ, and to show there are no prophecies of any such person; that the passages clandestinely styled prophecies are not prophecies; and that they refer to circumstances the Jewish nation was in at the time they were written or spoken, and not to any distance of future time or person.

EXAMINATION OF THE PROPHECIES

The passages called prophecies of, or concerning, Jesus Christ, in the Old Testament may be classed under the two following heads.

First, those referred to in the four books of the New Testament, called the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Secondly, those which translators and commentators have, of their own imagination, erected into prophecies, and dubbed with that title at the head of the several chapters of the Old Testament. Of these it is scarcely worth while to waste time, ink, and paper upon; I shall, therefore, confine myself chiefly to those referred to in the aforesaid four books of the New Testament. If I show that these are not prophecies of the person called Jesus Christ, nor have reference to any such person, it will be perfectly needless to combat those which translators or the Church have invented, and for which they had no other authority than their own imagination.

I begin with the book called the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

In i. 18, it is said, "*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph before they came together; SHE WAS FOUND WITH CHILD OF THE HOLY GHOST.*"

This is going a little too fast; because to make this verse agree with the next it should have said no more than that *she was found with child*; for the next verse says, "*Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privately.*" Consequently Joseph had found out no more than that she was with child, and he knew it was not by himself.

Verses 20, 21. *“And while he thought of these things, [that is whether he should put her away privately, or make a public example of her], behold the Angel of the Lord appeared to him IN A DREAM [that is, Joseph dreamed that an angel appeared unto him] saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and call his name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins.”*

Now, without entering into any discussion upon the merits or demerits of the account here given, it is proper to observe, that *it has no higher authority than that of a dream*; for it is impossible to a man to behold anything in a dream but that which he dreams of.

I ask not, therefore, whether Joseph if there was such a man had such a dream or not, because admitting he had, it proves nothing. So wonderful and irrational is the faculty of the mind in dream, that it acts the part of all the characters its imagination creates, and what it thinks it hears from any of them is no other than what the roving rapidity of its own imagination invents. It is therefore nothing to me what Joseph dreamed of; whether of the fidelity or infidelity of his wife. I pay no regard to my own dreams, and I should be weak indeed to put faith in the dreams of another.

The verses that follow those I have quoted, are the words of the writer of the book of Matthew. *“Now [says he] all this [that is, all this dreaming and this pregnancy] was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us.”*

This passage is in Isaiah vii, 14, and the writer of the book of Matthew endeavors to make his readers believe that this passage is a prophecy of the person called Jesus Christ. It is no such thing, and I go to show it is not. But it is first necessary that I explain the occasion of these words being spoken by Isaiah.

The reader will then easily perceive that so far from their being a prophecy of Jesus Christ, they have not the least reference to such a person, nor to anything that could happen in the time that Christ is said to have lived, which was about seven hundred years after the time of Isaiah. The case is this:

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

At this time Ahaz was King of Judah, which was in the time of Isaiah, Pekah was King of Israel; and Pekah joined himself to Rezin, King of Syria, to make war against Ahaz, King of Judah; and these two kings marched a confederated and powerful army against Jerusalem. Ahaz and his people became alarmed at their danger, and *“their hearts were moved as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.”* Isaiah vii, 3.

In this perilous situation of things, Isaiah addresses himself to Ahaz, and assures him in the name of the Lord (the cant phrase of all the prophets), that these two kings should not succeed against him; and to assure him that this should be the case (the case was however directly contrary¹) tells Ahaz to ask a sign of the Lord.

This Ahaz declined doing, giving as a reason, that he would not tempt the Lord; upon which Isaiah, who pretends to be sent from God, says, verse 14, *“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign, behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son – butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good – for before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land which thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings”* – meaning the King of Israel and the King of Syria who were marching against him.

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

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

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

But the case is, that the child of which Isaiah speaks *was his own child*, with which his wife or his mistress was then pregnant; for he says in the next chapter (Is. viii, 2), “*And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah; and I went unto the prophetess, and she conceived and bear a son;*” and he says, at verse 18 of the same chapter, “*Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel.*”

It may not be improper here to observe, that the word translated a *virgin* in Isaiah, doe not signify a virgin in Hebrew, but merely a *young woman*. The tense is also falsified in the translation. Levi gives the Hebrew text of Isaiah vii, 14, and the translation in English with it – “*Behold a young woman IS with child and beareth a son.*” The expression, says he, is in the present tense.

This translation agrees with the other circumstances related of the birth of this child which was to be a sign to Ahaz. But as the true translation could not have been imposed upon the world as a prophecy of a child to be born seven hundred years afterwards, the Christian translators have falsified the original: and instead of making Isaiah to say, behold a *young woman IS* with child and *beareth* a son, they have made him to say, “Behold a *virgin shall* conceive and *bear* a son.”

It is, however, only necessary for a person to read Isaiah vii, and viii, and he will be convinced that the passage in question is no prophecy of the person called Jesus Christ. I pass on to the second passage quoted from the Old Testament by the New, as a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

Matthew ii, 1-6. “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East and are come to wor-

ship him. When Herod the king heard these things he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem, in the land of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, *And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, art not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel.*” This passage is in Micah v, 2.

I pass over the absurdity of seeing and following a star in the day time, as a man would a *will-with-the-wisp*, or a candle and lantern at night; and also that of seeing it in the East, when themselves came from the East; for could such a thing be seen at all to serve them for a guide, it must be in the West to them. I confine myself solely to the passage called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

The book of Micah, in the passage above quoted, v, 2, is speaking of some person, without mentioning his name, from whom some great achievements were expected; but the description he gives of this person, verse 5, 6, proves evidently that is not Jesus Christ, for he says, “and this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise up against him [that is against the Assyrian] seven shepherds and eight principal men.

”And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod on the entrance thereof; thus shall *he* [the person spoken of at the head of the second verse] deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders.”

This is so evidently descriptive of a military chief, that it cannot be applied to Christ without outraging the character they pretend to give us of him. Besides which, the circumstances of the times here spoken of, and those of the times in which Christ is said to have lived, are in contradiction to each other.

It was the Romans, and not the Assyrians that had conquered and *were in the land* of Judea, and trod in their palaces when Christ was born, and when he died, and so far from his driving them out, it was they who signed the warrant for his execution, and he suffered under it.

Having thus shown that this is no prophecy of Jesus Christ, I pass on to the third passage quoted from the Old Testament by the New, as a prophecy of him. This, like the first I have spoken of, is introduced by a dream. Joseph dreameth another dream, and dreameth that he seeth another angel.

The account begins at Matthew ii, 13. "The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: For Herod will seek the life of the young child to destroy him.

"When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night and departed into Egypt: and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, *Out of Egypt have I called my son.*"

This passage is in the book of Hosea, xi, 1. The words are, "When Israel was a child then I loved him and *called my son out of Egypt*. As they called them so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim and burned incense to graven images."

This passage, falsely called a prophecy of Christ, refers to the children of Israel coming out of Egypt in the time of Pharaoh, and to the idolatry they committed afterwards. To make it apply to Jesus Christ, he then must be the person *who sacrificed unto Baalim and burned incense to graven images*; for the person called out of Egypt by the collective name, Israel, and the persons committing this idolatry, are the same persons or the descendants of them.

This then can be no prophecy of Jesus Christ, unless they are willing to make an idolater of him. I pass on to the fourth passage called a prophecy by the writer of the book of Matthew.

This is introduced by a story told by nobody but himself, and scarcely believed by anybody, of the slaughter of all the children under two years old, by the command of Herod. A thing which it is not probable should be done by Herod, as he only held an office under the Roman Government, to which appeals could always be had, as we see in the case of Paul. Matthew, however, having made or told his story, says, ii, 17, 18, "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying – *In Ramah was there a voice heard,*

lamentation, and weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they were not.”

This passage is in Jeremiah xxxi, 15; and this verse, when separated from the verses before and after it, and which explain its application, might with equal propriety be applied to every case of wars, sieges, and other violences, such as the Christians themselves have often done to the Jews, where mothers have lamented the loss of their children.

There is nothing in the verse, taken singly, that designates or points out any particular application of it, otherwise than it points to some circumstances which, at the time of writing it, had already happened, and not to a thing yet to happen, for the verse is in the preter or past tense. I go to explain the case and show the application of the verse.

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

It is this time of sorrow and suffering to the Jews that Jeremiah is speaking. Their Temple was destroyed, their land desolated, their nation and government entirely broken up, and themselves, men, women and children, carried into captivity. They had too many sorrows of their own, immediately before their eyes, to permit them, or any of their chiefs, to be employing themselves on things that might, or might not, happen in the world seven hundred years afterwards.

It is, as already observed, of this time of sorrow and suffering to the Jews that Jeremiah is speaking in the verse in question. In the next two verses (16, 17), he endeavors to console the sufferers by giving them hopes, and, according to the fashion of speaking in those days, assurances from the Lord, that their sufferings should have an end, and *that their children should return again to their own children*. But I leave the verses to speak for themselves, and the Old Testament to testify against the New.

Jeremiah xxxi, 15. “Thus saith the Lord, a voice *was* heard in Ramah [it is in the preter tense], lamentation and bitter weeping: Ra-

chel, weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children because they were not." Verse 16, "Thus saith the Lord: Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; *and THEY shall come again from the land of the enemy.*" Verse 17. - "And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, *that thy children shall come again to their own border.*"

By what strange ignorance or imposition is it, that the children of which Jeremiah speaks (meaning the people of the Jewish nation, scripturally called *children of Israel*, and not mere infants under two years old), and who were to return again from the land of the enemy, and come again into their own borders, can mean the children that Matthew makes Herod to slaughter? Could those return again from the land of the enemy, or how can the land of the enemy be applied to them? Could they come again to their own borders?

Good heavens! How the world has been imposed upon by testament-makers, priestcraft, and pretended prophecies. I pass on to the fifth passage called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

This, like two of the former, is introduced by dream. Joseph dreamed another dream, and dreameth of another angel. And Matthew is again the historian of the dream and the dreamer. If it were asked how Matthew could know what Joseph dreamed, neither the Bishop nor all the Church could answer the question.

Perhaps it was Matthew that dreamed, and not Joseph; that is, Joseph dreamed by proxy, in Matthew's brain, as they tell us Daniel dreamed for Nebuchadnezzar. But be this as it may, I go on with my subject.

The account of this dream is in Matthew ii, 19-23. "But when Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel."

"But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither. Notwithstanding being warned of God in a *dream* [here is another dream] he turned aside into the parts of Galilee; and he came and dwelt in a city called

Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.”

Here is good circumstantial evidence that Matthew dreamed, for there is no such passage in all the Old Testament; and I invite the Bishop, and all the priests in Christendom, including those of America, to produce it. I pass on to the sixth passage, called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

This, as Swift says on another occasion, is *lugged in head and shoulders*; it need only to be seen in order to be hooted as a forced and farfetched piece of imposition.

Matthew, iv, 12-16, “Now when Jesus heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee: and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zebulon and Nephtholim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias [Isaiah] the prophet, saying, *The land of Zebulon and the land of Nephtalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is springing upon them.*”

I wonder Matthew has not made the cris-cross-row, or the Christ-cross-row (I know not how the priests spell it) into a prophecy. He might as well have done this as cut out these unconnected and undescriptive sentences from the place they stand in and dubbed them with that title. The words however, are in Isaiah ix, 1, 2 as follows: “Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted *the land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali, and afterwards did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea beyond Jordan in Galilee of the nations.*”

All this relates to two circumstances that had already happened at the time these words in Isaiah were written. The one, where the land of Zebulon and Naphtali had been lightly afflicted, and afterwards more grievously by the way of the sea.

But observe, reader, how Matthew has falsified the text. He begins his quotation at a part of the verse where there is not so much as a comma, and thereby cuts off everything that relates to the first affliction. He then leaves out all that relates to the second affliction,

and by this means leaves out everything that makes the verse intelligible, and reduces it to a senseless skeleton of names of towns.

To bring this imposition of Matthew clearly and immediately before the eye of the reader, I will repeat the verse, and put between brackets [] the words he has left out, and put in *italics* those that he has preserved.

“[Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation when at the first he lightly afflicted] *the land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali*, [and did afterwards more grievously afflict her] *by the way of the sea beyond Jordan in Galilee of the nations.*”

What gross imposition is it to gut, as the phrase is, a verse in this manner, render it perfectly senseless, and then puff it off on a credulous world as a prophecy. I proceed to the next verse.

Verse 2. “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.” All this is historical, and not in the least prophetic. The whole is in the preter tense: it speaks of things that *had been accomplished* at the time the words were written, and not of things to be accomplished afterwards.

As then the passage is in no possible sense prophetic, nor intended to be so, and that to attempt to make it so is not only to falsify the original but to commit a criminal imposition, it is matter of no concern to us, otherwise than as curiosity, to know who the people were of which the passage speaks that sat in darkness, and what the light was that had shined in upon them.

If we look into the preceding chapter, Isaiah viii, of which ix is only a continuation, we shall find the writer speaking, at verse nineteen of “*witches and wizards who peep about and mutter,*” and of people who made application to them; and he preaches and exhorts them against this darksome practice.

It is of this people, and of this darksome practice, or *walking in darkness*, that he is speaking at ix, 2; and with respect to *the light that had shined in upon them*, it refers entirely to his own ministry, and to the boldness of it, which opposed itself to that of *the witches and wizards who peeped about and muttered.*

Isaiah is, upon the whole, a wild, disorderly writer, preserving in general no clear chain of perception in the arrangement of his ideas, and consequently producing no defined conclusions from them.

It is the wildness of his style, the confusion of his ideas, and the ranting metaphors he employs, that have afforded so many opportunities to priestcraft in some cases, and to superstition in others, to impose those defects upon the world as prophecies of Jesus Christ.

Finding no direct meaning in them, and not knowing what to make of them, and supposing at the same time they were intended to have a meaning, they supplied the defect by inventing a meaning of their own, and called it *his*. I have however in this place done Isaiah the justice to rescue him from the claws of Matthew, who has torn him unmercifully to pieces, and from the imposition or ignorance of priests and commentators, by letting Isaiah speak for himself.

If the words *walking in darkness*, and *light breaking in*, could in any case be applied prophetically, which they cannot be, they would better apply to the times we now live in than to any other. The world has "*walked in darkness*" for eighteen hundred years, both as to religion and government, and it is only since the American Revolution began that light has broken in.

The belief of *one God*, whose attributes are revealed to us in the book or scripture of the creation, which no human hand can counterfeit or falsify, and not in the written or printed book which, as Matthew has shown, can be altered or falsified by ignorance or design, is now making its way among us: and as to government, *the light is already gone forth*, and while men ought to be careful not to be blinded by the excess of it, as at a certain time in France when everything was Robespierrean violence, they ought to reverence, and even to adore it, with all the perseverance that true wisdom can inspire.

I pass on to the seventh passage, called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

Matthew viii, 16, 17. "When the evening was come, they brought unto him [Jesus] many that were possessed with devils, and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias [Isaiah] the prophet, saying, *himself took our infirmities, and bare our sickness.*"

This affair of people being possessed by devils, and of casting them out, was the fable of the day when the books of the New Testament were written. It had not existence at any other time. The books of the Old Testament mention no such thing; the people of the present day know of no such thing; nor does the history of any people or country speak of such a thing. It starts upon us all at once in the book of Matthew, and is altogether an invention of the New Testament makers and the Christian Church.

The book of Matthew is the first book where the word *devil* is mentioned.* We read in some of the books of the Old Testament of things called familiar spirits, the supposed companion of people called witches and wizards. It was no other than the trick of pretended conjurers to obtain money from credulous and ignorant people, or the fabricated charge of superstitious malignancy against unfortunate and decrepit old age. But the idea of a familiar spirit, if we can affix any idea to the term, is exceedingly different to that of being possessed by a devil.

In the one case, the supposed familiar spirit is a dexterous agent, that comes and goes and does as he is bidden; in the other, he is a turbulent roaring monster, that tears and tortures the body into convulsions. Reader, whoever thou art, put thy trust in thy Creator, make use of the reason He endowed thee with, and cast from thee all such fables.

The passage alluded to by Matthew, for as a quotation it is false, is in Isaiah, liii, 4, which is as follows: "Surely *he* [the person of whom Isaiah is speaking] *hath borne* our griefs and carried our sorrows." It is in the preter tense.

Here is nothing about casting out devils, nor curing of sicknesses. The passage, therefore, so far from being a prophecy of Christ, is not even applicable as a circumstance.

Isaiah, or at least the writer of the book that bears his name, employs the whole of this chapter, liii, in lamenting the sufferings of some deceased persons, of whom he speaks very pathetically. It is a monody on the death of a friend; but he mentions not the name of the person, nor gives any circumstance of him by which he can be per-

* The word *devil* is a personification of the word *evil*. – Author.

sonally known; and it is this silence, which is evidence of nothing, that Matthew has laid hold of, to put the name of Christ to it; as if the chiefs of the Jews, whose sorrows were then great, and the times they lived in big with danger, were never thinking about their own affairs, nor the fate of their own friends, but were continually running a wild-goose chase into futurity.

To make a monody into a prophecy is an absurdity. The characters and circumstances of men, even in the different ages of the world, are so much alike, that what is said of one may with propriety be said of many; but this fitness does not make the passage into a prophecy; and none but an imposter, or a bigot, would call it so.

Isaiah, in deploring the hard fate and loss of his friend, mentions nothing of him but what the human lot of man is subject to. All the cases he states of him, his persecutions, his imprisonment, his patience in suffering, and his perseverance in principle, are all within the line of nature; they belong exclusively to none, and may with justness be said of many.

But if Jesus Christ was the person the Church represents him to be, that which would exclusively apply to him must be something that could not apply to any other person; something beyond the line of nature, something beyond the lot of mortal man; and there are no such expressions in this chapter, nor any other chapter in the Old Testament.

It is no exclusive description to say of a person, as is said of the person Isaiah is lamenting in this chapter, *He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.* This may be said of thousands of persons, who have suffered oppressions and unjust death with patience, silence, and perfect resignation.

Grotius, whom the Bishop [of Llandaff] esteems a most learned man, and who certainly was so, supposes that the person of whom Isaiah is speaking, is Jeremiah. Grotius is led into this opinion from the agreement there is between the description given by Isaiah and the case of Jeremiah, as stated in the book that bears his name.

If Jeremiah was an innocent man, and not a traitor in the interest of Nebuchadnezzar when Jerusalem was besieged, his case was hard; he was accused by his countrymen, was persecuted, oppressed, and imprisoned, and he says of himself, (see Jer. xi. 19) "*But as for me I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter.*"

I should be inclined to the same opinion with Grotius, had Isaiah lived at the time when Jeremiah underwent the cruelties of which he speaks; but Isaiah died about fifty years before; and it is of a person of his own time whose case Isaiah is lamenting in the chapter in question, and which imposition and bigotry, more than seven hundred years afterwards, perverted into a prophecy of a person they call Jesus Christ.

I pass on to the eighth passage called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

Matthew xii, 14-21: "Then the Pharisees went out and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. But when Jesus knew it he withdrew himself; and great numbers followed him and he healed them all; and he charged them they should not make him known; That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias [Isaiah] the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased; I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles.

"He shall not strive nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust."

In the first place, this passage hath not the least relation to the purpose for which it is quoted.

Matthew says, that the Pharisees held a council against Jesus to destroy him – that Jesus withdrew himself – that great numbers followed him – that he healed them – and that he charged them they should not make him known. But the passage Matthew has quoted as being fulfilled by these circumstances does not so much as apply to any one of them.

It has nothing to do with the Pharisees holding a council to destroy Jesus – with his withdrawing himself – with great numbers fol-

lowing him - with his healing them - nor with his charging them not to make him known.

The purpose for which the passage is quoted, and the passage itself, are as remote from each other, as nothing from something. But the case is, that people have been so long in the habit of reading the books called the Bible and Testament with their eyes shut, and their senses locked up, that the most stupid inconsistencies have passed on them for truth, and imposition for prophecy. The All wise Creator hath been dishonored by being made the author of fable, and the human mind degraded by believing it.

In this passage, as in that last mentioned, the name of the person of whom the passage speaks is not given, and we are left in the dark respecting him. It is this defect in the history that bigotry and imposition have laid hold of, to call it prophecy.

Had Isaiah lived in the time of Cyrus, the passage would descriptively apply to him. As King of Persia, his authority was great among the Gentiles, and it is of such a character the passage speaks; and his friendship for the Jews, whom he liberated from captivity, and who might then be compared to a *bruised reed*, was extensive.

But this description does not apply to Jesus Christ, who had no authority among the Gentiles; and as to his own countrymen, figuratively described by the bruised reed, it was they who crucified him. Neither can it be said of him that he did not cry, and that his voice was not heard in the street. As a preacher it was his business to be heard, and we are told that he traveled about the country for that purpose.

Matthew has given a long sermon, which (if his authority is good, but which is much to be doubted since he imposes so much) Jesus preached to a multitude upon a mountain, and it would be a quibble to say that a mountain is not a street, since it is a place equally as public.

The last verse in the passage (the fourth) as it stands in Isaiah, and which Matthew has not quoted, says, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law." This also applies to Cyrus. He was not discouraged,

he did not fail, he conquered all Babylon, liberated the Jews, and established laws.

But this cannot be said of Jesus Christ, who in the passage before us, according to Matthew, [xii, 15], withdrew himself for fear of the Pharisees, and charged the people that followed him not to make it known where he was; and who, according to other parts of the Testament, was continually moving from place to place to avoid being apprehended.²

But it is immaterial to us, at this distance of time, to know who the person was: it is sufficient to the purpose I am upon, that of detecting fraud and falsehood, to know who it was not, and to show it was not the person called Jesus Christ.

I pass on to the ninth passage called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

Matthew xxi. 1-5. "And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethpage, unto the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose them and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought to you, ye shall say, the Lord hath need of them, and straightway he will send them. All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, *Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.*"

Poor ass! let it be some consolation amidst all thy sufferings, that if the heathen world erected a bear into a constellation, the Christian world has elevated thee into a prophecy.

This passage is in Zechariah ix, 9, and is one of the whims of friend Zechariah to congratulate his countrymen, who were then returning from captivity in Babylon, and himself with them, to Jerusalem. It has no concern with any other subject. It is strange that apostles, priests, and commentators, never permit, or never suppose, the Jews to be speaking of their own affairs.

Everything in the Jewish books is perverted and distorted into meanings never intended by the writers. Even the poor ass must not be a Jew-ass but a Christian-ass. I wonder they did not make an apos-

tle of him, or a bishop, or at least make him speak and prophesy. He could have lifted up his voice as loud as any of them.

Zechariah, in the first chapter of his book, indulges himself in several whims on the joy of getting back to Jerusalem. He says at the eighth verse, "I saw by night [Zechariah was a sharpsighted seer] and behold a man setting on a *red horse* [yes reader, a *red horse*], and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom, and behind him were *red horses, speckled and white*." He says nothing about green horses, nor blue horses, perhaps because it is difficult to distinguish green from blue by night, but a Christian can have no doubt they were there, because "*faith is the evidence of things not seen*."

Zechariah then introduces an angel among his horses, but he does not tell us what color the angel was of, whether black or white, nor whether he came to buy horses, or only to look at them as curiosities, for certainly they were of that kind. Be this however as it may, he enters into conversation with this angel on the joyful affair of getting back to Jerusalem, and he saith at the sixteenth verse, "*Therefore, thus saith the Lord, I AM RETURNED to Jerusalem with mercies; my house shall be built in it saith the Lord of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem*." An expression signifying the rebuilding the city.

All this, whimsical and imaginary as it is, sufficiently proves that it was the entry of the Jews into Jerusalem from captivity, and not the entry of Jesus Christ seven hundred years afterwards, that is the subject upon which Zechariah is always speaking.

As to the expression of riding upon an ass, which commentators represent as a sign of humility in Jesus Christ, the case is, he never was so well mounted before. The asses of those countries are large and well proportioned, and were anciently the chief of riding animals. Their beasts of burden, and which served also for the conveyance of the poor, were camels and dromedaries. We read in Judges x, 4, that Jair [one of the Judges of Israel] "had thirty sons that *rode on thirty ass-colts*, and they had thirty cities." But commentators distort everything.

There is besides very reasonable grounds to conclude that this story of Jesus riding publicly into Jerusalem, accompanied, as it is said at verses eight and nine, by a great multitude, shouting and re-

joining and spreading their garments by the way, is a story altogether destitute of truth.

In the last passage called a prophecy that I examined, Jesus is represented as withdrawing, that is, running away, and concealing himself for fear of being apprehended, and charging the people that were with him not to make him known. No new circumstance had arisen in the interim to change his condition for the better; yet here he is represented as making his public entry into the same city from which he had fled for safety. The two cases contradict each other so much, that if both are not false, one of them at least can scarcely be true.

For my own part, I do not believe there is one word of historical truth in the whole book. I look upon it at best to be a romance; the principal personage of which is an imaginary or allegorical character founded upon some tale, and in which the moral is in many parts good, and the narrative part very badly and blunderingly written.

I pass on to the tenth passage called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

Matthew xxvi, 51-56: "And behold one of them which was with Jesus [meaning Peter] stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?"

"In that same hour Jesus said to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and with staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."

This loose and general manner of speaking, admits neither of detection nor of proof. Here is no quotation given, nor the name of any Bible author mentioned, to which reference can be had.

There are, however, some high improbabilities against the truth of the account.

First – It is not possible that the Jews, who were then a conquered people, and under subjection to the Romans, should be permitted to wear swords.

Secondly – If Peter had attacked the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear, he would have been immediately taken up by the guard that took up his master and sent to prison with him.

Thirdly – What sort of disciples and preaching apostles must those of Christ have been that wore swords?

Fourthly – This scene is represented to have taken place the same evening of what is called the Lord's supper, which makes, according to the ceremony of it, the inconsistency of wearing swords the greater.

I pass on to the eleventh passage called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

Matthew xxvii, 3-10: "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us, see thou to that. And he cast down the thirty pieces of silver, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

"And the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, it is not lawful to put them in the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field is called the field of blood unto this day.

"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me."

This is a most barefaced piece of imposition. The passage in Jeremiah which speaks of the purchase of a field, has no more to do with the case to which Matthew applies it, than it has to do with the purchase of lands in America. I will recite the whole passage:

Jeremiah xxxii, 6-15: "And Jeremiah said, The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Behold Hanameel, the son of Shallum thine uncle, shall come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that is in

Anathoth, for the right of redemption is thine to buy it. So Hanameel mine uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison, according to the word of the Lord, and said unto me, Buy my field I pray thee that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin; for the right of inheritance is thine, and the redemption is thine; buy it for thyself.

"Then I knew this was the word of the Lord. And I bought the field of Hanameel mine uncle's son, that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver. And I subscribed the evidence and sealed it, and took witnesses and weighed him the money in the balances.

"So I took the evidence of the purchase, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open; and I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed [the book of the purchase], before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison.

"And I charged Baruch before them, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land."

I forbear making any remark on this abominable imposition of Matthew. The thing glaringly speaks for itself. It is priests and commentators that I rather ought to censure, for having preached falsehood so long, and kept people in darkness with respect to those impositions.

I am not contending with these men upon points of doctrine, for I know that sophistry has always a city of refuge. I am speaking of facts; for wherever the thing called a fact is a falsehood, the faith founded upon it is delusion, and the doctrine raised upon it not true. Ah, reader, put thy trust in thy Creator, and thou wilt be safe; but if thou trustest to the book called the Scriptures thou trustest to the rotten staff of fable and falsehood. But I return to my subject.

There is among the whims and reveries of Zechariah, mention made of thirty pieces of silver given to a potter. They can hardly have

been so stupid as to mistake a potter for a field: and if they had, the passage in Zechariah has no more to do with Jesus, Judas, and the field to bury strangers in, than that already quoted. I will recite the passage.

Zechariah xi, 7-14: "And I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called *Beauty*, the other I called *Bands*; and I fed the flock. Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul lothed them, and their soul also abhorred me. Then said I, I will not feed you; that which dieth, let it die; and that which is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat everyone the flesh of another.

"And I took my staff, even *Beauty*, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people. And it was broken in that day; and so the poor of the flock who waited upon me knew that it was the word of the Lord. And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price, and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price *thirty pieces of silver*.

"And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the *potter*; a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord. Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even *Bands*, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.³⁷"

There is no making either head or tail of this incoherent gibberish. His two staves, one called *Beauty* and the other *Bands*, is so much like a fairy tale, that I doubt if it had any other origin. There is, however, no part that has the least relation to the case stated in Matthew; on the contrary, it is the reverse of it. Here the *thirty pieces* of silver, whatever it was for, is called a *goodly price*, it was as much as the thing was worth, and according to the language of the day, was approved of by the Lord, and the money given to the potter in the house of the Lord.

In the case of Jesus and Judas, as stated in Matthew, the thirty pieces of silver were the price of blood; the transaction was condemned by the Lord, and the money when refunded was refused admittance into the treasury. Everything in the two cases is the reverse of each other.

Besides this, a very different and direct contrary account to that of Matthew, is given of the affair of Judas, in the book called the "Acts of the Apostles"; according to that book the case is, that so far from Judas repenting and returning the money, and the high priests buying a field with it to bury strangers in, Judas kept the money and bought a field with it for himself; and instead of hanging himself as Matthew says, that he fell headlong and burst asunder. Some commentators endeavor to get over one part of the contradiction by ridiculously supposing that Judas hanged himself first and the rope broke.

Acts i, 16-18: "Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus [David says not a word about Judas], for he [Judas] was numbered among us and obtained part of our ministry. *Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity, and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst and his bowels gushed out.*"

Is it not a species of blasphemy to call the New Testament *revealed religion*, when we see in it such contradictions and absurdities? I pass on to the twelfth passage called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

Matthew xxvii, 35: "And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, *They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.*" This expression is in Psalm xxii, 18.

The writer of that Psalm (whoever he was, for the Psalms are a collection and not the work of one man) is speaking of himself and his own case, and not that of another. He begins this Psalm with the words which the New Testament writers ascribed to Jesus Christ: "*My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me*" – words which might be uttered by a complaining man without any great impropriety, but very improperly from the mouth of a reputed God.

The picture which the writer draws of his own situation in this Psalm, is gloomy enough. He is not prophesying, but complaining of his own hard case. He represents himself as surrounded by enemies and beset by persecutions of every kind; and by the way of showing the inveteracy of his persecutors he says, "*They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*"

The expression is in the present tense; and is the same as to say, they pursue me even to the clothes upon my back, and dispute how they shall divide them. Besides, the word *vesture* does not always mean clothing of any kind, but *Property*, or rather the admitting a man to, or *investing* him with property; and as it is used in this Psalm distinct from the word garment, it appears to be used in this sense. But Jesus had no property; for they make him say of himself, "*The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.*"

But be this as it may, if we permit ourselves to suppose the Almighty would condescend to tell, by what is called the spirit of prophecy, what could come to pass in some future age of the world, it is an injury to our own faculties, and to our ideas of His greatness, to imagine that it would be about an old coat, or an old pair of breeches, or about anything which the common accidents of life, or the quarrels which attend it, exhibit every day.

That which is in the power of man to do, or in his will not to do, is not subject for prophecy, even if there were such a thing, because it cannot carry with it any evidence of divine power, or divine interposition.

The ways of God are not the ways of men. That which an Almighty power performs, or wills, is not within the circle of human power to do, or to control. But an executioner and his assistants might quarrel about dividing the garments of a sufferer, or divide them without quarrelling, and by that means fulfil the thing called a prophecy, or set it aside.

In the passages before examined, I have exposed the falsehood of them. In this I exhibit its degrading meanness, as an insult to the Creator and an injury to human reason.

Here end the passages called prophecies by Matthew.

Matthew concludes his book by saying, that when Christ expired on the cross, the rocks rent, the graves opened, and the bodies of many of the saints arose; and Mark says, there was darkness over the land from the sixth hour until the ninth.

They produce no prophecy for this; but had these things been facts, they would have been a proper subject for prophecy, because

none but an Almighty power could have inspired a foreknowledge of them, and afterwards fulfilled them. Since then there is no such prophecy, but a pretended prophecy of an old coat, the proper deduction is, there were no such things, and that the book of Matthew was fable and falsehood.

I pass on to the book called the Gospel according to St. Mark.

THE BOOK OF MARK

There are but few passages in Mark called prophecies; and but few in Luke and John. Such as there are I shall examine, and also such other passages as interfere with those cited by Matthew.

Mark begins his book by a passage which he puts in the shape of a prophecy. Mark i, 1,2. – “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God: As it is written in the prophets, *Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.*” (Malachi iii,1)

The passage in the original is in the first person. Mark makes this passage to be a prophecy of John the Baptist, said by the Church to be a forerunner of Jesus Christ. But if we attend to the verses that follow this expression, as it stands in Malachi, and to the first and fifth verses of the next chapter, we shall see that this application of it is erroneous and false.

Malachi having said, at the first verse, “Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me,” says, at the second verse, “But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap.”

This description can have no reference to the birth of Jesus Christ, and consequently none to John the Baptists. It is a scene of fear and terror that is here described, and the birth of Christ is always spoken of as a time of joy and glad tidings.

Malachi, continuing to speak on the same subject, explains in the next chapter what the scene is of which he speaks in the verses above quoted, and whom the person is whom he calls the messenger.

“Behold,” says he, (iv, 1), “the day cometh that shall burn like an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stub-

ble; and the day cometh that shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” Verse 5: “Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”

By what right, or by what imposition or ignorance Mark has made Elijah into John the Baptist, and Malachi’s description of the day of judgment into the birthday of Christ, I leave to the Bishop [of Llandaff] to settle.

Mark (i,2,3), confounds two passages together, taken from different books of the Old Testament. The second verse, “Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee,” is taken, as I have said before, from Malachi. The third verse, which says, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight,” is not in Malachi, but in Isaiah, xl, 3.

Whiston says that both these verses were originally in Isaiah. If so, it is another instance of the distorted state of the Bible, and corroborates what I have said with respect to the name and description of Cyrus being in the book of Isaiah, to which it cannot chronologically belong.

The words in Isaiah – *“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight”* – are in the present tense, and consequently not predictive. It is one of those rhetorical figures which the Old Testament authors frequently used. That it is merely rhetorical and metaphorical, may be seen at the sixth verse: “And the voice said, cry; and he said what shall I cry? *All flesh is grass.*”

This is evidently nothing but a figure; for flesh is not grass otherwise than as a figure or metaphor, where one thing is put for another. Besides which, the whole passage is too general and too declamatory to be applied exclusively to any particular person or purpose.

I pass on to the eleventh chapter.

In this chapter, Mark speaks of Christ riding into Jerusalem upon a colt, but he does not make it an accomplishment of a prophecy, as Matthew has done, for he says nothing about a prophecy. In-

stead of which he goes on the other tack, and in order to add new honors to the ass, he makes it to be a miracle; for he says, verse 2, it was a colt "*whereon never man sat*"; signifying thereby, that as the ass had not been broken, he consequently was *inspired into good manners*, for we do not hear that he kicked Jesus Christ off. There is not a word about his kicking in all the four Evangelists.

I pass on from these feats of horsemanship performed upon a jack-ass, to the 15th chapter. At the 24th verse of this chapter, Mark speaks of *parting Christ's garments and casting lots upon them*, but he applies no prophecy to it as Matthew does. He rather speaks of it as a thing then in practice with executioners, as it is at this day.

At the 28th verse of the same chapter, Mark speaks of Christ being crucified between two thieves; that, says he, the Scripture might be fulfilled, "*which saith, and he was numbered with the transgressors.*" The same might be said of the thieves.

This expression is in Isaiah liii, 12. Grotius applies it to Jeremiah. But the case has happened so often in the world, where innocent men have been numbered with transgressors, and is still continually happening, that it is absurdity to call it a prophecy of any particular person. All those whom the church calls martyrs were numbered with transgressors. All the honest patriots who fell upon the scaffold in France, in the time of Robespierre, were numbered with transgressors; and if himself had not fallen, the same case according to a note in his own handwriting, had befallen me; yet I suppose the Bishop [of Llandaff] will not allow that Isaiah was prophesying of Thomas Paine.

These are all the passages in Mark which have any reference to prophecies.

Mark concludes his book by making Jesus to say to his disciples (xvi, 16-18), "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned [fine popish stuff this], and these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Now, the Bishop, in order to know if he has all this saving and wonder-working faith, should try those things upon himself. He should take a good dose of arsenic, and if he please, I will send him a rattlesnake from America.

As for myself, as I believe in God and not at all in Jesus Christ, nor in the books called the Scriptures, the experiment does not concern me.

I pass on to the book of Luke.

THE BOOK OF LUKE

There are no passages in Luke called prophecies, excepting those which relate to the passages I have already examined.

Luke speaks of Mary being espoused to Joseph, but he makes no references to the passage in Isaiah, as Matthew does. He speaks also of Jesus riding into Jerusalem upon a colt, but he says nothing about a prophecy. He speaks of John the Baptist and refers to the passage in Isaiah, of which I have already spoken.

At chapter xiii, 31, 32, he says, "*The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him [Jesus], Get thee out and depart hence, for Herod will kill thee. And he said unto them, Go ye and tell that fox, Behold I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.*"

Matthew makes Herod to die while Christ was a child in Egypt, and makes Joseph to return with the child on the news of Herod's death, who had sought to kill him. Luke makes Herod to be living, and to seek the life of Jesus after Jesus was thirty years of age: for he says (iii, 23), "And Jesus began to be about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph."

The obscurity in which the historical part of the New Testament is involved, with respect to Herod, may afford to priests and commentators a plea, which to some may appear plausible, but to none satisfactory, that the Herod of which Matthew speaks, and the Herod of which Luke speaks, were two different persons.

Matthew calls Herod a king; and Luke (iii, 1) calls Herod, Tetrarch (that is, Governor) of Galilee. But there could be no such person as a *King Herod*, because the Jews and their country were then

under the dominion of the Roman Emperors who governed then by tetrarchs, or governors.

Luke ii makes Jesus to be born when Cyrenius was Governor of Syria, to which government Judea was annexed; and according to this, Jesus was not born in the time of Herod. Luke says nothing about Herod seeking the life of Jesus when he was born; nor of his destroying the children under two years old; nor of Joseph fleeing with Jesus into Egypt; nor of his returning from thence. On the contrary, the book of Luke speaks as if the person it calls Christ had never been out of Judea, and that Herod sought his life after he commenced preaching, as is before stated.

I have already shown that Luke, in the book called the Acts of the Apostles (which commentators ascribe to Luke), contradicts the account in Matthew with respect to Judas and the thirty pieces of silver. Matthew says that Judas returned the money, and that the high priests bought with it a field to bury strangers in; Luke says that Judas kept the money, and bought a field with it for himself.

As it is impossible the wisdom of God should err, so it is impossible those books should have been written by divine inspiration. Our belief in God and His unerring wisdom forbids us to believe it. As for myself, I feel religiously happy in the total disbelief of it.

There are no other passages called prophecies in Luke than those I have spoken of. I pass on to the book of John.

THE BOOK OF JOHN

John, like Mark and Luke, is not much of a prophecy-monger. He speaks of the ass, and the casting lots for Jesus' clothes, and some other trifles, of which I have already spoken.

John makes Jesus to say (v, 46), "*For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me.*" The book of the Acts, in speaking of Jesus, says (iii, 22), "*For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord, your God, raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.*"

This passage is in Deuteronomy, xviii, 15. They apply it as a prophecy of Jesus. What imposition! The person spoken of in Deu-

teronomy, and also in Numbers, where the same person is spoken of, is *Joshua*, the minister of Moses, and his immediate successor, and just such another Robespierrean character as Moses is represented to have been. The case, as related in those books, is as follows:

Moses was grown old and near to his end, and in order to prevent confusion after his death, for the Israelites had no settled system of government, it was thought best to nominate a successor to Moses while he was yet living. This was done, as we are told, in the following manner:

Numbers xxvii, 12, 13 “And the Lord said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. And when thou hast seen it thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother is gathered.” Verse 15-20. “And Moses spake unto the Lord, saying, Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep that have no Shepard. And the Lord said unto Moses, take thee Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.”

Verse 22, 23. “And Moses did as the Lord commanded him; and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and he laid hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.”

I have nothing to do, in this place, with the truth, or the conjuration here practiced, of raising up a successor to Moses like unto himself. The passage sufficiently proves it is Joshua, and that it is an imposition in John to make the case into a prophecy of Jesus. But the prophecy-mongers were so inspired with falsehood, that they never speak truth.⁴

I pass to the last passage, in these fables of the Evangelists, called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

John, having spoken of Jesus expiring on the cross between two thieves, says, (xix, 32, 33), "Then came the soldiers and break the legs of the first (meaning one of the thieves) and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs." Verse 36: "For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, *A bone of him shall not be broken.*"

The passage here referred to is in Exodus, and has no more to do with Jesus than with the ass he rode upon to Jerusalem; nor yet so much, if a roasted jack-ass, like a roasted he-goat, might be eaten at a Jewish Passover. It might be some consolation to an ass to know that though his bones might be picked, they would not be broken. I go to state the case.

The book of Exodus, in instituting the Jewish passover, in which they were to eat a he-lamb, or a he-goat, says (xii, 5), "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; ye shall take it from the *sheep* or from the *goats.*" The book, after stating some ceremonies to be used in killing and dressing it (for it was to be roasted, not boiled), says (verse 43-48), "And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: there shall no stranger eat thereof; but every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A foreigner shall not eat thereof. In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh thereof abroad out of the house; *neither shall ye break a bone thereof.*"

We here see that the case as it stands in Exodus is a ceremony and not a prophecy, and totally unconnected with Jesus' bones, or any part of him.

John, having thus filled up the measure of apostolic fable, concludes his book with something that beats all fable; for he says at the last verse, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they could be written everyone, *I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.*"

This is what in vulgar life is called a *thumper*; that is, not only a lie, but a lie beyond the line of possibility; besides which it is an absurdity, for if they should be written in the world, the world would

contain them. Here ends the examination of the passages called prophecies.

I have now, reader, gone through and examined all the passages which the four books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, quote from the Old Testament and call them prophecies of Jesus Christ. When I first sat down to this examination, I expected to find cause for some censure, but little did I expect to find them so utterly destitute of truth, and of all pretensions to it, as I have shown them to be.

The practice which the writers of these books employ is not more false than it is absurd. They state some trifling case of the person they call Jesus Christ, and then cut out a sentence from some passage of the Old Testament and call it a prophecy of that case. But when the words thus cut out are restored to the place they are taken from, and read with the words before and after them, they give the lie to the New Testament. A short instance or two of this will suffice for the whole.

They make Joseph to dream of an angel, who informs him that Herod is dead, and tells him to come with the child out of Egypt. They then cut out a sentence from the book of Hosea, "*Out of Egypt have I called my son,*" and apply it as a prophecy in that case. The words, "*And called my Son out of Egypt,*" are in the Bible.

But what of that? They are only part of a passage, and not a whole passage, and stand immediately connected with other words which show they refer to the children of Israel coming out of Egypt in the time of Pharaoh, and to the idolatry they committed afterwards.

Again, they tell us that when the soldiers came to break the legs of the crucified persons, they found Jesus was already dead, and, therefore, did not break his. They then, with some alteration of the original, cut out a sentence from Exodus, "*a bone of him shall not be broken,*" and apply it as a prophecy of that case.

The words "*Neither shall ye break a bone thereof*" (for they have altered the text), are in the Bible. But what of that? They are, as in the former case, only part of a passage, and not a whole passage, and when read with the words they are immediately joined to, show it is the bones of a he-lamb or a he-goat of which the passage speaks.

These repeated forgeries and falsifications create a well-founded suspicion that all the cases spoken of concerning the person called Jesus Christ are *made cases*, on purpose to lug in, and that very clumsily, some broken sentences from the Old Testament, and apply them as prophecies of those cases; and that so far from his being the Son of God, he did not exist even as a man – that he is merely an imaginary or allegorical character, as Apollo, Hercules, Jupiter, and all the deities of antiquity were. There is no history written at the time Jesus Christ is said to have lived that speaks of the existence of such a person, even as a man.

Did we find in any other book pretending to give a system of religion, the falsehoods, falsifications, contradictions, and absurdities, which are to be met with in almost every page of the Old and New Testament, all the priests of the present day, who supposed themselves capable, would triumphantly show their skill in criticism, and cry it down as a most glaring imposition.

But since the books in question belong to their own trade and profession, they, or at least many of them, seek to stifle every inquiry into them and abuse those who have the honesty and the courage to do it.

When a book, as is the case with the Old and New Testament, is ushered into the world under the title of being the WORD OF GOD, it ought to be examined with the utmost strictness, in order to know if it has a well founded claim to that title or not, and whether we are or are not imposed upon: for no poison is so dangerous as that which poisons the phisic, so no falsehood is so fatal as that which is made an article of faith.

This examination becomes more necessary, because when the New Testament was written, I might say invented, the art of printing was not known, and there were no other copies of the Old Testament than written copies. A written copy of that book would cost about as much as six hundred common printed Bibles now cost. Consequently the book was in the hands of very few persons, and these chiefly of the Church.

This gave an opportunity to the writers of the New Testament to make quotations from the Old Testament as they pleased, and call them prophecies, with very little danger of being detected. Besides

which, the terrors and inquisitorial fury of the Church, like what they tell us of the flaming sword that turned every way, stood sentry over the New Testament; and time, which brings everything else to light, has served to thicken the darkness that guards it from detection.

Were the New Testament now to appear for the first time, every priest of the present day would examine it line by line, and compare the detached sentences it calls prophecies with the whole passages in the Old Testament, from whence they are taken. Why then do they not make the same examination at this time, as they would make had the New Testament never appeared before?

If it be proper and right to make it in one case, it is equally proper and right to do it in the other case. Length of time can make no difference in the right to do it at any time. But, instead of doing this, they go on as their predecessors went on before them, to tell the people there are prophecies of Jesus Christ, when the truth is there are none.

They tell us that Jesus rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. It is very easy to say so; a great lie is as easily told as a little one. But if he had done so, those would have been the only circumstances respecting him that would have differed from the common lot of man; and, consequently, the only case that would apply exclusively to him, as prophecy, would be some passage in the Old Testament that foretold such things of him.

But there is no passage in the Old Testament that speaks of a person who, after being crucified, dead, and buried, should rise from the dead, and ascend into heaven. Our prophecy-mongers supply the silence the Old Testament guards upon such things, by telling us of passages they call prophecies, and that falsely so, about Joseph's dream, old clothes, broken bones, and such like trifling stuff.

In writing upon this, as upon every other subject, I speak a language full and intelligible. I deal not in hints and intimations. I have several reasons for this: First, that I may be clearly understood. Secondly, that it may be seen I am in earnest; and thirdly, because it is an affront to truth to treat falsehood with complaisance.

I will close the treatise with a subject I have already touched upon in the first part of the "Age of Reason."

The world has been amused with the term *revealed religion*, and the generality of priests apply this term to the books called the Old and New Testament. The Mahometans apply the same term to the Koran. There is no man that believes in revealed religion stronger than I do; but it is not the reveries of the Old and New Testament, nor the Koran, that I dignify with that sacred title. That which is revelation to me, exists in something which no human mind can invent, no human hand can counterfeit or alter.

The *Word of God* is the *Creation* we behold; and this Word of God revealeth to man all that is necessary for man to know of his Creator. Do we want to contemplate His power? We see it in the immensity of His creation. Do we want to contemplate His wisdom? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible whole is governed.

Do we want to contemplate His munificence? We see it in the abundance with which He fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate His mercy? We see it in His not withholding that abundance, even from the unthankful.

Do we want to contemplate His will, so far as it respects man? The goodness He shows to all is a lesson for our conduct to each other.

In fine – do we want to know what God is? Search not the book called the Scripture, which any human hand might make, or any imposter invent; but the SCRIPTURE CALLED THE CREATION.

When, in the first part of the “Age of Reason,” I called the creation, the true revelation of God to man, I did not know that any other person had expressed the same idea. But I lately met with the writings of Doctor Conyers Middleton, published the beginning of last century, (eighteenth century, editor), in which he expresses himself in the same manner, with respect to the creation, as I have done in the “Age of Reason.”

He was principal librarian of the University of Cambridge, in England, which furnished him with extensive opportunities of reading, and necessarily required he should be well acquainted with the dead as well as the living languages. He was a man of a strong origi-

nal mind, had the courage to think for himself, and the honesty to speak his thoughts.

He made a journey to Rome, from whence he wrote letters to show that the forms and ceremonies of the Romish Christian Church were taken from the degenerate state of the heathen mythology, as it stood in the latter times of the Greeks and Romans. He attacked without ceremony the miracles which the Church pretended to perform; and in one of his treatises, he calls the *creation a revelation*.

The priests of England, of that day, in order to defend their citadel, by first defending its out-works, attacked him for attacking the Roman ceremonies; and one of them censures him for calling the *creation a revelation*. He thus replies to him:

“One of them,” says he, “appears to be scandalized by the title of *revelation* which I have given to that discovery which God made of Himself in the visible works of his creation. Yet it is no other than what the wise in all ages have given to it, who consider it as the most authentic and indisputable revelation which God has ever given of Himself, from the beginning of the world to this day.

”It was this by which the first notice of Him was revealed to the inhabitants of the earth, and by which alone it has been kept up ever since among the several nations of it. From this the reason of man was enabled to trace out his nature and attributes, and, by a gradual deduction of consequences, to learn his own nature also, with all the duties belonging to it, which relate either to God or to his fellow-creatures.

“This constitution of things was ordained by God, as an universal law, or rule of conduct to man; the source of all his knowledge; the test of all truth, by which all subsequent revelations, which are supposed to have been given by God in any other manner must be tried, and cannot be received as divine any further than as they are found to tally and coincide with this original standard.

”It was this divine law which I referred to in the passage above recited [meaning the passage on which they had attacked him], being desirous to excite the reader’s attention to it, as it would enable him to judge more freely of the argument I was handling. For by contemplating this law, he would discover the genuine way which God Him-

self has marked out to us for the acquisition of true knowledge, not from the authority or reports of our fellow-creatures, but from the information of the facts and material objects which, in His providential distribution of worldly things, He hath presented to the perpetual observation of our senses. For as it was from these that his existence and nature, the most important articles of all knowledge, were first discovered to man, so that grand discovery furnished new light toward tracing out the rest, and made all the inferior subjects of human knowledge more easily discoverable to us by the same method.

“I had another view likewise in the same passage, and applicable to the same end, of giving the reader a more enlarged notion of the question in dispute, who, by turning his thoughts to reflect on the works of the Creator, as they are manifested to us in this fabric of the world, could not fail to observe that they are all of them great, noble, and suitable to the majesty of His nature; carrying with them the proofs of their origin, and showing themselves to be the production of an all-wise and Almighty being; and by accustoming his mind to these sublime reflections, he will be prepared to determine whether those miraculous interpositions, so confidently affirmed to us by the primitive fathers, can reasonably be thought to make a part in the grand scheme of the Divine administration, or whether it be agreeable that God, who created all things by His will, and can give what turn to them He pleases by the same will, should, for the particular purposes of His government and the services of the Church, *descend to the expedient of visions and revelations*, granted sometimes to boys for the instruction of the elders, and sometimes to women to settle the fashion and length of their veils, and sometimes to pastors of the Church to enjoin them to ordain one man a lecturer, another a priest; or that he should scatter a profusion of miracles around the stake of a martyr, yet all of them vain and insignificant, and without any sensible effect, either of preserving the life or easing the sufferings of the saint, or even of mortifying his persecutors, who were always left to enjoy the full triumph of their cruelty, and the poor martyr to expire in a miserable death.

”When these things, I say, are brought to the original test, and compared with the genuine and indisputable works of the Creator, how minute, how trifling, how contemptible must they be? And how incredible must it be thought that, for the instruction of His Church,

God should employ ministers so precarious, unsatisfactory, and inadequate, as the ecstasies of women and boys, and the visions of interested priests, which were derided at the very time by men of sense to whom they were proposed.

“That this universal law [continues Middleton, meaning the law revealed in the works of the Creation] was actually revealed to the heathen world long before the Gospel was known, we learn from all the principal sages of antiquity, who made it the capital subject of their studies and writings.

“Cicero [says Middleton] has given us a short abstract of it, in a fragment still remaining from one of his books on government, which [says Middleton] I shall here transcribe in his own words, as they will illustrate my sense also, in the passages that appear so dark and dangerous to my antagonist:

“The true law [it is Cicero who speaks], is right reason, conformable to the nature of things, constant, eternal, diffused through all, which calls us to duty by commanding, deters us from sin by forbidding; which never loses its influence with the good, nor ever preserves it with the wicked. This law cannot be over-ruled by any other, nor abrogated in whole or in part; nor can we be absolved from it either by the senate or by the people; nor are we to seek any other comment or interpreter of it but Himself; nor can there be one law at Rome and another at Athens; one now and another hereafter; but the same eternal immutable law comprehends all nations at all times, under one common master and governor of all – GOD. He is the inventor, propounder, enactor of this law; and whoever will not obey it must first renounce himself, and throw off the nature of man; by doing which, he will suffer the greatest punishments though he should escape all the other torments which are commonly believed to be prepared for the wicked.’ Here ends the quotation from Cicero.

“Our Doctors [continues Middleton] perhaps will look on this as RANK DEISM; but let them call it what they will, I shall ever avow and defend it as the fundamental, essential, and vital part of all true religion.” Here ends the quotation from Middleton.

I have here given the reader two sublime extracts from men who lived in ages of time far remote from each other, but who thought alike. Cicero lived before the time in which they tell us Christ was

born. Middleton may be called a man of our own time, as he lived within the same century with ourselves.

In Cicero we see that vast superiority of mind, that sublimity of right reasoning and justness of ideas, which man acquires, not by studying Bibles and Testaments, and the theology of schools built thereon, but by studying the Creator in the immensity and unchangeable order of His creation, and the immutability of His law.

“There cannot,” says Cicero *“be one law now, and another hereafter; but the same eternal immutable law comprehends all nations, at all times, under one common Master and Governor of all – GOD”* But according to the doctrine of schools which priests have set up, we see one law, called the *Old Testament*, given in one age of the world, and another law, called the *New Testament*, given in another age of the world.

As all this is contradictory to the eternal immutable nature, and the unerring and unchangeable wisdom of God, we must be compelled to hold this doctrine to be false, and the old and the new law, called the Old and New Testament, to be impositions, fables and forgeries.

In Middleton, we see the manly eloquence of an enlarged mind and the genuine sentiments of a true believer in his Creator. Instead of reposing his faith on books, by whatever name they may be called, whether Old Testament or New, he fixes the creation as the great original standard by which every other thing called the word or work of God is to be tried. In this we have an indisputable scale whereby to measure every word or work imputed to Him. If the thing so imputed carries not in itself the evidence of the same Almighty power, of the same unerring truth and wisdom, and the same unchangeable order in all its parts, as are visibly demonstrated to our senses, and comprehensible by our reason, in the magnificent fabric of the universe, that word or that work is not of God. Let then the two books called the Old and New Testament be tried by this rule, and the result will be that the authors of them, whoever they were, will be convicted of forgery.

The invariable principles, and unchangeable order, which regulate the movements of all the parts that compose the universe, dem-

onstrate both to our senses and our reason that its Creator is a God of unerring truth.

But the Old Testament, beside the numberless absurd and bagatelle stories it tells of God, represents Him as a God of deceit, a God not to be confided in. Ezekiel makes God to say (xiv, 9), "And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I, *the Lord have deceived that prophet.*" And at xx, 25, he makes God, in speaking of the children of Israel, to say "*Wherefore I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments by which they should not live.*" This, so far from being the Word of God, is horrid blasphemy against Him. Reader, put thy confidence in thy God, and put no trust in the Bible.

This same Old Testament, after telling us that God created the heavens and the earth in six days, makes the same Almighty power and eternal wisdom employ itself in giving directions how a priest's garments should be cut, and what sort of stuff they should be made of, and what their offerings should be, gold and silver, and brass and blue, and purple and scarlet, and fine linen and goat's hair, and rams' skins dyed red, and badger skins, etc. (xxv, 3); and in one of the pretended prophecies I have just examined, God is made to give directions how they should kill, cook and eat a he-lamb or a he-goat.

And Ezekiel (iv), to fill up the measure of abominable absurdity, makes God to order him to take *wheat and barley, and beans and lentiles, and millet and fitches, and make a loaf or a cake thereof, and bake it with human dung and eat it;* but as Ezekiel complained that this mess was too strong for his stomach, the matter was compromised from man's dung to cow-dung. Compare all this ribaldry, blasphemously called the Word of God, with the Almighty power that created the universe, and whose eternal wisdom directs and governs all its mighty movements, and we shall be at a loss to find a name sufficiently contemptible for it.

In the promises which the Old Testament pretends that God made to His people, the same derogatory ideas of Him prevail. It makes God to promise Abraham that his seed should be like the stars in heaven and the sand on the sea shore for multitude, and that He would give them the land of Canaan as their inheritance forever.

But observe, reader, how the performance of this promise was to begin, and then ask thine own reason, if the wisdom of God, whose

power is equal to His will, could, consistently with that power and that wisdom, make such a promise.

The performance of the promise was to begin, according to that book, by four hundred years of bondage and affliction. Genesis xv, 13, "*And he said unto Abraham, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years.*"

This promise then to Abraham and his seed forever, to inherit the land of Canaan, had it been a fact instead of a fable, was to operate, in the commencement of it, as a curse upon all the people and their children, and their children's children, for four hundred years.

But the case is, the book of Genesis was written after the bondage in Egypt had taken place; and in order to get rid of the disgrace of the Lord's chosen people, as they called themselves, being in bondage to the Gentiles, they make God to be the author of it, and annex it as a condition to a pretended promise; as if God, in making that promise, had exceeded His power in performing it, and consequently, His wisdom in making it, and was obliged to compromise with them for one-half, and with the Egyptians, to whom they were to be in bondage, for the other half.

Without degrading my own reason by bringing those wretched and contemptible tales into a comparative view with the Almighty power and eternal wisdom, which the Creator hath demonstrated to our senses in the creation of the universe, I shall confine myself to say, that if we compare them with the divine and forcible sentiments of Cicero, the result will be that the human mind has degenerated by believing them. Man, in a state of groveling superstition from which he has not courage to rise, loses the energy of his mental powers.

I will not tire the reader with more observations on the Old Testament.

As to the New Testament, if it be brought and tried by that standard which, as Middleton wisely says, God has revealed to our senses, of His Almighty power and wisdom in the creation and government of the visible universe, it will be found equally as false, paltry, and absurd, as the Old.

Without entering, in this place, into any other argument, that the story of Christ is of human invention and not of divine origin, I will confine myself to show that it is derogatory to God by the contrivance of it; because the means it supposes God to use, are not adequate to the end to be obtained; and, therefore, are derogatory to the Almightyness of His power, and the eternity of His wisdom.

The New Testament supposes that God sent His Son upon earth to make a new covenant with man, which the Church calls the covenant of *grace*; and to instruct mankind in a new doctrine, which it calls *Faith*, meaning thereby, not faith in God, for Cicero and all true Deists always had and always will have this, but faith in the person called Jesus Christ; and that whoever had not this faith should, to use the words of the New Testament, be DAMNED.

Now, if this were a fact, it is consistent with that attribute of God called His *goodness*, that no time should be lost in letting poor unfortunate man know it; and as that goodness was united to Almighty power, and that power to Almighty wisdom, all the means existed in the hand of the Creator to make it known immediately over the whole earth, in a manner suitable to the Almightyness of His divine nature, and with evidence that would not leave man in doubt; for it is always incumbent upon us, in all cases, to believe that the Almighty always acts, not by imperfect means as imperfect man acts, but consistently with His Almightyness. It is this only that can become the infallible criterion by which we can possibly distinguish the works of God from the works of man.

Observe now, reader, how the comparison between this supposed mission of Christ, on the belief or disbelief of which they say man was to be saved or damned – observe, I say, how the comparison between this, and the Almighty power and wisdom of God demonstrated to our senses in the visible creation, goes on.

The Old Testament tells us that God created the heavens and the earth, and everything therein, in six days. The term *six days* is ridiculous enough when applied to God; but leaving out that absurdity, it contains the idea of Almighty power acting unitedly with Almighty wisdom, to produce an immense work, that of the creation of the universe and everything therein, in a short time.

Now as the eternal salvation of man is of much greater importance than his creation, and as that salvation depends, and the New Testament tells us, on man's knowledge of and belief in the person called Jesus Christ, it necessarily follows from our belief in the goodness and justice of God, and our knowledge of His Almighty power and wisdom, as demonstrated in the creation, that ALL THIS, if true, would be made known to all parts of the world, in as little time at least, as was employed in making the world.

To suppose the Almighty would pay greater regard and attention to the creation and organization of inanimate matter, than he would to the salvation of innumerable millions of souls, which Himself had created, "*as the image of Himself,*" is to offer an insult to His goodness and His justice.

Now observe, reader, how the promulgation of this pretended salvation by a knowledge of, and a belief in Jesus Christ went on, compared with the work of creation. In the first place, it took longer time to make the child than to make the world, for nine months were passed away and totally lost in a state of pregnancy; which is more than forty times longer time than God employed in making the world, according to the Bible account.

Secondly, several years of Christ's life were lost in a state of human infancy. But the universe was in maturity the moment it existed. Thirdly, Christ, as Luke asserts, was thirty years old before he began to preach what they call his mission. Millions of souls died in the meantime without knowing it.

Fourthly, it was above three hundred years from that time before the book called the New Testament was compiled into a written copy, before which time there was no such book. Fifthly, it was above a thousand years after that before it could be circulated; because neither Jesus nor his apostles had knowledge of, or were inspired with, the art of printing; and, consequently, as the means for making it universally known did not exist, the means were not equal to the end, and therefore it is not the work of God.

I will here subjoin the nineteenth Psalm, which is truly deistical, to show how universally and instantaneously the works of God make themselves known, compared with this pretended salvation by Jesus Christ:

“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.

”Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a chamber for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

“His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.”

Now, had the news of salvation by Jesus Christ been inscribed on the face of the sun and the moon, in characters that all nations would have understood, the whole earth had known it in twenty-four hours, and all nations would have believed it; whereas, though it is now almost two thousand years since, as they tell us, Christ came upon earth, not a twentieth part of the people of the earth know anything of it, and among those who do, the wiser part do not believe it.

I have now, reader, gone through all the passages called prophecies of Jesus Christ, and shown there is no such thing.

I have examined the story told of Jesus Christ, and compared the several circumstances of it with that revelation which, as Middleton wisely says, God has made to us of His power and wisdom in the structure of the universe, and by which everything ascribed to Him is to be tried.

The result is, that the story of Christ has not one trait, either in its character or in the means employed, that bears the least resemblance to the power and wisdom of God, as demonstrated in the creation of the universe. All the means are human means, slow, uncertain and inadequate to the accomplishment of the end proposed; and therefore the whole is a fabulous invention, and undeserving of credit.

The priests of the present day profess to believe it. They gain their living by it, and they exclaim against something they call infidelity. I will define what it is. **HE THAT BELIEVES IN THE STORY OF CHRIST IS AN INFIDEL TO GOD.**

AUTHOR'S APPENDIX

CONTRADICTORY DOCTRINES BETWEEN MATTHEW AND MARK

In the New Testament (Mark xvi, 16), it is said "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." This is making salvation, or, in other words, the happiness of man after this life, to depend entirely on believing, or on what Christians call faith.

But *The Gospel according to Matthew* makes Jesus Christ preach a direct contrary doctrine to *The Gospel according to Mark*; for it makes salvation, or the future happiness of man, to depend entirely on *good works*; and those good works are not works done to God, for He needs them not, but good works done to man.

The passage referred to in Matthew is the account there given of what is called the last day, or the day of judgment, where the whole world is represented to be divided into two parts, the righteous and the unrighteous, metaphorically called the *sheep* and the *goats*. To the one part called the righteous, or the sheep, it says, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

"Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, *Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*"

Here is nothing about believing in Christ – nothing about that phantom of the imagination called *Faith*. The works here spoken of are works of humanity and benevolence, or, in other words, an endeavor to make God’s creation happy.

Here is nothing about preaching and making long prayers, as if God must be dictated to by man; nor about building churches and meetings, nor hiring priests to pray and preach in them. Here is nothing about predestination, that lust which some men have for damning one another.

Here is nothing about baptism, whether by sprinkling or plunging, nor about any of those ceremonies for which the Christian Church has been fighting, persecuting, and burning each other ever since the Christian Church began.

If it be asked, why do not priests preach the doctrine contained in this chapter, the answer is easy: they are not fond of practicing it themselves. It does not answer for their trade. They had rather get than give. Charity with them begins and ends at home.

Had it been said, *Come ye blessed, ye have been liberal in paying the preachers of the world, ye have contributed largely towards building churches and meeting-houses*, there is not a hired priest in Christendom but would have thundered it continually in the ears of his congregation. But as it is altogether on good works done to men, the priests pass over it in silence, and they will abuse me for bringing it into notice.

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

Of the Religion of Deism Compared with the Christian Religion

Every person, of whatever religious denomination he may be, is a DEIST in the first article of his Creed. Deism, from the Latin word *Deus*, God, is the belief of a God, and this belief is the first article of every man's creed.

It is on this article, universally consented to by all mankind, that the Deist builds his church, and here he rests. Whenever we step aside from this article, by mixing it with articles of human invention, we wander into a labyrinth of uncertainty and fable, and become exposed to every kind of imposition by pretenders to revelation.

The Persian shows the Zend-Avesta of Zoroaster, the lawgiver of Persia, and calls it the divine law; the Bramin shows the *Shaster*, revealed, he says, by God to Brama, and given to him out of a cloud; the Jew shows what he calls the law of Moses, given, he says, by God, on the Mount Sinai; the Christian shows a collection of books and epistles, written by nobody knows who, and called the New Testament; and the Mahometan shows the Koran, given, he says, by God to Mahomet: each of these calls itself *revealed religion*, and the *only* true Word of God, and this the followers of each profess to believe from the habit of education, and each believes the others are imposed upon.

But when the divine gift of reason begins to expand itself in the mind and calls man to reflection, he then reads and contemplates God and His works, and not in the books pretending to be revelation. The creation is the Bible of the true believer in God. Everything in this vast volume inspires him with sublime ideas of the Creator. The little and paltry, and often obscene, tales of the Bible sink into wretchedness when put in comparison with this mighty work.

The Deist needs none of those tricks and shows called miracles to confirm his faith, for what can be a greater miracle than the creation itself, and his own existence?

There is a happiness in Deism, when rightly understood, that is not to be found in any other system of religion. All other systems have something in them that either shock our reason, or are repugnant to it, and man, if he thinks at all, must stifle his reason in order to force himself to believe them.

But in Deism our reason and our belief become happily united. The wonderful structure of the universe, and everything we behold in the system of the creation, prove to us, far better than books can do, the existence of a God, and at the same time proclaim His attributes.

It is by the exercise of our reason that we are enabled to contemplate God in His works, and imitate Him in His ways. When we see His care and goodness extended over all His creatures, it teaches us our duty toward each other, while it calls forth our gratitude to Him. It is by forgetting God in His works, and running after the books of pretended revelation, that man has wandered from the straight path of duty and happiness, and become by turns the victim of doubt and the dupe of delusion.

Except in the first article in the Christian creed, that of believing in God, there is not an article in it but fills the mind with doubt as to the truth of it, the instant man begins to think. Now every article in a creed that is necessary to the happiness and salvation of man, ought to be as evident to the reason and comprehension of man as the first article is, for God has not given us reason for the purpose of confounding us, but that we should use it for our own happiness and His glory.

The truth of the first article is proved by God Himself, and is universal; for *the creation is of itself demonstration of the existence of a Creator*. But the second article, that of God's begetting a son, is not proved in like manner, and stands on no other authority than that of a tale.

Certain books in what is called the New Testament tell us that Joseph dreamed that the angel told him so, (Matthew i, 20): "And be-

hold the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.”

The evidence upon this article bears no comparison with the evidence upon the first article, and therefore is not entitled to the same credit, and ought not to be made an article in a creed, because the evidence of it is defective, and what evidence there is, is doubtful and suspicious. We do not believe the first article on the authority of books, whether called Bibles or Korans, nor yet on the visionary authority of dreams, but on the authority of God’s own visible works in the creation.

The nations who never heard of such books, nor of such people as Jews, Christians, or Mahometans, believe the existence of a God as fully as we do, because it is self-evident. The work of man’s hands is a proof of the existence of man as fully as his personal appearance would be.

When we see a watch, we have as positive evidence of the existence of a watchmaker, as if we saw him; and in like manner the creation is evidence to our reason and our senses of the existence of a Creator. But there is nothing in the works of God that is evidence that He begat a son, nor anything in the system of creation that corroborates such an idea, and, therefore, we are not authorized in believing it.

What truth there may be in the story that Mary, before she was married to Joseph, was kept by one of the Roman soldiers, and was with child by him, I leave to be settled between the Jews and Christians. The story however has probability on its side, for her husband Joseph suspected and was jealous of her, and was going to put her away. “Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was going to put her away, privately.” (Matt. i, 19).

I have already said that “whenever we step aside from the first article (that of believing in God), we wander into a labyrinth of uncertainty,” and here is evidence of the justness of the remark, for it is impossible for us to decide who was Jesus Christ’s father.

But presumption can assume anything, and therefore it makes Joseph's dream to be of equal authority with the existence of God, and to help it on calls it revelation. It is impossible for the mind of man in its serious moments, however it may have been entangled by education, or beset by priestcraft, not to stand still and doubt upon the truth of this article and of its creed.

But this is not all. The second article of the Christian creed having brought the son of Mary into the world (and this Mary, according to the chronological tables, was a girl of only fifteen years of age when this son was born), the next article goes on to account for his being begotten, which was, that when he grew a man he should be put to death, to expiate, they say, the sin that Adam brought into the world by eating an apple or some kind of forbidden fruit.

But though this is the creed of the Church of Rome, from whence the Protestants borrowed it, it is a creed which that Church has manufactured of itself, for it is not contained in nor derived from, the book called the New Testament.

The four books called the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which give, or pretend to give, the birth, sayings, life, preaching, and death of Jesus Christ, make no mention of what is called the fall of man; nor is the name of Adam to be found in any of those books, which it certainly would be if the writers of them believed that Jesus was begotten, born, and died for the purpose of redeeming mankind from the sin which Adam had brought into the world. Jesus never speaks of Adam himself, of the garden of Eden, nor of what is called the fall of man.

But the Church of Rome having set up its new religion, which it called Christianity, invented the creed which it named the Apostles's Creed, in which it calls Jesus the *only son of God, conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary*; things of which it is impossible that man or woman can have any idea, and consequently no belief but in words; and for which there is no authority but the idle story of Joseph's dream in the first chapter of Matthew, which any designing imposter or foolish fanatic might make.

It then manufactured the allegories in the book of Genesis into fact, and the allegorical tree of life and the tree of knowledge into real trees, contrary to the belief of the first Christians, and for which there is not the least authority in any of the books of the New Testament; for in none of them is there any mention made of such place as the Garden of Eden, nor of anything that is said to have happened there.

But the Church of Rome could not erect the person called Jesus into a Savior of the world without making the allegories in the book of Genesis into fact, though the New Testament, as before observed, gives no authority for it. All at once the allegorical tree of knowledge became, according to the Church, a real tree, the fruit of it real fruit, and the eating of it sinful.

As priestcraft was always the enemy of knowledge, because priestcraft supports itself by keeping people in delusion and ignorance, it was consistent with its policy to make the acquisition of knowledge a real sin.

The Church of Rome having done this, it then brings forward Jesus the son of Mary as suffering death to redeem mankind from sin, which Adam, it says, had brought into the world by eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge. But as it is impossible for reason to believe such a story, because it can see no reason for it, nor have any evidence of it, the Church then tells us we must not regard our reason, but must *believe*, as it were, and that through thick and thin, as if God had given man reason like a plaything, or a rattle, on purpose to make fun of him.

Reason is the forbidden tree of priestcraft, and may serve to explain the allegory of the forbidden tree of knowledge, for we may reasonably suppose the allegory had some meaning and application at the time it was invented. It was the practice of the Eastern nations to convey their meaning by allegory, and relate it in the manner of fact. Jesus followed the same method, yet nobody ever supposed the allegory or parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the Prodigal Son, the ten Virgins, etc., were facts.

Why then should the tree of knowledge, which is far more romantic in idea than the parables in the New Testament are, be sup-

posed to be a real tree?*" The answer to this is, because the Church could not make its new-fangled system, which it called Christianity, hold together without it. To have made Christ to die on account of an allegorical tree would have been too barefaced a fable.

But the account, as it is given of Jesus in the New Testament, even visionary as it is, does not support the creed of the Church that he died for the redemption of the world. According to that account he was crucified and buried on the Friday, and rose again in good health on the Sunday morning, for we do not hear that he was sick. This cannot be called dying, and is rather making fun of death than suffering it.

There are thousands of men and women also, who if they could know they should come back again in good health in about thirty-six hours, would prefer such kind of death for the sake of the experiment, and to know what the other side of the grave was. Why then should that which would be only a voyage of curious amusement to us, be magnified into merit and suffering in him? If a God, he could not suffer death, for immortality cannot die, and as a man his death could be no more than the death of any other person.

The belief of the redemption of Jesus Christ is altogether an invention of the Church of Rome, not the doctrine of the New Testament. What the writers of the New Testament attempted to prove by the story of Jesus is the *resurrection of the same body from the grave*, which was the belief of the Pharisees, in opposition to the Sadducees (a sect of Jews) who denied it.

Paul, who was brought up a Pharisee, labors hard at this for it was the creed of his own Pharisaical Church: I Corinthians xv is full of supposed cases and assertions about the resurrection of the same body, but there is not a word in it about redemption. This chapter makes part of the funeral service of the Episcopal Church.

The dogma of the redemption is the fable of priestcraft invented since the time the New Testament was compiled, and the agreeable

* The remark of the Emperor Julian, on the story of the Tree of Knowledge is worth observing. "If," said he, "there ever had been, or could be, a Tree of Knowledge, instead of God forbidding man to eat thereof, it would be that of which He would order him to eat the most."

delusion of it suited with the depravity of immoral livers. When men are taught to ascribe all their crimes and vices to the temptations of the devil, and to believe that Jesus, by his death, rubs all off, and pays their passage to heaven gratis, they become as careless in morals as a spendthrift would be of money, were he told that his father had engaged to pay off all his scores.

It is a doctrine not only dangerous to morals in this world, but to our happiness in the next world, because it holds out such a cheap, easy, and lazy way of getting to heaven, as has a tendency to induce men to hug the delusion of it to their own injury.

But there are times when men have serious thoughts, and it is at such times, when they begin to think, that they begin to doubt the truth of the Christian religion; and well they may, for it is too fanciful and too full of conjecture, inconsistency, improbability and irrationality, to afford consolation to the thoughtful man. His reason revolts against his creed. He sees that none of its articles are proved, or can be proved.

He may believe that such a person as is called Jesus (for Christ was not his name) was born and grew to be a man, because it is no more than a natural and probable case. But who is to prove he is the son of God, that he was begotten by the Holy Ghost? Of these things there can be no proof; and that which admits not of proof, and is against the laws of probability and the order of nature, which God Himself has established, is not an object for belief. God has not given man reason to embarrass him, but to prevent his being imposed upon.

He may believe that Jesus was crucified, because many others were crucified, but who is to prove he was crucified *for the sins of the world*? This article has no evidence, not even in the New Testament; and if it had, where is the proof that the New Testament, in relating things neither probable nor provable, is to be believed as true?

When an article in a creed does not admit of proof nor of probability, the salvo is to call it revelation; but this is only putting one difficulty in the place of another, for it is as impossible to prove a thing to be revelation as it is to prove that Mary was gotten with child by the Holy Ghost.

Here it is that the religion of Deism is superior to the Christian Religion. It is free from all those invented and torturing articles that shock our reason or injure our humanity, and with which the Christian religion abounds. Its creed is pure, and sublimely simple. It believes in God, and there it rests.

It honors reason as the choicest gift of God to man, and the faculty by which he is enabled to contemplate the power, wisdom and goodness of the Creator displayed in the creation; and reposing itself on His protection, both here and hereafter, it avoids all presumptuous beliefs, and rejects, as the fabulous inventions of men, all books pretending to revelation.

Biblical Blasphemy

The Church tells us that the books of the Old and New Testament are divine revelation, and without this revelation we could not have true ideas of God.

The Deist, on the contrary, says that those books are not divine revelation; and that were it not for the light of reason and the religion of Deism, those books, instead of teaching us true ideas of God, would teach us not only false but blasphemous ideas of Him.

Deism teaches us that God is a God of truth and justice. Does the Bible teach the same doctrine? It does not.

The Bible says (Jeremiah xx, 7) that God is a deceiver. “O Lord (says Jeremiah) thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived. Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed.”

Jeremiah not only upbraids God with deceiving him, but, in iv, 10, he upbraids God with deceiving the people of Jerusalem. “Ah! Lord God (says he), surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, ye shall have peace, whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul.”

In xv, 18, the Bible becomes more impudent, and calls God in plain language, a liar. “Wilt thou (says Jeremiah to God) be altogether unto me as a liar and as waters that fail?”

Ezekiel xiv, 9, makes God to say – “If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, *I the Lord have deceived that prophet.*” All this is downright blasphemy.

The prophet Micaiah, as he is called, II Chron. xviii, 18-21, tells another blasphemous story of God. “I saw,” says he, “the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the hosts of Heaven standing on His right hand and on His left. And the Lord said, who shall entice Ahab, King of Israel, to go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead? And one spoke after this manner, and another after that manner.

“Then there came out a spirit [Micaiah does not tell us where he came from] and stood *before the Lord* [what an impudent fellow this spirit was] and said, I will entice him. And the Lord said unto him, wherewith? And he said, I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And the Lord said, Thou shalt entice him, and thou shalt also prevail; go out, and do even so.”

We often hear of a gang of thieves plotting to rob and murder a man, and laying a plan to entice him out that they may execute their design, and we always feel shocked at the wickedness of such wretches; but what must we think of a book that describes the Almighty acting in the same manner, and laying plans in heaven to entrap and ruin mankind? Our ideas of His justice and goodness forbid us to believe such stories, and therefore we say that a lying spirit has been in the mouth of the writers of the books of the Bible.

The Tower of Babel

The story of the tower of Babel is told in Genesis xi. It begins thus: "And the whole earth [it was but a very little part of it they knew] was of one language and of one speech. And it came to pass as they journeyed from the East, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick and burn them thoroughly, and they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

"And they said, Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded.

"And the Lord said, Behold the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do; and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

"So [that is, by that means] the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off building the city."

This is the story, and a very foolish, inconsistent story it is. In the first place, the familiar and irreverent manner in which the Almighty is spoken of in this chapter is offensive to a serious mind.

As to the project of building a tower whose top should reach to heaven, there never could be a people so foolish as to have such a notion; but to represent the Almighty as jealous of the attempt, as the writer of the story has done, is adding profanation to folly. "*Go to,*" say the builders, "let us build us a tower whose top shall reach to heaven." "*Go to,*" says God, "let us go down and confound their language."

This quaintness is indecent, and the reason given for is worse, for, “now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do.” This is representing the Almighty as jealous of their getting into heaven. The story is too ridiculous, even as a fable, to account for the diversity of languages in the world, for which it seems to have been intended.

As to the project of confounding their language for the purpose of making them separate, it is altogether inconsistent; because instead of producing this effect, it would, by increasing their difficulties, render them more necessary to each other, and cause them to keep together. Where could they go to better themselves?

Another observation upon this story is, the inconsistency of it with respect to the opinion that the Bible is the Word of God given for the information of mankind; for nothing could so effectually prevent such a word from being known by mankind as confounding their language. The people, who after this spoke different languages, could no more understand such a Word generally, than the builders of Babel could understand on another. It would have been necessary, therefore, had such Word ever been given or intended to be given, that the whole earth should be, as they say it was at first, of one language and of one speech, and that it should never have been confounded.

The case, however, is, that the Bible will not bear examination in any part of it, which it would do if it was the Word of God. Those who most believe it are those who know least about it, and priests always take care to keep the inconsistent and contradictory parts out of sight.

A Letter to a Friend Regarding *The Age of Reason*

Paris, May 12, 1797

In your letter of the twentieth of March, you give me several quotations from the Bible, which you call the Word of God, to show me that my opinions on religion are wrong, and I could give you as many, from the same book to show that yours are not right; consequently, then, the Bible decides nothing, because it decides any way, and every way, one chooses to make it.

But by what authority do you call the Bible the Word of God? for this is the first point to be settled. It is not your calling it so that makes it so, any more than the Mahometans calling the Koran the Word of God makes the Koran to be so. The Popish Councils of Nice and Laodicea, about 350 years after the time the person called Jesus Christ is said to have lived, voted the books that now compose what is called the New Testament to be the Word of God. This was done by *yeas* and *nays*, as we now vote a law.

The Pharisees of the second temple, after the Jews returned from captivity in Babylon, did the same by the books that now compose the Old Testament, and this is all the authority there is, which to me is no authority at all. I am as capable of judging for myself as they were, and I think more so, because, as they made a living by their religion, they had a self-interest in the vote they gave.

You may have an opinion that a man is inspired, but you cannot prove it, nor can you have any proof of it yourself, because you cannot see into his mind in order to know how he comes by his thoughts; and the same is the case with the word revelation. There can be no evidence of such a thing, for you can no more prove revelation than you can prove what another man dreams of, neither can he prove it himself.

It is often said in the Bible that God spake unto Moses, but how do you know that God spake unto Moses? Because, you will say, the Bible says so. The Koran says, that God spake unto Mahomet, do you believe that too? No.

Why not? Because, you will say, you do not believe it; and so because you do, and because you don't is all the reason you can give for believing or disbelieving except that you will say that Mahomet was an impostor. And how do you know Moses was not an impostor?

For my own part, I believe that all are impostors who pretend to hold verbal communication with the Deity. It is the way by which the world has been imposed upon; but if you think otherwise you have the same right to your opinion that I have to mine, and must answer for it in the same manner. But all this does not settle the point, whether the Bible be the Word of God, or not. It is therefore necessary to go a step further. The case then is: –

You form your opinion of God from the account given of Him in the Bible; and I form my opinion of the Bible from the wisdom and goodness of God manifested in the structure of the universe, and in all works of creation. The result in these two cases will be, that you, by taking the Bible for your standard, will have a bad opinion of God; and I, by taking God for my standard, shall have a bad opinion of the Bible.

The Bible represents God to be a changeable, passionate, vindictive being; making a world and then drowning it, afterwards repenting of what he had done, and promising not to do so again. Setting one nation to cut the throats of another, and stopping the course of the sun till the butchery should be done. But the works of God in the creation preach to us another doctrine. In that vast volume we see nothing to give us the idea of a changeable, passionate, vindictive God; everything we there behold impresses us with a contrary idea – that of unchangeableness and of eternal order, harmony, and goodness.

The sun and the seasons return at their appointed time, and everything in the creation claims that God is unchangeable. Now, which am I to believe, a book that any impostor might make and call the Word of God, or the creation itself which none but an Almighty Power could make? For the Bible says one thing, and the creation

says the contrary. The Bible represents God with all the passions of a mortal, and the creation proclaims him with all the attributes of a God.

It is from the Bible that man has learned cruelty, rapine, and murder; for the belief of a cruel God makes a cruel man. That blood-thirsty man, called the prophet Samuel, makes God to say, (I Sam. xv. 3) 'Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and *spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.*'

That Samuel or some other impostor might say this, is what, at this distance of time, can neither be proved nor disproved, but in my opinion it is blasphemy to say, or to believe, that God said it. All our ideas of the justice and goodness of God revolt at the impious cruelty of the Bible. It is not a God, just and good, but a devil, under the name of God, that the Bible describes.

What makes this pretended order to destroy the Amalekites appear the worse, is the reason given for it. The Amalekites, four hundred years before, according to the account in Exodus xvii. (but which has the appearance of fable from the magical account it gives of Moses holding up his hands), had opposed the Israelites coming into their country, and this the Amalekites had a right to do, because the Israelites were the invaders, as the Spaniards were the invaders of Mexico. This opposition by the Amalekites, at that time, is given as a reason, that the men, women, infants and sucklings, sheep and oxen, camels and asses, that were born four hundred years afterward, should be put to death; and to complete the horror, Samuel hewed Agag, the chief of the Amalekites, in pieces, as you would hew a stick of wood. I will bestow a few observations on this case.

In the first place, nobody knows who the author, or writer, of the book of Samuel was, and, therefore, the fact itself has no other proof than anonymous or hearsay evidence, which is no evidence at all. In the second place, this anonymous book says, that this slaughter was done by the express command of God: but all our ideas of the justice and goodness of God give the lie to the book, and as I never will believe any book that ascribes cruelty and injustice to God, I therefore reject the Bible as unworthy of credit.

As I have now given you my reasons for believing that the Bible is not the Word of God, that it is a falsehood, I have a right to ask you your reasons for believing the contrary; but I know you can give me none, except that *you were educated to believe the Bible*; and as the Turks give the same reason for believing the Koran, it is evident that education makes all the difference, and that reason and truth have nothing to do in the case.

You believe in the Bible from the accident of birth, and the Turks believe in the Koran from the same accident, and each calls the other infidel. But leaving the prejudice of education out of the case, the unprejudiced truth is, that all are infidels who believe falsely of God, whether they draw their creed from the Bible, or from the Koran, from the Old Testament, or from the New.

When you have examined the Bible with the attention that I have done (for I do not think you know much about it), and permit yourself to have just ideas of God, you will most probably believe as I do. But I wish you to know that this answer to your letter is not written for the purpose of changing your opinion. It is written to satisfy you, and some other friends whom I esteem, that my disbelief of the Bible is founded on a pure and religious belief in God; for in my opinion the Bible is a gross libel against the justice and goodness of God, in almost every part of it.

Thomas Paine's Ideas Regarding Death

A Letter to Andrew Dean From Thomas Paine

I received your friendly letter, for which I am obliged to you. It is three weeks ago today (Sunday, August fifteenth), that I was struck with a fit of apoplexy, that deprived me of all sense and motion. I had neither pulse nor breathing, and the people about me supposed me dead. I had felt exceedingly well that day, and had just taken a slice of bread and butter for supper, and was going to bed.

The fit took me on the stairs, as suddenly as if I had been shot through the head; and I got so very much hurt by the fall, that I have not been able to get in and out of bed since that day, otherwise than being lifted out in a blanket, by two persons; yet all this while my mental faculties have remained as perfect as I ever enjoyed them.

I consider the scene I have passed through as an experiment on dying, and I find that death has no terrors for me. As to the people called Christians, they have no evidence that their religion is true. There is no more proof that the Bible is the Word of God, than that the Koran of Mahomet is the Word of God. It is education makes all the difference. Man, before he begins to think for himself, is as much the child of habits in *Creeds* as he is in plowing and sowing. Yet creeds, like opinions, prove nothing.

Where is the evidence that the person called Jesus Christ is the begotten Son of God? The case admits not of evidence either to our senses or our mental faculties: neither has God given to man any talent by which such a thing is comprehensible.

It cannot therefore be an object for faith to act upon, for faith is nothing more than an assent the mind gives to something it sees cause to believe is fact. But priests, preachers, and fanatics, put

imagination in the place of faith, and it is the nature of the imagination to believe without evidence.

If Joseph the carpenter dreamed (as the book of Matthew (i) says he did), that his betrothed wife, Mary, was with child by the Holy Ghost, and that an angel told him so, I am not obliged to put faith in his dreams; nor do I put any, for I put no faith in my own dreams, and I should be weak and foolish indeed to put faith in the dreams of others.

The Christian religion is derogatory to the Creator in all its articles. It puts the Creator in an inferior point of view, and places the Christian devil above Him. It is he, according to the absurd story in Genesis, that outwits the Creator in the Garden of Eden, and steals from Him His favorite creature, man, and at last obliges Him to beget a son, and put that son to death, to get man back again; and this the priests of the Christian religion call redemption.

Christian authors exclaim against the practice of offering up human sacrifices, which, they say, is done in some countries; and those authors make those exclamations without ever reflecting that their own doctrine of salvation is founded on a human sacrifice. They are saved, they say, by the blood of Christ. The Christian religion begins with a dream and ends with a murder.

As I am now well enough to sit up some hours in the day, though not well enough to get up without help, I employ myself as I have always done, in endeavoring to bring man to the right use of the reason that God has given him, and to direct his mind immediately to his Creator, and not to fanciful secondary beings called mediators, as if God was superannuated or ferocious.

As to the book called the Bible, it is blasphemy to call it the Word of God. It is a book of lies and contradictions, and a history of bad times and bad men. There are but a few good characters in the whole book. The fable of Christ and his twelve apostles, which is a parody on the sun and the twelve signs of the zodiac, copied from the ancient religions of the eastern world, is the least hurtful part.

Everything told of Christ has reference to the sun. His reported resurrection is at sunrise, and that on the first day of the week; that is, on the day anciently dedicated to the sun, and from thence called

Sunday – in Latin *Dies Solis*, the day of the sun; and the next day, Monday, is Moon-day. But there is no room in a letter to explain these things.

While man keeps to the belief of one God, his reason unites with his creed. He is not shocked with contradictions and horrid stories. His bible is the heavens and the earth. He beholds his Creator in all His works, and everything he beholds inspires him with reverence and gratitude. From the goodness of God to all, he learns his duty to his fellow-man, and stands self-reproved when he transgresses it. Such a man is no persecutor.

But when he multiplies his creed with imaginary things, of which he can have neither evidence nor conception, such as the tale of the Garden of Eden, the Talking Serpent, the Fall of Man, the Dreams of Joseph the Carpenter, the pretended Resurrection and Ascension, of which there is even no historical relation – for no historian of those times mentions such a thing – he gets into the pathless region of confusion, and turns either fanatic or hypocrite. He forces his mind, and pretends to believe what he does not believe. This is in general the case with the Methodists. Their religion is all creed and no morals.

I have now, my friend, given you a facsimile of my mind on the subject of religion and creeds, and my wish is, that you make this letter as publicly known as you find opportunities of doing.

Yours, in friendship,
Thomas Paine
New York, August 15, 1806

**Correspondence Between Thomas Paine and Samuel
Adams Regarding Religion and Deism**

**Correspondence With The
Hon. Samuel Adams**

To the Editor of the National Intelligencer,
Federal City

By Thomas Paine

Toward the latter end of last December I received a letter from a venerable patriot, Samuel Adams, dated Boston, November thirtieth. It came by a private hand, which I suppose was the cause of the delay. I wrote Mr. Adams an answer, dated January first, and that I might be certain of his receiving it, and also that I might know of that reception, I desired a friend of mine at Washington to put it under cover to some friend of his at Boston, and desire him to present it to Mr. Adams.

The letter was accordingly put under cover while I was present, and given to one of the clerks of the post-office to seal and put in the mail. The clerk put it in his pocket-book, and either forgot to put it into the mail, or supposed he had done so among other letters. The postmaster-general, on learning this mistake, informed me of it last Saturday, and as the cover was then out of date, the letter was put under a new cover, with the same request, and forwarded by the post.

I felt concern at this accident, lest Mr. Adams should conclude I was unmindful of his attention to me; and therefore, lest any further accident should prevent or delay his receiving it, as well as to relieve myself from that concern, I give the letter an opportunity of reaching him by the newspapers.

I am the more induced to do this, because some manuscript copies have been taken of both letters, and therefore there is a possibility of imperfect copies getting into print; and besides this, if some of the Federalists printers (for I hope they are not all base alike) could get

hold of a copy, they would make no scruple of altering it, and publishing it as mine. I therefore send you the original letter of Mr. Adams, and my own copy of the answer.

Thomas Paine
Federal City

Boston, November 30, 1802

Sir:

I have frequently with pleasure reflected on your services to my native and your adopted country. Your “Common Sense” and your “Crisis” unquestionably awakened the public mind, and led the people loudly to call for a declaration of our national independence. I therefore esteemed you as a warm friend to the liberty and lasting welfare of the human race. But when I heard that you had turned your mind to a defense of infidelity, I felt myself much astonished and more grieved that you had attempted a measure so injurious to the feelings and so repugnant to the true interest of so great a part of the citizens of the United States.

The people of New England, if you will allow me to use a Scripture phrase, are fast returning to their first love. Will you excite among them the spirit of angry controversy, at a time when they are hastening to unity and peace? I am told that some of our newspapers have announced your intention to publish an additional pamphlet upon the principles of your “Age of Reason.”

Do you think that your pen, or the pen of any other man can unchristianize the mass of our citizens, or have you hopes of converting a few of them to assist you in so bad a cause? We ought to think ourselves happy in the enjoyment of opinion without the danger of persecution by civil or ecclesiastical law.

Our friend, the President of the United States, has been calumniated for his liberal sentiments, by men who have attributed that liberality to a latent design to promote the cause of infidelity. This and all other slanders have been made without a shadow of proof. Neither religion nor liberty can long subsist in the tumult of altercation, and amidst the noise and violence of faction.

Felix qui cautus.
Adieu. SAMUEL ADAMS.

MR. THOMAS PAINE.

MY DEAR AND VENERABLE FRIEND SAMUEL ADAMS:

I received with great pleasure your friendly and affectionate letter of November thirtieth, and I thank you also for the frankness of it. Between men in pursuit of truth, and whose object is the happiness of man both here and hereafter, there ought to be no reserve. Even error has a claim to indulgence, if not respect, when it is believed to be truth.

I am obliged to you for your affectionate remembrance of what you style my services in awakening the public mind to a declaration of independence, and supporting it after it was declared. I also, like you, have often looked back on those times and have thought that if independence had not been declared at the time it was, the public mind could not have been brought up to it afterwards.

It will immediately occur to you, who were so intimately acquainted with the situation of things at that time, that I allude to the black times of Seventy-six; for though I know, and you my friend also know, they were no other than the natural consequence of the military blunders of that campaign, the country might have viewed them as proceeding from a natural inability to support its cause against the enemy, and have sunk under the despondency of that misconceived idea. This was the impression against which it was necessary the country should be strongly animated.

I come now to the second part of your letter, on which I shall be as frank with you as you are with me.

“But (say you), when I heard you had turned your mind to a defense of *Infidelity* I felt myself much astonished, etc.” – What, my good friend, do you call believing in God infidelity? for that is the great point maintained in the “Age of Reason” against all divided beliefs and allegorical divinities. The Bishop of Llandaff (Doctor Watson) not only acknowledges this, but pays me some compliments upon it (in his answer to the second part of that work). “*There is* (says he) *a philosophical sublimity in some of your ideas when speaking of the Creator of the Universe.*”

What then (my much esteemed friend, for I do not respect you the less because we differ, and that perhaps not much in religious

sentiments), what, I ask, is this thing called infidelity? If we go back to your ancestors and mine three or four hundred years ago, for we must have had fathers and grandfathers or we should not be here, we shall find them praying to Saints and Virgins, and believing in purgatory and transubstantiation; and therefore all of us are infidels according to our forefathers' belief. If we go back to times more ancient we shall again be infidels according to the belief of some other forefathers.

The case, my friend is, that the world has been over-run with fable and creeds of human invention, with sectaries of whole nations against all other nations, and sectaries of those sectaries in each of them against each other. Every sectary, except the Quakers, has been a persecutor. Those who fled from persecution persecuted in their turn, and it is this confusion of creeds that has filled the world with persecution and deluged it with blood.

Even the depredation on your commerce by the Barbary powers sprang from the crusades of the Church against those powers. It was a war of creed against creed, each boasting of God for its author, and reviling each other with the name of infidel. If I do not believe as you believe, it proves that you do not believe as I believe, and this is all that it proves.

There is however one point of union wherein all religions meet, and that is in the first article of every man's creed, and of every nation's creed, that has any creed at all: I believe in God. Those who rest here, and there are millions who do, cannot be wrong as far as their creed goes. Those who choose to go further may be wrong, for it is impossible that all can be right, since there is so much contradiction among them. The first therefore are, in my opinion, on the safest side.

I presume you are so far acquainted with ecclesiastical history as to know, and the bishop who has answered me has been obliged to acknowledge the fact, that the books that compose the New Testament were voted by yeas and nays to be the Word of God, as you now vote a law, by the popish Councils of Nice and Laodicea about one thousand four hundred and fifty years ago. With respect to the fact there is no dispute, neither do I mention it for the sake of controversy. This vote may appear authority enough to some, and not authority

enough to others. It is proper however that everybody should know the fact.

With respect to the “Age of Reason,” which you so much condemn, and that I believe without having read it, for you say only that you *heard* of it, I will inform you of a circumstance, because you cannot know it by other means.

I have said in the first page of the first part of that work that it had long been my intention to publish my thoughts upon religion, but that I had reserved it to a later time of life. I have now to inform you why I wrote it and published it at the time I did.

In the first place, I saw my life in continual danger. My friends were falling as fast as the guillotine could cut their heads off, and as I every day expected the same fate, I resolved to begin my work. I appeared to myself to be on my death-bed, for death was on every side of me, and I had no time to lose. This accounts for my writing it at the time I did; and so nicely did the time and the intention meet, that I had not finished the first part of that work more than six hours before I was arrested and taken to prison. Joel Barlow was with me and knows the fact.

In the second place, the people of France were running headlong into atheism, and I had the work translated and published in their own language to stop them in that career, and fix them to the first article (as I have before said) of every man’s creed who has any creed at all, *I believe in God*.

I endangered my own life, in the first place, by opposing in the Convention the execution of the King, and by laboring to show they were trying the monarchy and not the man, and that the crimes imputed to him were the crimes of the monarchical system; and I endangered it a second time by opposing atheism; and yet some of your priests, for I do not believe that all are perverse, cry out, in the war-whoop of monarchical priestcraft, “What an infidel, what a wicked man, is Thomas Paine!” They might as well add, “for he believes in God and is against shedding blood.”

But all this *war-whoop* of the pulpit has some concealed object. Religion is not the cause, but is the stalking horse. They put it forward to conceal themselves behind it. It is not a secret that there has

been a party composed of the leaders of the Federalists, for I do not include all Federalists with their leaders, who have been working by various means for several years past to overturn the Federal Constitution established on the representative system, and place government in the New World on the corrupt system of the Old.

To accomplish this, a large standing army was necessary, and as a pretense for such an army, the danger of a foreign invasion must be bellowed forth from the pulpit, from the press, and by their public orators.

I am not of a disposition inclined to suspicion. It is in its nature a mean and cowardly passion, and upon the whole, even admitting error into the case, it is better, I am sure, it is more generous, to be wrong on the side of confidence than on the side of suspicion. But I know as a fact that the English Government distributes annually fifteen hundred pounds sterling among the Presbyterian ministers in England and one thousand among those in Ireland; and when I hear of the strange discourses of some of your ministers and professors of colleges, I cannot, as the Quakers say, find freedom in my mind to acquit them. Their anti-revolutionary doctrines invite suspicion even against one's will, and in spite of one's charity to believe well of them.

As you have given me one Scripture phrase I will give you another for those ministers. It is said in Exodus xxii, 28, "*Thou shalt not revile the Gods nor curse the ruler of thy people.*" But those ministers, such I mean as Dr. Emmons, curse ruler and people both, for the majority are, politically, the people, and it is those who have chosen the ruler whom they curse. As to the first part of the verse, that of *not reviling the Gods*, it makes no part of my scripture. I have but one God.

Since I began this letter, for I write it by piece-meal as I have leisure, I have seen the four letters that passed between you and John Adams. In your first letter you say, "Let divines and philosophers, statesmen and patriots, unite their endeavors to *renovate the age* by inculcating in the minds of youth *the fear and love of the Deity and universal philanthropy.*"

Why, my dear friend, this is exactly *my* religion, and is the whole of it. That you may have an idea that the "Age of Reason" (for I be-

lieve you have not read it) inculcates this reverential fear and love of the Deity I will give you a paragraph from it.

“Do we want to contemplate His power? We see it in the immensity of the creation. Do we want to contemplate His wisdom: We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible whole is governed. Do we want to contemplate His munificence? We see it in the abundance with which He fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate His mercy? We see it in His not withholding that abundance even from the unthankful.”

As I am fully with you in your first part, that respecting the Deity, so am I in your second, that of *universal philanthropy*; by which I do not mean merely the sentimental benevolence of wishing well, but the practical benevolence of doing good. We cannot serve the Deity in the manner we serve those who cannot do without that service. He needs no service from us. We can add nothing to eternity. But it is in our power to render a service *acceptable* to Him, and that is not by praying, but by endeavoring to make his creatures happy.

A man does not serve God when he prays, for it is himself he is trying to serve; and as to hiring or paying men to pray, as if the Deity needed instruction, it is, in my opinion, an abomination. One good schoolmaster is of more use and of more value than a load of such persons as Dr. Emmons and some others.

You, my dear and much respected friend, are now far in the vale of years; I have yet , I believe, some years in store, for I have a good state of health and a happy mind, and I take care of both, by nourishing the first with temperance and the latter with abundance. This, I believe, you will allow to be the true philosophy of life.

You will see by my third letter to the citizens of the United States that I have been exposed to, and preserved through, many dangers; but instead of buffeting the Deity with prayers as if I distrusted Him, or must dictate to Him, I reposed myself on His protection; and you, my friend, will find, even in your last moments, more consolation in the silence of resignation than in the murmuring wish of a prayer.

In everything which you say in your second letter to John Adams, respecting our rights as men and citizens in this world, I am perfectly with you. On other points we have to answer to our Creator

and not to each other. The key of heaven is not in the keeping of any sect, nor ought the road to it be obstructed by any.

Our relation to each other in this world is as men, and the man who is a friend to man and to his rights, let his religious opinions be what they may, is a good citizen, to whom I can give, as I ought to do, and as every other ought, the right hand of fellowship, and to none with more hearty good will, my dear friend, than to you.

Thomas Paine

Federal City, January 1, 1803

OF THE WORD “RELIGION,” AND OTHER WORDS OF UNCERTAIN SIGNIFICATION

The word *religion* is a word of forced application when used with respect to the worship of God. The root of the word is the Latin verb *ligo*, to tie or bind. From *ligo*, comes *religo*, to tie or bind over again, to make more fast – from *religo*, comes the substantive *religio*, which, with the addition of *n* makes the English substantive *religion*.

The French use the word properly: when a woman enters a convent she is called a *novitiate*, that is, she is upon trial or probation. When she takes the oath, she is called a *religieuse*, that is, she is tied or bound by that oath to the performance of it. We use the word in the same kind of sense when we say we will religiously perform the promise that we make.

But the word, without referring to its etymology, has, in the manner it is used, no definite meaning, because it does not designate what religion a man is of. There is the religion of the Chinese, of the Tartars, of the Brahmins, of the Persians, of the Jews, of the Turks, etc.

The word Christianity is equally as vague as the word religion. No two sectaries can agree what is it. It is *lo here* and *lo there*. The two principal sectaries, Papists and Protestants, have often cut each other's throats about it.

The Papists call the Protestants heretics, and the Protestants call the Papists idolaters. The minor sectaries have shown the same spirit of rancor, but as the civil law restrains them from blood, they content themselves with preaching damnation against each other.

The word *protestant* has a positive signification in the sense it is used. It means protesting against the authority of the Pope, and this is the only article in which the Protestants agree. In every other sense, with respect to religion, the word protestant is as vague as the word Christian.

When we say an Episcopalian, a Presbyterian, a Baptist, a Quaker, we know what those persons are, and what tenets they hold; but when we say a “Christian,” we know he is not a Jew nor a Mahometan, but we know not if he be a trinitarian or an anti-trinitarian, a believer in what is called the immaculate conception, or a disbeliever, a man of seven sacraments, or of two sacraments, or of none. The word “Christian” describes what a man is not, but not what he is.

The word *theology*, from *Theos*, the Greek word for God, and meaning the study and knowledge of God, is a word that strictly speaking belongs to Theists or Deists, and not to the Christians. The head of the Christian Church is the person called Christ, but the head of the Church of the Theists, or Deists, as they are more commonly called (from *Deus*, the Latin word for God), is God Himself; and therefore the word “Theology” belongs to that Church which has Theos or God for its head, and not to the Christian Church which has the person called Christ for its head. Their technical word is *Christianity*, and they cannot agree what Christianity is.

The words *revealed religion*, and *natural religion*, also require explanation. They are both invented terms, contrived by the Church for the support of priestcraft. With respect to the first, there is no evidence of any such thing, except in the universal revelation that God has made of His power, His wisdom, His goodness, in the structure of the universe, and in all the works of creation.

We have no cause or ground from anything we behold in those works to suppose God would deal partially by mankind, and reveal knowledge to one nation and withhold it from another, and then damn them for not knowing it. The sun shines an equal quantity of light all over the world – and mankind in all ages and countries are endued with reason, and blessed with sight, to read the visible works of God in the creation, and so intelligent is this book that *he that runs may read*.

We admire the wisdom of the ancients, yet they had no Bibles nor books called “revelation.” They cultivated the reason that God gave them, studied Him in His works, and arose to eminence.

As to the Bible, whether true or fabulous, it is a history, and history is not a revelation. If Solomon had seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines, and if Samson slept in Delilah’s lap, and she cut his hair off, the relation of those things is mere history that needed no revelation from heaven to tell it; neither does it need any revelation to tell us that Samson was a fool for his pains, and Solomon too.

As to the expressions so often used in the Bible, that *the word of the Lord* came to such an one, or such an one, it was the fashion of speaking in those times, like the expression used by a Quaker, that *the spirit moveth him*, or that used by priests, that they *have a call*. We ought not to be deceived by phrases because they are ancient. But if we admit the supposition that God would condescend to reveal Himself in words, we ought not to believe it would be in such idle and profligate stories as are in the Bible; and it is for this reason, among others which our reverence to God inspires, that the Deists deny that the book called the Bible is the Word of God, or that it is revealed religion.

With respect to the term *natural religion*, it is upon the face of it, the opposite of artificial religion, and it is impossible for any man to be certain that what is called *revealed religion* is not artificial.

Man has the power of making books, inventing stories of God, and calling them revelation, or the Word of God. The Koran exists as an instance that this can be done, and we must be credulous indeed to suppose that this is the only instance, and Mahomet the only impostor. The Jews could match him, and the Church of Rome could overmatch the Jews. The Mahometans believe the Koran, the Christians believe the Bible, and it is education makes all the difference.

Books, whether Bibles or Korans, carry no evidence of being the work of any other power than man. It is only that which man cannot do that carries the evidence of being the work of a superior power. Man could not invent and make a universe – he could not invent nature, for nature is of divine origin. It is the laws by which the universe is governed.

When, therefore, we look through nature up to nature's God, we are in the right road of happiness, but when we trust to books as the Word of God, and confide in them as revealed religion, we are afloat on the ocean of uncertainty, and shatter into contending factions. The term, therefore, *natural religion*, explains itself to be *divine religion*, and the term *revealed religion* involves in it the suspicion of being *artificial*.

To show the necessity of understanding the meaning of words, I will mention an instance of a minister, I believe of the Episcopalian Church of Newark, New Jersey. He wrote and published a book, and entitled it "An Antidote to Deism." An antidote to *Deism* must be *Atheism*. It has no other antidote – for what can be an antidote to the belief of a God, but the disbelief of God? Under the tuition of such pastors, what but ignorance and false information can be expected?

Predestination Remarks on Romans, IX, 18-21

Addressed to the Ministers of the Calvinistic Church

Paul, in speaking of God, says, “Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth. Thou wilt say, why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will? Nay, but who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?”

I shall leave it to Calvinists and Universalists to wrangle about these expressions, and to oppose or corroborate them by other passages from other books of the Old or New Testament. I shall go to the root at once, and say, that the whole passage is presumption and nonsense.

Presumption, because it pretends to know the private mind of God: and nonsense, because the cases it states as parallel cases have no parallel in them, and are opposite cases.

The first expression says, “Therefore hath He (God) mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth.” As this is ascribing to the attribute of God’s power at the expense of His justice, I, as a believer in the justice of God, disbelieve the assertion of Paul. The Predestinarians, of which the loquacious Paul was one, appear to acknowledge but one attribute in God, that of *power*; which may not improperly be called the *physical attribute*. The Deists, in addition to this, believe in His moral attributes, those of justice and goodness.

In the next verses, Paul gets himself into what in vulgar life is called a hobble, and he tries to get out of it by nonsense and sophistry; for having committed himself by saying that “God hath mercy

on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth,” he felt the difficulty he was in, and the objections that would be made, which he anticipates by saying, “Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He (God) yet find fault? for who hath resisted His will? Nay, but, O man, who art thou, that repliest against God!”

This is neither answering the question, nor explaining the case. It is downright quibbling and shuffling off the question, and the proper retort upon him would have been, “Nay, but who art thou, presumptuous Paul, that putttest thyself in God’s place?”

Paul, however, goes on and says, “Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?” Yes, if the thing felt itself hurt, and could speak, it would say it. But as pots and pans have not the faculty of speech, the supposition of such things speaking is putting nonsense in the place of argument, and is too ridiculous even to admit of apology. It shows to what wretched shifts sophistry will resort.

Paul, however, dashes on, and the more he tries to reason the more he involves himself, and the more ridiculous he appears. “Hath not,” says he, “the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?”

In this metaphor, and a most wretched one it is, Paul makes the potter to represent God; the lump of clay the whole human race; the vessels unto honor those souls “on whom He hath mercy because He will have mercy”; and the vessels unto dishonor, those souls “whom He hardeneth (for damnation) because He will harden them.” The metaphor is false in everyone of its points, and if it admits of any meaning or conclusion, it is the reverse of what Paul intended and the Calvinists understand.

In the first place, a potter doth not, because he cannot, make vessels of different qualities, from the same lump of clay; he cannot make a fine china bowl, intended to ornament a sideboard, from the same lump of clay that he makes a coarse pan, intended for a close-stool. The potter selects his clays for different uses, according to their different qualities, and degrees of fineness and goodness.

Paul might as well talk of making gun-flints from the same stick of wood of which the gun-stock is made, as of making china bowls

from the same lump of clay of which are made common earthen pots and pans.

Paul could not have hit upon a more unfortunate metaphor for his purpose, than this of the potter and the clay; for if any inference is to follow from it, it is that as the potter selects his clay for different kinds of vessels according to the different qualities and degrees of fineness and goodness in the clay, so God selects for future happiness those among mankind who excel in purity and good life, which is the reverse of predestination.

In the second place there is no comparison between the souls of men, and vessels made of clay; and, therefore, to put one to represent the other is a false position. The vessels, or the clay they are made from, are insensible of honor or dishonor. They neither suffer nor enjoy. The clay is not punished that serves the purpose of a close-stool, nor is the finer sort rendered happy that is made up into a punch-bowl.

The potter violates no principle of justice in the different uses to which he puts his different clays; for he selects as an artist, not as a moral judge; and the materials he works upon know nothing, and feel nothing, of his mercy or his wrath. Mercy or wrath would make a potter appear ridiculous, when bestowed upon his clay. He might kick some of his pots to pieces.

But the case is quite different with man, either in this world or the next. He is a being sensible of misery as well as of happiness, and therefore Paul argues like an unfeeling idiot, when he compares man to clay on a potter's wheel, or to vessels made therefrom: and with respect to God, it is an offense to His attributes of justice, goodness, and wisdom, to suppose that He would treat the choicest work of creation like inanimate and insensible clay. If Paul believed that God made man after His own image, he dishonors it by making that image and a brickbat to be alike.

The absurd and impious doctrine of predestination, a doctrine destructive of morals, would never have been thought of had it not been for some stupid passages in the Bible, which priestcraft at first, and ignorance since, have imposed upon mankind as revelation.

Nonsense ought to be treated as nonsense, wherever it be found; and had this been done in the rational manner it ought to be done, instead of intimating and mincing the matter, as has been too much the case, the nonsense and false doctrine of the Bible, with all the aid that priestcraft can give, could never have stood their ground against the divine reason that God has given to man.

Doctor Franklin gives a remarkable instance of the truth of this, in an account of his life, written by himself. He was in London at the time of which he speaks. "Some volumes," says he, "against Deism, fell into my hands. They were said to be the substance of sermons preached at Boyle's lectures.

"It happened that they produced on me an effect precisely the reverse of what was intended by the writers; for the arguments of the Deists, which were cited in order to be refuted, appeared to me more forcible than the refutation itself. In a word I soon became a perfect Deist." – New York edition of Franklin's Life, page 93.

All America, and more than all America, knows Franklin. His life was devoted to the good and improvement of man. Let, then, those who profess a different creed, imitate his virtues, and excel him if they can.

Of the Sabbath-Day in Connecticut

The word Sabbath, means REST; that is, cessation from labor, but the stupid Blue Laws* of Connecticut make a labor of rest, for they oblige a person to sit still from sunrise to sunset on a Sabbath-day, which is hard work. Fanaticism made those laws, for where such laws prevail hypocrisy will prevail also.

One of those laws says, “No person shall run on a Sabbath-day, nor walk in his garden, nor elsewhere; but reverently to and from meeting.” These fanatical hypocrites forgot that God dwells not in temples made with hands, and that the earth is full of His glory.

One of the finest scenes and subjects of religious contemplation is to walk into the woods and fields, and survey the works of the God of the Creation. The wide expanse of heaven, the earth covered with verdure, the lofty forest, the waving corn, the magnificent roll of mighty rivers, and the murmuring melody of the cheerful brooks, are scenes that inspire the mind with gratitude and delight.

But this the gloomy Calvinist of Connecticut must not behold on a Sabbath-day. Entombed within the walls of his dwelling, he shuts from his view the Temple of Creation. The sun shines no joy to him. The gladdening voice of nature calls on him in vain. He is deaf, dumb and blind to everything around that God has made. Such is the Sabbath-day of Connecticut.

From whence could come this miserable notion of devotion? It comes from the gloominess of the Calvinistic creed. If men love darkness rather than light, because their works are evil, the ulcerated mind of a Calvinist, who sees God only in terror, and sits brooding over the scenes of hell and damnation, can have no joy in beholding

* They were called Blue Laws because they were originally printed on blue paper. — *Author.*

the glories of the creation. Nothing in that mighty and wondrous system accords with his principles or his devotion.

He sees nothing there that tells him that God created millions on purpose to be damned, and that the children of a span long are born to burn forever in hell. The creation preaches a different doctrine to this. We there see that the care and goodness of God is extended impartially over all the creatures He has made. The worm of the earth shares His protection equally with the elephant of the desert. The grass that springs beneath our feet grows by His bounty as well as the cedars of Lebanon.

Everything in the creation reproaches the Calvinist with unjust ideas of God, and disowns the hardness and ingratitude of his principles. Therefore he shuns the sight of them on a Sabbath-day.

AN ENEMY TO CANT AND IMPOSITION.

— *Thomas Paine*

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY, STYLING ITSELF THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY

T*he New York Gazette of the sixteenth (August) contains the following article – “On Tuesday, a committee of the Missionary Society, consisting chiefly of distinguished Clergymen, had an interview, at the City Hotel, with the chiefs of the Osage tribe of Indians, now in this city (New York) to whom they presented a Bible, together with an address, the object of which was to inform them that this good book contained the will and laws of the GREAT SPIRIT.”*

It is to be hoped some humane person will, on account of our people on the frontiers, as well as of the Indians, undeceive them with respect to the present the missionaries have made them, and which they call a good book, containing, they say, the *will and laws of the GREAT SPIRIT*. Can those missionaries suppose that the assassination of men, women and children, and sucking infants, related in the books ascribed to Moses, Joshua, etc., and blasphemously said to be done by the command of the Lord, the Great Spirit, can be edifying to our Indian neighbors, or advantageous to us?

Is not the Bible warfare the same kind of warfare as the Indians themselves carry on, that of indiscriminate destruction, and against which humanity shudders? Can the horrid examples and vulgar obscenity with which the Bible abounds improve the morals or civilize the manners of the Indians? Will they learn sobriety and decency from drunken Noah and beastly Lot; or will their daughters be edified by the example of Lot's daughters?

Will the prisoners they take in war be treated the better by their knowing the horrid story of Samuel's hewing Agag in pieces like a block of wood, or David's putting them under harrows of iron?

Will not the shocking accounts of the destruction of the Canaanites, when the Israelites invaded their country, suggest the idea that we may serve them in the same manner, or the accounts stir them up to do the like to our people on the frontiers, and then justify the assassination by the Bible the missionaries have given them? Will those missionary societies never leave off doing mischief?

In the accounts which this missionary committee give of the interview, they make the chief of the Indians to say, that, “as neither he nor his people could read it, he begged that some good white man might be sent to instruct them.”

It is necessary the general Government keep a strict eye over those missionary societies, who, under the pretense of instructing the Indians, send spies into their country to find out the best lands. No society should be permitted to have intercourse with the Indian tribes, nor send any person among them, but with the knowledge and consent of the Government.

The present Administration [Jefferson’s] has brought the Indians into a good disposition, and is improving them in the moral and civil comforts of life; but if these self-created societies be suffered to interfere, and send their speculating missionaries among them, the laudable object of government will be defeated. Priests, we know, are not remarkable for doing anything gratis; they have in general some scheme in everything they do, either to impose on the ignorant, or derange the operations of government.

A FRIEND TO THE INDIANS — Thomas Paine

ORIGIN OF FREEMASONRY

It is always understood that Freemasons have a secret which they carefully conceal; but from everything that can be collected from their own accounts of Masonry, their real secret is no other than their origin, which but few of them understand; and those who do, envelop it in mystery.

The Society of Masons are distinguished into three classes or degrees. 1st. The Entered Apprentice. 2d. The Fellow Craft. 3d. The Master Mason.

The Entered Apprentice knows but little more of Masonry than the use of signs and tokens, and certain steps and words by which Masons can recognize each other without being discovered by a person who is not a Mason. The Fellow Craft is not much better instructed in Masonry, than the Entered Apprentice. It is only in the Master Mason's Lodge, that whatever knowledge remains of the origin of Masonry is preserved and concealed.

In 1730, Samuel Pritchard, member of a constituted lodge in England, published a treatise entitled "Masonry Dissected"; and made oath before the Lord Mayor of London that it was a true copy. "Samuel Pritchard maketh oath that the copy hereunto annexed is a true and genuine copy of every particular." In his work he has given the catechism or examination, in question and answer, of the Apprentices, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason. There was no difficulty in doing this, as it is mere form.

In his introduction he says, "the original institution of Masonry consisted in the foundation of the liberal arts and sciences, but more especially in geometry, for at the building of the tower of Babel, the art and mystery of Masonry was first introduced, and from thence handed down by Euclid, a worthy and excellent mathematician of

the Egyptians; and he communicated it to Hiram, the Master Mason concerned in building Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem."

Besides the absurdity of deriving Masonry from the building of Babel, where, according to the story, the confusion of languages prevented the builders understanding each other, and consequently of communicating any knowledge they had, there is a glaring contradiction in point of chronology in the account he gives.

Solomon's Temple was built and dedicated 1,004 years before the Christian era; and Euclid, as may be seen in the tables of chronology, lived 277 years before the same era. It was therefore impossible that Euclid could communicate anything to Hiram, since Euclid did not live till seven hundred years after the time of Hiram.

In 1783, Captain George Smith, inspector of the Royal Artillery Academy at Woolwich, in England, and Provincial Grand Master of Masonry for the County of Kent, published a treatise entitled, "The Use and Abuse of Freemasonry."

In his chapter of the antiquity of Masonry, he makes it to be coeval with creation, "when," says he, "the sovereign architect raised on Masonic principles the beauteous globe, and commanded the master science, geometry, to lay the planetary world, and to regulate by its laws the whole stupendous system in just, unerring proportion, rolling round the central sun.

"But," continues he, "I am not at liberty publicly to undraw the curtain, and openly to descant on this head; it is sacred, and ever will remain so; those who are honored with the trust will not reveal it, and those who are ignorant of it cannot betray it."

By this last part of the phrase, Smith means the two inferior classes, the Fellow Craft and the Entered Apprentice, for he says in the next page of his work, "It is not every one that is barely initiated into Freemasonry that is intrusted with all the mysteries thereto belonging; they are not attainable as things of course, nor by every capacity."

The learned, but unfortunate Doctor Dodd, Grand Chaplain of Masonry, in his oration at the dedication of Freemason's Hall, London, traces Masonry through a variety of stages. "Masons," says he, "are well informed from their own private and interior records that

the building of Solomon's Temple is an important era, from whence they derive many mysteries of their art.

"Now," says he, "be it remembered that this great event took place above one thousand years before the Christian era, and consequently more than a century before Homer, the first of the Grecian poets, wrote; and about five centuries before Pythagoras brought from the East his sublime system of truly Masonic instruction to illuminate our western world. But, remote as this period is, we date not from thence the commencement of our art. For though it might owe to the wise and glorious King of Israel some of its many mystic forms and hieroglyphic ceremonies, yet certainly the art itself is coeval with man, the great subject of it.

"We trace," continues he, "its footsteps in the most distant, the most remote ages and nations of the world. We find it among the first and most celebrated civiliziers of the East. We deduce it regularly from the first astronomers on the plains of Chaldea, to the wise and mystic kings and priests of Egypt, the sages of Greece, and the philosophers of Rome."

From these reports and declarations of Masons of the highest order in the institution, we see that Masonry, without publicly declaring so, lays claim to some divine communications from the Creator, in a manner different from, and unconnected with, the book which the Christians call the Bible; and the natural result from this is, that Masonry is derived from some very ancient religion, wholly independent of and unconnected with that book.

To come then at once to the point, *Masonry* (as I shall show from the customs, ceremonies, hieroglyphics, and chronology of Masonry) is derived and is the remains of the religion of the ancient Druids; who, like the magi of Persia and the priests of Heliopolis in Egypt, were priests of the sun. They paid worship to this great luminary, as the great visible agent of a great invisible first cause, whom they styled "Time without limits."

The Christian religion and Masonry have one and the same common origin: both are derived from the worship of the sun. The difference between their origin is, that the Christian religion is a parody on the worship of the sun, in which they put a man whom they call Christ, in the place of the sun, and pay him the same adoration

which was originally paid to the sun, as I have shown in the chapter on the origin of the Christian religion.

In Masonry many of the ceremonies of the Druids are preserved in their original state, at least without any parody. With them the sun is still the sun; and his image in the form of the sun is the great emblematical ornament of Masonic lodges and Masonic dresses. It is the central figure on their aprons, and they wear it also pendant on the breast of their lodges, and in their processions. It has the figure of a man, as at the head of the sun, as Christ is always represented.

At what period of antiquity, or in what nation, this religion was first established, is lost in the labyrinth of unrecorded time. It is generally ascribed to the ancient Egyptians, the Babylonians and Chaldeans, and reduced afterwards to a system regulated by the apparent progress of the sun through the twelve signs of the zodiac by Zoroaster the lawgiver of Persia, from whence Pythagoras brought it into Greece. It is to these matters Dr. Dodd refers in the passage already quoted from his oration.

The worship of the sun as the great visible agent of a great invisible first cause, "Time without limits," spread itself over a considerable part of Asia and Africa, from thence to Greece and Rome, through all ancient Gaul, and into Britain and Ireland.

Smith, in his chapter on the antiquity of Masonry in Britain, says, that "notwithstanding the obscurity which envelops Masonic history in that country, various circumstances contribute to prove that Freemasonry was introduced into Britain about 1,030 years before Christ."

It cannot be Masonry in its present state that Smith here alludes to. The Druids flourished in Britain at the period he speaks of, and it is from them that Masonry is descended. Smith has put the child in the place of the parent.

It sometimes happens, as well in writing as in conversation, that a person lets slip an expression that serves to unravel what he intends to conceal, and this is the case with Smith, for in the same chapter he says, "The Druids, when they committed anything to writing, used the Greek alphabet, and I am bold to assert that the most perfect remains of the Druids' rites and ceremonies are preserved in the cus-

toms and ceremonies of the Masons that are to be found existing among mankind. My brethren," says he, "may be able to trace them with greater exactness than I am at liberty to explain to the public."

This is a confession from a Master Mason, without intending it to be so understood by the public, that Masonry is the remains of the religion of the Druids; the reasons for the Masons keeping this a secret I shall explain in the course of this work.

As the study and contemplation of the Creator [is] in the works of the creation, the sun, as the great visible agent of that Being, was the visible object of the adoration of the Druids; all their religious rites and ceremonies had reference to the apparent progress of the sun through the twelve signs of the zodiac, and his influence upon the earth.

The Masons adopt the same practices. The roof of their temples or lodges is ornamented with a sun, and the floor is a representation of the variegated face of the earth either by carpeting or mosaic work.

Freemasons' Hall, in Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, is a magnificent building, and cost upward of 12,000 pounds sterling. Smith, in speaking of this building, says (page 152), "The roof of this magnificent hall is in all probability the highest piece of finished architecture in Europe. In the center of this roof, a most resplendent sun is represented in burnished gold, surrounded with the twelve signs of the zodiac, with their respective characters.

After giving this description, he says, "The emblematical meaning of the sun is well known to the enlightened and inquisitive Freemason; and as the real sun is situated in the center of the universe, so the emblematical sun is the center of real Masonry. We all know" continues he, "that the sun is the fountain of light, the source of the seasons, the cause of the vicissitudes of day and night, the parent of vegetation, the friend of man; hence the scientific Freemason only knows the reason why the sun is placed in the center of this beautiful hall."

The Masons, in order to protect themselves from the persecution of the Christian Church, have always spoken in a mystical manner of

the figure of the sun in their lodges, or, like the astronomer Lalande, who is a Mason, been silent upon the subject.

It is their secret, especially in Catholic countries, because the figure of the sun is the expressive criterion that denotes they are descended from the Druids, and that wise, elegant, philosophical religion was the faith opposite to the faith of the gloomy Christian Church.

The lodges of the Masons, if built for the purpose, are constructed in a manner to correspond with the apparent motion of the sun. They are situated East and West. The master's place is always in the East. In the examination of an Entered Apprentice, the master, among many other questions, asks him,

Q. "How is the lodge situated?"

A. "East and West."

Q. "Why so?"

A. "Because all churches and chapels are, or ought to be so."

This answer, which is mere catechismal form, is not an answer to the question. It does no more than remove the question a point further, which is, why ought all churches and chapels to be so? But as the Entered Apprentice is not initiated into the druidical mysteries of Masonry, he is not asked any questions a direct answer to which would lead thereto.

Q. "Where stands your master?"

A. "In the East."

Q. "Why so?"

A. "As the sun rises in the East and opens the day, so the master stands in the East (with his right hand upon his left breast, being a sign, and the square about his neck), to open the lodge, and set his men at work."

Q. "Where stand your wardens?"

A. "In the West."

Q. "What is their business?"

A. "As the sun sets in the West to close the day, so the wardens stand in the West (with their right hands upon their left breasts, being

a sign, and the level and plumb rule about their necks), to close the lodge, and dismiss the men from labor, paying them their wages.”

Here the name of the sun is mentioned, but it is proper to observe that in this place it has reference only to labor or to the time of labor, and not to any religious druidical rite or ceremony, as it would have with respect to the situation of lodges East and West.

I have already observed in the chapter on the origin of the Christian religion, that the situation of churches East and West is taken from the worship of the sun, which rises in the East, and has not the least reference to the person called Jesus Christ.

The Christians never bury their dead on the North side of a church; and a Mason’s lodge always has, or is supposed to have, three windows which are called fixed lights, to distinguish them from the movable lights of the sun and the moon. The master asks the Entered Apprentice,

Q. “How are they (the fixed lights) situated?”

A. “East, West, and South.”

Q. “What are their uses?”

A. “To light the men to and from their work.”

Q. “Why are there no lights in the North?”

A. “Because the Sun darts no rays from thence.”

This, among numerous other instances, shows that the Christian religion and Masonry have one and the same common origin, the ancient worship of the sun.

The high festival of the Masons is on the day they call St. John’s day; but every enlightened Mason must know that holding their festival on this day has no reference to the person called St. John, and that it is only to disguise the true cause of holding it on this day, that they call the day by that name. As there were Masons, or at least Druids, many centuries before the time of St. John, if such a person ever existed, the holding their festival on this day must refer to some cause totally unconnected with John.

The case is, that the day called St. John’s day, is the twenty-fourth of June, and is what is called midsummer day. The sun is then arrived at the summer solstice; and, with respect to his

meridional altitude, or height at high noon, appears for some days to be of the same height.

The astronomical longest day, like the shortest day, is not every year, on the same numerical day, and therefore the twenty-fourth of June is always taken for midsummer day; and it is in honor of the sun, which has then arrived at his greatest height in our hemisphere, and not anything with respect to St. John, that this annual festival of the Masons, taken from the Druids, is celebrated on midsummer day.

Customs will often outlive the remembrance of their origin, and this is the case with respect to a custom still practiced in Ireland, where the Druids flourished at the time they flourished in Britain.

On the eve of St. John's day, that is, on the eve of midsummer day, the Irish light fires on the tops of the hills. This can have no reference to St. John; but it has emblematical reference to the sun, which on that day is at his highest summer elevation, and might in common language be said to have arrived at the top of the hill.

As to what Masons, and books of Masonry, tell us of Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem, it is no wise improbable that some Masonic ceremonies may have been derived from the building of that temple, for the worship of the sun was in practice many centuries before the temple existed, or before the Israelites came out of Egypt. And we learn from the history of the Jewish kings, II Kings xxiii, that the worship of the sun was performed by the Jews in that temple.

It is, however, much to be doubted if it was done with the same scientific purity and religious morality with which it was performed by the Druids, who, by all accounts that historically remain of them, were a wise, learned, and moral class of men. The Jews, on the contrary, were ignorant of astronomy, and of science in general, and if a religion founded upon astronomy fell into their hands, it is almost certain it would be corrupted.

We do not read in the history of the Jews whether in the Bible or elsewhere, that they were the inventors or the improvers of any one art or science. Even in the building of this temple, the Jews did not know how to square and frame the timber for beginning and carrying on the work, and Solomon was obliged to send to Hiram, King of Tyre (Zidon), to procure workmen; "for thou knowest" (says Solo-

mon to Hiram, I Kings v, 6), “that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Zidonians.”

This temple was more properly Hiram’s Temple than Solomon’s, and if the Masons derive anything from the building of it, they owe it to the Zidonians and not to the Jews. But to return to the worship of the sun in this temple.

It is said, II Kings xxiii, 5, “And [King Josiah] put down all the idolatrous priests . . . that burned incense unto . . . the sun, the moon, the planets, and all the host of heaven.” And it is said at the eleventh verse: “And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the Lord . . . and burned the chariot of the sun with fire”; verse 13, “And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the King of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth, the abomination of the Zidonians” (the very people that built the temple) “did the king defile.”

Besides these things, the description that Josephus gives of the decorations of this temple, resembles on a large scale those of a Mason’s lodge. He says that the distribution of the several parts of the Temple of the Jews represented all nature, particularly the parts most apparent of it, as the sun, moon, the planets, the zodiac, the earth, the elements; and that the system of the world was retraced there by numerous ingenious emblems.

These, in all probability, are, what Josiah, in his ignorance, calls the abominations of the Zidonians. Everything, however, drawn from this temple, and applied to Masonry, still refers to the worship of the sun, however corrupted or misunderstood by the Jews, and consequently to the religion of the Druids.

Another circumstance, which shows that Masonry is derived from some ancient system, prior to and unconnected with the Christian religion, is the chronology, or method of counting time, used by the Masons in the records of their lodges. They make no use of what is called the Christian era; and they reckon their months numerically, as the ancient Egyptians did, and as the Quakers do now.

I have by me, a record of a French lodge, at the time the late Duke of Orleans, then Duke de Chartres, was Grand Master of Ma-

sonry in France. It begins as follows: “the thirteenth day of the sixth month of the year of the Venerable Lodge, 5773.

By what I observe in English books of Masonry, the English Masons use the initials A. L. and not V. L. By A. L. they mean in the *year of Light*, as the Christians by A.D. mean in the year of our Lord. But A. L. like V. L. refers to the same chronological era, that is, to the supposed time of the Creation.

In the chapter on the Christian religion, I have shown that the cosmogony, that is the account of the Creation with which the book of Genesis opens, has been taken and mutilated from the Zend-Avesta of Zoroaster, and was fixed as a preface to the Bible after the Jews returned from captivity in Babylon, and that the rabbins of the Jews do not hold their account in Genesis to be a fact, but mere allegory. The six thousand years in the Zend-Avesta, is changed or interpolated into six days in the account of Genesis.

The Masons appear to have chosen the same period, and perhaps to avoid the suspicion and persecution of the Church, have adopted the era of the world, as the era of Masonry. The V. L. of the French, and the A. L. of the English Mason, answer to the A. M. *Anno Mundi*, or year of the world.

Though the Masons have taken many of their ceremonies and hieroglyphics from the ancient Egyptians, it is certain they have not taken their chronology from thence. If they had, the Church would soon have sent them to the stake; as the chronology of the Egyptians, like that of the Chinese, goes many thousand years beyond the Bible chronology.

The religion of the Druids, as before said, was the same as the religion of the ancient Egyptians. The priests of Egypt were the professors and teachers of science, and were styled priests of Heliopolis, that is, of the *City of the Sun*.

The Druids in Europe, who were the same order of men, have their name from the Teutonic or ancient German language; the Germans being anciently called Teutons. The word Druid signifies a *wise man*. In Persia they were called magi, which signifies the same thing.

“Egypt,” says Smith, “from whence we derive many of our mysteries, has always borne a distinguished rank in history, and was once celebrated above all others for its antiquities, learning, opulence, and fertility. In their system, their principal hero-gods, Osiris and Isis, theologically represented the Supreme Being and universal nature; and physically the two great celestial luminaries, the sun and the moon, by whose influence all nature was actuated.

“The experienced brethren of the Society” says Smith in a note to this passage, “are well informed what affinity these symbols bear to Masonry, and why they are used in all Masonic lodges.”

In speaking of the apparel of the Masons in their lodges, part of which, as we see in their public processions, is a white leather apron, he says, “the Druids were appareled in white at the time of their sacrifices and solemn offices. The Egyptian priests of Osiris wore snow-white cotton. The Grecian and most other priests wore white garments. As Masons, we regard the principles of those *who were the first worshipers of the true God*, imitate their apparel, and assume the badge of innocence.”

“The Egyptians,” continues Smith, “in the earliest ages constituted a great number of lodges, but with assiduous care kept their secrets of Masonry from all strangers. These secrets have been imperfectly handed down to us by oral tradition only, and ought to be kept undiscovered to the laborers, craftsmen, and apprentices, till by good behavior and long study they become better acquainted in geometry and the liberal arts, and thereby qualified for masters and wardens, which is seldom or never the case with English Masons.”

Under the head of Freemasonry, written by the astronomer Lalande, in the French Encyclopedia, I expected from his great knowledge in astronomy, to have found much information on the origin of Masonry; for what connection can there be between any institution and the sun and twelve signs of the zodiac, if there be not something in that institution, or in its origin, that has reference to astronomy?

Everything used as a hieroglyphic has reference to the subject and purpose for which it is used, and we are not to suppose the Freemasons, among whom are many very learned and scientific men, to

be such idiots as to make use of astronomical signs without some astronomical purpose.

But I was much disappointed in my expectation from Lalande. In speaking of the origin of Masonry, he says, the origin of Masonry, like many others, loses itself in the obscurity of time. When I came to this expression, I supposed Lalande a Mason, and on inquiry found he was. This *passing over* saved him from the embarrassment which Masons are under respecting the disclosure of their origin, and which they are sworn to conceal.

There is a society of Masons in Dublin who take the name of Druids; these Masons must be supposed to have a reason for taking that name.

I come now to speak of the cause of secrecy used by the Masons.

The natural source of secrecy is fear. When any new religion over-runs a former religion, the professors of the new become the persecutors of the old. We see this in all instances that history brings before us.

When Hilkiah the priest and Shaphan the scribe, in the reign of King Josiah, found, or pretended to find, the law, called the law of Moses, a thousand years after the time of Moses (and it does not appear from II Kings, xxii, xxiii, that such a law was ever practiced or known before the time of Josiah) he established that law as a national religion, and put all the priests of the sun to death.

When the Christian religion over-ran the Jewish religion, the Jews were the continual subject of persecution in all Christian countries. When the Protestant religion in England over-ran the Roman Catholic religion, it was made death for a Catholic priest to be found in England.

As this has been the case in all the instances we have any knowledge of, we are obliged to admit it with respect to the case in question, and that when the Christian religion over-ran the religion of the Druids in Italy, ancient Gaul, Britain, and Ireland, the Druids became the subject of persecution.

This would naturally and necessarily oblige such of them as remained attached to their original religion to meet in secret, and under the strongest injunctions of secrecy. Their safety depended upon it. A

false brother might expose the lives of many of them to destruction; and from the remains of the religion of the Druids, thus preserved, arose the institution which, to avoid the name of Druid, took that of Mason, and practiced under this new name the rites and ceremonies of Druids.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

A DISCOURSE AT THE SOCIETY OF THEOPHILANTHROPISTS, PARIS

RELIGION has two principal enemies, Fanaticism and Infidelity, or that which is called Atheism. The first requires to be combated by reason and morality, the other by natural philosophy.

The existence of a God is the first dogma of the Theophilanthropists. It is upon this subject that I solicit your attention; for though it has been often treated of, and that most sublimely, the subject is inexhaustible; and there will always remain something to be said that has not been before advanced. I go therefore to open the subject, and to crave your attention to the end.

The universe is the bible of a true Theophilanthropist. It is there that he reads of God. It is there that the proofs of his existence are to be sought and to be found. As to written or printed books, by whatever name they are called, they are the works of man's hands, and carry no evidence in themselves that God is the author of any of them. It must be in something that man could not make that we must seek evidence for our belief, and that something is the universe, the true Bible – the inimitable work of God.

Contemplating the universe, the whole system of creation, in this point of light, we shall discover, that all that which is called natural philosophy is properly a divine study. It is the study of God through his works. It is the best study, by which we can arrive at a knowledge of his existence, and the only one by which we can gain a glimpse of his perfection.

Do we want to contemplate his power? We see it in the immensity of the Creation. Do we want to contemplate his wisdom? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible WHOLE is governed. Do we want to contemplate his munificence? We see it in the abundance with which he fills the earth. Do we want

to contemplate his mercy? We see it in his not withholding that abundance even from the unthankful. In fine, do we want to know what GOD is? Search not written or printed books, but the Scripture called the *Creation*.

It has been the error of the schools to teach astronomy, and all the other sciences, and subjects of natural philosophy, as accomplishments only; whereas they should be taught theologically, or with reference to the *Being* who is the author of them: for all the principles of science are of divine origin. Man cannot make, or invent, or contrive principles: he can only discover them; and he ought to look through the discovery to the author.

When we examine an extraordinary piece of machinery, an astonishing pile of architecture, a well executed statue, or an highly finished painting, where life and action are imitated, and habit only prevents our mistaking a surface of light and shade for cubical solidity, our ideas are naturally led to think of the extensive genius and talents of the artist.

When we study the elements of geometry, we think of Euclid. When we speak of gravitation, we think of Newton. How then is it, that when we study the works of God in the creation, we stop short, and do not think of GOD? It is from the error of the schools in having taught those subjects as accomplishments only, and thereby separated the study of them from the *Being* who is the author of them.

The schools have made the study of theology to consist in the study of opinions in written or printed books; whereas theology should be studied in the works or books of the creation. The study of theology in books of opinions has often produced fanaticism, rancour, and cruelty of temper; and from hence have proceeded the numerous persecutions, the fanatical quarrels, the religious burnings and massacres, that have desolated Europe.

But the study of theology in the works of the creation produces a direct contrary effect. The mind becomes at once enlightened and serene, a copy of the scene it beholds: information and adoration go hand in hand; and all the social faculties become enlarged.

The evil that has resulted from the error of the schools, in teaching natural philosophy as an accomplishment only, has been that of

generating in the pupils a species of Atheism. Instead of looking through the works of creation to the Creator himself, they stop short, and employ the knowledge they acquire to create doubts of his existence. They labor with studied ingenuity to ascribe everything they behold to innate properties of matter, and jump over all the rest by saying, that matter is eternal.

Let us examine this subject; it is worth examining; for if we examine it through all its cases, the result will be, that the existence of a SUPERIOR CAUSE, or that which man calls GOD, will be discoverable by philosophical principles.

In the first place, admitting matter to have properties, as we see it has, the question still remains, how came matter by those properties? To this they will answer, that matter possessed those properties eternally. This is not solution, but assertion; and to deny it is equally as impossible of proof as to assert it.

It is then necessary to go further; and therefore I say, – if there exist a circumstance that is *not* a property of matter, and without which the universe, or to speak in a limited degree, the solar system composed of planets and a sun, could not exist a moment, all the arguments of Atheism, drawn from properties of matter, and applied to account for the universe, will be overthrown, and the existence of a superior cause, or that which man calls God, becomes discoverable, as is before said, by natural philosophy.

I go now to show that such a circumstance exists, and what it is.

The universe is composed of matter, and, as a system, is sustained by motion. Motion is *not a property* of matter, and without this motion, the solar system could not exist. Were motion a property of matter, that undiscovered and undiscoverable thing called perpetual motion would establish itself.

It is because motion is not a property of matter, that perpetual motion is an impossibility in the hand of every being but that of the Creator of motion. When the pretenders to Atheism can produce perpetual motion, and not till then, they may expect to be credited.

The natural state of matter, as to place, is a state of rest. Motion, or change of place, is the effect of an external cause acting upon matter. As to that faculty of matter that is called gravitation, it is the in-

fluence which two or more bodies have reciprocally on each other to unite and be at rest. Everything which has hitherto been discovered, with respect to the motion of the planets in the system, relates only to the laws by which motion acts, and not to the cause of motion.

Gravitation, so far from being the cause of motion to the planets that compose the solar system, would be the destruction of the solar system, were revolutionary motion to cease; for as the action of spinning upholds a top, the revolutionary motion upholds the planets in their orbits, and prevents them from gravitating and forming one mass with the sun. In one sense of the word, philosophy knows, and atheism says, that matter is in perpetual motion.

But the motion here meant refers to the state of matter, and that only on the surface of the earth. It is either decomposition, which is continually destroying the form of bodies of matter, or recomposition, which renews that matter in the same or another form, as the decomposition of animal or vegetable substances enter into the composition of other bodies.

But the motion that upholds the solar system is of an entire different kind, and is not a property of matter. It operates also to an entire different effect. It operates to *perpetual preservation*, and to prevent *any change* in the state of the system.

Giving then to matter all the properties which philosophy knows it has, or all that atheism ascribes to it, and can prove, and even supposing matter to be eternal, it will not account for the system of the universe, or of the solar system, because it will not account for motion, and it is motion that preserves it.

When, therefore, we discover a circumstance of such immense importance, that without it the universe could not exist, and for which neither matter, nor any nor all the properties can account, we are by necessity forced into the rational conformable belief of the existence of a cause superior to matter, and that cause man calls GOD.

As to that which is called nature, it is no other than the laws by which motion and action of every kind, with respect to unintelligible matter, are regulated. And when we speak of looking through nature up to nature's God, we speak philosophically the same rational lan-

guage as when we speak of looking through human laws up to the power that ordained them.

God is the power of first cause, nature is the law, and matter is the subject acted upon.

But infidelity, by ascribing every phenomenon to properties of matter, conceives a system for which it cannot account, and yet it pretends to demonstration. It reasons from what it sees on the surface of the earth, but it does not carry itself on the solar system existing by motion.

It sees upon the surface a perpetual decomposition and recomposition of matter. It sees that an oak produces an acorn, an acorn an oak, a bird an egg, an egg a bird, and so on. In things of this kind it sees something which it calls a natural cause, but none of the causes it sees is the cause of that motion which preserves the solar system.

Let us contemplate this wonderful and stupendous system consisting of matter, and existing by motion. It is not matter in a state of rest, nor in a state of decomposition or recomposition. It is matter systematized in perpetual orbicular or circular motion. As a system that motion is the life of it: as animation is life to an animal body, deprive the system of motion, and, as a system, it must expire.

Who then breathed into the system the life of motion? What power impelled the planets to move, since motion is not a property of the matter of which they are composed? If we contemplate the immense velocity of this motion, our wonder becomes increased, and our adoration enlarges itself in the same proportion.

To instance only one of the planets, that of the earth we inhabit, its distance from the sun, the centre of the orbits of all the planets, is, according to observations of the transit of the planet Venus, about one hundred million miles; consequently, the diameter of the orbit, or circle in which the earth moves round the sun, is double that distance; and the measure of the circumference of the orbit, taken as three times its diameter, is six hundred million miles. The earth performs this voyage in three hundred and sixty-five days and some hours, and consequently moves at the rate of more than one million six hundred thousand miles every twenty-four hours.

Where will infidelity, where will Atheism, find cause for this astonishing velocity of motion, never ceasing, never varying, and which is the preservation of the earth in its orbit? It is not by reasoning from an acorn to an oak, from an egg to a bird, or from any change in the state of matter on the surface of the earth, that this can be accounted for.

Its cause is not to be found in matter, nor in anything we call nature. The Atheist who affects to reason, and the fanatic who rejects reason, plunge themselves alike into inextricable difficulties.

The one perverts the sublime and enlightening study of natural philosophy into a deformity of absurdities by not reasoning to the end. The other loses himself in the obscurity of metaphysical theories, and dishonors the Creator, by treating the study of his works with contempt. The one is a half-rational of whom there is some hope, the other a visionary to whom we must be charitable.

When at first thought we think of a Creator, our ideas appear to us undefined and confused; but if we reason philosophically, those ideas can be easily arranged and simplified. *It is a Being whose power is equal to his will.*

Observe the nature of the will of man. It is of an infinite quality. We cannot conceive the possibility of limits to the will. Observe, on the other hand, how exceedingly limited is his power of acting compared with the nature of his will. Suppose the power equal to the will, and man would be a God. He would will himself eternal, and be so. He could will a creation, and could make it.

In this progressive reasoning, we see in the nature of the will of man half of that which we conceive in thinking of God; add the other half, and we have the whole idea of a Being who could make the universe, and sustain it by perpetual motion; because he could create that motion.

We know nothing of the capacity of the will of animals, but we know a great deal of the difference of their powers. For example, how numerous are the degrees, and how immense is the difference of power, from a mite to a man.

Since then everything we see below us shows a progression of power, where is the difficulty in supposing that there is, *at the sum-*

mit of all things, a Being in whom an infinity of power unites with the infinity of the will. When this simple idea presents itself to our mind, we have the idea of a perfect Being, that man calls God.

It is comfortable to live under the belief of the existence of an infinite protecting power; and it is an addition to that comfort to know that such a belief is not a mere conceit of the imagination, as many of the theories that is called religious are; nor a belief founded only on tradition or received opinion; but is a belief deducible by the action of reason upon the things that compose the system of the universe; a belief arising out of visible facts: and so demonstrable is the truth of this belief, that if no such belief had existed, the persons who now controvert it would have been the persons who would have produced and propagated it; because by beginning to reason they would have been led to reason progressively to the end, and thereby have discovered that matter and the properties it has will not account for the system of the universe, and that there must necessarily be a superior cause.

It was the excess to which imaginary systems of religion had been carried, and the intolerance, persecutions, burnings and massacres they occasioned, that first induced certain persons to propagate infidelity; thinking, that upon the whole it was better not to believe at all than to believe a multitude of things and complicated creeds that occasioned so much mischief in the world.

But those days are past, persecution hath ceased, and the antidote then set up against it has no longer even the shadow of apology. We profess, and we proclaim in peace, the pure, unmixed, comfortable, and rational belief of a God, as manifested to us in the universe. We do this without any apprehension of that belief being made a cause of persecution as other beliefs have been, or of suffering persecution ourselves. To God, and not to man, are all men to account for their belief.

It has been well observed, at the first institution of this Society, that the dogmas it professes to believe are from the commencement of the world; that they are not novelties, but are confessedly the basis of all systems of religion, however numerous and contradictory they may be.

All men in the outset of the religion they profess are Theophilanthropists. It is impossible to form any system of religion without building upon those principles, and therefore they are not sectarian principles, unless we suppose a sect composed of all the world.

I have said in the course of this discourse, that the study of natural philosophy is a divine study, because it is the study of the works of God in the creation. If we consider theology upon this ground, what an extensive field of improvement in things both divine and human opens itself before us!

All the principles of science are of divine origin. It was not man that invented the principles on which astronomy, and every branch of mathematics, are founded and studied. It was not man that gave properties to the circle and the triangle. Those principles are eternal and immutable.

We see in them the unchangeable nature of the Divinity. We see in them immortality, an immortality existing after the material figures that express those properties are dissolved in dust.

The Society is at present in its infancy, and its means are small; but I wish to hold in view the subject I allude to, and instead of teaching the philosophical branches of learning as ornamental accomplishments only, as they have hitherto been taught, to teach them in a manner that shall combine theological knowledge with scientific instruction.

To do this to the best advantage, some instruments will be necessary, for the purpose of explanation, of which the Society is not yet possessed. But as the views of this Society extend to public good as well as to that of the individual, and as its principles can have no enemies, means may be devised to procure them.

If we unite to the present instruction a series of lectures on the ground I have mentioned, we shall, in the first place, render theology the most delightful and entertaining of all studies. In the next place we shall give scientific instruction to those who could not otherwise obtain it. The mechanic of every profession will there be taught the mathematical principles necessary to render him a proficient in his art; the cultivator will there see developed the principles of vegetation; while, at the same time, they will be led to see the hand of God in all these things.

EXTRACT FROM A REPLY TO THE BISHOP OF LLANDAFF

GENESIS

The bishop says, “the oldest book in the world is Genesis.” This is mere assertion; he offers no proof of it, and I go to controvert it, and to show that the book of job, which is not a Hebrew book, but is a book of the Gentiles translated into Hebrew, is much older than the book of Genesis.

The book of Genesis means the book of Generations; to which are prefixed two chapters, the first and second, which contain two different cosmogonies, that is, two different accounts of the creation of the world, written by different persons, as I have shown in the preceding part of this work.

The first cosmogony begins at chapter i. 1, and ends at ii. 3; for the adverbial conjunction thus, with which chapter ii. begins, shows those three verses to belong to chapter i. The second cosmogony begins at ii. 4, and ends with that chapter.

In the first cosmogony the name of God is used without any epithet joined to it, and is repeated thirty-five times. In the second cosmogony it is always the Lord God, which is repeated eleven times. These two different styles of expression show these two chapters to be the work of two different persons, and the contradictions they contain, show they cannot be the work of one and the same person, as I have already shown.

The third chapter, in which the style of Lord God is continued in every instance except in the supposed conversation between the woman and the serpent (for in every place in that chapter where the

writer speaks, it is always the Lord God) shows this chapter to belong to the second cosmogony.

This chapter gives an account of what is called the *fall of man*, which is no other than a fable borrowed from, and constructed upon, the religious allegory of Zoroaster, or the Persians, of the annual progress of the sun through the twelve signs of the zodiac. It is the *fall of the year*, the approach and evil of winter, announced by the ascension of the autumnal constellation of the *serpent* of the zodiac, and not the *moral fall of man*, that is the key of the allegory, and of the fable in Genesis borrowed from it.

The *fall of man* in Genesis is said to have been produced by eating a certain fruit, generally taken to be an apple. The fall of the year is the season for the gathering and eating the new apples of that year. The allegory, therefore, holds with respect to the fruit, which it would not have done had it been an early summer fruit. It holds also with respect to place.

The tree is said to have been placed in the *midst* of the garden. But why in the midst of the garden more than in any other place? The solution of the allegory gives the answer to this question, which is, that the fall of the year, when apples and other autumnal fruits are ripe, and when days and nights are of equal length, is the mid-season between summer and winter.

It holds also with respect to clothing, and the temperature of the air. It is said in Genesis (iii. 21), "*Unto Adam and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.*" But why are coats of skins mentioned? This cannot be understood as referring to anything of the nature of *moral evil*. The solution of the allegory gives again the answer to this question, which is, that the *evil of winter*, which follows the *fall of the year*, fabulously called in Genesis the *fall of man*, makes warm clothing necessary.

But of these things I shall speak fully when I come in another part to treat of the ancient religion of the Persians, and compare it with the modern religion of the New Testament. At present, I shall confine myself to the comparative antiquity of the books of Genesis and Job, taking, at the same time, whatever I may find in my way with respect to the fabulousness of the book of Genesis; for if what is called the *fall of man*, in Genesis, be fabulous or allegorical, that

which is called the redemption in the New Testament cannot be a fact. It is logically impossible, and impossible also in the nature of things, that *moral good* can redeem *physical evil*. I return to the bishop.

If Genesis be, as the bishop asserts, the oldest book in the world, and, consequently, the oldest and first written book of the Bible, and if the extraordinary things related in it; such as the creation of the world in six days, the tree of life, and of good and evil, the story of Eve and the talking serpent, the fall of man and his being turned out of Paradise, were facts, or even believed by the Jews to be facts, they would be referred to as fundamental matters, and that very frequently, in the books of the Bible that were written by various authors afterwards; whereas, there is not a book, chapter, or verse of the Bible, from the time that Moses is said to have written the book of Genesis, to the book of Malachi, the last book in the Bible, including a space of more than a thousand years, in which there is any mention made of these things, or any of them, nor are they so much as alluded to. How will the bishop solve this difficulty, which stands as a circumstantial contradiction to his assertion?

There are but two ways of solving it:

First, that the book of Genesis is not an ancient book, that it has been written by some (now) unknown person, after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, about a thousand years after the time that Moses is said to have lived, and put as a preface or introduction to the other books when they were formed into a canon in the time of the second temple, and therefore not having existed before that time, none of these things mentioned in it could be referred to in those books.

Secondly, that admitting Genesis to have been written by Moses, the Jews did not believe the things stated in it to be true, and therefore, as they could not refer to them as facts, they would not refer to them as fables. The first of these solutions goes against the antiquity of the book, and the second against its authenticity; and the bishop may take which he please.

But be the author of Genesis whoever it may, there is abundant evidence to show, as well from the early Christian writers as from the Jews themselves, that the things stated in that book were not believed

to be facts. Why they have been believed as facts since that time, when better and fuller knowledge existed on the case than is known now, can be accounted for only on the imposition of priestcraft.

Augustine, one of the early champions of the Christian Church, acknowledges in his "City of God" that the adventure of Eve and the serpent, and the account of Paradise, were generally considered as fiction or allegory. He regards them as allegory himself, without attempting to give any explanation, but he supposes that a better explanation might be found than those that had been offered.

Origen, another early champion of the Church, says, "What man of good sense can ever persuade himself that there were a first, a second, and a third day, and that each of these days had a night when there were yet neither sun, moon, nor stars? What man can be stupid enough to believe that God, acting the part of a gardener, had planted a garden in the East, that the tree of life was a real tree, and that its fruit had the virtue of making those who eat of it live forever?"

Maimonides, one of the most learned and celebrated of the Jewish rabbins, who lived in the Eleventh Century (about seven or eight hundred years ago) and to whom the bishop refers in his answer to me, is very explicit in his book entitled "Moreh Nebuchim," upon the non-reality of the things stated in the account of the creation in the book of Genesis.

"We ought not," (says he) "to understand, nor take according to the letter, that which is written in the book of the creation; nor to have the same ideas of it which common men have; otherwise our ancient sages would not have recommended with so much care to conceal the sense of it, and not to raise the allegorical veil which envelopes the truths it contains.

"The book of Genesis, taken according to the letter, gives the most absurd and the most extravagant ideas of the Divinity. Whoever shall find out the sense of it, ought to restrain himself from divulging it. It is a maxim which all our sages repeat, and above all with respect to the work of six days.

"It may happen that someone, with the aid he may borrow from others, may hit upon the meaning of it. In that case he ought to impose silence upon himself; or if he speak of it, he ought to speak ob-

scurely, and in an enigmatical manner, as I do myself, leaving the rest to be found out by those who can understand me.”

This is, certainly, a very extraordinary declaration of Maimonides, taking all the parts of it. First, he declares, that the account of the Creation in the book of Genesis is not a fact, and that to believe it to be a fact gives the most absurd and the most extravagant ideas of the Divinity. Secondly, that it is an allegory. Thirdly, that the allegory has a concealed secret. Fourthly, that whoever can find the secret ought not to tell it.

It is this last part that is the most extraordinary. Why all this care of the Jewish rabbins, to prevent what they call the concealed meaning, or the secret, from being known, and if known to prevent any of their people from telling it? It certainly must be something which the Jewish nation are afraid or ashamed the world should know.

It must be something personal to them as a people, and not a secret of a divine nature, which the more it is known the more it increases the glory of the creator, and the gratitude and happiness of man. It is not God’s secret but their own they are keeping. I go to unveil the secret.

The case is, the Jews have stolen their cosmogony, that is, their account of the Creation, from the cosmogony of the Persians, contained in the books of Zoroaster, the Persian law-giver, and brought it with them when they returned from captivity by the benevolence of Cyrus, King of Persia. For it is evident, from the silence of all the books of the Bible upon the subject of the Creation, that the Jews had no cosmogony before that time.

If they had a cosmogony from the time of Moses, some of their judges who governed during more than four hundred years, or of their kings, the Davids and Solomons of their day, who governed nearly five hundred years, or of their prophets and psalmists, who lived in the mean time, would have mentioned it.

It would, either as fact or fable, have been the grandest of all subjects for a psalm. It would have suited to a tittle the ranting poetical genius of Isaiah, or served as a cordial to the gloomy Jeremiah. But not one word, not even a whisper, does any of the bible authors give upon the subject.

To conceal the theft, the rabbins of the second temple have published Genesis as a book of Moses, and have enjoined secrecy to all their people, who by travelling or otherwise might happen to discover from whence the cosmogony was borrowed, not to tell it. The evidence of circumstances is often unanswerable, and there is no other than this which I have given that goes to the whole of the case, and this does.

Diogenes Laertius, an ancient and respectable author, whom the bishop in his answer to me quotes on another occasion, has a passage that corresponds with the solution here given. In speaking of the religion of the Persians as promulgated by their priests or magi, he says the Jewish rabbins were the successors of their doctrine.

Having thus spoken on the plagiarism, and on the non-reality of the book of Genesis, I will give some additional evidence that Moses is not the author of that book.

Aben-Ezra, a celebrated Jewish author, who lived about seven hundred years ago, and whom the bishop allows to have been a man of great erudition, has made a great many observations, too numerous to be repeated here, to show that Moses was not, and could not be, the author of the book of Genesis, nor of any of the five books that bear his name.

Spinoza, another learned Jew, who lived about a hundred and thirty years ago, recites, in his treatise on the ceremonies of the Jews, ancient and modern, the observations of Aben-Ezra, to which he adds many others, to shew that Moses is not the author of those books.

He also says, and shows his reasons for saying it, that the Bible did not exist as a book till the time of the Maccabees, which was more than a hundred years after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity.

In the second part of the "Age of Reason," I have, among other things, referred to nine verses in Genesis xxxvi, beginning at verse 31 (These are the kings that reigned in Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel,) which it is impossible could have been written by Moses, or in the time of Moses, and which could not have been written till after the Jew kings began to reign in

Israel, which was not till several hundred years after the time of Moses.

The bishop allows this, and says “I think you say true.” But he then quibbles, and says, that “a small addition to a book does not destroy either the genuineness or authenticity of the whole book.” This is priestcraft. These verses do not stand in the book as an addition to it, but as making a part of the whole book, and which it is impossible that Moses could write.

The bishop would reject the antiquity of any other book if it could be proved from the words of the book itself that a part of it could not have been written till several hundred years after the reputed author of it was dead. He would call such a book a forgery. I am authorized, therefore, to call the book of Genesis a forgery.

Combining, then, all the foregoing circumstances together, respecting the antiquity and authenticity of the book of Genesis, a conclusion will naturally follow therefrom. Those circumstances are:

First, that certain parts of the book cannot possibly have been written by Moses, and that the other parts carry no evidence of having been written by him.

Secondly, the universal silence of all the following books of the Bible, for about a thousand years, upon the extraordinary things spoken of in Genesis, such as the creation of the world in six days – the garden of Eden – the tree of knowledge – the tree of life – the story of Eve and the serpent – the fall of man and of his being turned out of this fine garden, together with Noah’s flood, and the tower of Babel.

Thirdly, the silence of all the books of the Bible upon even the name of Moses, from the book of Joshua until the second book of Kings, which was not written till after the captivity, for it gives an account of the captivity, a period of about a thousand years.

Strange that a man who is proclaimed as the historian of the Creation, the privy-counsellor and confidant of the Almighty – the legislator of the Jewish nation and the founder of its religion; strange, I say, that even the name of such a man should not find a place in their books for a thousand years, if they knew or believed anything about him or the books he is said to have written.

Fourthly, the opinion of some of the most celebrated of the Jewish commentators that Moses is not the author of the book of Genesis, founded on the reasons given for that opinion.

Fifthly, the opinion of the early Christian writers, and of the great champion of Jewish literature, Maimonides, that the book of Genesis is not a book of facts.

Sixthly, the silence imposed by all the Jewish rabbins, and by Maimonides himself, upon the Jewish nation, not to speak of anything they may happen to know or discover respecting the cosmogony (or creation of the world) in the book of Genesis.

From these circumstances the following conclusions offer:

First, that the book of Genesis is not a book of facts.

Secondly, that as no mention is made throughout the Bible of any of the extraordinary things related in [it], Genesis has not been written till after the other books were written, and put as a preface to the Bible. Everyone knows that a preface to a book, though it stands first, is the last written.

Thirdly, that the silence imposed by all the Jewish rabbins and by Maimonides upon the Jewish nation, to keep silence upon everything related in their cosmogony, evinces a secret they are not willing should be known.

The secret therefore explains itself to be, that when the Jews were in captivity in Babylon and Persia they became acquainted with the cosmogony of the Persians, as registered in the Zend-Avesta of Zoroaster, the Persian law-giver, which, after their return from captivity, they manufactured and modeled as their own, and ante-dated it by giving to it the name of Moses. The case admits of no other explanation.

From all which it appears that the book of Genesis, instead of being the oldest book in the world, as the bishop calls it, has been the last written book of the Bible, and that the cosmogony it contains has been manufactured.

OF THE NAMES IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Everything in Genesis serves as evidence or symptom that the book has been composed in some late period of the Jewish nation. Even the names mentioned in it serve to this purpose.

Nothing is more common or more natural than to name the children of succeeding generations after the names of those who had been celebrated in some former generation. This holds good with respect to all the people and all the histories we know of, and it does not hold good with the Bible. There must be some cause for this.

This book of Genesis tells us of a man whom it calls Adam, and of his sons Abel and Seth; of Enoch, who lived three hundred and sixty-five years (it is exactly the number of days in a year), and that then God took him up. (It has the appearance of being taken from some allegory of the Gentiles on the commencement and termination of the year, by the progress of the sun through the twelve signs of the zodiac, on which the allegorical religion of the Gentiles was founded.)

It tells us of Methuselah who lived 969 years, and of a long train of other names in the fifth chapter. It then passes on to a man whom it calls Noah, and his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet; then to Lot, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and his sons, with which the book of Genesis finishes.

All these, according to the account given in that book, were the most extraordinary and celebrated of men. They were moreover heads of families. Adam was the father of the world. Enoch, for his righteousness, was taken up to heaven. Methuselah lived to almost a thousand years. He was the son of Enoch, the man of 365, the number of days in a year. It has the appearance of being the continuation of an allegory on the 365 days of the year, and its abundant productions.

Noah was selected from all the world to be preserved when it was drowned, and became the second father of the world. Abraham was the father of the faithful multitude. Isaac and Jacob were the inheritors of his fame, and the last was the father of the twelve tribes.

Now, if these very wonderful men and their names, and the book that records them, had been known by the Jews before the Babylonian captivity, those names would have been as common among the Jews before that period as they have been since. We now hear of thousands of Abrahams, Isaacs, and Jacobs among the Jews, but there were none of that name before the Babylonian captivity. The Bible does not mention one, though from the time that Abraham is said to have lived to the time of the Babylonian captivity is about 1,400 years.

How is it to be accounted for, that there have been so many thousands, and perhaps hundreds of thousands of Jews of the names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob since that period, and not one before?

It can be accounted for but one way, which is, that before the Babylonian captivity the Jews had no such book as Genesis, nor knew anything of the names and persons it mentions, nor of the things it relates, and that the stories in it have been manufactured since that time. From the Arabic name *Ibrahim* (which is the manner the Turks write that name to this day) the Jews have, most probably, manufactured their Abraham.

I will advance my observations a point further, and speak of the names of *Moses* and *Aaron*, mentioned for the first time in the book of Exodus. There are now, and have continued to be from the time of the Babylonian captivity, or soon after it, thousands of Jews of the names of *Moses* and *Aaron*, and we read not of any of that name before that time. The Bible does not mention one.

The direct inference from this is, that the Jews knew of no such book as Exodus before the Babylonian captivity. In fact, that it did not exist before that time, and that it is only since the book has been invented that the names of *Moses* and *Aaron* have been common among the Jews.

It is applicable to the purpose to observe, that the picturesque work, called *Mosaic-work*, spelled the same as you would say the *Mosaic* account of the creation, is not derived from the word *Moses* but from *Muses* (the *Muses*,) because of the variegated and picturesque pavement in the temples dedicated to the *Muses*. This carries a strong implication that the name *Moses* is drawn from the same source, and that he is not a real but an allegorical person, as

Maimonides describes what is called the *Mosaic* account of the Creation to be.

I will go a point still further. The Jews now know the book of Genesis, and the names of all the persons mentioned in the first *ten chapters* of that book, from Adam to Noah: yet we do not hear (I speak for myself) of any Jew of the present day, of the name of Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, Noah, Shem, Ham, or Japhet, (names mentioned in the first ten chapters), though these were, according to the account in that book, the most extraordinary of all the names that make up the catalogue of the Jewish chronology.

The names the Jews now adopt, are those that are mentioned in Genesis after the tenth chapter, as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc. How then does it happen that they do not adopt the names found in the first ten chapters? Here is evidently a line of division drawn between the first ten chapters of Genesis and the remaining chapters, with respect to the adoption of names. There must be some cause for this, and I go to offer a solution of the problem.

The reader will recollect the quotation I have already made from the Jewish rabbin, Maimonides, wherein he says, "We ought not to understand nor to take according to the letter that which is written in the book of the Creation. . . . It is a maxim (says he) which all our sages repeat, *above all* with respect to the work of six days." The qualifying expression *above all* implies there are other parts of the book, though not so important, that ought not to be understood or taken according to the letter, and as the Jews do not adopt the names mentioned in the first ten chapters, it appears evident those chapters are included in the injunction not to take them in a literal sense, or according to the letter.

From which it follows, that the persons or characters mentioned in the first ten chapters, as Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, and so on to Noah, are not real, but fictitious or allegorical persons, and therefore the Jews do not adopt their names into their families. If they affixed the same idea of reality to them as they do to those that follow after the tenth chapter, the names of Adam, Abel, Seth, etc., would be as common among the Jews of the present day as are those of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Aaron.

In the superstition they have been in, scarcely a Jew family would have been without an *Enoch*, as a presage of his going to Heaven as ambassador for the whole family. Every mother who wished that the *days* of her son might be long in the land would call him *Methuselah*; and all the Jews that might have to traverse the ocean would be named Noah, as a charm against shipwreck and drowning.

This is domestic evidence against the book of Genesis, which, joined to the several kinds of evidence before recited, show the book of Genesis not to be older than the Babylonian captivity, and to be fictitious. I proceed to fix the character and antiquity of the book of Job.

The book of Job has not the least appearance of being a book of the Jews, and though printed among the books of the Bible, does not belong to it. There is no reference to it in any Jewish law or ceremony. On the contrary, all the internal evidence it contains shows it to be a book of the Gentiles, either of Persia or Chaldea.

The name of Job does not appear to be a Jewish name. There is no Jew of that name in any of the books of the Bible, neither is there now that I ever heard of. The country where Job is said or supposed to have lived, or rather where the scene of the drama is laid, is called Uz, and there was no place of that name ever belonging to the Jews. If Uz is the same as Ur, it was in Chaldea, the country of the Gentiles.

The Jews can give no account how they came by this book, nor who was the author, nor the time when it was written. Origen, in his work against Celsus, (in the first ages of the Christian church,) says that *the book of Job is older than Moses*. Aben-Ezra, the Jewish commentator, whom (as I have before said) the bishop allows to have been a man of great erudition, and who certainly understood his own language, says that the book of Job has been translated from another language into Hebrew.

Spinoza, another Jewish commentator of great learning, confirms the opinion of Aben-Ezra, and says moreover, "*Je crois que Job etait Gentil;*"* "I believe that Job was a Gentile."

* Spinoza on the Ceremonies of the Jews, p. 296, published in French at Amsterdam, 1678.

The bishop, (in answer to me), says, that “the structure of the whole book of Job, in whatever light of history or drama it be considered, is founded on the belief that prevailed with the Persians and Chaldeans, and other Gentile nations, of a good and an evil spirit.”

In speaking of the good and evil spirit of the Persians, the bishop writes them *Arimanius* and *Oromasdes*. I will not dispute about the orthography, because I know that translated names are differently spelled in different languages. But he has nevertheless made a capital error. He has put the devil first; for Arimanius, or, as it is more generally written, *Ahriman*, is the evil spirit, and *Oromasdes* or *Ormud* the good spirit.

He has made the same mistake in the same paragraph, in speaking of the good and evil spirit of the ancient Egyptians, *Osiris* and *Typho*; he puts Typho before Osiris. The error is just the same as if the bishop in writing about the Christian religion, or in preaching a sermon, were to say the *Devil* and *God*.

A priest ought to know his own trade better. We agree, however, about the structure of the book of Job, that it is Gentile. I have said in the second part of the “Age of Reason,” and given my reasons for it, that *the drama of it is not Hebrew*.

From the Testimonies I have cited, that of Origen, who, about fourteen hundred years ago, said that the book of Job was more ancient than Moses, that of Aben-Ezra who, in his commentary on Job, says it has been translated from another language (and consequently from a Gentile language) into Hebrew; that of Spinoza, who not only says the same thing, but that the author of it was a Gentile; and that of the bishop, who says that the structure of the whole book is Gentile; it follows, in the first place, that the book of Job is not a book of the Jews originally.

Then, in order to determine to what people or nation any book of religion belongs, we must compare it with the leading dogmas and precepts of that people or nation; and therefore, upon the bishop’s own construction, the book of Job belongs either to the ancient Persians, the Chaldeans, or the Egyptians; because the structure of it is consistent with the dogma they held, that of a good and an evil spirit, called in Job *God* and *Satan*, existing as distinct and separate beings, and it is not consistent with any dogma of the Jews.

The belief of a good and an evil spirit, existing as distinct and separate beings, is not a dogma to be found in any of the books of the Bible. It is not till we come to the New Testament that we hear of any such dogma. There the person called the Son of God, holds conversation with Satan on a mountain, as familiarly as is represented in the drama of Job. Consequently the bishop cannot say, in this respect, that the New Testament is founded upon the Old.

According to the Old, the God of the Jews was the God of everything. All good and evil came from him. According to Exodus it was God, and not the devil, that hardened Pharaoh's heart. According to the book of Samuel, it was an evil spirit from *God* that troubled Saul. And Ezekiel makes God to say, in speaking of the Jews, "*I gave them the statutes that were not good, and judgments by which they should not live.*"

The Bible describes the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in such a contradictory manner, and under such a twofold character, there would be no knowing when He was in earnest and when in irony; when to believe, and when not.

As to the precepts, principles, and maxims in the book of Job, they show that the people abusively called the heathen in the books of the Jews, had the most sublime ideas of the Creator, and the most exalted devotional morality. It was the Jews who dishonored God. It was the Gentiles who glorified Him.

As to the fabulous personifications introduced by the Greek and Latin poets, it was a corruption of the ancient religion of the Gentiles, which consisted in the adoration of a first cause of the works of the creation, in which the sun was the great visible agent. It appears to have been a religion of gratitude and adoration, and not of prayer and discontented solicitation.

In Job we find adoration and submission, but not prayer. Even the Ten Commandments enjoin not prayer. Prayer has been added to devotion by the Church of Rome, as the instrument of fees and perquisites.

All prayers by the priests of the Christian Church, whether public or private, must be paid for. It may be right, individually, to pray for virtues, or mental instruction, but not for things. It is an attempt to

dictate to the Almighty in the government of the world. – But to return to the book of Job.

As the book of Job decides itself to be a book of the Gentiles, the next thing is to find out to what particular nation it belongs, and lastly, what is its antiquity.

As a composition, it is sublime, beautiful, and scientific: full of sentiment, and abounding in grand metaphorical description. As a drama it is regular. The *dramatis personas*, the persons performing the several parts, are regularly introduced, and speak without interruption or confusion. The scene, as I have before said, is laid in the country of the Gentiles, and the unities, though not always necessary in a drama, are observed here as strictly as the subject would admit.

In the last act, where the Almighty is introduced as speaking from the whirlwind, to decide the controversy between Job and his friends, it is an idea as grand as poetical imagination can conceive. What follows of Job's future prosperity does not belong to it as a drama. It is an epilogue of the writer, as the first verses of the first chapter, which gave an account of Job, his country and his riches, are the prologue.

The book carries the appearance of being the work of some of the Persian magi, not only because the structure of it corresponds to the dogma of the religion of those people, as founded by Zoroaster, but from the astronomical references in it to the constellations of the zodiac and other objects in the heavens, of which the sun, in their religion called Mithra, was the chief.

Job, in describing the power of God, (ix. 7-9), says, "Who commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and sealeth up the stars. Who alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. Who maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south." All this astronomical allusion is consistent with the religion of the Persians.

Establishing then the book of Job as the work of some of the Persian or Eastern magi, the case naturally follows that when the Jews returned from captivity, by the permission of Cyrus King of Persia, they brought this book with them, had it translated into Hebrew, and put into their scriptural canons, which were not formed till after their

return. This will account for the name of Job being mentioned in Ezekiel, (xiv. 14), who was one of the captives, and also for its not being mentioned in any book said or supposed to have been written before the captivity.

Among the astronomical allusions in the book, there is one which serves to fix its antiquity. It is that where God is made to say to Job, in the style of reprimand, "*Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades.*" (xxxviii. 31). As the explanation of this depends upon astronomical calculation, I will, for the sake of those who would not otherwise understand it, endeavor to explain it as clearly as the subject will admit.

The Pleiades are a cluster of pale, milky stars, about the size of a man's hand, in the constellation Taurus, or in English, the Bull. It is one of the constellations of the zodiac, of which there are twelve, answering to the twelve months of the year. The Pleiades are visible in the winter nights, but not in the summer nights, being then below the horizon.

The zodiac is an imaginary belt or circle in the heavens, eighteen degrees broad, in which the sun apparently makes his annual course, and in which all the planets move. When the sun appears to our view to be between us and the group of stars forming such or such a constellation, he is said to be in that constellation. Consequently the constellations he appears to be in, in the summer, are directly opposite to those he appeared in in the winter, and the same with respect to spring and autumn.

The zodiac, besides being divided into twelve constellations, is also, like every other circle, great or small, divided into 360 equal parts, called degrees; consequently each constellation contains 30 degrees. The constellations of the zodiac are generally called signs, to distinguish them from the constellations that are placed out of the zodiac, and this is the name I shall now use.

The procession of the Equinoxes is the part most difficult to explain, and it is on this that the explanation chiefly depends.

The Equinoxes correspond to the two seasons of the year when the sun makes equal day and night.

SABBATH OR SUNDAY

The seventh day, or more properly speaking the period of seven days, was originally a numerical division of time and nothing more; and had the bishop been acquainted with the history of astronomy, he would have known this. The annual revolution of the earth makes what we call a year. The year is artificially divided into months, the months into weeks of seven days, the days into hours, etc. The period of seven days, like any other of the artificial divisions of the year, is only a fractional part thereof, contrived for the convenience of countries. It is ignorance, imposition, and priest-craft, that have called it otherwise.

They might as well talk of the Lord's month, of the Lord's week, of the Lord's hour, as of the Lord's day. All time is His, and no part of it is more holy or more sacred than another. It is, however, necessary to the trade of a priest, that he should preach up a distinction of days.

Before the science of astronomy was studied and carried to the degree of eminence to which it was by the Egyptians and Chaldeans, the people of those times had no other helps than what common observation of the very visible changes of the sun and moon afforded, to enable them to keep an account of the progress of time.

As far as history establishes the point, the Egyptians were the first people who divided the year into twelve months. Herodotus, who lived above 2,200 years ago, and is the most ancient historian whose works have reached our time, says, *they did this by the knowledge they had of the stars.*

As to the Jews, there is not one single improvement in any science or in any scientific art that they ever produced. They were the most ignorant of all the illiterate world. If the word of the Lord had come to them, as they pretend, and as the bishop professes to believe, and that they were to be the harbingers of it to the rest of the world, the Lord would have taught them the use of letters, and the art of printing; for without the means of communicating the word, it could not be communicated; whereas letters were the invention of the Gentile world, and printing of the modern world. But to return to my subject —

Before the helps which the science of astronomy afforded, the people, as before said, had no other whereby to keep an account of the progress of time, than what the common and very visible changes of the sun and moon afforded. They saw that a great number of days made a year, but the account of them was too tedious and too difficult to be kept numerically, from one to three hundred and sixty-five; neither did they know the true time of a solar year.

It therefore became necessary, for the purpose of marking the progress of days, to put them into small parcels, such as are now called weeks; and which consisted as they now do of seven days.

By this means the memory was assisted as it is with us at this day; for we do not say of anything that is past, that it was fifty, sixty, or seventy days ago, but that it was so many weeks, or, if longer time, so many months. It is impossible to keep an account of time without helps of this kind.

Julian Scaliger, the inventor of the Julian period of 7,980 years, produced by multiplying the cycle of the moon, the cycle of the sun, and the years of an indiction, 19, 28, 15, into each other, says that the custom of reckoning by periods of seven days was used by the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Hebrews, the people of India, the Arabs, and by all the nations of the East.

In addition to what Scaliger says, it is evident that in Britain, in Germany, and the north of Europe, they reckoned by periods of seven days long before the book called the Bible was known in those parts; and, consequently, that they did not take that mode of reckoning from anything written in that book.

That they reckoned by periods of seven days is evident from their having seven names and no more for the several days; and which have not the most distant relation to anything in the book of Genesis, or to that which is called the fourth commandment.

Those names are still retained in England, with no other alteration than what has been produced by molding the Saxon and Danish languages into modern English:

1. Sun-day from *Sunne* the sun, and *dag*, day, Saxon. *Sondag*, Danish. The day dedicated to the sun.

2. Monday, that is, moonday, from *Mona*, the moon Saxon. *Moano*, Danish. Day dedicated to the moon.

3. Tuesday, that is *Tuisco's-day*. The day dedicated to the idol *Tuisco*.

4. Wednes-day, that is *Woden's-day*. The day dedicated to *Woden*, the Mars of the Germans.

5. Thursday, that is *Thor's-day*, dedicated to the Idol *Thor*.

6. Friday, that is *Friga's-day*. The day dedicated to *Friga*, the Venus of the Saxons.

7. Saturday from *Seaten* (*Saturn*) an idol of the Saxons; one of the emblems representing time, which continually terminates and renews itself; the last day of the period of seven days.

When we see a certain mode of reckoning general among nations totally unconnected, differing from each other in religion and in government, and some of them unknown to each other, we may be certain that it arises from some natural and common cause, prevailing alike over all, and which strikes everyone in the same manner.

Thus all nations have reckoned arithmetically by tens, because the people of all nations have ten fingers. If they had more or less than ten, the mode of arithmetical reckoning would have followed that number, for the fingers are a natural numeration table to all the world. I now come to show why the period of seven days is so generally adopted.

Though the sun is the great luminary of the world, and the animating cause of all the fruits of the earth, the moon by renewing herself more than twelve times oftener than the sun, which does it but once a year, served the rustic world as a natural almanac, as the fingers served it for a numeration table.

All the world could see the moon, her changes, and her monthly revolutions; and their mode of reckoning time was accommodated, as nearly as could possibly be done in round numbers, to agree with the changes of that planet, their natural almanac. The moon performs her natural revolution round the earth in twenty-nine days and a half. She goes from a new moon to a half moon, to a full moon, to a half moon gibbous or convex, and then to a new moon again.

Each of these changes is performed in seven days and nine hours; but seven days is the nearest division in round numbers that could be taken; and this was sufficient to suggest the universal custom of reckoning by periods of seven days, since it is impossible to reckon time without some stated period.

How the odd hours could be disposed of without interfering with the regular periods of seven days, in case the ancients recommenced a new Septenary period with every new moon, required no more difficulty than it did to regulate the Egyptian calendar afterwards of twelve months of thirty days each, or the odd hour in the Julian calendar, or the odd days and hours in the French calendar. In all cases it is done by the addition of complementary days; and it can be done in no otherwise.

The bishop knows that as the solar year does not end at the termination of what we call a day, but runs some hours into the next day, as the quarter of the moon runs some hours beyond seven days; that it is impossible to give the year any fixed number of days that will not in course of years become wrong, and make a complementary time necessary to keep the nominal year parallel with the solar year.

The same must have been the case with those who regulated time formerly by lunar revolutions. They would have to add three days to every second moon, or in that proportion, in order to make the new moon and the new week commence together, like the nominal year and the solar year.

Diodorus of Sicily, who, as before said, lived before Christ was born, in giving an account of times much anterior to his own, speaks of years of three months, of four months, and of six months. These could be of no other than years composed of lunar revolutions, and therefore, to bring the several periods of seven days to agree with such years, there must have been complementary days.

The moon was the first almanac the world knew; and the only one which the face of the heavens afforded to common spectators. Her changes and her revolutions have entered into all the calendars that have been known in the known world.

The division of the year into twelve months, which, as before shown, was first done by the Egyptians, though arranged with astro-

nomical knowledge, had reference to the twelve moons, or more properly speaking to the twelve lunar revolutions, that appear in the space of a solar year; as the period of seven days had reference to one revolution of the moon.

The feasts of the Jews were, and those of the Christian Church still are, regulated by the moon. The Jews observed the feasts of the new moon and full moon, and therefore the period of seven days was necessary to them.

All the feasts of the Christian Church are regulated by the moon. That called Easter governs all the rest, and the moon governs Easter. It is always the first Sunday after the first full moon that happens after the vernal Equinox, or twenty-first of March.

In proportion as the science of astronomy was studied and improved by the Egyptians and Chaldeans, and the solar year regulated by astronomical observations, the custom of reckoning by lunar revolutions became of less use, and in time discontinued. But such is the harmony of all parts of the machinery of the universe, that a calculation made from the motion of one part will correspond with the motion of some other.

The period of seven days, deduced from the revolution of the moon round the earth, corresponded nearer than any other period of days would do to the revolution of the earth round the sun. Fifty-two periods of seven days make 364, which is within one day and some odd hours of a solar year; and there is no other periodical number that will do the same, till we come to the number thirteen, which is too great for common use, and the numbers before seven are too small.

The custom therefore of reckoning by periods of seven days, as best suited to the revolution of the moon, applied with equal convenience to the solar year, and became united with it. But the decimal division of time, as regulated by the French Calendar, is superior to every other method.

There is no part of the Bible that is supposed to have been written by persons who lived before the time of Josiah, (which was a thousand years after the time of Moses), that mentions anything about the Sabbath as a day consecrated to that which is called the fourth commandment, or that the Jews kept any such day.

Had any such day been kept, during the thousand years of which I am speaking, it certainly would have been mentioned frequently; and that it should never be mentioned is strong presumptive and circumstantial evidence that no such day was kept. But mention is often made of the feasts of the new moon, and of the full moon; for the Jews, as before shown, worshipped the moon; and the word *Sabbath* was applied by the Jews to the feasts of that planet, and to those of their other deities.

It is said in Hosea ii. 11, in speaking of the Jewish nation, "And I will cause all her mirth to cease, her feast-days, her *new moons*, and her *sabbaths*, and all her solemn feasts." Nobody will be so foolish as to contend that the sabbaths here spoken of are Mosaic sabbaths. The construction of the verse implies they are lunar sabbaths, or sabbaths of the moon.

It ought also to be observed that Hosea lived in the time of Ahaz and Hezekiah, about seventy years before the time of Josiah, when the law called the law of Moses is said to have been found; and, consequently, the sabbaths that Hosea speaks of are sabbaths of the Idolatry.

When those priestly reformers (impostors I should call them) Hilkiyah, Ezra, and Nehemiah, began to produce books under the name of the books of Moses, they found the word *sabbath* in use: and as to the period of seven days, it is, like numbering arithmetically by tens, from time immemorial.

But having found them in use, they continued to make them serve to the support of their new imposition. They trumped up a story of the creation being made in six days, and of the Creator resting on the seventh, to suit with the lunar and chronological period of seven days; and they manufactured a commandment to agree with both.

Impostors always work in this manner. They put fables for originals, and causes for effects.

There is scarcely any part of science, or anything in nature, which those impostors and blasphemers of science, called priests, as well Christians as Jews, have not, at some time or other, perverted, or sought to pervert to the purpose of superstition and falsehood.

Everything wonderful in appearance, has been ascribed to angels, to devils, or to saints. Everything ancient has some legendary tale annexed to it. The common operations of nature have not escaped their practice of corrupting everything.

FUTURE STATE

The idea of a future state was an universal idea to all nations except the Jews. At the time, and long before, Jesus Christ and the men called his disciples were born, it had been sublimely treated of by Cicero (in his book on Old Age,) by Plato, Socrates, Xenophon, and other of the ancient theologians, whom the abusive Christian Church calls heathen. Xenophon represents the elder Cyrus speaking after this manner:

“Think not, my dearest children, that when I depart from you, I shall be no more: but remember that my soul, even while I lived among you, was invisible to you; yet by my actions you were sensible it existed in this body. Believe it therefore existing still, though it be still unseen. How quickly would the honors of illustrious men perish after death, if their souls performed nothing to preserve their fame?

“For my own part, I could never think that the soul while in a mortal body lives, but when departed from it dies; or that its consciousness is lost when it is discharged out of an unconscious habitation. But when it is freed from all corporeal alliance, it is then that it truly exists.”

Since then the idea of a future existence was universal, it may be asked, what new doctrine does the New Testament contain? I answer, that of corrupting the theory of the ancient theologians, by annexing to it the heavy and gloomy doctrine of the resurrection of the body.

As to the resurrection of the body, whether the same body or another, it is a miserable conceit, fit only to be preached to man as an animal. It is not worthy to be called doctrine. Such an idea never entered the brain of any visionary but those of the Christian Church; yet it is in this that the novelty of the New Testament consists! All the other matters serve but as props to this, and those props are most wretchedly put together.

MIRACLES

The Christian Church is full of miracles. In one of the churches of Brabant they show a number of cannon balls which, they say, the Virgin Mary, in some former war, caught in her muslin *apron* as they came roaring out of the cannon's mouth, to prevent their hurting the *saints* of her favorite army. She does no such feats now-a-days. Perhaps the reason is, that the infidels have taken away her muslin apron.

They show also, between Montmartre and the village of St. Denis, several places where they say St. Denis stopped with his head in his hands after it had been cut off at Montmartre. The Protestants will call those things lies; and where is the proof that all the other things called miracles are not as great lies as those?

CABALISM

Christ, say those Cabalists, came in the *fullness of time*. And pray what is the fullness of time? The words admit of no idea. They are perfectly cabalistical. Time is a word invented to describe to our conception a greater or less portion of eternity. It may be a minute, a portion of eternity measured by the vibration of a pendulum of a certain length; it may be a day, a year, a hundred, or a thousand years, or any other quantity. Those portions are only greater or less comparatively.

The word fullness applies not to any of them. The idea of fullness of time cannot be conceived. A woman with child and ready for delivery, as Mary was when Christ was born, may be said to have gone her full time; but it is the woman that is full, not time.

It may also be said figuratively, in certain cases, that the times are full of events; but time itself is incapable of being full of itself. Ye hypocrites! learn to speak intelligible language.

It happened to be a time of peace when they say Christ was born; and what then? There had been many such intervals; and have been many such since. Time was no fuller in any of them than in the other. If he were he would be fuller now than he ever was before. If he was full then he must be bursting now.

But peace or war have relation to circumstances, and not to time; and those Cabalists would be at as much loss to make out any meaning to fullness of circumstances, as to fullness of time. And if they could, it would be fatal; for fullness of circumstances would mean when there are no more circumstances to happen; and fullness of time when there is no more time to follow.

Christ, therefore, like every other person, was neither in the fullness of one nor the other.

But though we cannot conceive the idea of fullness of time, because we cannot have conception of a time when there shall be no time; nor of fullness of circumstance, because we cannot conceive a state of existence to be without circumstances; we can often see, after a thing is past, if any circumstance necessary to give the utmost activity and success to that thing was wanting at the time that thing took place.

If such a circumstance was wanting, we may be certain that the thing which took place was not a thing of God's ordaining; whose work is always perfect, and His means perfect means. They tell us that Christ was the Son of God: in that case, he would have known everything; and he came upon earth to make known the will of God to man throughout the whole earth.

If this had been true, Christ would have known and would have been furnished with all the possible means of doing it; and would have instructed mankind, or at least his apostles, in the use of such of the means as they could use themselves to facilitate the accomplishment of the mission; consequently he would have instructed them in the art of printing, for the press is the tongue of the world, and without which, his or their preaching was less than a whistle compared to thunder.

Since then he did not do this, he had not the means necessary to the mission; and consequently had not the mission.

They tell us in the book of Acts (ii.), a very stupid story of the Apostles' having the gift of tongues; and *cloven tongues of fire* descended and sat upon each of them. Perhaps it was this story of cloven tongues that gave rise to the notion of slitting jackdaws' tongues to make them talk. Be that however as it may, the gift of tongues,

even if it were true, would be but of little use without the art of printing.

I can sit in my chamber, as I do while writing this, and by the aid of printing can send the thoughts I am writing through the greatest part of Europe, to the East Indies, and over all North America, in a few months. Jesus Christ and his apostles could not do this. They had not the means, and the want of means detects the pretended mission.

There are three modes of communication. Speaking, writing, and printing. The first is exceedingly limited. A man's voice can be heard but a few yards of distance; and his person can be but in one place. Writing is much more extensive; but the thing written cannot be multiplied but at great expense, and the multiplication will be slow and incorrect.

Were there no other means of circulating what priests call the Word of God (the Old and New Testament) than by writing copies, those copies could not be purchased at less than forty pounds sterling each; consequently, but few people could purchase them, while the writers could scarcely obtain a livelihood by it.

But the art of printing changes all the cases, and opens a scene as vast as the world. It gives to man a sort of divine attribute. It gives to him mental omnipresence. He can be everywhere and at the same instant; for wherever he is read he is mentally there.

The case applies not only against the pretended mission of Christ and his Apostles, but against everything that priests call the Word of God, and against all those who pretend to deliver it; for had God ever delivered any verbal word, He would have taught the means of communicating it. The one without the other is inconsistent with the wisdom we conceive of the Creator.

Genesis iii. 21 tells us that *God made coats of skin and clothed Adam and Eve*. It was infinitely more important that man should be taught the art of printing, than that Adam should be taught to make a pair of leather breeches, or his wife a petticoat.

There is another matter, equally striking and important, that connects itself with these observations against this pretended Word of God, this manufactured book called *Revealed Religion*. We know that whatever is of God's doing is unalterable by man beyond the

laws which the Creator has ordained. We cannot make a tree grow with the root in the air and the fruit in the ground; we cannot make iron into gold nor gold into iron; we cannot make rays of light shine forth rays of darkness, nor darkness shine forth light.

If there were such a thing, as a Word of God, it would possess the same properties which all His other works do. It would resist destructive alteration. But we see that the book which they call the Word of God has not this property. That book says, (Genesis i. 27), "*So God created man in his own image;*" but the printer can make it say, *So man created God in his own image.*

The words are passive to every transposition of them, or can be annihilated and others put in their places. This is not the case with anything that is of God's doing; and, therefore, this book called the Word of God, tried by the same universal rule which every other of God's works within our reach can be tried by, proves itself to be a forgery.

The bishop says, that "*miracles are proper proofs of a divine mission.*" Admitted. But we know that men, and especially priests, can tell lies and call them miracles. It is therefore necessary that the thing called a miracle be proved to be true, and also to be miraculous, before it can be admitted as proof of the thing called revelation.

The bishop must be a bad logician not to know that one doubtful thing cannot be admitted as proof that another doubtful thing is true. It would be like attempting to prove a liar not to be a liar, by the evidence of another who is as great a liar as himself.

Though Jesus Christ, by being ignorant of the art of printing, shows he had not the means necessary to a divine mission, and consequently had no such mission; it does not follow that if he had known that art the divinity of what they call his mission would be proved thereby, any more than it proved the divinity of the man who invented printing.

Something therefore beyond printing, even if he had known it, was necessary as a *miracle*, to have proved that what he delivered was the Word of God; and this was that the book in which that word should be contained, which is now called the Old and New Testa-

ment, should possess the miraculous property, distinct from all human books, of resisting alteration.

This would be not only a miracle, but an ever existing and universal miracle; whereas, those which they tell us of, even if they had been true, were momentary and local; they would leave no trace behind, after the lapse of a few years, of having ever existed; but this would prove, in all ages and in all places, the book to be divine and not human, as effectually, and as conveniently, as aquafortis proves gold to be gold by not being capable of acting upon it, and detects all other metals and all counterfeit composition, by dissolving them.

Since then the only miracle capable of every proof is wanting, and which everything that is of a divine origin possesses, all the tales of miracles, with which the Old and New Testament are filled, are fit only for impostors to preach and fools to believe.

WORSHIP AND CHURCH BELLS

A LETTER TO CAMILLE JORDAN

CITIZEN REPRESENTATIVE:

As everything in your Report, relating to what you call worship, connects itself with the books called the Scriptures, I begin with a quotation therefrom. It may serve to give us some idea of the fanciful origin and fabrication of those books, II Chronicles xxxiv, 14, etc. "Hilkiah, the priest, *found* the book of the law of the Lord given by Moses. And Hilkiah, the priest, said to Shaphan, the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord, and Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan. And Shaphan, the scribe, told the king, (Josiah), saying, Hilkiah, the priest, hath given me a book."

This pretended finding was about a thousand years after the time that Moses is said to have lived. Before this pretended finding, there was no such thing practiced or known in the world as that which is called the law of Moses.

This being the case, there is every apparent evidence that the books called the books of Moses (and which make the first part of what are called the Scriptures) are forgeries contrived between a priest and a limb of the law, Hilkiah, and Shaphan the scribe, a thousand years after Moses is said to have been dead.

Thus much for the first part of the Bible. Every other part is marked with circumstances equally as suspicious. We ought therefore to be reverentially careful how we ascribe books *as his word*, of which there is no evidence, and against which there is abundant evidence to the contrary, and every cause to suspect imposition.

In your Report you speak continually of something by the name of worship, and you confine yourself to speak of one kind only, as if there were but one, and that one was unquestionably true.

The modes of worship are as various as the sects are numerous; and amidst all this variety and multiplicity there is but one article of belief in which every religion in the world agrees. That article has universal sanction. It is the belief of a God, or what the Greeks described by the word *Theism*, and the Latins by that of *Deism*.

Upon this one article have been erected all the different superstructures of creeds and ceremonies continually warring with each other that now exist or ever existed. But the men most and best informed upon the subject of theology rest themselves upon this universal article, and hold all the various superstructures erected thereon to be at least doubtful, if not altogether artificial.

The intellectual part of religion is a private affair between every man and his Maker, and in which no third party has any right to interfere. The practical part consists in our doing good to each other. But since religion has been made into a trade, the practical part has been made to consist of ceremonies performed by men called priests; and the people have been amused with ceremonial shows, processions, and bells.

By devices of this kind true religion has been banished; and such means have been found out to extract money even from the pockets of the poor, instead of contributing to their relief.

No man ought to make a living by religion. It is dishonest so to do. Religion is not an act that can be performed by proxy. One person cannot act religion for another. Every person must perform it for himself; and all that a priest can do is to take from him; he wants nothing but his money and then to riot in the spoil and laugh at his credulity.

The only people who, as a professional sect of Christians provide for the poor of their society, are people known by the name of Quakers. Those men have no priests. They assemble quietly in their places of meeting, and do not disturb their neighbors with shows and noise of bells. Religion does not unite itself to show and noise. True religion is without either. Where there is both there is no true religion.

The first object for inquiry in all cases, more especially in matters of religious concern, is TRUTH. We ought to inquire into the

truth of whatever we are taught to believe, and it is certain that the books called the Scriptures stand, in this respect, in more than a doubtful predicament.

They have been held in existence, and in a sort of credit among the common class of people, by art, terror, and persecution. They have little or no credit among the enlightened part, but they have been made the means of encumbering the world with a numerous priesthood, who have fattened on the labor of the people, and consumed the sustenance that ought to be applied to the widows and the poor.

It is a want of feeling to talk of priests and bells while so many infants are perishing in the hospitals, and aged and infirm poor in the streets, from the want of necessaries. The abundance that France produces is sufficient for every want, if rightly applied; but priests and bells, like articles of luxury, ought to be the least articles of consideration.

We talk of religion. Let us talk of truth; for that which is not truth, is not worthy of the name of religion.

We see different parts of the world overspread with different books, each of which, though contradictory to the other, is said by its partisans to be of divine origin, and is made a rule of faith and practice.

In countries under despotic governments, where inquiry is always forbidden, the people are condemned to believe as they have been taught by their priests. This was for many centuries the case in France: but this link in the chain of slavery is happily broken by the revolution; and, that it may never be riveted again, let us employ a part of the liberty we enjoy in scrutinizing into the truth.

Let us leave behind us some monument, that we have made the cause and honor of our Creator an object of our care. If we have been imposed upon by the terrors of government and the artifice of priests in matters of religion, let us do justice to our Creator by examining into the case. His name is too sacred to be affixed to anything which is fabulous; and it is our duty to inquire whether we believe, or encourage the people to believe, in fables or in facts.

It would be a project worthy the situation we are in, to invite an inquiry of this kind. We have committees for various objects; and, among others, a committee for bells. We have institutions, academies, and societies for various purposes; but we have none for inquiring into historical truth in matters of religious concern.

They show us certain books which they call the Holy Scriptures, the word of God, and other names of that kind; but we ought to know what evidence there is for our believing them to be so, and at what time they originated and in what manner. We know that men could make books, and we know that artifice and superstition could give them a name, – could call them sacred. But we ought to be careful that the name of our Creator be not abused. Let then all the evidence with respect to those books be made a subject of inquiry. If there be evidence to warrant our belief of them, let us encourage the propagation of it; but if not, let us be careful not to promote the cause of delusion and falsehood.

I have already spoken of the Quakers – that they have no priests, no bells – and that they are remarkable for their care of the poor of their Society. They are equally as remarkable for the education of their children. I am a descendant of a family of that profession; my father was a Quaker; and I presume I may be admitted an evidence of what I assert.

The seeds of good principles, and the literary means of advancement in the world, are laid in early life. Instead, therefore, of consuming the substance of the nation upon priests, whose life at best is a life of idleness, let us think of providing for the education of those who have not the means of doing it themselves. One good schoolmaster is of more use than a hundred priests.

If we look back at what was the condition of France under the *ancien regime*, we cannot acquit the priests of corrupting the morals of the nation. Their pretended celibacy led them to carry debauchery and domestic infidelity into every family where they could gain admission; and their blasphemous pretensions to forgive sins encouraged the commission of them. Why has the Revolution of France been stained with crimes, which the Revolution of the United States of America was not? Men are physically the same in all countries; it is education that makes them different. Accustom a people to believe

that priests or any other class of men can forgive sins, and you will have sins in abundance.

I come now to speak more particularly to the object of your report.

You claim a privilege incompatible with the constitution and with rights. The constitution protects equally, as it ought to do, every profession of religion; it gives no exclusive privilege to any. The churches are the common property of all the people; they are national goods, and cannot be given exclusively to any one profession, because the right does not exist of giving to any one that which appertains to all.

It would be consistent with right that the churches be sold, and the money arising therefrom be invested as a fund for the education of children of poor parents of every profession, and, if more than sufficient for this purpose, that the surplus be appropriated to the support of the aged poor. After this, every profession can erect its own place of worship, if it choose – support its own priests, if it choose to have any – or perform its worship without priests, as the Quakers do.

As to bells, they are a public nuisance. If one profession is to have bells, and another has the right to use the instruments of the same kind, or any other noisy instrument, some may choose to meet at the sound of cannon, another at the beat of drum, another at the sound of trumpets, and so on, until the whole becomes a scene of general confusion. But if we permit ourselves to think of the state of the sick, and the many sleepless nights and days they undergo, we shall feel the impropriety of increasing their distress by the noise of bells, or any other noisy instruments.

Quiet and private domestic devotion neither offends nor incommodes anybody; and the Constitution has wisely guarded against the use of externals. Bells come under this description, and public processions still more so. Streets and highways are for the accommodation of persons following their several occupations, and no sectary has a right to incommode them. If anyone has, every other has the same; and the meeting of various and contradictory processions would be tumultuous.

Those who formed the Constitution had wisely reflected upon these cases; and, whilst they were careful to reserve the equal right of every one, they restrained everyone from giving offence, or incommoding another.

Men who, through a long and tumultuous scene, have lived in retirement as you have done, may think, when they arrive at power, that nothing is more easy than to put the world to rights in an instant; they form to themselves gay ideas at the success of their projects; but they forget to contemplate the difficulties that attend them, and the dangers with which they are pregnant.

Alas! nothing is so easy as to deceive one's self. Did all men think as you think, or as you say, your plan would need no advocate, because it would have no opposer; but there are millions who think differently to you, and who are determined to be neither the dupes nor the slaves of error or design.

It is your good fortune to arrive at power, when the sunshine of prosperity is breaking forth after a long and stormy night. The firmness of your colleagues, and of those you have succeeded – the unabated energy of the Directory, and the unequalled bravery of the armies of the Republic, – have made the way smooth and easy to you.

If you look back at the difficulties that existed when the Constitution commenced, you cannot but be confounded with admiration at the difference between that time and now. At that moment the Directory were placed like the forlorn hope of an army, but you were in safe retirement. They occupied the post of honorable danger, and they have merited well of their country.

You talk of justice and benevolence, but you begin at the wrong end. The defenders of your country, and the deplorable state of the poor, are objects of prior consideration to priests and bells and gaudy processions.

You talk of peace, but your manner of talking of it embarrasses the Directory in making it, and serves to prevent it. Had you been an actor in all the scenes of government from its commencement, you would have been too well informed to have brought forward projects that operate to encourage the enemy.

When you arrived at a share in the government, you found everything tending to a prosperous issue. A series of victories unequalled in the world, and in the obtaining of which you had no share, preceded your arrival. Every enemy but one was subdued; and that one, (the Hanoverian government of England,) deprived of every hope, and a bankrupt in all its resources, was suing for peace. In such a state of things, no new question that might tend to agitate and anarchize the interior ought to have had place; and the project you propose tends directly to that end.

While France was a monarchy, and under the government of those things called kings and priests, England could always defeat her; but since France has RISEN TO BE A REPUBLIC, the GOVERNMENT OF ENGLAND crouches beneath her, so great is the difference between a government of kings and priests, and that which is founded on the system of representation.

But, could the Government of England find a way, under the sanction of your report, to inundate France with a flood of emigrant priests, she would find also the way to domineer as before; she would retrieve her shattered finances at your expense, and the ringing of bells would be the tocsin of your downfall.

Did peace consist in nothing but the cessation of war, it would not be difficult; but the terms are yet to be arranged and those terms will be better or worse, in proportion as France and her counsels be united or divided. That the government of England counts much upon your Report, and upon others of a similar tendency, is what the writer of this letter, who knows that government well, has no doubt.

You are but new on the theatre of government, and you ought to suspect yourself of misjudging; the experience of those who have gone before you, should be of some service to you. But if, in consequence of such measures as you propose, you put it out of the power of the Directory to make a good peace, and force them to accept of terms you would afterwards reprobate, it is yourself that must bear the censure.

You conclude your report by the following address to your colleagues:

“Let us hasten, representatives of the people! to affix to these tutelary laws the seal of our unanimous approbation. All our fellow-citizens will learn to cherish political liberty from the enjoyment of religious liberty: you will have broken the most powerful arm of your enemies; you will have surrounded this assembly with the most impregnable rampart – confidence, and the people’s love.

“O my colleagues, how desirable is that popularity which is the offspring of good laws! What a consolation it will be to us hereafter, when returned to our own firesides, to hear from the mouths of our fellow-citizens these simple expressions – *Blessings reward you, men of peace! you have restored to us our temples, our ministers, the liberty of adoring the God of our fathers: you have recalled harmony to our families – morality to our hearts: You have made us adore the legislature and respect all its laws!*”

Is it possible, citizen representative, that you can be serious in this address? Were the lives of the priests under the *ancien regime* such as to justify anything you say of them? Were not all France convinced of their immorality? Were they not considered as the patrons of debauchery and domestic infidelity, and not as the patrons of morals? What was their pretended celibacy but perpetual adultery? What was their blasphemous pretention to forgive sins but an encouragement to the commission of them, and a love for their own?

Do you want to lead again into France all the vices of which they have been the patrons, and to overspread the republic with English pensioners? It is cheaper to corrupt than to conquer; and the English Government, unable to conquer, will stoop to corrupt. Arrogance and meanness, though in appearance opposite, are vices of the same heart.

Instead of concluding in the manner you have done, you ought rather to have said:

“O my colleagues! we are arrived at a glorious period – a period that promises more than we could have expected, and all that we could have wished. Let us hasten to take into consideration the honors and rewards due to our brave defenders. Let us hasten to give encouragement to agriculture and manufactures, that commerce may reinstate itself, and our people have employment. Let us review the

condition of the suffering poor, and wipe from our country the reproach of forgetting them.

“Let us devise means to establish schools of instruction, that we may banish the ignorance that the *ancien regime* of kings and priests had spread among the people. Let us propagate morality, unfettered by superstition. Let us cultivate justice and benevolence, that the God of our fathers may bless us. The helpless infant and the aged poor cry to us to remember them. Let not wretchedness be seen in our streets. Let France exhibit to the world the glorious example of expelling ignorance and misery together.

“Let these, my virtuous colleagues, be the subject of our care that, when we return among our fellow-citizens they may say, *Worthy representatives! you have done well. You have done justice and honor to our brave defenders. You have encouraged agriculture, cherished our decayed manufactures, given new life to commerce, and employment to our people.*

“You have removed from our the reproach of forgetting the poor – You have caused the cry of the orphan to cease – You have wiped the tear from the eye of the suffering mother – You have given comfort to the aged and infirm – You have penetrated into the gloomy recesses of wretchedness, and have banished it.

“Welcome among us, ye brave and virtuous representatives, and may your example be followed by your successors!”

— THOMAS PAINE

REMARKS ON R. HALL'S SERMON

The preacher of the foregoing sermon speaks a great deal about *infidelity*, but does not define what he means by it. His harangue is a general exclamation. Everything, I suppose that is not in his creed is infidelity with him, and his creed is infidelity with me. Infidelity is believing falsely. If what Christians believe is not true, it is the Christians that are the infidels.

The point between Deists and Christians is not about doctrine, but about fact – for if the things believed by the Christians to be facts are not facts, the doctrine founded thereon falls of itself. There is such a book as the Bible, but is it a fact that the Bible is *revealed religion*? The Christians cannot prove it is. They put tradition in place of evidence, and tradition is not proof. If it were, the reality of witches could be proved by the same kind of evidence.

The Bible is a history of the times of which it speaks, and history is not revelation. The obscene and vulgar stories in the Bible are as repugnant to our ideas of the purity of a divine Being, as the horrid cruelties and murders it ascribes to Him are repugnant to our ideas of His justice. It is the reverence of the *Deists* for the attributes of the DEITY, that causes them to reject the Bible.

Is the account which the Christian church gives of the person called Jesus Christ a fact, or a fable? Is it a fact that he was begotten by the Holy Ghost? The Christians cannot prove it, for the case does not admit of proof.

The things called miracles in the Bible, such for instance as raising the dead, admitted if true of ocular demonstration, but the story of the conception of Jesus Christ in the womb is a case beyond miracle, for it did not admit of demonstration.

Mary, the reputed mother of Jesus, who must be supposed to know best, never said so herself, and all the evidence of it is that the

book of Matthew says that Joseph dreamed an angel told him so. Had an old maid two or three hundred years of age brought forth a child it would have been much better presumptive evidence of a supernatural conception, than Matthew's story of Joseph's dream about his young wife.

Is it a fact that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world, and how is it proved? If a God he could not die, and as a man he could not redeem. How then is this redemption proved to be fact? It is said that Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, commonly called an apple, and thereby subjected himself and all his posterity for ever to eternal damnation.

This is worse than visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the *third and fourth generations*. But how was the death of Jesus Christ to affect or alter the case? Did God thirst for blood? If so, would it not have been better to have crucified Adam at once upon the forbidden tree, and made a new man? Would not this have been more creator-like than repairing the old one?

Or did God, when He made Adam, supposing the story to be true, exclude Himself from the right of making another? or impose on Himself the necessity of breeding from the old stock? Priests should first prove facts, and deduce doctrines from them afterwards. But instead of this they assume everything and prove nothing. Authorities drawn from the Bible are no more than authorities drawn from other books, unless it can be proved that the Bible is revelation.

The story of the redemption will not stand examination. That man should redeem himself from the sin of eating an apple by committing a murder on Jesus Christ, is the strangest system of religion ever set up. Deism is perfect purity compared with this.

It is an established principle with the Quakers not to shed blood: suppose then all Jerusalem had been Quakers when Christ lived, there would have been nobody to crucify him, and in that case, if man is redeemed by his blood, which is the belief of the Church, there could have been no redemption; and the people of Jerusalem must all have been damned because they were too good to commit murder. The Christian system of religion is an outrage on common sense. Why is man afraid to think?

Why do not the Christians, to be consistent, make saints of Judas and Pontius Pilate? For they were the persons who accomplished the act of salvation. The merit of a sacrifice, if there can be any merit in it, was never in the thing sacrificed, but in the persons offering up the sacrifice – and, therefore, Judas and Pontius Pilate ought to stand first on the calendar of saints.

OF CAIN AND ABEL

The story of Cain and Abel is told in Genesis iv. Cain was the elder brother, and Abel the younger, and Cain killed Abel. The Egyptian story of Typhon and Osiris, and the Jewish story in Genesis of Cain and Abel, have the appearance of being the same story differently told, and that it came originally from Egypt.

In the Egyptian story, Typhon and Osiris are brothers; Typhon is the elder, and Osiris the younger, and Typhon kills Osiris. The story is an allegory on Darkness and Light: Typhon, the elder brother, is Darkness, because Darkness was supposed to be more ancient than Light: Osiris is the Good Light who rules during the summer months, and brings forth the fruits of the earth, and is the favorite, as Abel is said to have been; for which Typhon hates him; and when the winter comes, and cold and darkness overspread the earth, Typhon is represented as having killed Osiris out of malice, as Cain is said to have killed Abel.

The two stories are alike in their circumstances and their event, and are probably but the same story. What corroborates this opinion is, that the fifth chapter of Genesis historically contradicts the reality of the story of Cain and Abel in the fourth chapter; for though the name of Seth, a son of Adam, is mentioned in the fourth chapter, he is spoken of in the fifth chapter as if he was the firstborn of Adam. The chapter begins thus:

This is the book of the *generations* of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God created He him; Male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years and begat a son, in his own likeness and after his image, and called his name *Seth*. ” The rest of the chapter goes on with the genealogy.

Anybody reading this chapter, cannot suppose there were any sons born before *Seth*. The chapter begins with what is called *the cre-*

ation of Adam, and calls itself the book of the *generation of Adam*, yet no mention is made of such persons as Cain and Abel.

One thing however is evident on the face of these two chapters, which is, that the same person is not the writer of both; the most blundering historian could not have committed himself in such a manner.

Though I look on everything in the first ten chapters of Genesis to be fiction, yet fiction historically told should be consistent; whereas these two chapters are not. The Cain and Abel of Genesis appear to be no other than the ancient Egyptian story of Typhon and Osiris, the Darkness and the Light, which answered very well as an allegory without being believed as a fact.

OF THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

ADDRESS TO THE BELIEVERS IN THE BOOK CALLED THE SCRIPTURES

The New Testament contains twenty-seven books, of which four are called Gospels; one called the Acts of the Apostles; fourteen called the Epistles of Paul; one of James; two of Peter; three of John; one of Jude; one called the Revelation.

None of those books have the appearance of being written by the persons whose names they bear, neither do we know who the authors were. They come to us on no other authority than the Church of Rome, which the Protestant Priests, especially those of New England, call the *Whore of Babylon*.

This church, or to use their own vulgar language, *this whore*, appointed sundry councils to be held, to compose creeds for the people, and to regulate Church affairs. Two of the principal of these councils were that of Nice, and of Laodicea (names of the places where the councils were held) about three hundred and fifty years after the time that Jesus is said to have lived. Before this time there was no such book as the New Testament.

But the Church could not well go on without having something to show, as the Persians showed the Zend-Avesta, revealed they say by God to Zoroaster; the Bramins of India, the Shaster, revealed, they say, by God to Brama, and given to him out of a dusky cloud; the Jews, the books they call the Law of Moses, given they say also out of a cloud on Mount Sinai.

The Church set about forming a code for itself out of such materials as it could find or pick up. But where they got those materials, in what language they were written, or whose handwriting they were,

or whether they were originals or copies, or on what authority they stood, we know nothing of, nor does the New Testament tell us.

The Church was resolved to have a New Testament, and as, after the lapse of more than three hundred years, no handwriting could be proved or disproved, the Church, which like former impostors had then gotten possession of the State, had everything its own way. It invented creeds, such as that called the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and out of the loads of rubbish that were presented it voted four to be Gospels, and others to be Epistles, as we now find them arranged.

Of those called Gospels, above forty were presented, each contending to be genuine. Four only were voted in, and entitled: the Gospel *according* to St. Matthew – the Gospel *according* to St. Mark – the Gospel *according* to St. Luke – the Gospel *according* to St. John.

This word *according*, shows that those books have not been written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, but according to some accounts or traditions, picked up concerning them. The word “according” means agreeing with, and necessarily includes the idea of two things, or two persons.

We cannot say, *The Gospel written by Matthew according to Matthew*, but we might say, the Gospel of some other person according to what was reported to have been the opinion of Matthew. Now we do not know who those other persons were, nor whether what they wrote accorded with anything that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John might have said. There is too little evidence, and too much contrivance, about those books to merit credit.

The next book after those called Gospels, is that called the Acts of the Apostles. This book is anonymous; neither do the councils that compiled or contrived the New Testament tell us how they came by it. The Church, to supply this defect, say it was written by Luke, which shows that the Church and its priests have not compared that called the Gospel according to St. Luke and the Acts together, for the two contradict each other.

The book of Luke, xxiv., makes Jesus ascend into heaven the very same day that it makes him rise from the grave. The book of

Acts, i. 3, says that he remained on earth forty days after his crucifixion. There is no believing what either of them says.

The next to the book of Acts is that entitled, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle* to the Romans." This is not an Epistle, or letter, written by Paul or signed by him. It is an Epistle, or letter, written by a person who signs himself TERTIUS, and sent, as it is said in the end, by a servant woman called Phebe. The last chapter, ver. 22, says, "I Tertius, who wrote this Epistle, salute you." Who Tertius or Phebe were, we know nothing of.

The epistle is not dated. The whole of it is written in the first person, and that person is Tertius, not Paul. But it suited the Church to ascribe it to Paul. There is nothing in it that is interesting except it be to contending and wrangling sectaries. The stupid metaphor of the potter and the clay is in chapter ix.

The next book is entitled "The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians." This, like the former, is not an Epistle written by Paul, nor signed by him. The conclusion of the Epistle says, "The first epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, by Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus, and Timotheus."

The second epistle entitled, "The second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians," is in the same case with the first. The conclusion of it says, "It was written from Philippi, a city of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas."

A question may arise upon these cases, which is, are these persons the writers of the epistles originally, or are they the writers and attestors of copies sent to the councils who compiled the code or canon of the New Testament? If the epistles had been dated this question could be decided; but in either of the cases the evidences of Paul's hand writing and of their being written by him is wanting, and, therefore, there is no authority for calling them Epistles of Paul. We

* According to the criterion of the Church, Paul was not an apostle; that appellation being given only to those called the Twelve. Two sailors belonging to a man-of-war got into a dispute upon this point, whether Paul was an apostle or not, and they agreed to refer it to the boatswain, who decided very *canonically* that Paul was an *acting* apostle but not *rated*.

know not whose Epistles they were, nor whether they are genuine or forged.

The next is entitled, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians." It contains six short chapters, yet the writer of it says, vi. 11, "Ye see how large a letter I have written to you with my own hand." If Paul was the writer of this it shows he did not accustom himself to write long epistles; yet the epistle to the Romans and the first to the Corinthians contain sixteen chapters each; the second to the Corinthians and that to the Hebrews thirteen each.

There is something contradictory in these matters. But short as the epistle is, it does not carry the appearance of being the work or composition of one person. Chapter v, 2, says, "If ye be circumcised Christ shall avail you nothing." It does not say circumcision shall profit you nothing, but Christ shall profit you nothing. Yet in vi, 15, it says "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

These are not reconcilable passages, nor can contrivance make them so. The conclusion of the epistle says it was written from Rome, but it is not dated, nor is there any signature to it, neither do the compilers of the New Testament say how they came by it. We are in the dark upon all these matters.

The next is entitled, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians." Paul is not the writer. The conclusion of it says, "Written from Rome unto the Ephesians by Tychicus."

The next is entitled, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians." Paul is not the writer. The conclusion of it says, "It was written to the Philippians from Rome by Epaphroditus." It is not dated. Query, were those men who wrote and signed those Epistles journeymen Apostles, who undertook to write in Paul's name, as Paul is said to have preached in Christ's name?

The next is entitled, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians." Paul is not the writer. Doctor Luke is spoken of in this Epistle as sending his compliments. "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you." (iv, 14). It does not say a word about his writing any Gospel. The conclusion of the epistle says, "Written from Rome to the Colossians by Tychicus and Onesimus."

The next is entitled, "The first and the second Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians." Either the writer of these Epistles was a visionary enthusiast, or a direct impostor, for he tells the Thessalonians, and, he says, he tells them by the Word of the Lord, that the world will be at an end in his and their time; and after telling them that those who are already dead shall rise, he adds, iv, 17, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up with them into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord."

Such detected lies as these, ought to fill priests with confusion, when they preach such books to be the Word of God. These two Epistles are said in the conclusion of them, to be written from Athens. They are without date or signature.

The next four Epistles are private letters. Two of them are to Timothy, one to Titus, and one to Philemon. Who they were, nobody knows.

The first to Timothy, is said to be written from Laodicea. It is without date or signature. The second to Timothy, is said to be written from Rome, and is without date or signature. The Epistle to Titus is said to be written from Nicopolis in Macedonia. It is without date or signature. The Epistle to Philemon is said to be written from Rome by Onesimus. It is without date.

The last Epistle ascribed to Paul is entitled, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews," and is said in the conclusion to be written from Italy, by Timothy. This Timothy (according to the conclusion of the epistle called the second Epistle of Paul to Timothy) was Bishop of the Church of the Ephesians, and consequently this is not an Epistle of Paul.

On what slender cobweb evidence do the priests and professors of the Christian religion hang their faith! The same degree of hearsay evidence, and that at third and fourth hand, would not, in a court of justice, give a man title to a cottage, and yet the priests of this profession presumptuously promise their deluded followers the Kingdom of Heaven. A little reflection would teach men that those books are not to be trusted to; that so far from there being any proof they are the Word of God, it is unknown who the writers of them were, or at what

time they were written, within three hundred years after the reputed authors are said to have lived.

It is not the interest of priests, who get their living by them, to examine into the insufficiency of the evidence upon which those books were received by the popish councils who compiled the New Testament. But if Messrs. Linn and Mason would occupy themselves upon this subject (it signifies not which side they take, for the event will be the same) they would be better employed than they were last Presidential election, in writing jesuitical electioneering pamphlets. The very name of a priest attaches suspicion on to it the instant he becomes a dabbler in party politics.

The New England priests set themselves up to govern the state, and they are falling into contempt for so doing. Men who have their farms and their several occupations to follow, and have a common interest with their neighbors in the public prosperity and tranquility of their country, neither want nor choose to be told by a priest who they shall vote for, nor how they shall conduct their temporal concerns.

The cry of the priests that the Church is in danger, is the cry of men who do not understand the interest of their own craft; for instead of exciting alarms and apprehensions for its safety, as they expect, it excites suspicion that the foundation is not sound, and that it is necessary to take down and build it on a surer foundation. Nobody fears for the safety of a mountain, but a hillock of sand may be washed away! Blow then, O ye priests, “the Trumpet in Zion,” for the Hillock is in danger.

HINTS TOWARD FORMING A SOCIETY FOR
INQUIRING INTO

THE TRUTH OR
FALSEHOOD OF ANCIENT
HISTORY,

SO FAR AS HISTORY IS CONNECTED WITH
SYSTEMS OF RELIGION ANCIENT AND
MODERN

It has been customary to class history into three divisions, distinguished by the names of Sacred, Profane, and Ecclesiastical. By the first is meant the Bible; by the second, the history of nations, of men and things; and by the third, the history of the church and its priesthood.

Nothing is more easy than to give names, and, therefore, mere names signify nothing unless they lead to the discovery of some cause for which that name was given. For example, *Sunday* is the name given to the first day of the week, in the English language, and it is the same in the Latin, that is, it has the same meaning, (*Dies solis*,) and also in the German, and in several other languages.

Why then was this name given to that day? Because it was the day dedicated by the ancient world to the luminary which in the English we call the Sun, and therefore the day *Sun-day*, or the day of the Sun; as in the like manner we call the second day Monday, the day dedicated to the Moon.

Here the name *Sunday* leads to the cause of its being called so, and we have visible evidence of the fact, because we behold the Sun from whence the name comes; but this is not the case when we distinguish one part of history from another by the name of *Sacred*.

All histories have been written by men. We have no evidence, nor any cause to believe, that any have been written by God. That

part of the Bible called the Old Testament, is the history of the Jewish nation, from the time of Abraham, which begins in Genesis xi., to the downfall of that nation by Nebuchadnezzar, and is no more entitled to be called sacred than any other history. It is altogether the contrivance of priestcraft that has given it that name. So far from its being *sacred*, it has not the appearance of being true in many of the things it relates.

It must be better authority than a book which any impostor might make, as Mahomet made the Koran, to make a thoughtful man believe that the sun and moon stood still, or that Moses and Aaron turned the Nile, which is larger than the Delaware, into blood; and that the Egyptian magicians did the same. These things have too much the appearance of romance to be believed for fact.

It would be of use to inquire, and ascertain the time, when that part of the Bible called the Old Testament first appeared. From all that can be collected there was no such book till after the Jews returned from captivity in Babylon, and that is the work of the Pharisees of the Second Temple. How they came to make Kings xix. and Isaiah xxxvii word for word alike, can only be accounted for by their having no plan to go by, and not knowing what they were about.

The same is the case with respect to the last verses in II Chronicles, and the first verses in Ezra; they also are word for word alike, which shows that the Bible has been put together at random.

But besides these things there is great reason to believe we have been imposed upon with respect to the antiquity of the Bible, and especially with respect to the books ascribed to Moses. Herodotus, who is called the father of history, and is the most ancient historian whose works have reached to our time, and who travelled into Egypt, conversed with the priests, historians, astronomers, and learned men of that country, for the purpose of obtaining all the information of it he could, and who gives an account of the ancient state of it, makes no mention of such a man as Moses, though the Bible makes him to have been the greatest hero there, nor of any one circumstance mentioned in the Book of Exodus respecting Egypt, such as turning the rivers into blood, the dust into lice, the death of the first born throughout all the land of Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, the drowning of Pharaoh and all his host, things which could not have

been a secret in Egypt, and must have been generally known, had they been facts; and, therefore, as no such things were known in Egypt, nor any such man as Moses, at the time Herodotus was there, which is about 2,200 years ago, it shows that the account of these things in the books ascribed to Moses is a made story of later times, that is, after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, and that Moses is not the author of the books ascribed to him.

With respect to the cosmogony, or account of the Creation, in Genesis i., of the Garden of Eden in chapter ii., and of what is called the Fall of Man in chapter iii., there is something concerning them we are not historically acquainted with. In none of the books of the Bible, after Genesis, are any of these things mentioned, or even alluded to.

How is this to be accounted for? The obvious inference is, that either they were not known, or not believed to be facts, by the writers of the other books of the Bible, and that Moses is not the author of the chapters where these accounts are given.

The next question on the case is, how did the Jews come by these notions, and at what time were they written? To answer this question we must first consider what the state of the world was at the time the Jews began to be a people, for the Jews are but a modern race compared with the antiquity of other nations.

At the time there were, even by their own account, but thirteen Jews or Israelites in the world, *Jacob and his twelve sons*, and four of these were bastards, the nations of Egypt, Chaldea, Persia, and India, were great and populous, abounding in learning and science, particularly in the knowledge of astronomy, of which the Jews were always ignorant.

The chronological tables mention that eclipses were observed at Babylon above two thousand years before the Christian era, which was before there was a single Jew or Israelite in the world.

All those ancient nations had their cosmogonies, that is, their accounts how the creation was made, long before there was such people as Jews or Israelites. An account of these cosmogonies of India and Persia is given by Henry Lord, Chaplain to the East India Company at Surat, and published in London in 1630. The writer of this

has seen a copy of the edition of 1630, and made extracts from it. The work, which is now scarce, was dedicated by Lord to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

We know that the Jews were carried captive into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, and remained in captivity several years, when they were liberated by Cyrus, King of Persia. During their captivity they would have had an opportunity of acquiring some knowledge of the cosmogony of the Persians, or at least of getting some ideas how to fabricate one to put at the head of their own history after their return from captivity. This will account for the cause, for some cause there must have been, that no mention nor reference is made to the cosmogony in Genesis in any of the books of the Bible supposed to have been written before the captivity, nor is the name of Adam to be found in any of those books.

The books of Chronicles were written after the return of the Jews from captivity, for the third chapter of the first book gives a list of all the Jewish kings from David to Zedekiah, who was carried captive into Babylon, and to four generations beyond the time of Zedekiah. In Chron. i. I, the name of Adam is mentioned, but not in any book in the Bible written before that time, nor could it be, for Adam and Eve are names taken from the cosmogony of the Persians.

Henry Lord, in his book, written from Surat and dedicated, as I have already said, to the Archbishop of Canterbury, says that in the Persian cosmogony the name of the first man was *Adamoh*, and of the woman *Hevah*.^{*} From hence comes the Adam and Eve of the book of Genesis. In the cosmogony of India, of which I shall speak in a future number, the name of the first man was *Pourous*, and of the woman *Parcoutee*. We want a knowledge of the Sanscrit language of India to understand the meaning of the names, and I mention it in this place, only to show that it is from the cosmogony of Persia, rather than that of India, that the cosmogony in Genesis has been fabricated by the Jews, who returned from captivity by the liberality of Cyrus, king of Persia.

^{*} In an English edition of the Bible, in 1583, the first woman is called Hevah.

There is, however, reason to conclude, on the authority of Sir William Jones, who resided several years in India, that these names were very expressive in the language to which they belonged, for in speaking of this language, he says, (see the Asiatic Researches), "The Sanscrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of wonderful structure; it is more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either."

These hints, which are intended to be continued, will serve to show that a society for inquiring into the ancient state of the world, and the state of ancient history, so far as history is connected with systems of religion, ancient and modern, may become a useful and instructive institution.

There is good reason to believe we have been in great error with respect to the antiquity of the Bible, as well as imposed upon by its contents. Truth ought to be the object of every man; for without truth there can be no real happiness to a thoughtful mind, or any assurance of happiness hereafter. It is the duty of man to obtain all the knowledge he can, and then make the best use of it.

TO MR. MOORE, OF NEW YORK, COMMONLY CALLED BISHOP MOORE

I have read in the newspapers your account of the visit you made to the unfortunate General Hamilton,* and of administering to him a ceremony of your church which you call the *Holy Communion*.

I regret the fate of General Hamilton, and I so far hope with you that it will be a warning to thoughtless man not to sport away the life that God has given him; but with respect to other parts of your letter I think it very reprehensible, and betrays great ignorance of what true religion is. But you are a priest, you get your living by it, and it is not your worldly interest to undeceive yourself.

After giving an account of your administering to the deceased what you call the Holy Communion, you add, “By reflecting on this melancholy event let the humble believer be encouraged ever to hold fast that precious faith which is the *only source of true consolation* in the last extremity of nature. Let the infidel be persuaded to abandon his opposition to the Gospel.”

To show you, Sir, that your promise of consolation from Scripture has no foundation to stand upon, I will cite to you one of the greatest falsehoods upon record, and which was given, as the record says, for the purpose, and as a promise, of consolation.

In the epistle called the First Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, iv, the writer consoles the Thessalonians as to the case of their friends who were already dead.

* Alexander Hamilton who was dying from a gunshot he received in a duel. — Editor

He does this by informing them, and he does it he says, by the word of the Lord, (a most notorious falsehood,) that the general resurrection of the dead and the ascension of the living will be in his and their days; that their friends will then come to life again; that the dead in Christ will rise first. – “Then WE (says he, ver. 17, 18) which *are alive and remain* shall be *caught up* together with THEM *in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air*, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore *comfort* one another with these words.”

Delusion and falsehood cannot be carried higher than they are in this passage. You, Sir, are but a novice in the art. The words admit of no equivocation. The whole passage is in the first person and the present tense, “*We which are alive.*”

Had the writer meant a future time, and a distant generation, it must have been in the third person and the future tense. “*They who shall then be alive.*” I am thus particular for the purpose of nailing you down to the text, that you may not ramble from it, nor put other constructions upon the words than they will bear, which priests are very apt to do.

Now, Sir, it is impossible for serious man, to whom God has given the divine gift of reason, and who employs that reason to reverence and adore the God that gave it, it is, I say, impossible for such a man to put confidence in a book that abounds with fable and falsehood as the New Testament does. This passage is but a sample of what I could give you.

You call on those whom you style “*infidels,*” (and they in return might call you an idolater, a worshipper of false gods, a preacher of false doctrines), “to abandon their opposition to the Gospel.” Prove, Sir, the Gospel to be true, and the opposition will cease of itself; but until you do this (which we know you cannot do) you have no right to expect they will notice your call. If by *infidels* you mean *Deists* (and you must be exceedingly ignorant of the origin of the word *Deist*, and know but little of *Deus*, to put that construction upon it), you will find yourself over-matched if you begin to engage in a controversy with them.

Priests may dispute with priests, and sectaries with sectaries, about the meaning of what they *agree* to call Scripture, and end as they began; but when you engage with a Deist you must keep to fact.

Now, Sir, you cannot prove a single article of your religion to be true, and we tell you so publicly. Do it, *if you can*. The Deistical article, *the belief of a God*, with which your creed begins, has been borrowed by your church from the ancient Deists, and even this article you dishonor by putting a *dream-begotten* phantom* which you call His son, over His head, and treating God as if he was superannuated.

Deism is the only profession of religion that admits of worshipping and reverencing God in purity, and the only one on which the thoughtful mind can repose with undisturbed tranquillity. God is almost forgotten in the Christian religion. Everything, even the creation, is ascribed to the son of Mary.

In religion, as in everything else, perfection consists in simplicity. The Christian religion of Gods within Gods, like wheels within wheels, is like a complicated machine that never goes right, and every projector in the art of Christianity is trying to mend it. It is its defects that have caused such a number and variety of tinkers to be hammering at it, and still it goes wrong.

In the visible world no time-keeper can go equally true with the sun; and in like manner, no complicated religion can be equally true with the pure and unmixed religion of Deism.

Had you not offensively glanced at a description of men whom you call by a false name, you would not have been troubled nor honored with this address; neither has the writer of it any desire or intention to enter into controversy with you. He thinks the temporal establishment of your church politically unjust and offensively unfair; but with respect to religion itself, distinct from temporal establishments, he is happy in the enjoyment of his own, and he leaves you to make the best you can of yours.

* The first chapter of Matthew, relates that Joseph, the betrothed husband of Mary, dreamed that the angel told him that his intended bride was with child by the Holy Ghost. It is not every husband, whether carpenter or priest, that can be so easily satisfied, for lo! It was a dream. Whether Mary was in a dream when this was done we are not told. It is, however, a comical story. There is no woman living can understand it.

TO JOHN MASON, ONE OF
THE MINISTERS OF THE
SCOTCH PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF NEW YORK,
WITH REMARKS ON HIS ACCOUNT OF THE
VISIT HE MADE TO THE LATE GENERAL
HAMILTON

“Come now, let us REASON together saith the Lord.” This is one of the passages you quoted from your Bible, in your conversation with General Hamilton,* as given in your letter, signed with your name, and published in the *Commercial Advertiser*, and other New York papers, and I requote the passage to show that your text and your religion contradict each other.

It is impossible to reason upon things *not comprehensible by reason*; and therefore, if you keep to your text, which priests seldom do, (for they are generally either above it, or below it, or forget it,) you must admit a religion to which reason can apply, and this certainly is not the Christian religion.

There is not an article in the Christian religion that is cognizable by reason. The Deistical article of your religion, *the belief of a God*, is no more a Christian article than it is a Mahometan article. It is an universal article, common to all religions, and which is held in greater purity by Turks than by Christians; but the Deistical church is the only one which holds it in real purity; because that church acknowledges no co-partnership with God. It believes in Him solely;

* Alexander Hamilton who was dying from a gunshot he received in a duel. — *Editor*.

and knows nothing of sons, married virgins, nor ghosts. It holds all these things to be the fables of priestcraft.

Why then do you talk of reason, or refer to it, since your religion has nothing to do with reason, nor reason with that? You tell people as you told Hamilton, that they must have *faith!* Faith in what? You ought to know that before the mind can have faith in anything, it must either know it as a fact, or see cause to believe it on the probability of that kind of evidence that is cognizable by reason.

But your religion is not within either of these cases; for, in the first place, you cannot prove it to be fact; and in the second place, you cannot support it by reason, not only because it is not cognizable by reason, but because it is contrary to reason.

What reason can there be in supposing, or believing that God put *Himself to death to satisfy Himself, and be revenged on the Devil on account of Adam?* For, tell the story which way you will it comes to this at last.

As you can make no appeal to reason in support of an unreasonable religion, you then (and others of your profession) bring yourselves off by telling people they must not believe in reason but in *revelation*.

This is the artifice of habit without reflection. It is putting *words* in the place of *things*; for do you not see that when you tell people to believe in revelation, you must first prove that what you *call* revelation, *is* revelation; and as you cannot do this, you put the *word*, which is easily spoken, in the place of the *thing* you cannot prove.

You have no more evidence that your Gospel is revelation than the Turks have that their Koran is revelation, and the only difference between them and you is, that they preach their delusion and you preach yours.

In your conversation with General Hamilton, you say to him, “The *simple truths* of the Gospel which require *no abstruse investigation*, but faith in the veracity of *God who cannot lie*, are best suited to your present condition.”

If those matters you call “*simple truths*” are what you call them, and require no abstruse investigation, they would be so obvious that reason would easily comprehend them; yet the doctrine you preach

at other times is, *that the mysteries of the Gospel are beyond the reach of reason.*

If your first position be true, that they are *simple truths*, priests are unnecessary, for we do not want preachers to tell us the sun shines; and if your second be true, the case, as to effect, is the same, for it is waste of money to pay a man to explain unexplainable things, and loss of time to listen to him.

That *God cannot lie*, is no advantage to your argument, because it is no proof that priests cannot, or, that the Bible does not. Did not Paul lie when he told the Thessalonians that the general resurrection of the dead would be in his life- time, and that he should go up alive along with them into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air? I Thes. iv. 17.

You spoke of what you call, "*the precious blood of Christ.*" This savage style of language belongs to the priests of the Christian religion. The professors of this religion say they are shocked at the accounts of human sacrifices of which they read in the histories of some countries. Do they not see that their own religion is founded on a human sacrifice, the blood of man, of which their priests talk like so many butchers?

It is no wonder the Christian religion has been so bloody in its effects, for it began in blood, and many thousands of human sacrifices have since been offered on the altar of the Christian religion.

It is necessary to the character of a religion, as being true, and immutable as God Himself is, that the evidence of it be equally the same through all periods of time and circumstance.

This is not the case with the Christian religion, nor with that of the Jews that preceded it, (for there was a time and that within the knowledge of history, when these religions did not exist,) nor is it the case with any religion we know of but the religion of Deism. In this the evidences are eternal and universal. "*The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto nigh showeth knowledge.*"¹ But all other religions are made to arise from some local circumstance, and are introduced by some temporary trifle which its partisans call a miracle, but of which there is no proof but the story of it.

The Jewish religion, according to the history of it, began in a *wilderness*, and the Christian religion in a *stable*. The Jewish books tell us of wonders exhibited upon Mount Sinai. It happened that nobody lived there to contradict the account.

The Christian books tell us of a star that hung over the *stable* at the birth of Jesus. There is no star there now, nor any person living that saw it. But all the stars in the heavens bear eternal evidence to the truth of Deism. It did not begin in a stable, nor in a wilderness. It began everywhere. The theater of the universe is the place of its birth.

As adoration paid to any being but GOD Himself is idolatry: the Christian religion by paying adoration to a man, born of a woman called Mary, belongs to the idolatrous class of religions; consequently the consolation drawn from it is delusion.

Between you and your rival in communion ceremonies, Dr. Moore of the Episcopal Church, you have, in order to make yourselves appear of some importance, reduced General Hamilton's character to that of a feeble minded man, who in going out of the world wanted a passport from a priest. Which of you was first or last applied to for this purpose is a matter of no consequence.

The man, Sir, who puts his trust and confidence in God, that leads a just and moral life, and endeavors to do good, does not trouble himself about priests when his hour of departure comes, nor permit priests to trouble themselves about him. They are in general mischievous beings where character is concerned; a consultation of priests is worse than a consultation of physicians.

OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

Archbishop Tillotson says: “The difference between the style of the Old and New Testament is so very remarkable, that one of the greatest sects in the primitive times, did, upon this very ground, found their heresy of two Gods, the one evil, fierce, and cruel, whom they called the God of the Old Testament; the other good, kind, and merciful, whom they called the God of the New Testament; so great a difference is there between the representations that are given of God in the books of the Jewish and Christian religion, as to give, at least, some color and pretence to an imagination of two Gods.” Thus far Tillotson.

But the case was, that as the Church had picked out several passages from the Old Testament, which she most absurdly and falsely calls prophecies of Jesus Christ, (whereas there is no prophecy of any such person, as any one may see by examining the passages and the cases to which they apply,) she was under the necessity of keeping up the credit of the Old Testament, because if that fell the other would soon follow, and the Christian system of faith would soon be at an end.

As a book of morals, there are several parts of the New Testament that are good; but they are no other than what had been preached in the Eastern world several hundred years before Christ was born. Confucius, the Chinese philosopher, who lived five hundred years before the time of Christ, says, *Acknowledge thy benefits by the return of benefits, but never revenge injuries.*

The clergy in Popish countries were cunning enough to know that if the Old Testament was made public the fallacy of the New, with respect to Christ, would be detected, and they prohibited the use of it, and always took it away wherever they found it.

The Deists, on the contrary, always encouraged the reading it, that people might see and judge for themselves, that a book so full of contradictions and wickedness could not be the word of God, and that we dishonor God by ascribing it to Him.

BIBLICAL ANACHRONISM

In addition to the judicious remarks in your twelfth number, on the absurd story of Noah's Flood, in Genesis vii, I send you the following:

The second verse makes God to say unto Noah, "Of every *clean* beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female, and of every beast that are *not clean*, by two, the male and his female."

Now, there was no such thing as beasts *clean* and *unclean* in the time of Noah. Neither were there any such people as Jews or Israelites at that time, to whom that distinction was a law. The law, called the Law of Moses, by which a distinction is made, beasts clean and unclean, was not until several hundred years after the time that Noah is said to have lived.

The story, therefore, detects itself, because the inventor forgot himself, by making God make use of an expression that could not be used at the time. The blunder is of the same kind, as if a man in telling a story about America a hundred years ago, should quote an expression from Mr. Jefferson's inaugural speech as if spoken by him at that time.

My opinion of this story is the same as what a man once said to another, who asked him in a drawling tone of voice, "Do you believe the account about No-ah?" The other replied in the same tone of voice, *ah-no*.

THOMAS PAINE'S RESPONSE TO CHRISTIAN
ACCOUNTS OF
CHARISMATIC CHRISTIAN
REVIVALS

MADE BY CLERGYMAN GEORGE SCOTT, OF
MILL CREEK, WASHINGTON COUNTY,
PENNSYLVANIA TO COLONEL WILLIAM
M'FARRAN DATED NOVEMBER 3, 1802.

In the fifth chapter of Mark, we read a strange story of the devil getting into the swine after he had been turned out of a man, and as the freaks of the devil in *that* story and the tumble-down description in *this* are very much alike, the two stories ought to go together.

The force of the imagination is capable of producing strange effects. When animal magnetism began in France, which was while Doctor Franklin was Minister to that country, the wonderful accounts given of the wonderful effects it produced on the persons who were under operation, exceeded anything related in the foregoing letter from Washington County. They tumbled down, fell into trances, roared and rolled about like persons supposed to be bewitched.

The Government, in order to ascertain the fact, or detect the imposition, appointed a committee of physicians to inquire into the case, and Doctor Franklin was requested to accompany them, which he did. The committee went to the operator's house, and the persons on whom an operation was to be performed were assembled. They were placed in the position in which they had been when under former operations, and *blindfolded*.

In a little time they began to show signs of agitation, and in the space of about two hours they went through all the frantic airs they had shown before; but the case was, that no operation was performing upon them, neither was the operator in the room, for he had been

ordered out of it by the physicians; but as the persons did not know this, they supposed him present and operating upon them. It was the effect of imagination only.

Doctor Franklin, in relating this account to the writer of this article, said, that he thought the government might as well have let it gone on, for that as imagination sometimes produced disorders it might also cure some. It is fortunate, however, that this falling down and crying out scene did not happen in New England a century ago, for if it had the preachers would have been hung for witchcraft, and in more ancient times the poor falling down folks would have been supposed to be possessed of a devil, like the man in Mark, among the tombs. The progress that reason and Deism make in the world lessen the force of superstition, and abate the spirit of persecution.

MY PRIVATE THOUGHTS ON A FUTURE STATE

I have said, in the first part of the “Age of Reason,” that “I hope for happiness after this life.” This hope is comfortable to me, and I presume not to go beyond the comfortable idea of hope, with respect to a future state.

I consider myself in the hands of my Creator, and that He will dispose of me after this life consistently with His justice and goodness. I leave all these matters to Him, as my Creator and friend, and I hold it to be presumption in man to make an article of faith as to what the Creator will do with us hereafter.

I do not believe because a man and a woman make a child, that it imposes on the Creator the unavoidable obligation of keeping the being so made in eternal existence hereafter. It is in His power to do so, or not to do so, and it is not in our power to decide which He will do.

The book called the New Testament, which I hold to be fabulous and have shown to be false, gives an account in Matthew xxv of what is there called the last day, or the day of judgment.

The whole world, according to that account, is divided into two parts, the righteous and the unrighteous, figuratively called the sheep and the goats. They are then to receive their sentence. To the one, figuratively called the sheep, it says, “*Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*” To the other, figuratively called the goats, it says, “*Depart from me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*”

Not the case is, the world cannot be thus divided: the moral world, like the physical world, is composed of numerous degrees of character, running imperceptibly one into the other, in such a manner

that no fixed point of division can be found in either. That point is nowhere, or is everywhere.

The whole world might be divided into two parts numerically, but not as to moral character; and therefore the metaphor of dividing them, as sheep and goats can be divided, whose difference is marked by their external figure, is absurd. All sheep are still sheep; all goats are still goats; it is their physical nature to be so. But one part of the world are not all good alike, nor the other part all wicked alike. There are some exceedingly good; others exceedingly wicked.

There is another description of men who cannot be ranked with either the one or the other – they belong neither to the sheep nor the goats; and there is still another description of them who are so very insignificant, both in character and conduct, as not to be worth the trouble of damning or saving, or of raising from the dead.

My own opinion is, that those whose lives have been spent in doing good, and endeavoring to make their fellow-mortals happy, for this is the only way in which we can serve God, *will be happy hereafter*; and that the very wicked will meet with some punishment. But those who are neither good nor bad, or are too insignificant for notice, will be dropped entirely.

This is my opinion. It is consistent with my idea of God's justice, and with the reason that God has given me, and I gratefully know that He has given me a large share of that divine gift.

— *Thomas Paine*

Humorous Poem

The Monk and the Jew

By Thomas Paine

An unbelieving Jew one day
Was skating o'er the icy way,
Which being brittle let him in,
Just deep enough to catch his chin;
And in that woful plight he hung,
With only power to move his tongue.
A brother skater near at hand,
A Papist born in foreign land,
With hasty strokes directly flew
To save poor Mordecai the Jew -
"But first," quoth he, "I must enjoin
That you renounce your faith for mine;
There's no entreaties else will do,
'Tis heresy to help a Jew -"

"Forswear mine fait! No! Cot forbid!
Dat would be very base indeed,
Come never mind such tings as deeze,
Tink, tink, how fery hard it freeze.
More coot you do, more coot you be,
Vat signifies your faith to me?
Come tink agen, how cold and vet,
And help me out von little bit."

"By holy mass, 'tis hard, I own,
To see a man both hang and drown,
And can't relieve him from his plight
Because he is an Israelite;

The Church refuses all assistance,
 Beyond a certain pale and distance;
 And all the service I can lend
 Is praying for your soul, my friend.”

“Pray for my soul, ha! ha! You make me laugh.
 You petter help me out py half:
 Mine soul I farrant vill take care,
 To pray for her own self, my tear:
 So tink a little now for me,
 ’Tis I am in de hole not she.”

“The Church forbids it, friend, and saith
 That all shall die who had no faith.”
 “Vell, if I must peblieve, I must.
 But help me out von little first.”

“No, not an inch without Amen
 That seals the whole” – “Vell, hear me den,
 I here renounce for coot and all
 De race of Jews both great and small;
 ’Tis de vurst trade peneth the sun,
 Or vurst religion; dat’s all von.
 Dey cheat, and get deir living py’t,
 And lie, and swear the lie is right.
 I’ll co to mass as soon as ever
 I get to toder side the river.
 So help me out, dow Christian friend,
 Dat I may do as I intend.”

“Perhaps you do intend to cheat,
 If once you get upon your fee.”
 “No, no, I do intend to be
 A Christian, such as one as dee.”
 For, thought the Jew, he is as much
 a Christian man as I am such.

The bigot Papist joyful hearted
To hear the heretic converted,
Replied to the designing Jew,

“This was a happy fall for you:
You’d better die a Christian now,
For if you live you’ll break your vow.”
Then said no more, but in trice
Popp’d Mordecai beneath the ice.

ON DEISM, AND THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

The following reflections, written last winter, were occasioned by certain expressions in some of the public papers against Deism and the writings of Thomas Paine on that subject.

“*Great is Diana of the Ephesians,*” was the cry of the people of Ephesus (Acts xix. 28); and the cry of “*our holy religion*” has been the cry of superstition in some instances, and of hypocrisy in others, from that day to this.

The Brahmin, the follower of Zoroaster, the Jew, the Mahometan, the Church of Rome, the Greek Church, the Protestant Church, split into several hundred contradictory sectaries, preaching in some instances damnation against each other, all cry out, “*our holy religion.*”

The Calvinist, who damns children of a span long to hell to burn forever for the glory of God, (and this is called Christianity), and the Universalist who preaches that all shall be saved and none shall be damned, (and this also is called Christianity), boast alike of their holy religion and their Christian faith.

Something more therefore is necessary than mere *cry* and wholesale assertion, and that something is TRUTH; and as inquiry is the road to truth, he that is opposed to inquiry is not a friend to truth.

The God of Truth is not the God of fable; when, therefore, any book is introduced into the world as the Word of God, and made a ground-work for religion, it ought to be scrutinized more than other books to see if it bear evidence of being what it is called. Our reverence to God demands that we do this, lest we ascribe to God what is

not His, and our duty to ourselves demands it lest we take fable for fact, and rest our hope of salvation on a false foundation.

It is not our calling a book *holy* that makes it so, any more than our calling a religion holy that entitles it to the name. Inquiry therefore is necessary in order to arrive at truth. But inquiry must have some principle to proceed on, some standard to judge by, superior to human authority.

When we survey the works of Creation, the revolutions of the planetary system, and the whole economy of what is called nature, which is no other than the laws the Creator has prescribed to matter, we see unerring order and universal harmony reigning throughout the whole. No one part contradicts another. The sun does not run against the moon, nor the moon against the sun, nor the planets against each other. Everything keeps its appointed time and place.

This harmony in the works of God is so obvious, that the farmer of the field, though he cannot calculate eclipses, is as sensible of it as the philosophical astronomer. He sees the God of order in every part of the visible universe.

Here, then, is the standard to which everything must be brought that pretends to be the work or Word of God, and by this standard it must be judged, independently of anything and everything that man can say or do. His opinion is like a feather in the scale compared with the standard that God himself has set up.

It is, therefore, by this standard, that the Bible, and all other books pretending to be the Word of God, (and there are many of them in the world,) must be judged, and not by the opinions of men or the decrees of ecclesiastical councils. These have been so contradictory, that they have often rejected in one council what they had voted to be the word of God in another; and admitted what had been before rejected.

In this state of uncertainty in which we are, and which is rendered still more uncertain by the numerous contradictory sectaries that have sprung up since the time of Luther and Calvin, what is man to do? The answer is easy. Begin at the root – begin with the Bible itself. Examine it with the utmost strictness. It is our duty so to do.

Compare the parts with each other, and the whole with the harmonious, magnificent order that reigns throughout the visible universe, and the result will be, that if the same Almighty wisdom that created the universe dictated also the Bible, the Bible will be as harmonious and as magnificent in all its parts, and in the whole, as the universe is.

But if, instead of this, the parts are found to be discordant, contradicting in one place what is said in another, (as in II Sam. xxiv, 1, and I Chron. xxi, 1, where the same action is ascribed to God in one book and to Satan in the other,) abounding also in idle and obscene stories, and representing the Almighty as a passionate, whimsical Being, continually changing His mind, making and unmaking His own works as if He did not know what He was about, we may take it for certainty that the Creator of the universe is not the author of such a book, that it is not the Word of God, and that to call it so is to dishonor His name.

The Quakers, who are a people more moral and regular in their conduct than the people of other sectaries, and generally allowed so to be, do not hold the Bible to be the word of God. They call it *a history of the times*, and a bad history it is, and also a history of bad men and of bad actions, and abounding with bad examples.

For several centuries past the dispute has been about doctrines. It is now about fact. Is the Bible the Word of God, or is it not? For until this point is established, no doctrine drawn from the Bible can afford real consolation to man, and he ought to be careful he does not mistake delusion for truth. This is a case that concerns all men alike.

There has always existed in Europe, and also in America, since its establishments, a numerous description of men, (I do not here mean the Quakers,) who did not, and do not believe the Bible to be the Word of God. These men never formed themselves into an established society, but are to be found in all the sectaries that exist, and are more numerous than any, perhaps equal to all, and are daily increasing. From *Deus*, the Latin word for God, they have been denominated *Deists*, that is, believers in God. It is the most honorable appellation that can be given to man, because it is derived immediately from the Deity. It is not an artificial name like Episcopalian,

Presbyterian, etc., but is a name of sacred signification, and to revile it is to revile the name of God.

Since then there is so much doubt and uncertainty about the Bible, some asserting and others denying it to be the Word of God, it is best that the whole matter come out. It is necessary for the information of the world that it should.

A better time cannot offer than while the Government, patronizing no one sect or opinion in preference to another, protects equally the rights of all; and certainly every man must spurn the idea of an ecclesiastical tyranny, engrossing the rights of the press, and holding it free only for itself.

While the terrors of the Church, and the tyranny of the State, hung like a pointed sword over Europe, men were commanded to believe what the Church told them, or go to the stake. All inquiries into the authenticity of the Bible were shut out by the Inquisition. We ought therefore to suspect that a great mass of information respecting the Bible, and the introduction of it into the world, has been suppressed by the united tyranny of Church and State, for the purpose of keeping people in ignorance, and which ought to be known.

The Bible has been received by the Protestants on the authority of the Church of Rome, and on no other authority. It is she that has said it is the Word of God. We do not admit the authority of that Church with respect to its pretended *infallibility*, its manufactured miracles, its setting itself up to forgive sins, its amphibious doctrine of transubstantiation, etc.; and we ought to be watchful with respect to any book introduced by her, or her ecclesiastical councils, and called by her the Word of God: and the more so, because it was by propagating that belief and supporting it by fire and faggot, that she kept up her temporal power.

That the belief of the Bible does no good in the world, may be seen by the irregular lives of those, as well priests as laymen, who profess to believe it to be the Word of God, and the moral lives of the Quakers who do not. It abounds with too many ill examples to be made a rule for moral life, and were a man to copy after the lives of some of its most celebrated characters, he would come to the gallows.

Thomas Paine has written to show that the Bible is not the Word of God, that the books it contains were not written by the persons to whom they are ascribed, that it is an anonymous book, and that we have no authority for calling it the Word of God, or for saying it was written by inspired penmen, since we do not know who the writers were.

This is the opinion not only of Thomas Paine, but of thousands and tens of thousands of the most respectable characters in the United States and in Europe. These men have the same right to their opinions as others have to contrary opinions, and the same right to publish them. Ecclesiastical tyranny is not admissible in the United States.

With respect to morality, the writings of Thomas Paine are remarkable for purity and benevolence; and though he often enlivens them with touches of wit and humor, he never loses sight of the real solemnity of his subject. No man's morals, either with respect to his Maker, himself, or his neighbor, can suffer by the writings of Thomas Paine.

It is now too late to abuse Deism, especially in a country where the press is free, *or where free presses can be established*. It is a religion that has God for its patron and derives its name from Him. The thoughtful mind of man, wearied with the endless contentions of sectaries against sectaries, doctrines against doctrines, and priests against priests, finds its repose at last in the contemplative belief and worship of one God and the practice of morality; for as Pope wisely says,

"He can't be wrong, whose life is in the right."

End Notes

Part First

1. As there are many readers who do not see that a composition is poetry unless it be in rhyme, it is for their information that I add this note.

Poetry consists principally in two things – imagery and composition. The composition of poetry differs from that of prose in the manner of mixing long and short syllables together. Take a long syllable out of a line of poetry, and put a short one in the room of it, or put a long syllable where a short one should be, and that line will lose its poetical harmony. It will have an effect upon the line like that of misplacing a note in a song. The imagery in those books, called the Prophets, appertains altogether to poetry. It is fictitious, and often extravagant, and not admissible in any other kind of writing than poetry. To show that these writings are composed in poetical numbers, I will take ten syllables, as they stand in the book, and make a line of the same number of syllables, (heroic measure) that shall rhyme with the last word. It will then be seen that the composition of these books is poetical measure. The instance I shall produce is from Isaiah:

“Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth!”

Tis God himself that calls attention forth.

Another instance I shall quote is from the mournful Jeremiah, to which I shall add two other lines, for the purpose of carrying out the figure, and showing the intention of the poet:

“O! that mine head were waters and mine eyes”

Were fountains flowing like the liquid skies;

The would I give the mighty flood release,

And weep a deluge for the human race.

- *Author.*

2. It is impossible for us now to know at what time the heathen mythology began; but it is certain, from the internal evidence that it carries, that it did not begin in the same state or condition in which it ended. All the gods of that mythology, except Saturn, were of modern invention. The supposed reign of Saturn was prior to that which is called the heathen mythology, and was so far a species of theism, that it admitted the belief of only one God. Saturn is supposed to have abdicated the government in favor of his three sons and one daughter, Jupiter, Pluto, Neptune and Juno; after this, thousands of other gods and demi-gods were imaginarily created, and the calendar of gods increased as fast as the calendar of saints and the calendar of courts have increased since.

All the corruptions that have taken place in theology and in religion have been produced by admitting of what man calls *revealed religion*. The Mythologists pretended to more revealed religion than the Christians do. They had their oracles and their priests, who were supposed to receive and deliver the word of God verbally, on almost all occasions.

Since then, all corruptions, down from Moloch to modern predestinarianism, and the human sacrifices of the heathens to the Christian sacrifice of the Creator, have been produced by admitting of what is called *revealed religion*. The most effectual means to prevent all such evils and impositions is not to admit of any other revelation than that which is manifested in the book of creation, and to contemplate the creation as the only true and real Word of God that ever did or ever will exist; and that everything else, called the Word of God, is fable and imposition. – Author

3. As this book may fall into the hands of persons who do not know what an orrery is, it is for their information I add this note, as the name gives no idea of the uses of the thing. The orrery has its name from the person who invented it. It is a machinery of clock-work, representing the universe in miniature, and in which the revolution of the earth round itself and round the sun, the revolution of the moon round the earth, the revolution of the planets round the sun, their relative distances from the sun, as the center of the whole system, their relative distances from each other and their different

magnitudes, are represented as they really exist in what we call the heavens. – *Author*.

4. If it should be asked, how can man know these things? I have one plain answer to give, which is, that man knows how to calculate an eclipse, and also how to calculate to a minute of time when the planet Venus in making her revolutions around the sun will come in a straight line between our earth and the sun, and will appear to us about the size of a large pea passing across the face of the sun. This happens but twice in about a hundred years, at the distance of about eight years from each other, and has happened twice in our time, both of which were foreknown by calculation. It can also be known when they will happen again for a thousand years to come, or to any other portion of time. As, therefore, man could not be able to do these things if he did not understand the solar system, and the manner in which the revolutions of the several planets or worlds are performed, the fact of calculating an eclipse, or a transit of Venus, is a proof in point that the knowledge exists; and as to a few thousand, or even a few million miles, more or less, it makes scarcely any sensible difference in such immense distances. – *Author*.

Part Second

1. I observed, as I passed along, several broken and senseless passages in the Bible, without thinking them of consequence enough to be introduced in the body of the work; such as that, I. Samuel, chap. Xiii. Ver. 1, where it is said, “Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men,” etc. The first part of the verse, that Saul reigned one year, has non sense, since it does not tell us what Saul did, nor say anything of what happened at the end of that one year; and it is, besides, mere absurdity to say he reigned one year, when the very next phrase says he had reigned two; for if he had reigned two, it was impossible not to have reigned one.

Another instance occurs in Joshua, chap. V, where the writer tells us a story of an angel (for such the table of contents as the head of the chapter tells him) appearing unto Joshua; and the story ends abruptly, and without any conclusion. The story is as follows: Verse 13. “And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted

up his eyes and looked, and behold there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand; and Joshua went unto him and said unto him, Art thou for us or for our adversaries?" Verse 14, "And he said, Nay; but as captain of the hosts of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant?" Verse 15, "And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose they shoe from off they foot; for the place whereon thou standeth is holy. And Joshua did so." And what then? nothing, for here the story ends, and the chapter too.

Either the story is broken off in the middle, or it is a story told by some Jewish humorist, in ridicule of Joshua's pretended mission from God; and the compilers of the Bible, not perceiving the design of the story, have told it as a serious matter. As a story of humor and ridicule it has a great deal of point, for it pompously introduces an angel in the figure of a man, with a drawn sword in his hand, before whom Joshua falls on his face to the earth and worships (which is contrary to their second commandment); and then this most important embassy from heaven ends in telling Joshua to pull off his shoe. It might as well have told him to pull up his breeches.

It is certain, however, that the Jews did not credit everything their leaders told them, as appears from the cavalier manner in which they speak of Moses, when he was gone into the mount. "As for Moses," say they, "we wot not what is become of him." *Exod. Chap. xxxii, ver. 1.*

—*Author*

2. Particulars of the Families from the second Chapter of Ezra.

Chap. ii.	Bro't for. 12,243	Bro't for. 15,953	Bro't for. 24,144
Verse 3	2172	Verse 14	2056
4	372	Verse 25	743
5	775	Verse 26	621
6	2812	Verse 27	122
7	1254	Verse 28	223
8	945	Verse 29	52
9	760	Verse 30	156
10	642	Verse 31	1254
		Verse 32	320
		Verse 36	973
		37	1052
		38	1247
		39	1017
		40	74
		41	128
		42	139
		53	392

11	623	22	56	33	725	60	652
12	1222	23	128	34	345		
13	666	24	42	35	3630		
	12,243		15,953		24,144	Total,	29,818

— *Author*

3. The prayer known by the name of *Agur's prayer*, in the 30th chapter of Proverbs, immediately preceding the proverbs of Lemuel, and which is the only sensible, well-conceived and well-expressed prayer in the Bible, has much the appearance of being a prayer taken from the Gentiles. The name of Agur occurs on no other occasion than this; and he is introduced, together with the prayer ascribed to him, in the same manner, and nearly in the same words, that Lemuel and his proverbs are introduced in the chapter that follows. The first verse of the 30th chapter says, "The words of Agur, the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy." Here the word prophecy is used in the same application it has in the following chapter of Lemuel, unconnected with any thing of prediction. The prayer of Agur is in the 8th and 9th verses, "Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." This has not any of the marks of being a Jewish prayer, for the Jews never prayed but when they were in trouble, and never for anything but victory, vengeance and riches.

— *Author.*

4. I observed two chapters, 16th and 17th, in the first book of Samuel, that contradict each other with respect to David, and the manner he became acquainted with Saul; as the 37th and 38th chapters of the book of Jeremiah contradict each other with respect to the cause of Jeremiah's imprisonment.

In the 16th chapter of Samuel, it is said, that an evil spirit of God troubled Saul, and that his servants advised him (as a remedy) "to seek out a man who was a cunning player upon the harp." And Saul said, [verse 17,] Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring *him* to me. Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, *that is* cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters,

and a comely person, and the LORD is with him. Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, "Send me David thy son." And [verse 21,] David came to Saul, and stood before him, and he loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer. And when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul [ver. 23] that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well."

But the next chapter [17] gives an account, all different to this, of the manner that Saul and David became acquainted. Here it is ascribed to David's encounter with Goliah, when David was sent by his father to carry provision to his brethren in the camp. In the 55th verse of this chapter it is said, "And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine [Goliah], he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, *As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.* And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling *is*. And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, Whose son art *thou* young man? And David answered, *I am* the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite." These two accounts belie each other, because each of them supposes Saul and David not to have known each other before. This book, the Bible is too ridiculous even for criticism. — *Author.*

5. From the birth of David to the birth of Christ is upwards of 1080 years; and as the lifetime of Christ is not included, there are but 27 full generations. To find therefore the average age of each person mentioned in the list, at the time his first son was born, it is only necessary to divide 1080 years by 27, which gives 40 years for each person. As the lifetime of man was then but the same extent it is now, it is an absurdity to suppose that 27 following generations should all be old bachelors, before they married; and the more so, when we are told, that Solomon, the next in succession to David, had a house full of wives and mistresses before he was twenty-one years of age. So far from this genealogy being a solemn truth, it is not even a reasonable lie. This list of Luke gives about twenty-six years for the average age, and this is too much. — *Author.*

6. The former part of the "The Age of Reason" has not been published in two years, and there is already an expression in it that is not

mine. The expression is, The book of Luke was carried by a majority of one voice only. It may be true, but it is not I that have said it. Some person, who might know of the circumstance, has added it in a note at the bottom of the page of some of the editions, printed either in England or in America; and the printers, after that, have placed it into the body of the work, and made me the author of it. If this has happened within such a short space of time, notwithstanding the aid of printing, which prevents the alteration of copies individually, what may not have happened in a much greater length of time, when there was no printing, and when any man who could write could make a written copy, and call it an original by Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John? – *Author.*

7. Boulanger, in his *Life of Paul*, has collected from the ecclesiastical histories, and from the writings of fathers, as they are called, several matters which show the opinions that prevailed among the different sects of Christians at the time the Testament, as we now see it, was voted to be the word of God. The following extracts are from the second chapter of that work.

“The Marcionists, (a Christian sect,) assumed that the evangelists were filled with falsities. The Manicheans, who formed a very numerous sect at the commencement of Christianity, rejected as false all the New Testament, and showed other writings quite different that they gave for authentic. The Cerinthians, like the Marcionists, admitted not the Acts of the Apostles. The Encratites, and the Severians, adopted neither the Acts nor the Epistles of Paul. Chrysostom, in a homily which he made upon the Acts of the Apostles, says that in his time, about the year 400, many people knew nothing either of the author or of the book. St. Irene, who lived before that time, reports that the Valentinians, like several other sects of Christians, accused the scriptures of being filled with imperfections, errors, and contradictions. The Ebionites, or Nazarines, who were the first Christians, rejected all the Epistles of Paul and regarded him as an impostor. They report, among other things, that he was originally a pagan, that he came to Jerusalem, where he lived some time; and that having a mind to marry the daughter of the high priest, he caused himself to be circumcised: but that not being able to obtain

her, he quarreled with the Jews and wrote against circumcision, and against the observance of the sabbath, and against all the legal ordinances. – *Author*.

8. According to what is called Christ's sermon on the mount, in the book of Matthew, where, among some other good things, a great deal of this feigned morality is introduced, it is there expressly said, that the doctrine of forbearance, or of not retaliating injuries, was not any part of the doctrine of the Jews; but as this doctrine is found in Proverbs it must, according to that statement, have been copied from the Gentiles, from whom Christ had learned it. Those men, whom Jewish and Christian idolaters have abusively called heathens, had much better and clearer ideas of justice and morality than are to be found in the Old Testament, so far as it is Jewish; or in the New. The answer of Solon on the question, Which is the most perfect popular government? has never been exceeded by anyone since his time, as containing a maxim of political morality. "That," says he, "*where the least injury done to the meanest individual, is considered as an insult on the whole constitution.*" Solon lived about 500 years before Christ. – *Author*.

9. The Bible-makers have undertaken to give us, in the first chapter of Genesis, an account of the creation; and in doing this, they have demonstrated nothing but their ignorance. They make there to have been three days and three nights, evenings and mornings, before there was a sun; when it is the presence or absence of the sun that is the cause of day and night, and what is called his rising and setting that of morning and evening. Besides, it is a puerile and pitiful idea, to suppose the Almighty to say, Let there be light. It is the imperative manner of speaking that a conjuror uses when he says to his cups and balls, Presto, begone, and most probably has been taken from it; as Moses and his rod are a conjuror and his wand. Longinus calls this expression the sublime; and by the same rule, the conjuror is sublime too, for the manner of speaking is expressively and grammatically the same. When authors and critics talk of the sublime, they see not how nearly it borders on the ridiculous. The sublime of the critics, like some parts of Edmund Burke's *Sublime and Beautiful*, is like a windmill just visible in a fog, which imagination might distort into a flying mountain, or an archangel, or a flock of wild geese. – *Author*.

Part Third

1. II. Chron. xxviii. 1. *Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, but he did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord. – ver. 5. Wherefore the Lord his God delivered him into the hand of the King of Syria, and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captive and brought them to Damascus; and he was also delivered into the hand of the King of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter. – ver. 6. And Pekah (King of Israel) slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day. – ver. 8. And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand women, sons, and daughter.*

2. In the second part of the ‘Age of Reason,’ I have shown that the book ascribed to Isaiah is not only miscellaneous as to matter, but as to authorship; that there are parts in it which could not be written by Isaiah, because they speak of things one hundred and fifty years after he was dead. The instance I have given of this, in that work, corresponds with the subject I am upon, *at least a little better than Matthew’s introduction and his question.*

Isaiah lived, the latter part of his life, in the time of Hezekiah, and it was about one hundred and fifty years from the death of Hezekiah to the first year of the reign of Cyrus, when Cyrus published a proclamation, which is given in Ezra i., for the return of the Jews to Jerusalem. It cannot be doubted, at least it ought not to be doubted, that the Jews would feel an affectionate gratitude for this act of benevolent justice, and it is natural they would express that gratitude in the customary stile, bombastical and hyperbolic as it was, which they used on extraordinary occasions, and which was and still is in practice with all the eastern nations.

The instance to which I refer, and which is given in the second part of the Age of Reason, Is. xliv. 28 and xlv. 1, in these words: *“That saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusaalm, Thou shalt be built, and to the Temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the Lard to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut.”*

This complimentary address is in the present tense, which shows that the things of which it speaks were in existence at the time of writing it; and consequently that the author must have been at least one hundred and fifty years later than Isaiah, and that the book which bears his name is a compilation. The Proverbs called Solomon's, and the Psalms called David's, are of the same kind. The last two verses of the second book of Chronicles, and the first three verses of Ezra i. are word for word the same; which show that the compilers of the Bible mixed the writings of different authors together, and put them under some common head.

As we have here an instance in Isaiah xlv. and xlv. of the introduction of the name of Cyrus into a book to which it cannot belong, it affords good ground to conclude, that the passage in chapter xlii., in which the character of Cyrus is given without his name, has been introduced in like manner, and that the person there spoken of is Cyrus.

— *Author*

3. Whiston, in his Essay on the Old Testament, says, that the passage of Zechariah of which I have spoken, was, in the copies of the Bible of the first century, in the book of Jeremiah, from whence, says he, it was taken and inserted without coherence in that of Zechariah. Well, let it be so, it does not make the case a whit the better for the New Testament; but it makes the case a great deal the worse for the Old.

Because it shows, as I have mentioned respecting some passages in a book ascribed to Isaiah, that the works of different authors have been so mixed and confounded together, they cannot now be discriminated, except where they are historical, chronological, or biographical, as in the interpolation in Isaiah. It is the name of Cyrus, inserted where it could not be inserted, as he was not in existence till one hundred and fifty years after the time of Isaiah, that detects the interpolation and the blunder with it.

Whiston was a man of great literary learning, and what is of much higher degree, of deep scientific learning. He was one of the best and most celebrated mathematicians of his time, for which he was made professor of mathematics of the University of Cambridge. He wrote so much in defence of the Old Testament, and of what he calls prophecies of Jesus Christ, that at last he began to suspect the truth of the Scriptures, and wrote against them; for it is only those who examine them, that see the imposition. Those who believe them most, are those who know least about them.

Whiston, after writing so much in defence of the Scriptures, was at last prosecuted for writing against them. It was this that gave occasion to Swift, in his ludicrous epigram on Ditton and Whiston, each of which set up to find out the longitude, to call the one *good master Ditton* and the other *wicked Will Whiston*. But as Swift was a great associate with the Freethinkers of those days, such as Bolingbroke, Pope, and others, who did not believe the book called the scriptures, there is no certainty whether he wittily called him wicked for defending the scriptures, or for writing against them. The known character of Swift decides for the former.

— *Author*

4. Newton, Bishop of Bristol in England, published a work in three volumes, entitled, “Dissertations on the Prophecies.” The work is tediously written and tiresome to read. He strains hard to make every passage into a prophecy that suits his purpose. Among others, he makes this expression of Moses, “the Lord shall raise thee up a prophet like unto me,” into a prophecy of Christ, who was not born, according to the Bible chronologies, till fifteen hundred and fifty-two years after the time of Moses; whereas it was an immediate successor to Moses, who was then near his end, that is spoken of in the passage above quoted.

This bishop, the better to impose this passage on the world as a prophecy of Christ, has entirely omitted the account in the book of Numbers which I have given at length, word for word, and which shows, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that the person spoken of by Moses is Joshua, find no other person.

Newton is but a superficial writer. He takes up things upon *hearsay*, and inserts them without either examination or reflection, and the more extraordinary and incredible they are, the better he likes them. In speaking of the walls of Babylon, (vol. i. p. 263,) he makes a quotation from a traveller of the name of *Tavernaer*, whom he calls, (by way of giving credit to what he says,) *a celebrated traveller*; that those walls *were made of burnt brick, ten feet square and three feet thick*.

If Newton had only thought of calculating the weight of such a brick, he would have seen the impossibility of their being used or even made. A brick ten feet square, and three feet thick, contains 300 cubic feet, and allowing a cubic foot of brick to be only one hundred pounds, each of the Bishop’s bricks would weigh 30,000 pounds; and it would take about thirty cart loads of clay (one horse carts) to make one brick.

But his account of the stones used in the building of Solomon's temple, (vol. ii. p. 211,) far exceeds his bricks of ten feet square in the walls of Babylon; these are but brick-bats compared to them. The stones (says he) employed in the foundation, were in magnitude forty cubits, (that is above sixty feet, a cubit, says he, being somewhat more than one foot and a half, (a cubit is one foot nine inches,) and the superstructure (says this Bishop) was worthy of such foundations. There were some stones, says he, of the whitest marble forty-five cubits long, five cubits high, and six cubits broad. These are the dimensions this Bishop has given, which, in measure of twelve inches to a foot, is 78 feet 9 inches long, 10 feet 6 inches broad, and 8 feet 3 inches thick, and contains 7,234 cubic feet.

I now go to demonstrate the imposition of this bishop. A cubic foot of water weighs sixty-two pounds and a half. The specific gravity of marble to water is as 2 1-2 is to one. The weight, therefore, of a cubic foot of marble is 156 pounds, which, multiplied by 7,234, the number of cubic feet in one of those stones, makes the weight of it to be 1,128,504 pounds, which is 503 tons.

Allowing then a horse to draw about half a ton, it will require a thousand horses to draw one such stone on the ground; how then were they to be lifted into the building by human hands? The Bishop may talk of faith removing mountains, but all the faith of all the Bishops that ever lived could not remove one of those stones, and their bodily strength given in.

This bishop also tells of *great guns* used by the Turks at the taking of Constantinople, one of which, he says, was drawn by seventy yoke of oxen, and by two thousand men. (Vol. iii. p. 117.) The weight of a cannon that carries a ball of 43 pounds, which is the largest cannon that are cast, weighs 8,000 pounds, about three tons and a half, and may be drawn by three yoke of oxen.

Anybody may now calculate what the weight of the Bishop's great gun must be, that required seventy yoke of oxen to draw it. This bishop beats Gulliver.

When men give up the use of the divine gift of reason in writing on any subject, be it religious or anything else, there are no bounds to their extravagance, no limit to their absurdities. The three volumes which this Bishop has written on what he calls the prophecies, contain above 1,200 pages, and he says in vol. iii. p. 117, "*I have studied brevity.*" This is as marvelous as the bishop's great gun. — *Author.*

Miscellaneous Writings

1. Smith, in speaking of a lodge, says, when the lodge is revealed to an entering Mason, it discovers to him *a representation of the World*; in which, from the wonders of nature, we are led to contemplate her great Original, and worship Him from His mighty works; and we are thereby also moved to exercise those moral and social virtues which become mankind as the servants of the great Architect of the world.

It may not be improper here to observe, that the law called the law of Moses could not have been in existence at the time of building this Temple. Here is the likeness of things in heaven above and in earth beneath. And we read in I Kings vi., vii., that Solomon made cherubs and cherubims, that he *carved* all the walls of the house round about with cherubims, and palm-trees, and open flowers, and that he made a molten sea, placed on twelve oxen, and the ledges of it were ornamented with lions, oxen, and cherubims: all this is contrary to the law called the law of Moses.

2. This Psalm (19) which is a Deistical Psalm, is so much in the manner of some parts of the book of Job (which is not a book of the Jews, and does not belong to the Bible), that it has the appearance of having been translated into Hebrew from the same language in which the book of Job was originally written, and brought by the Jews from Chaldea or Persia, when they returned from captivity. The contemplation of the heavens made a great part of the religious devotion of the Chaldeans and Persians, and their religious festivals were regulated by the progress of the sun through the twelve signs of the zodiac. But the Jews knew nothing about the heavens, or they would not have told the foolish story of the sun's standing still upon a hill, and the moon in a valley. What could they want the moon for in the day time?