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REMARKS

CONCERNING

THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY

BY

A HINDU

CALCUTTA.

1853.

কালীচরণ বসু মুদ্রিত

TO THE EDUCATED
NATIVE YOUNG MEN

OF CALCUTTA

FRIENDS AND COUNTRYMEN

The subject, which we are about to discuss is one of over whelming interest and importance, being the evidences of a religion which has been maintained by nations the most pre-eminent now in arts and civilization to be a revelation from God. For the present, we undertake to examine these evidences as set forth by the Revd. D. Ewart in his lecture delivered to the Educated Native Young Men, and published in a small pamphlet for more extended circulation. A free and candid analysis of these evidences at our hands is likely to wound the prejudices and offend the feelings of our Chistian friends. There are many among them who may be disposed to exclaim What! Is Christianity, the religion of Newton and Locke, of Boyle and Milton, to be confemned and its authority questioned by the narrow-minded unbelievers of our day? Shall half informed striplings on the

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banks of the Ganges dare to dispute the covenant of grace and disprove the testimonies by which it stands? Shall they presume to resist the evidence which arises from the assents of the mightiest intellects of this world and the belief of a large portion of the human race. What daring insolence! what blind infatuation! My dear friends, we must not be imposed upon by such vain declamations and led away by mere names. Ere we admit the incredible occurrences of the Gospel narrative to be true and credit the divine origin of Christianity, we must examine the credibility of the testimony upon which they are founded. Are we not called upon to exercise our powers of reason and discernment in an investigation of such high importance? Are we to swallow down the most monstrous absurdities, because they happened to command the belief of some good and exalted personages? Did not Johnson, "whose incredulity amounted almost to disease," and Bacon, the father of inductive philosophy, betray instances of a morbid faith by their implicit belief in the stories of goblins and witches? Are we bound to pay the tribute of homage to the souls of these great luminaries of our race by a servile imitation of their weaknesses? And if arguments be drawn in support of Christianity from its extensive promulgation, are we to forget that its votaries are equalled if not out-numbered by the followers of Buddhism? Was not idolatry at one time

the prevailing religion of the world, and did it not claim among its votaries the intellectual giants of antiquity? Had not Mahomedanism and every other system of religious worship to struggle at its first promulgation with the obstacles opposed to them by the followers of pre-existing systems of religion and the physical force of the men in power? Are we then to conclude from their successful dissemination that they emanated from the Supreme author of our beings and the revealer of all truths? In claiming the privilege of private judgement and sifting the true merits of the case, if we be so unfortunate as to offend the false delicacy of our Christian friends, we must patiently bear their censures, content with exposing the fallacy of their arguments and unveiling the inherent errors of their system. It is our bounden duty as servants of the Most High and watchmen on the ramparts of truth to sound the alarm and proclaim to our countrymen the danger of falling into the snares of the Christian missionaries.

In glancing over the first 8 pages of Mr. Ewart's lecture which treat of the rise and progress of Christianity amidst the opposition of its numerous antagonists, we could not perceive a single argument deserving of a serious refutation. The establishment of Christianity in the various regions of the globe, and the boasted triumph of the primitive fathers of the Church over its adversaries cannot, we repeat, be

urged as a token, far less as a proof, of its divine origin. Similar trains of reasoning, if allowed, would tend to uphold all other rival systems of superstition and error. The learned lecturer would have done an essential service to the cause of truth, if instead of vainly boasting of the victories of the Christian apologists over Celsus and Porphyry, Julian and Hierocles, he had furnished his readers with a fair statement of the arguments of these several controversialists, and thereby enabled them to form their own unbiassed opinion of the case. But this was beyond his power. We admit he could have had no access to the original works of the anti Christian writers, "whose attacks upon the Christian system" as he himself acknowledges, "have been so utterly forgotten, that it is only from the writings of the Christian advocates and apologists who refuted them, that he gains a knowledge of their contents." But can these remnants of anti Christian authorship, rescued from oblivion by the notice which their enemies have deigned to take of them, exhibit the full force of all the arguments of their respective authors? Can the passages which are now extant serve as an index to those that are lost? How can we feel assured that the advocates of Christianity have not, like the advocates who practise in our courts of justice, sought to suppress the strong and expose the weak points of their adversaries? What grounds have we to believe that

the priests of Christ have not distorted facts and passed in silence over the most unanswerable arguments? So often have the fair features of truth been deformed by the rude hands of its enemies and so thoroughly replete is the history of the Church with indubitable proofs of the corruptions and frauds of the priesthood that we cannot view their integrity on this point without suspicion.

Without wasting further time in remarks on the other irrelevant assertions and gratuitous assumptions of the Revd. gentleman which are alike devoid of interest or argument, we hasten at once to an examination of the evidences generally adduced in support of the Christian religion.

Mr. Ewart, like all other writers on the evidences of Christianity, commences with an attempt to prove the authenticity, genuineness, and credibility of the New, and avoids entering into a discussion about those of the Old Testament. He asserts that "the authority of that portion of the Divine Record follows as a necessary corollary from the demonstrated truth and authority of the New Testament and is brought home to our perceptions in one sentence of the Apostle Paul II &c." Here we enter our caveat and demur against the propriety and fairness of this mode of argumentation. We cannot allow the advocates of Christianity to touch the subject of the New Testament ere the Old has been satisfactorily proved and brought home

to our convictions. No, we cannot suffer ourselves to be misled by the devices of subtle men and ensnared by their cobweb sophistries. We must begin with the beginning and test the solidity and strength of the foundation ere we trust to the security of the imposing superstructures which stand on it. What rational objection can Christians have against the prosecution of our investigation in this its natural order? Why do they shrink from the task of demonstrating the truth of the Old Testament without the help of the New? Why are they afraid to grapple with the question of the Old Testament upon its own merits? How could the authority of the ancient portion of the Divine Record have followed as a necessary corollary from the demonstrated truth and authority of the New Testament at an age when the latter existed not?

The books of the Old Testament carry on the very face of them such evident and palpable marks of spuriousness that we need not go out of them for evidences to prove that they are not the productions of the persons upon whom they have been palmed. The Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, which are ascribed to Moses, could not have been written by him or any of his contemporaries, as among other grounds of suspicion they contain narratives of events which took place several centuries

after his time. It * is related in the 14 Chapter of Genesis verse 14 that "when Abram heard his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan." But it is said in the 18 chapter of the book of Judges verse 27 that they (the Danites) came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure, they smote them with the edge of the sword and burnt the city with fire. And they built a city and dwelt therein and they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan, their father who was born unto the house of Israil: how be it the name of the city was Laish at the first." The foundation of the city of Dan was laid after the death of Sampson. The death of Sampson happened according to the Bible Chronology 1120 years B. C. and that of Moses 1451 years B. C. How could Moses then have composed a book which contains this allusion to Dan, a city which was built 331 years after his death? What authority have we to assume that there was at the time of Moses any other place of the same name or as Bishop Watson fancies that Dan

* This and most other arguments against the genuineness of the Bible have been borrowed from the Age of Reason to which we beg to refer our readers.

was a branch of the well known river Jordan? *

The 36 Chapter of Genesis gives a genealogy of the descendants of Esau, and in furnishing a list of the Kings of Edom, says (verse 31.) "And these are the kings that reigned in Edom, before there reigned *any* king over the children of Israil. This passage could not have been written before the time of Saul the first king elected by the Israilites B. C. 1196 or 255 years after the death of Moses. But the expression *any* king implies more kings than one, and shews that the book in question was not written till after the reign of some of the successors of Saul. This carries the period of the composition of Genesis farther from the time of Moses and proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that he could not be the author of it.

Unable to refute the above objection of Thomas Paine, Bishop Watson "admits this inference but denies its application." He says a small addition to a book does not destroy either the genuineness or the

* Christians have but recently spun out this hypothesis to reconcile the above contradictory passages of the Old Testament. It is indeed at variance with the most approved authorities on antiquarian subjects: Some of them think that the name Jordan is derived from its rapid descent. Some say that it is formed of the oriental *Jor* a stream, and *Dan* a Town near which it had its source. Hardonin says that this name signifies the delightful river. Others say that it received the name from its great depth.

authenticity of the whole book." This is indeed an instance of unbounded faith, the offspring of a blind credulity. Unless it can be clearly shewn that the original copy of the Mosaic Law is free from this indubitable mark of spuriousness and that the foregoing quotation from the bible was added to it by an editor of Moses' work who lived after the commencement of the Jewish monarchy, the subtilities of the bishop must of necessity fall to the ground.

It is related in the 34 chapter of Deuteronomy verses 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, that Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord; And he burried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. And the children of Israil wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping and mourning for Moses was ended. And Joshua, the son of Nun, was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him and the children of Israil hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses. And there arose not a prophet since in Israil like unto Moses whom the Lord knew face to face. Now in the name of common sense we ask could Moses possibly write this account of his own death and burial? How could he know and relate

that Israilites wept and mourned for him in the land of Moab thirty days and that there arose not a prophet since in Israil like unto Moses? Do not the phrases "*no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day and there arose not a prophet since in Israil like unto Moses*" imply that this book was written long posterior to the time of Moses and after the rise of at least more than one prophet in Israil?

It appears from the 34 chapter of Chronicles II verses 14, 15, 16, 18, that the law ascribed to Moses was accidentally discovered in the time of Isaah, who caused it to be sent to a prophetess to ascertain its truthfulness. "Hilkiab, the priest found the book of the law of the Lord given by Moses; and Hilkiab answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord; and Hilkiab delivered the book to Shaphan and Shaphan carried the book to the king, then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiab the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And the king commanded Hilkiab, and Alican the son of Shaphan, and Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe and Asaih a servant of the king's, saying, Go, enquire of the Lord for me and for them that are left in Israil and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found." Hence it is evident that the Jewish people were not in possession of this book till the time of Isaah and that there were no other means of establish-

ing its genuineness, save by submitting it to the suspicious and antiquated test of an oracle. But how is it possible that this law, if really written and promulgated by Moses during his life time, as elsewhere represented in the bible, was unknown and unnoticed during a period of about 1000 years? Is it not highly probable, nay almost certain, that this book found by a priest and passed by a prophetess, is no other than a fabrication of a crafty priesthood and an interested synagogue?

In the 24 chapter of Joshua verses 29, 30, 31, it is said "that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being a hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath Serah, which is in mount Ephram, on the north side of the hill of Gaash. And Israil served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders that out-lived Joshua." Now, can it be Joshua that wrote this story of his having died at the age of 110 years, and being buried in Timnath-Serah? Is it possible for him to say that the Israilites served the Lord not only during his whole life-time, but during that of the elders who survived him? Is it not quite clear that the strange tales embodied in this book must have been composed and concocted by some fabulist that lived not only after Joshua but also after the elders that out-lived him?

The book of Judges being anonymous, we are not called upon to examine its genuineness or receive its

reports on the testimony of unknown writers. From the accounts it contains of the capture of the city of Jerusalem, which was not taken till the reign of David, it is probable that this book was not written till 370 years after the death of Joshua.

That the two books of Samuel are not genuine may be satisfactorily proved from their relating events which took place after the death of Samuel and from other circumstances scattered throughout these books. But it is supererogatory to enter into an elaborate disquisition about their genuineness when the advocates of Christianity admit "that Samuel did not write any part of the second book which bears his name and only a part of the first." *

The books of Kings and Chronicles are also anonymous, and as nothing certain can be known of their paternity we shall not stop to examine them. They are but a catalogue of treachery, warfare, and bloodshed, and contain narratives of monstrous absurdities not at all deserving of our belief.

We need not waste further time in examining the genuineness of the remaining books of the Old Testament, as the followers of Jesus are doubtful of their origin and have themselves acknowledged that some passages of the ancient scripture have been written by other persons than those to whom they are ascribed.

* Bishop Watson.

Thus says Dr. Hartley" I *suppose* then, that the Pentateuch consists of the writings of Moses, put together by Samuel with a very few additions ; that the book of Joshua and Judges were, in like manner, collected by him ; that the book of Ruth with the first part of the book of Samuel written by him ; that the latter part of the first book of Samuel, and second book, were written by the prophets who succeeded Samuel, *suppose* Natham and Gad : that the books of Kings and Chronicles are extracts from the records of the succeeding prophets concerning their own times, and from the public genealogical tables by Ezra, that the book of Ezra and Nehemiah are collections of like records, some written by Ezra and Nehemiah and some by their predecessors ; that the book of Esther was written by some eminent Jew, in or near the times of the transactions there recorded, perhaps Mordecai ; that the book of Job by a Jew of an uncertain time ; the Psalms by David and other pious persons ; the book of Proverbs and Canticles by Solomon, or perhaps by a Jew of latter times speaking in his person but not with an intention to make him pass for the author ; and the prophecies by the prophets whose names they bear." Such is the hypothesis of an eminent Christian writer, who, with all his learning and talents for biblical researches, could not arrive at a certain conclusion regarding the origin of the books of the Old Testament. All that he has said is full of doubts and un-

certainties. Watson, Bishop of Landaff, well known for his apology for the Bible, has been constrained to admit that "the history of the Old Testament has, without doubt, some difficulties in it." Eben Ezra, a Jewish author of great erudition, and a competent judge in questions of Hebrew literature, asserts that the Pentateuch or the five books of Moses were not, and could not be written, by him. Spinoza, another Jewish writer, have advanced many reasons to shew that Moses is not the writer of the books ascribed to him and that the Old Testament did not exist as a book till a century after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity. Eben Ezra and Spinoza moreover agree in maintaining that the book of Job bears "no internal evidence of being a Hebrew book; that the genius of the composition, and the drama of the piece are not Hebrew; that it has been translated from another language into Hebrew; and that the author of the book was a Gentile."

With regard to the genuineness of the books of the New Testament we have no affirmative evidence of their being composed by the men whose names they bear, except that they have been received as such by the Christian Church. Suspicious as this authority must necessarily appear to every unprejudiced enquirer, we hope to be pardoned for our scepticism in questioning their legitimacy and denying the divine inspiration of their authors. Intimately associated as the wri-

ters of the Gospel were, and equally interested in establishing the religion of their celestial teacher, it is impossible to believe that they respectively withheld their knowledge from their comrades, and fell into contradictions in their several narratives. With the torch of revelation in their hands and under the immediate guidance of the Omniscient, if they failed in giving consistent accounts of mere historical facts and the things they are said to have witnessed, what guarantee have we to trust that they would lead us aright into what lies beyond the reach of reason and philosophy, and appertains to the dark mysteries of the invisible world. As a specimen of the contradictions into which they have fallen, we beg to subjoin a few quotations from Thomas Paine and refer our readers to the Age of Reason and the Ecce Homo for a fuller exposition of the fallacies of the bible. Hume, Gibbon, Voltaire, Rosseau, and a host of other illustrious writers have too abundantly proved the falsehood of the Christian religion to leave any thing new to be said on the subject.

"The book of Mathew gives, chap. 1 ver. 6, a genealogy by name from David, up through Joseph, the husband of Mary, to Christ; and makes there to be *twenty-eight* generations. The book of Luke gives also the same genealogy, and makes there to be *forty-three* generations; besides which, there are only the two names of David and Joseph that are alike in the

two lists. I here insert both genealogical lists, and for the sake of perspicuity and comparison have placed them both in the same direction ; that is, from Joseph down to David."

Genealogy according to Mathew. Genealogy according to Luke.

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| Christ | Christ |
| 2 Joseph | 2 Joseph |
| 3 Jacob | 3 Heli |
| 4 Mathan | 4 Matthat |
| 5 Eleazer | 5 Levi |
| 6 Eliud | 6 Melchi |
| 7 Achim | 7 Janna |
| 8 Sadoc | 8 Joseph |
| 9 Azor | 9 Mattathias |
| 10 Eliakim | 10 Amos |
| 11 Ebiud | 11 Naum |
| 12 Zorobabel | 12 Esli |
| 13 Salathiel | 13 Nagge |
| 14 Jechonias | 14 Maath |
| 15 Josias | 15 Mattathias |
| 16 Amon | 16 Semci |
| 17 Manasses | 17 Joseph |
| 18 Ezekias | 18 Juda |
| 19 Achaz | 19 Joanna |
| 20 Joatham | 20 Rhesa |
| 21 Ozias | 21 Zorobabel |

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 22 Joram | 22 Salathiel |
| 23 Josaphat | 23 Neri |
| 24 A sa | 24 Melchi |
| 25 Abia | 25 Addi |
| 26 Roboam | 26 Cosam |
| 27 Solomon | 27 Elimodam |
| 28 David | 28 Er |
| | 29 Jose |
| | 30 Eliezer |
| | 31 Jorim |
| | 32 Matthat |
| | 33 Levi |
| | 34 Simeon |
| | 35 Juda |
| | 36 Joseph |
| | 37 Jonan |
| | 38 Elakim |
| | 39 Melea |
| | 40 Menan |
| | 41 Mattatha |
| | 42 Natham |
| | 43 David |

To get rid of this difficulty Bishop Watson asserts that Mathew has given the genealogy of Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus, while Luke has furnished that of Mary, his real mother. But this supposition is entirely groundless. Why would Luke have inserted the name

of Joseph and omitted that of Mary in the maternal genealogy of Jesus? The very mention of Joseph's name incontrovertibly proves that Luke has written the paternal pedigree of Jesus and not that of Mary as the Bishop attempts to make us believe. The observations of Theodore Parker, Minister of the second Church in Roxbury, are so apposite to the point at issue that we cannot resist the temptation of quoting the following passage from his work.

“ Mathew enumerates three series, each of fourteen generations, or forty-two persons in the whole, between Abraham and Jesus, and gives the names of the individuals; but the number actually given does not agree with his enumeration, and no hypothesis relieves us of the difficulty. If we compare this list with the Old Testament, it is still more objectionable, for it omits several well-known names, and contains some mistakes. Luke's genealogy differs still more widely from the Old Testament; from Nathan, the son of David downward, he mentions only two persons who occur in the Old Testament, namely Salathiel and Zorobabel, and even here it contradicts the narratives in 1 Chronicles III, 17, 19, 20. If we compare these two genealogies together, there is a striking difference between them. Luke reckons forty-one generations of David to Joseph, the father of Jesus, where Mathew makes but twenty-six, and with the two exceptions above mentioned, the names are all different in the two narrations.

According to Luke, the father of Joseph is Heli, a descendant of Nathan son of David; according to Mathew, Joseph's father is Jacob, a descendant of Solomon. Various attempts have been made to reconcile these conflicting genealogies, but they all rest on arbitrary suppositions. It is sometimes said one contains the genealogy of Joseph, the other of Mary; but this also is an arbitrary supposition, at variance with the text, and is not supported by any passage in the Bible. We must, then, conclude these genealogies are arbitrary compositions, which do not prove the Davidic descent of Jesus, who was called *son of David*, because he was considered as the Messiah. It is easily conceivable that a Galilean, whose descent was unknown, after he had acquired the title of Messiah, should be represented by tradition as a son of David. On the strength of these tradition genealogies were composed, which for want of authentic documents, were as various and conflicting as these two of Luke and Mathew.” Andrews Norton, Professor of sacred story in the Harvard University, “and author of the Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels,” rejects Mathew's account (of the miraculous birth of Jesus) as spurious and unauthentic; while Mr. Straus, with more perfect logical consistency, rejects likewise Luke's narrative, on the ground that Gabriel talks like a Jew; that supernatural birth is impossible; that if a human birth implies the sinfulness of the

child, then a celestial mother is needed also, that the child may be free from sin."

The accounts of the circumstances which are said to have attended the crucifixion are differently related in the four Gospels.

The book ascribed to Mathew says. "There was darkness over all the land from the sixth hour unto the ninth hour—that the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom—that the graves opened, that the bodies of the saints that slept arose and came out of their graves after the resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." Such is the account which Mathew gives and in which he is not supported by the writers of the other books except in the relation of the darkness and the rendering of the veil mentioned only by Mark and Luke.

"The writer of the book ascribed to Mark, in detailing the circumstances of the crucifixion, makes no mention of any earthquake, nor of the graves opening, nor of the dead men walking out. The writer of the book of Luke is silent also upon the same points, and as to the writer of the book of John; though he details all the circumstances of the crucifixion down to the burial of Christ, he says nothing about either the darkness—the veil of the temple—the earthquake—the rocks—the graves—nor the deadmen."

"Now if it had been true, that those things hap-

pened, and if the writer of these books lived at the time they did happen, and had they been the disciples of Christ, it was not possible for them as true historians, even without the aid of inspiration, not to have recorded them. The things, supposing them to have been facts were of too much notoriety not to have been known and of too much importance not to have been told. All these Gospel—writers must have been witnesses of the earthquake, if there had been any; for it is not possible for them to have been absent from it; the opening of the graves and the resurrection of the dead men, and their walking about the city, is of much greater importance than the earthquake. An earthquake is always possible, and natural, and proves nothing; but the opening of the graves is supernatural, and directly in point to their doctrine, their cause, and their apostleship. Had they been true, it would have filled whole chapters of these books, and been the chosen theme and general chorus of all the writers."

"Who it may be asked, where these Saints? Not disciples of Christ; for many of them had not died. Not unconverted Jews of that time; for to them such a title would not applied. How long had they lain in their sepulchres? We cannot but suppose, that corruption had done its work on the larger portion; and is it to be thought that God would recreate as it were those mouldering bodies without some purpose far dif-

ferent from what can be discerned ? What purpose indeed can be discerned ? They appeared, it is said, to many ; but we do not find that many converts were made in consequence, nor can we perceive that any good whatever followed, directly or indirectly, from their appearance. Supposing the story to be true, many to whom they did not appear would regard it as a fable ; and its circulation would tend to throw discredit on the testimony to the resurrection of Christ himself. Were these saints in fact recalled to life, and did not they die again, and their bodies resume their places, when their supposed mission to the living was accomplished ? Is it possible, if such an astonishing miracle had been performed, a miracle more adapted to excite consternation than any in the whole history of the Evangelists that one really acquainted with such a fact should have known nothing of the consequences that must have resulted from it, or that knowing those consequences, he should not have thought it worth while to record them ? Is it likely that so strange a marvel, about which all Jerusalem must have been full of excitement, should have been mentioned but by one Evangelist and that so slightly ?

“ Strange indeed that an army of saints should return to life, and no body knew who they were, nor who it was that saw them, and that not a word more should be said upon the subject, nor these saints have any thing to tell us. They could have told us every

thing, and we should have had posthumous prophecies with notes and commentaries upon the first, a little better than we have now. Had it been Moses, and Aaron, and Joshua, and Samuel, and David, not an unconverted Jew had remained in all Jerusalem. Had it been John the Baptist, and the saints of the time then present, every body would have known them, and they would have out preached and out famed all the other apostles. But instead of this, these saints are made to pop up, like Jonah's gourd in the night, for no other purpose at all but to wither in the morning. Thus much for this part of the story.”

Mathew gives an account of a guard being placed over Christ's sepulchre to prevent his body being stolen by his followers, and of sealing the stone that covered its mouth. But Mark, Luke, and John do not mention a word about it. Had this circumstance been true, is it probable that they would all pass over it in silence ?

Mathew chap. XII. verse 40, “ For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” This is in contradiction with the story of the ascension given by the Evangelists, who assert that Christ was only one day and two nights in the sepulchre. Are both these contradictory passages infallible ?

This is an average sample of the accuracy of the testimony upon which we are desired to rely in the most momentous concerns of our soul.

“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 says it was written by Luke, which shows the Church and its priests have not compared that called Gospel according to St. Luke and the Acts together, for the two contradict each other. The book of Luke, chapter 34, makes Jesus ascend into heaven the very same day that it makes him rise from the grave. The book of Acts, chap: 1, ver: 3, says that he remained on the earth forty days after the crucifixion. There is no believing, what either of them says.”

“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 at the end, by a servant woman called Phebe. The last chapter, verse, 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.”

The next book is entitled. “The first Epistle of Paul the apostle to the Corinthians.” The conclusion of the Epistle says, the first epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippe, by Stephenos and Fortunatus and Achiachus 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 Philippe, a city of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas.

The next is entitled, “The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians.” 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 Phillippeans.” 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 Phillippeans.” Paul is not the writer. The conclusion of it says, written to the Phillippeans from Rome by Epaphroditus. It is not dated.

The next is entitled, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle, to the Colossians.” Paul is not the writer. The conclusion of the epistle says, “Written from

Rome to the Colossians, by Tychicus and Onesimus."

The next is entitled "the first and second Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians." They are said in the conclusion of them, to be written from Athens. They are without date and signature.

The next four Epistles are private letters. Two of them are to Timothy, one to Titus, and one to Philimon. Who they were no body knows.

The first to Timothy is said to be written from Laodoea. It is without date and signature. The second to Timothy is said to be written from Rome, and is without date and signature. The Epistle to Titus is said to be written from Nicopolis in Macedonia. It is without date and signature. The Epistle to Philimon is said to be written from Rome by Onesimus. It is without date.

The last Epistle ascribed to Paul is entitled, Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews, "and is said in the conclusion to be written from Italy, by Timothy.

The origin of the books of the New Testament, as well as those of the Old is thus buried in the deepest obscurity and oblivion. There is no satisfactory evidence for us to believe that they are the genuine productions of their reputed authors; nor is there any possible means of ascertaining at

this distance of time as to who the persons were that really composed them.

Even the champions of Christianity, who look upon the Gospels as an infallible oracle of divine truth, have been forced to acknowledge that "with its real miracles, the fictions of oral tradition had probably become blended; and the individual, by whom it was committed to writing, probably added what he regarded as poetical embellishments. It is not necessary to believe for example, that Mary and Zachariah actually expressed themselves in the mythical language of the hymns ascribed to them; or to believe as literal history the whole of the account respecting the birth of John the Baptist, or of the different appearances of an angel, announcing himself as Gabriel. *With our present means of judging, however, we cannot draw a precise line between the truth and what has been added to the truth.*"

It is a well-known fact that in the early ages of Christianity multitudinous books professing to be revelations from God were manufactured and imposed as such upon the credulous votaries of the Son of Man. "In the course of three centuries after the death of Jesus, these effusions of inspiration were multiplied to such an amazing extent, and the corruptions of manuscripts became so numerous and manifest, that the Christians of the time felt the enormity of the growing evil and attempted to

check its farther progress. With this view they held ecclesiastical councils at Nice and Laodocia, and decided by vote upon the divine origin of the books which suited their purpose. Thus in the 325th year of the Christian era they selected four out of the fifty Gospels submitted to them and condemned the rest as apocryphal although they did not lack miracles and prophecies to uphold them. It is upon the authority of these assembled prelates the Christians have received their present Gospels unfolding their marvellous scheme of human redemption. It is this holy synod that restored them their book of life and procured them their lost keys of heaven! But of what avail could be the prophecies of inspired sages, the miracles and death of Christ and the martyrdom of saints, if through the frailty of human nature the fathers of the church have happened to err in the selection of the books laid before them? Was this assembly composed of all disinterested, unprejudiced, infallible men, who could neither possibly deceive or be deceived? Could not the imperial influence of Constantine present on the occasion and the interest of the heads of the Church secure the votes of the majority in their favor.

The proficiency which from a remote antiquity some men of superior genius acquired in the arts of magic and the occult sciences enabled them to achieve what are vulgarly called miracles, and work

successfully upon the passions, desires, hopes, and resolutions of the ignorant multitude. Fond of power and of enthralling the human mind, these magicians succeeded by feats of agility and other mysterious arts to work upon the credulity of the weak minded populace, and usurp the honor of being the delegates of heaven. Every new impostor or prophet has excited the terror of the superstitious, amazed the vulgar with an exhibition of miracles and claimed the testimony of eye witnesses in attestation of his divine mission. But on a close analysis of these miracles, and examination of the reports upon which they are generally received, they will be found to have been produced in subserviency to the laws of nature and through the aid of the occult sciences. Those, who have curiosity and leisure sufficient to prosecute this enquiry to the fullest extent, will find ample matter for study in a French work recently published by Eusebe. Salvert and translated into English by A. T. Thomson. This philosopher in enumerating the prodigies of magicians, gives an account of the address of a mere juggler in imposing upon a large audience of respectable men assembled at Nancy in 1829. "A juggler," says he "very recently, indeed, exhibited to the public the spectacle of apparently beheading a man, as he lay upon the stage, in such a manner as to excite very painful feelings in the spectators.

He displayed the severed head to convince the sceptical and even invited them to touch it; to open the mouth which shut again of its own accord and to examine the bleeding section of the neck at the extremity of the trunk. He afterwards withdrew a curtain and almost immediately the living man appeared. Now let us suppose the juggler to be above the suspicion of chicanry, the sceptic might say: "I presumed the thing to be impossible, but it appears that I was wrong if my senses were not spell-bound by some insurmountable illusion. I admit that the fact, if once established, becomes a valuable acquisition to science; but before I can recognize a miracle in it, I must have the demonstration that the thing could not occur, except God himself should reverse the order of his own fixed laws. At present your proof reaches no further than what is afforded by my probably deceived sight and your skilfulness." In treating of ventriloquism employed in oracles, he speaks of a most successful ventriloquist of modern times M. St Gelle, a grocer, of St. Germain enLaye." The ventriloquist exhibited his art merely as a matter of amusement but with a degree of skill, which appears almost incredible. He had occasion to take shelter from a storm in a convent, while the monks were lamenting, over the tomb of a lately deceased brother. the few honors that had been paid to his memory. A voice was heard to

proceed from the roof of the choir, bewailing the condition of the deceased in purgatory, and reproving the brotherhood of their want of zeal. The tidings of this supernatural event brought the whole brotherhood into the the Church. The voice again repeated its lamentations and reproaches, and the whole convent fell upon their faces, and vouched to make reparation of their error. They accordingly chanted in full choir a *De Profundis*, during the interval of which the spirit of the departed monk expressed his satisfaction at their pious exercises. The Prior afterwards expressed strongly against modern scepticism on the subject of apparitions; and M. St. Gelle had great difficulty in convincing the fraternity that the whole was a deception." Now if the tricks of these jugglers played before the eyes of acute and sagacious observers of enlightened ages could so completely escape detection; might not the founder of Christianity practise the arts of magic and with far greater facility dupe the unlettered fishermen of Galilee! Did not the higher orders of the Jewish people, the learned men of Greece, Rome, and all other civilized countries combine in attributing the alleged miracles of Christ to magic, and in rejecting his pretensions of divinity with scorn?

But in the sense in which the deceptions of Christ have been viewed by his followers; miracles are in-

fringements of the laws of nature, which no amount of testimony, however irrefragable it may appear to superficial observers, can establish to the satisfaction of unprejudiced observers." Miracles are, "to quote the words of Bishop Wilson, "visible suspensions of the laws of nature, on the general constancy of which the order and preservation of the whole universe rest." According to this definition, no work or event, however rare, strange, and incomprehensible to us, can be said to be miraculous unless it be opposed to and be at variance with one or more of the known laws of nature. A miracle then presupposes an established and necessarily invariable course of nature and our acquaintance with such of her laws as it pretends to suspend, control or violate. "Thus" to borrow an illustration from Horne's Christian Evidences, "were a physician to give sight to a blind man, by anointing his eyes with a chemical preparation, which we had never before seen, and to the nature and qualities of which we were absolute strangers, the cure would to us undoubtedly be wonderful, but we could not pronounce it to be miraculous, because it might be the physical effect of the unguent to the eye. But were he to give sight to his patient merely by commanding him to receive it, or by anointing his eyes with spittle, we should with the utmost confidence pronounce the cure to be a miracle; because we know

perfectly that neither the human voice, nor human spittle, has by the established constitution of things any such power over the diseases of the eye." Such being the nature of miracle, let us deliberately and impartially examine its claims on our belief and the credibility of the testimony upon which it is founded.

Our personal experience and that of all mankind from the creation of the world to the present moment have established beyond the shadow of a doubt the constancy and immutability of the laws of nature. The believers of miracles as well as the unprejudiced observers of nature have in all ages agreed in placing implicit faith in the unbending, invariable, and universal operation of these laws and regulated their conduct and all occurrences of life in perfect harmony with them. The speculations of metaphysics, the researches of natural history, the discoveries of philosophy, and improvements in different branches of human knowledge, have enhanced instead of diminishing our confidence in the constancy of these laws. Their immutability is an intuitive and axiomatic truth which has survived the revolutions of science and commanded the rational faith and just veneration of the whole race of men. We cannot therefore credit the accounts of miracles or infringement of those laws "on the constancy of which the order and preservation of the whole uni-

verse rest" upon any testimony which does not outweigh the evidence of our senses, the uniform experience of all men of all climates, and the proofs of science. But as the testimony of the apostles upon which the miracles are founded falls infinitely shorter than these overwhelming evidences, and "as a weaker evidence can never destroy a stronger" we cannot consistently with reason and common sense credit any reports of the miraculous infringements of the laws of nature. To believe in miracles is, in fine, to deny God's immutability, his manifold power, and infinite wisdom.

Were we even to concede to the advocates of Christianity the possibility of miraculous occurrences, and the sufficiency of a certain species of testimony to establish them, (though we have no reason to do so) they would still fail to prove that Christ is the Son of God who descended on earth for the purpose of regenerating the fallen world. The miracles ascribed to him are not attested by a class of men who, by the good sense, superior learning, and unquestioned integrity were above the suspicion of being misled by a blind credulity or actuated by a deliberate design of deceiving others. Since the testimony of Josephus, Tacitus, Livy, and such other celebrated historians are rejected with scorn when they speak of prodigies, it is a height of infamy to ask us to acquiesce in the belief of miracles said

to have been witnessed by the very dregs of a barbarous people devoid of all education and charged by their own contemporaries of falsehood and imposture.

The martyrdom of the first Christians, so often cited by the friends of the Gospel as the highest possible evidence of the reality of the miracles said to have been wrought by their Lord, furnishes no stable basis for the structure of the Christian argument. Was it for religion alone or for sole testifying to the fact of miracles that the primitive Christians had to suffer at the stake or the scaffold? Were not the martyrs often accused of violating the laws of the land and condemned for encroaching upon the rights of their fellow brethren? Did they not fall victims to popular indignation rather than as martyrs to the cause of truth? The severity of their punishment no doubt exceeded their crimes; but can it be denied that they sank under the weight of civil and political charges truly or falsely preferred against them?

The Jews were once raised to power and affluence by David, and at a later period delivered from servitude and restored to their country by Cyrus. When they were again conquered and oppressed by foreigners, it was natural for them to expect that a deliverer like David or Cyrus should rise to redress their grievances and revive their old theocracy.

Hence prophets rose to predict the coming of a Redeemer, a Saviour, the Lord of hosts and the King of the Jews. Their prophecies of a deliverer of the royal blood, and of the family of David a conquerer armed with imperial power and vested with the pomp and splendour of oriental royalty : can be never reasonably applied to Jesus, a man of the lowest extraction, born in a stable laid in a manger the companion of fishermen. and himself an obscure carpenter of Nazareth. We propose therefore to avail ourselves of the assistance of Thomas Paine in entering upon a more minute examination of the prophecies and detecting their false application to the texts of the New Testament relating to Jesus Christ.

Prophecies cited by Methew.—“ Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken 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. “Allusion is here made to Isaiah Chap : V II, ver : 14, which is construed into a prophecy concerning Jesus Christ but the prophet, who pronounced it appears to have never dreamed of such an interpretation. When Ahaz, the king of Judah, was invaded by the kings of Israel and Syria, Israel desired the former to ask a sign of the Lord. This Ahaz refused to do saying he would not tempt the Lord : upon which Isaiah says, ver : 14, “ Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign ; Behold, a

virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. 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 that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings” (meaning Pekah, the king of Israel, and Rezin the king of Syria). Here the birth of a son is the sign, and here also is the time limited for the accomplishment of the sign, namely, before that son should know to refuse the evil and choose the good. The birth of the son to be a sign of success to Ahaz must have taken place before the issue of the battle between him and his assailants. It would have been a mockery for Isaiah to have assured Ahaz as a sign that these two kings should not prevail against him, that a child should be born seven hundred years after his death; 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, for he says in the next chapter, ver. 2, “ And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberchiah. And I went unto the prophetess, and she conceived and bare a son :” and he says in ver. 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, does not signify a virgin in Hebrew, but merely a young woman. The tense also is falsified in the translation. Levi gives the Hebrew text of the 14th ver. of the 7th chap. of Isaiah, and the translation in English with it—"Behold a young woman is with child and beareth a son."

Micah, chap. V. ver. 5—6 : "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 against him (that is the Assyrian) seven shepherds and eight principal men. And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof : thus shall He (the person spoken of at the head of the 2nd verse) deliver us from the Assyrian when he cometh into our land and when he treadeth within our borders." Matthew makes of the 6th and 2nd verses of this chap. a prophecy concerning Jesus Christ. But 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 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

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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 of his execution and he suffered under it.

The next prophecy to which Matthew alludes is in Hosea, chap. XI. ver. 1 : "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." Ver. 2 : "As they called them, so they went from them : they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images." This refers to the children of Israel coming out of Egypt in the time of Pharaoh, and to the idolatry they committed afterwards; and not to Christ who is supposed to have been free from the guilt of idolatry.

The passage in Jeremiah, chap. 31, ver. 15, contains no prophecy concerning Jesus, as the description thereof is in the past tense. It describes the sorrows and sufferings of the Jews when they were led captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. In the two following verses Jeremiah consoles them that their sufferings should have an end and their children should return again to their own land.

Isaiah, chap. 9, ver. 1, 2, is not predictive but descriptive of things that had been accomplished. The whole is in the past tense, and has no reference to events which were then in the womb of futurity.

Isaiah, chap. 53, ver. 4, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows," contains no prophecy

relating to Christ. The circumstances there given do not apply to him. Besides, the description is in the past tense. According to Grotius, Isaiah is here speaking of Jeremiah; but Thomas Paine differs from this opinion and thinks the passage has reference to some person of Isaiah's time. "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 should shew judgement 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 sends forth judgement unto victory—and in his name shall the Gentiles trust." Matthew has taken this passage from Isaiah, chap. XIII. ver. 1, 2, 3, 4, and called it a prophecy concerning Christ. Isaiah is a disorderly writer, and has not given the name of the person described in this passage. But this description does not apply to Jesus Christ, who had no authority among the Gentiles; and as to his 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 himself has given a long sermon; but to say that it was on a mountain and not in a street is

a mere quibble, since both the places are equally public. The last verse in the passage (the 4th) as it stands in Isaiah, and which Matthew has not quoted, says, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgement in the earth and the isles shall wait for his law." This cannot be said of Jesus Christ, who, according to Matthew, 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.

Zechariah, chap. IX. ver. 9, has reference to the entry of the Jews from captivity and not to the entry of Jesus 700 years afterwards. Jesus never rode to Jerusalem, accompanied, as has been said by Zechariah, by a great multitude shouting, and rejoicing, and spreading their garments by the way. Besides, the description being in the present tense can have no relation to Jesus, who was born seven centuries afterwards.

Jeremiah, chap. 32, ver. 6: "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 right of redemption is thine; buy it for thyself. Then I knew that 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 the money in balance. 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 the 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." This passage contains no prophecy regarding the purchase of the potter's field related by Matthew. This is a story of a quite different tran-

saction between Hanameel and his cousin which is related to have been finally closed about seven centuries before the birth of Jesus and Judah.

Matthew, chap. XXVII. ver. 3: "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the 30 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 pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, It is not lawful to put them into 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." This account is contradicted by that in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, wherein it is said, chap. 1. ver. 18: "Now this man (Judas) purchased a field with the reward of iniquity &c." How are these glaring contradictions of the two infallible and inspired penmen to be reconciled?

Matthew, chap. XXVII. ver. 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 passage is in the 22nd psalm, ver. 18. The psalmist here speaks of himself and his own misfortunes and

not those of Christ. The language is not prophetic and the interpretation which has been forced upon it, is quite arbitrary.

Prophecies, cited by Mark: "As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare the way before thee." Mark has perverted the text in Malachi, chap. 3, ver. 1, to answer his own purpose. The passage in Malachi is in the first person, "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. But who shall 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 sope." The 5th verse of the next chapter says, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." How can the passage quoted by Mark, which evidently refers to Elijah and the day of judgement, be reasonably construed into a prophecy relating to John the Baptist and the birth-day of Christ?

The 3rd verse of Mark, chap. 1, which has been taken from Isaiah, chap. 40, ver. 3, says, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." This passage is too general and declamatory to be applied exclusively to any particular person or purpose. Besides, the expression being in the present tense cannot be viewed as prophetic.

Prophecies cited by John, chap. V. ver. 46: "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me." The book of the Acts of the Apostles, in speaking of Jesus, says, chap. III. ver. 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."

The person spoken of in the Pentateuch, is not Christ, but Joshua, the minister of Moses, whom the latter caused to be nominated his successor to prevent disorder and anarchy after his death among the Israelites who had no systematic government at the time. This will appear evident from the subjoined quotation from the Numbers, chap. XXVII. ver. 12: "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 was gathered." Ver. 15: "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 which have no shepherd. And the Lord said unto Moses, Take 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." Ver. 22: "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 his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses."

John, chap. 19, ver. 33: "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs". Ver. 36: "For these things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken." Far from being a prophecy, this passage does not bear the remotest relation to Jesus. It is a broken sentence taken out of Exodus, chap. XII. treating of the Jewish ceremony called the Passover, as the following quotation from that book will prove.

"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 and an hired servant shall not eat thereof. In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry it abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof."

abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof."

This is a brief sketch of the prophecies said to have been made concerning Jesus Christ. The writers of the several books which compose the New Testament, have, as it has been already proved, extracted some broken texts of the Hebrew Scriptures and contrived to apply them to certain anecdotes of Jesus on purpose to make their own writings assume an air of importance and authority. On restoring these texts to their proper places and connecting them with the words which precede and follow them, every man of ordinary discretion will clearly perceive the fallacy of the argument arising from the so-called prophecies of the Jewish prophets.

The bible is full of fables and absurdities. It teems with stories of ghosts and apparitions, witches and wizards. Its passages are dark and ambiguous. Its interpretations are conjectural and varying. Hence the opposition of its professors to every new-born science, and their subsequent recognition of its truth. Hence the burning of witches and the division of sects among Christians. Truths which were once deemed fatal to Christianity, are now attempted to be reconciled to its doctrines. Its facts are ascertained, and its inductions false. It admits the reality of miracles on a false testimony, and deduces the truth of Christ alone from their

occurrence. Taking for granted that every miracle-worker is a celestial and an infallible teacher of truth and the saviour of man, it may be logically concluded that the magicians of Egypt whose miracles are recorded in the Old Testament are also celestial and infallible teachers of truth and the saviours of man. This much for the biblical mode of argumentation. Now, it may be also affirmed that Christianity has not discovered a single rule of morality unknown to the ancients, nor are its precepts alone in their excellence and purity. Confucius, Socrates, Cicero, and other philosophers of antiquity had inculcated the same maxims several centuries before the birth of Christ. Confucius, to whom the Christians are indebted for the *summum bonum* of their ethics, taught to do to another what you would should be done unto you; and do not to another what you would should not be done unto you. "You are not permitted to render evil for evil" was one of the precepts of Socrates. Numberless extracts of this nature may be given from other ancient authors, but it may suffice to quote a few lines from the II. Discourse delivered by sir William Jones in 1794 before the Asiatic Society of Calcutta, "on the Philosophy of the Asiatics." If the conversion of the Pundits and Moulavis in this country shall ever be attempted by protestant Missionaries, they must beware of asserting, while they preach the gospel of truth, what those pundits and moulavis know to be false.

The former would cite that beautiful Arya couplet which was written at least three centuries before our era, and which pronounces the duty of a good man, even till the moment of his destruction, to consist not only in forgiving, but even in a desire of benefiting his destroyer, as the sandal-tree, in the instant of its overthrow, sheds perfume on the axe which fells it; and the latter would triumph in repeating the verse of Sadi, who represents the return of good for good as a slight reciprocity, but says to the virtuous man "Confer benefits on him who has injured thee," using an Arabian sentence, and a maxim apparently of the ancient Arabs. Nor would the Mussulmans fail to cite from distiches of Hafiz who has illustrated that

maxim with fanciful but elegant allusions:—

"Learn from yon orient shell to love thy foe,
 And store with pearls, the hand that brings thee woe;
 Free like yon rock, from base vindictive pride,
 Imblaze with gems the wrist that tears thy side;
 Mark, where yon tree rewards the stony shower,
 With fruit nectarious, or the balmy flower;
 All nature calls aloud, unless
 Than heal the

by the founders of every other system of revealed religion. The Old Testament itself relates the miracles performed by the magicians of Egypt, and acknowledges their power of turning sticks into snakes and a river of water into a river of blood. The book, which treats of the divinity of Christ, is profuse in its stories of devils, sorcerers, witches, and wizards, and you have precisely the same grounds to believe the one as you have to believe the other parts of the story. Ponder deeply on the scriptural texts which pretend to predict the coming of a Messiah, and try to detect the frauds which lurk amidst its boasted prophecies. Consider the invalidity of the testimony, and examine the character and capacity of the alleged witnesses, before you credit the miracles, which form the pillars as it were of Christianity. If a number of men professing to be messengers from God were to tell you that a part is greater than the whole, would you believe this to be possible, and confide in their testimony! Ask of the missionaries the names of the martyrs, read the charges that were brought against them, the defence they made, the depositions of the witnesses, the proceedings and sentence of the tribunals, which they were judged, and who, presenting it laid his life for merely to give testimony to a miracle or simply professing to be a messenger. With regard to

morality, what new doctrine in ethical science has the founder of Christianity discovered that eluded the researches of the ancient philosophers and that could not be known without the help of revelation? Does not the theological part of the bible rob the Deity of his most exalted attributes and ignore him to the level of humanity? Build not your faith then on the quick sands of Christianity and load not on its frail bark the treasures of your religious hope. Read the lessons of immortal truth written by the finger of God in legible and glowing characters in the vast volume of nature, and look to Him alone for peace in time and eternity.