

**WESTBROOK
RICHARD
BRODHEAD**

THE ELIMINATOR; OR,
SKELETON KEYS TO
SACERDOTAL SECRETS

Richard Westbrook

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Keys to Sacerdotal Secrets**

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Содержание

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION	5
PREFACE	7
CHAPTER I. THE WHOLE TRUTH	9
CHAPTER II. SACERDOTALISM IMPEACHED	15
CHAPTER III. THE FABULOUS CLAIMS OF JUDAISM	24
CHAPTER IV. MOSES AND THE PENTATEUCH	39
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	43

Richard B. Westbrook

The Eliminator; or, Skeleton Keys to Sacerdotal Secrets

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE Eliminator has now been before the public nearly two years. I have seen nothing worthy of the name of criticism respecting it. A few Unitarian ministers have said that Christ must have been a person instead of a personification, for the reason that men could not have conceived of such a perfect character without a living example, and that the great influence exercised by him for so long a time, over so many people, proves him to have been an historic character. These arguments are anticipated and fully answered. (See pp. 283, 284, 306.)

Our Unitarian friends are the greatest *idealists* upon the globe! They only accept the Gospel biography of Jesus (and we have no other) just so far as the story accords with what they think it ought to be. They deny the immaculate conception and miraculous birth of the Christ, and have very great doubts about his crucifixion and resurrection. Their Christ is purely *ideal*. The fact is that Christendom has worshipped the literal Jesus for the ideal Christ for nearly twenty centuries, though their conceptions of him have been manifold and contradictory. No wonder that so many intelligent Christian sects in the early ages of the church utterly denied the existence of Jesus as an historic person. (See pp. 266, 267, 357.) But there is indubitable evidence that this *Christ character* (called by many Unitarians the “Universal Christ”) was mainly *mythical, drawn from the astrological riddles of the older Pagan mythologies*.

In fact, almost everything in Christianity seems to have been an *afterthought*. It is the least original of any of the ten great religions of the world, and the great mistake has been in making almost everything *literal* which the wise men of ancient times regarded as *allegorical*. This comes from the priestly attempt to identify the *Jewish Jesus* with the *Oriental Christ* Tradition is, in fact, the main foundation of the Christian scheme, and cunning sacerdotalists have done by artifice what history, in fact, has failed to do. But for its moral precepts and its “enthusiasm of humanity,” Christianity would not survive for a single century. The so-called “Apostles’ Creed” (which was not formulated until centuries after the last Apostle slept in the grave), and which is repeated in so many churches every Sunday, has a greater number of historical and theological misstatements than any other writing of the same length now extant!

There is in our day a general disposition to magnify the virtues of the Christ of the New Testament, connected with a proposition to unite all Christians in his leadership. This device will not succeed, because it is as impossible to found a perfect religion upon an imperfect man as it is upon a fallible Book. Lovers of the truth will show that the traditional Christ is not a perfect model. (See Chapter xiii.) There is a most significant sense in which it may be truthfully said: “Never man spake like this man,” as no great moral teacher ever uttered so many things that needed to be revised and explained!

May it not be the fact that both Catholic and Protestant Christians are under a great delusion as to the facts of religion? I think so. I believe so. I well know how difficult it is to explode a delusion that is nearly twenty centuries old, and that is supported by a sacerdotalism of vast wealth and learning, and whose votaries by “this craft have their wealth.”

I nail these *Thèses* to the church doors of all the Catholics and Protestants in Christendom, and with Martin Luther, at the Diet of Worms, I exclaim, “Here I stand. I cannot move! God help me!” If I am mistaken, then my reason is at fault and all history is a lie! It is said that when Renan died,

the Pope inquired whether he had confessed before his de-cess, and upon being told that he had not, replied, “Well, then God will have to save him for his sincerity!” I am ready to be judged on this ground. I sum up my latest conclusions thus: The Jesus of the Gospels is *traditional*, the Christ of the New Testament is *mythical*.

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PREFACE

Many things in this book will greatly shock, and even give heartfelt pain to, numerous persons whom I greatly respect. I have a large share of the love of approbation, and naturally desire the good opinion of those with whom I have been associated in a long life. There is no pleasure in the fact that I have to stand quite alone in the eyes of nearly all Christendom. There is no satisfaction in being deemed a disturber of the peace of the great majority of those “professing and calling themselves Christians.” But, at the same time, I must not be indifferent in matters where I believe truth is concerned.

Before I withdrew from the orthodox ministry I used to wonder why God in his gracious providence had not seen fit to so order events as to give us a credible and undoubted history of the incarnation and birth of his Son Jesus Christ, and why that Saviour, who had come to repair the great evils inflicted upon our race by Adam, had never once mentioned that unfortunate fall.

I do not deny that there was a person named Jesus nearly nineteen hundred years ago. I think there were several persons bearing this name and who were contemporaneous, and that several of them were very good men; but that any one of them was *such* a person as is described in the Gospels I cannot believe. I lay special emphasis on the word *such*. Admitting for the sake of the argument the real, historical personality of Jesus of Nazareth, he has by the process of *idealization* become an *impersonation*, and I have so attempted to make it appear; and I cannot but think that this view is not inconsistent with the most enlightened piety and religious devotion, while this explanation relieves us of many things which are absurd and contradictory.

I desire to explain more fully than appears in the *Table of Contents* the plan of this book. I first combat the policy of *suppression and deception*, and insist that the whole truth shall be published, and have shown that sacerdotalism is responsible for the fact that it has not been done. As so-called Christianity is based upon Judaism, I undertake to show the fabulous character of many of the claims of the Jews, disclaiming all intention to asperse the character of Israelites of the present generation.

I thought it proper in this connection to give the substance of an *open letter* to the Chief-Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania on *Moses and the Pentateuch*—to which His Honor never responded—showing that the “law of Sinai was not the first of which we have any knowledge,” and that Moses was not “the greatest statesman and lawgiver the world had ever produced,” as the Chief-Justice had affirmed in a lecture before the Law School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Presenting brief views of the symbolic character of the Old Testament, and showing how “Astral Keys” unlock many Bible stories, I undertake to show that the so-called fall of Adam is a *fable*, nothing more; and then, as the *first* Adam is shown to be a *myth*, I go in search for the “*last Adam*.” Finding no knowledge of such a person except in the New Testament, I deem it necessary to briefly show the character of this book, that it may be determined how far it should be received as evidence in a matter of so much importance. Then in five chapters, more or less connected, I combat the idea of the historical, or rather *traditional*, Jesus, and follow with an examination of the evangelical dogma of *Blood-Salvation*, and close with a very brief summary of the *Things that Remain* as the foundation of faith.

I do not expect *caste* clergymen to read this book any farther than is necessary to denounce it. It is their way of meeting questions like those herein discussed. I am prepared to have certain *dilettanti* sneer-ingly say, “This book is of no critical value.” They are so accustomed to “scholarly essays” which “are poetically sentimental and floridly vague” that they have little respect for anything else. The book is intended for the common people, and not for the professional critics.

I do not expect everybody to agree with me, especially at first. Truth can afford to wait, and in years to come many points that I have made, which are now so startling, will be calmly and intelligently accepted.

There are probably mistakes in the book—mistakes in names, in dates, and perhaps in facts; but these will not affect the main argument. No man knows everything. Until recently it was never suspected by the learned world that *The Contemplative Life* was not written by Philo nearly nineteen centuries ago, instead of being written by a monk in the third century of the Christian era. Even Macaulay and Bancroft have made mistakes, and so have many other authors of good repute.

I have always tried to preserve a *reverent spirit*—a genuine respect for true religion and morality. I have always been profoundly religious, and cannot remember the time when I was not devout. But I do not believe that it is ever proper “to do evil that good may come.” In this work I have sought only the *truth*, in the firm conviction that superstition and falsehood cannot promote a course of *right living*, which is the object and aim of all true religion.

I have a supreme disregard for literary fame. I do not shrink from being called a *compiler* or even a *plagiarist*. There is absolutely very little of real *originality* in the world. I could have followed the course of many writers and *absorbed or assimilated*, and thus seemingly made my own what they had written; but I have chosen to quote freely, and so have substantially given the words of many authors of repute, and at the same time saved myself the labor of a re-coining, which does not, after all, deceive the intelligent reader. The books from which I largely quote are mainly voluminous and very expensive, and some of them are out of print. I am indebted to the learned foot-notes of Evan Powell Meredith in his prize essay on *The Prophet of Nazareth* for several things, and must not fail to acknowledge my obligations to certain living authors for valuable assistance, and especially to my friend Dr. Alexander Wilder, who prepared at my request the substance of Chapter X., *The Drama of the Gospels*, and who, in my judgment, has few superiors in classical and Oriental literature.

I sympathize with those persons who will complain-ingly exclaim, “You have taken away my Saviour, and I know not where you have laid him.” But suppose that we do not *need a Saviour* in the evangelical sense? Suppose that man has not *fallen*, but that the race has been *rising* these many centuries; and that while we have mainly to save ourselves, all the good and great men of all ages have aided us in the work of salvation by what they have said and done and suffered, so that instead of one savior we really have had many saviors. I think that this view is more reasonable and consoling than the commercial device of what is called the “scheme of redemption,” besides having scientific facts to sustain it.

I have preserved on the title-page some of my college degrees, to indicate my professional studies of theology and law, and not from motives of pedantry.

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CHAPTER I. THE WHOLE TRUTH

“For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light, and that which ye have spoken in the ear, in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.”—Luke 12: 2, 3.

THE assumption is general that if the faith of the common people should be unsettled as to some things which they have heretofore been taught regarding religion, they would immediately reject all truth, and fall into a most deplorable state of skepticism and infidelity, and that the existing institutions of religion would be destroyed, and public virtue so undermined as to endanger the very foundations of morality and civil government. This is not only the fear of conservative and timid clergymen, but many of our prominent statesmen seem anxious lest the enlightenment of the people in matters in which they have been cruelly deceived should so weaken the restraints of police and governmental authority as to result in universal anarchy and a general disregard of the rights of property, and even of the sacredness of human life.

These foolish fears show a great want of confidence in human nature, and falsely assume that moral character depends mainly upon an unquestioning faith in certain dogmas which, in point of fact, have no necessary connection with it.

The statistics of crime show that a very large majority of those who have been seized by the strong arm of the law as dangerous members of society are those who most heartily believe in those very dogmas of theology which we are warned not to criticise, though we may know them to be accretions of ignorance and superstition, and that some of them have a natural tendency to fetter the essential principles of true religion and that higher code of morality which alone can stand strong under all circumstances. It is safe to affirm that ninety-nine hundredths of the criminal class believe, or profess to believe, in the dogmas of the dominant theology, Romish and Protestant; which are essentially the same.

It is too often forgotten that the very first condition of good government is faith in human nature, confidence in the people. You always excite dishonor and dishonesty by treating men as if you think them all rogues, and as if you expect nothing good from them, but every conceivable evil, only as they may be restrained by the fear of pains and penalties in this life and after death.

One great fundamental mistake of theologians and dogmatic pietists is the baseless assumption that religion is something supernatural, not to say anti-natural; something external to human nature and of foreign origin; something to be received by transfusion as the result or consequence of faith in certain dogmas or the observance of external rites; something bottled up by the Church, like rare and precious medicines in an apothecary-shop, to be dealt out to those who are willing to follow priestly prescriptions and pay the required price.

The fact is, churches and scriptures and dogmas are the outcome of that religious element which is inherent in human nature. It cannot be too often or too strongly urged that the religious principle is *innate* and *ineradicable* in mankind, and that you might as well try to destroy man's love of the beautiful, his desire for knowledge, his love of home and kindred, or even his appetite for food, as to try to destroy it. It is as natural to feel the want of religion as it is to be hungry. You *cannot* destroy the foundations of religion. They rest in *nature* and antedate all creeds and churches, and will survive them.

Even Professor Tyndall says: “The facts of religious feeling are to me as certain as the facts of physics.”

... “The world will have religion of some kind.”... “You who have escaped from these religions into the high and dry light of intellect may deride them, but in doing so you deride accidents of form

merely, and fail to touch the immovable basis of the religious sentiment in the nature of man. To yield this sentiment reasonable satisfaction is the problem of problems at this hour.”

Renan also writes thus: “All the symbols which serve to give shape to the religious sentiment are imperfect, and their fate is to be one after another rejected. But nothing is more remote from the truth than the dream of those who seek to imagine a perfected humanity without religion.”... “Devotion is as natural as egoism to a true-born man. The organization of devotion *is* religion. Let no one hope, therefore, to dispense with religion or religious associations. Each progression of modern society will render this want more imperious.”

We use the word religion as it was used by Cicero, in the sense of *scruple*, implying the consciousness of a natural obligation wholly irrespective of what one may believe concerning the gods. Religion in its true meaning is the great fact of *duty, of oughtness*, consisting in an honest and persistent effort to realize ideal excellence and to transform it into actual character and practical life. Religion as a *spirit* and a life is objected to by none, but is admired and commended by all. It is superstition, bigotry, credulity, and dogma that are detestable. The religious instinct has been perverted, turned into wrong channels, made subservient to priestcraft and kingcraft, but its basic principle remains for ever firm. If it *could* have been destroyed, the machinations of priests would have annihilated it long ago. Give yourselves no anxiety about the corner-stone of religion, but look well to the rotten superstructures that have been reared upon it. Its professed friends are often its real enemies. It is the false prophet who is afraid to have his oracles subjected to tests of reason and history. It is the evil-doer who is afraid of the light, the conscious thief who objects to being searched. An honest man would say, “Let the truth be published, though the heavens fell.”

The whole truth should be published, as a matter of common honesty, if nothing more. We have no moral right to conceal the truth, any more than we have to proclaim falsehood. He who deliberately does the one will not hesitate long about doing the other. And this is one of the most serious aspects of this subject. He who can bring himself to practise deceit regarding religion will soon be a villain at heart, even if worldly prudence is strong enough to keep him out of the penitentiary.

As a rule, the unfaithful teacher inflicts a greater evil upon his own soul than upon his unsuspecting dupe. The deceiver is sure to be overtaken by his own deceit. Mean men become more mean, and liars come to believe their own oft-repeated falsehoods. This principle may in part account for the fact that in all ages dishonest, mercenary, designing priests have been most corrupt citizens and ready tools in the hands of tyrants to oppress and enslave the people.

Every deceptive act blunts the moral sense, defiles and sears the conscience, until at last the hypocrite degenerates into a slimy, subtle human serpent that always crawls upon its belly and eats dust. Secretiveness and deceitfulness become a second nature, and show themselves continually even in the ordinary affairs of life. The reflex influence of deception upon the deceiver himself is its most bitter condemnation.

But modern preachers have a way of justifying their evasions and prevarications by saying that even Jesus himself withheld from his own disciples some things, for the reason that they were “not able to bear them,” quite overlooking the fact that he is also reported to have said, “When the Spirit of truth has come, he will teach you all things,” and that other passage (Luke 12: 2), where Jesus is represented as saying, “For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light, and that which ye have spoken in the ear, in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.”

If after eighteen hundred years of Christian teaching the time has not yet come to proclaim the whole truth, it is not likely to come for many ages in the future. If religion is a mystery too great to be comprehended, too sacred for reverent but untrammelled investigation, something that can only exist with a blind, unreasoning credulity and the utter stultification of the natural faculties of a true manhood, then religion is not worth what it costs and should be exposed as a delusion and a snare.

The time for the religious *Kabala* has passed, and ambiguities, concealments, and evasions are no longer to be tolerated. Martin Luther builded better than he knew when he proclaimed the right of private judgment in matters of religion. It has taken two hundred years for this fundamental principle to become thoroughly accepted by the people; but so firmly is it now established that bigoted ecclesiastics might as well attempt to resist the trend of an earthquake, stop the rising of the sun, and turn the light of noonday into the darkness of midnight as to attempt to arrest the progress of a true religious rationalism. The mad ravings of fanatics will have no more influence than the pope's bull had on the comet. Learning is no longer monopolized by a few monks and ministers. For every five clergymen who are abreast with the times, the progress of modern thought, and the conclusions of science, there are fifty laymen who are familiar with the writings of Humboldt, Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Tyndall, and scores of other scientists, to whom the world is more indebted for true progress than to all the lazy monks and muttering priests who have lived since the world began. The fact is, the old delusion that men must look to the sacerdotal class exclusively, or even mainly, for religious truth, has been for ever banished from the minds of intelligent men. The literature of the day is full of free thought and downright rationalism, and even the secular newspaper is a missionary of religious progress and reform, and brings stirring messages of intellectual progress every day to our breakfast-tables. The world moves, and those who attempt to stop it are sure to be crushed.

The pretence that anything is too sacred for investigation and publication will not stand the light of this wide-awake nineteenth century.

It is often said that the common people are not ready for the whole truth. In 1873, Dr. J. G. Holland, then editor of *Scribner's Monthly*, wrote to Dr. Augustus Blauvelt declining to publish an article on "The Divine and Infallible Inspiration of the Bible," and added, "I believe you are right. I should like to speak your words to the world; but if I do speak them it will pretty certainly cost me my connection with the magazine. This sacrifice I am willing to make if duty requires it. I am afraid of nothing but doing injury to the cause I love.... In short, you see that I sincerely doubt whether the Christian world is ready for this article.... Instead of the theologians the *people* would howl.... I cannot yet carry my audience in such a revolution. Perhaps I shall be able to do so by and by, but as I look at it to-day it seems impossible.... My dear friend, I believe in you. You are in advance of your time. You have great benefits in your hands for your time. You are free and true. And I mourn sadly and in genuine distress that I cannot speak your words with a tongue which all my fellow-Christians can hear. They will not hear them yet. They will some time...."

Dr. Holland has passed away and cannot reply to criticism. Let us be kind and charitable. He intended to be right, but he was mistaken. The people do not howl when the truth is published, even though their prejudices may be aroused; and no tedious preparation is now necessary to be able to hear the whole truth. The masses of the people are hungry for knowledge, and it is high time that they be honestly fed. They now more than half suspect that they have been deceived by those some of whom they have educated by their charities and liberally paid to teach them the truth. When, in 1875, *Scribner's Monthly* did publish Dr. Blauvelt's articles on "Modern Skepticism," it was not the people that "howled." It was the clergy. Some of them demanded a new editor; others warned the people from the pulpit not to patronize *Scribner*; and one distinguished man declared that the magazine must be "stamped out," and at once organized a most powerful ecclesiastical combination against the freedom of the press; and yet the *North American Review* and other similar magazines are today doing more to settle long-mooted religious questions than all the pulpits in Christendom; and the people do not howl. No respectable enterprising publisher now hesitates to publish a book of real merit, however much its doctrines may differ from the dominant faiths. The masses of the people are determined to know all that can be known of the history, philosophy, and principles of religion; and the greater the effort to conceal and suppress the truth the stronger will be the demand for its full and undisguised proclamation.

That there is a general drifting away from the old formulas of religious doctrine everybody knows, and yet there is more practical religion in the world to-day than in any previous age. It does not consist in fastings and attendance upon ecclesiastical rites and ordinances; but it takes the form of universal education, of providing homes for friendless infancy and old age, of the prevention of cruelty to children and even to brute animals, of the more rational and humane treatment of lunatics, paupers, and criminals, ameliorating the miseries of prisons and hospitals,—in short, of elevating and improving the condition of universal humanity. These truly religious works do not depend upon any particular statement of religious belief, for all sects and persons of no sect are equally engaged in them.

Charities would not cease if all creeds should be abandoned or should be so revised as not to be recognized by the disciples of Calvin and Wesley, and if every priest in the land should henceforth give up the mummeries and puerilities of the Dark Ages.

Religion, as the “enthusiasm of humanity,” the cultivation of all the virtues, and the practice of the highest morality growing out of the inalienable rights of man in all the relations of life, is a fixed fact. It is a natural endowment, coeval with humanity in its development and progress, and is as absolutely indestructible as manhood itself.

So far from being true is the assumption that religion would be imperilled by the exposure of the false dogmas of theology and the heathenish rites and superstitious ceremonies of ecclesiasticism, it is clear to many minds that the myths of dogmatic theology and the absurdities of primitive ages are the chief obstacles in the way of the free course of true religion; and it may safely be affirmed that the distinguishing dogmas of the dominant theology, Catholic and Protestant, as will hereafter be shown, are essentially demoralizing and logically *tend* to undermine and corrupt public virtue. It is not intended to affirm that churches and theologians do no good and that their entire influence is bad. They teach much that is humane in principle and moral in practice, and so do good for society. Nevertheless, it is true that much of the rotten morality of the times can be philosophically traced to the influence of a false theology. The main dogmas of Romish and orthodox Protestant creeds are false, and it is absurd to suppose that a pure system of public virtue can be founded upon ignorance, superstition, and falsehood.

But, after all, we are asked, Does it make any odds what one believes if he is only sincere in his faith?

The obvious answer is, that the more sincerely you believe a lie the more dangerous is your faith. The more trustfully you build upon a sandy foundation the sooner and greater will be the fall and ruin of the superstructure. The more implicitly you confide in a dishonest partner or agent the more successful will be his robbery. There is no safety in error and falsehood. The Westminster divines well said, “Truth is in order to righteousness.” There can be no true righteousness inherent in a system of superstition and falsehood. The failure of the Church to reach the masses and to establish a condition of public honesty superior to the ancient heathen morality shows that there must be some serious defect in its methods.

But the crushing objection to theological agitation and free discussion is the common one that “it is unwise to unsettle and destroy the faith of the people in the dominant theology unless there is something better to offer them as a substitute.”

There is something better. Truth is always better and safer than falsehood. In the discussions which are to follow an attempt will be made to show that there is a *natural religion* which accords with enlightened reason, and which cannot fail to furnish a firm scientific foundation for *the highest morality*. The common saying, that “it is better to have a false religion than no religion,” contains two groundless assumptions—viz. that it is possible for a man to have *no* religion, and that that which is false may be dignified with the name *religion*. It is about time that things should be called by their right names, and that superstition and falsehood should not be deemed necessary to public morality.

For a religion (so called) of superstition and falsehood there must be a religion of *natural science**that cannot be overthrown, and which cannot fail to make its way among men as knowledge shall increase and the principles of true religious philosophy shall be better understood. We should not be frightened at the cowardly cry of “destructive criticism.” We *must pull down before we can reconstruct.

CONCLUSIONS.

To imitate the example of the early Christian Fathers in fraud, falsehood, and forgery for the promotion of religion is a policy that is too shocking to the moral sense of civilized men everywhere to be tolerated. To withhold or suppress the truth is a crime against humanity and contrary to the spirit of this age; and those who do it are the enemies of progress and unworthy to be recognized as the authoritative teachers of the world.

Those who publish that which is false or suppress what is true not only do a great wrong to the people, but, if possible, do a greater wrong to their own souls, and must suffer the consequences. They must have an awful reckoning with eternal, retributive justice.

It is a most egregious mistake to suppose that the people cannot be trusted with the whole truth—that their sense of right is so dull and flimsy that on the slightest discovery of the errors in which they have been instructed from infancy they would lose confidence in all truth and rightfulness and rush riotously to ruin. If the people must be hoodwinked for ever, then the distinguishing principle of the Protestant Reformation and the basic principles of our American Declaration of Independence and republican government are false and delusive, and we should return to mediæval times and to feudal and autocratic government in Church and State.

It is high time that men should see that dogma is not religion; that blind faith is more to be feared than rational skepticism and scientific investigation; that whatever is opposed to reason and science in theology can be spared, not only without any loss, but greatly to the advantage of true religion and sound morality. All the religion that is worth having is *natural and rational*, and corresponds with the facts of the universe as they are demonstrated by the crucibles of science and the inductions of a sound philosophy. The principal moral obligations of men grow out of their relations to each other in life, and nothing can be more complete than the Golden Rule, emphasized in the Sermon on the Mount, but as clearly taught in the Jewish *Babylonian Talmud*, and in the twenty-fourth Maxim of the Chinese philosopher Confucius, and many others centuries before the Christian era.

Instead of loading down religion with Oriental myths and fables, instead of a gorgeous ritualism and surpliced priests, borrowed literally from the ancient paganism, instead of dogmas and creeds and unquestioning faith and blind submission to ecclesiastical dictation and rule, we want sound moral instruction in the great fundamental truths of nature and of science, which will always be found to strengthen and confirm the principles of true religion. These are the sources from which to gain light. We want less creed and more ethical culture, less profession and paraphernalia in religious worship and more practical philosophy and common sense.

The man who in scientific matters would make false representations and conceal the real truth would be deemed an impostor, and the time has come when hypocrites and cowards in theology should be made to feel their degradation and be forced into an open abandonment of “ways that are dark and tricks that are vain.” If we would scorn delusions in natural philosophy, if we would correct errors in oceanic charts, astronomical diagrams, and geographical maps, why should we hesitate to correct the most egregious blunders regarding those things which are infinitely more important? Can we with any proper sense of propriety and right connive at falsehood and uphold and strengthen it by our silence and cowardly negligence in failing to expose it? Are not all delusions debasing and opposed to the progress of truth and the elevation of mankind? In all the departments of human knowledge religion and morality are most imperative in their demands for pure and unadulterated truth; and he who does not recognize this fact sins grievously against his own soul, against the human family, and against the truth and its eternal Author, the God of all truth.

Finally, let it not be overlooked that it will not, for many reasons, be possible much longer to keep the people in ignorance, and to palm off upon them myths for veritable history and a system of theology plainly at variance with the conclusions of science, the facts of history, and the spiritual and moral consciousness of every true and well-developed man. The schoolmaster is abroad, and the spirit of fearless investigation is in the air, and men *will*, sooner or later, find out what is true; and when they come to understand how they have been imposed upon by their cowardly teachers, a fearful *reaction* will be the result; and woe to the hypocrite and time-server when that time comes! It is therefore not only good principle, but good policy, to tell the whole truth now. The following copy of a book-notice well describes the prevalent policy regarding matters of faith:

“A theory of religious philosophy which is much commoner among us than most of us think, but which has never been expressed so fully or so attractively as in the story of Marius.

“‘Submit,’ it seems to say, ‘to the religious order about you, accept the common beliefs, or at least behave as if you accepted them, and live habitually in the atmosphere of feeling and sensation which they have engendered and still engender; surrender your feeling while still maintaining the intellectual citadel intact; pray, weep, dream with the majority while you think with the elect; only so will you obtain from life all it has to give, its most delicate flavor, its subtlest aroma.’” Against such a *sham* the writer heartily protests, as against the villainous maxim, quoted from memory, accredited to Aristotle: “*Think* with the sages and philosophers, but *talk* like the common people.” Come what may, let us cease to profess what we have ceased to believe.

“The two learned people of the village,” says Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, telling of his fanciful Arrowhead Village, “were the rector and the doctor. These two worthies kept up the old controversy between the professions which grows out of the fact that one studies nature from below upward, and the other from above downward. The rector maintained that physicians contracted a squint which turns their eyes inwardly, while the muscles which roll their eyes upward become palsied. The doctor retorted that theological students developed a third eyelid—the *nictitating membrane*, which is so well known in birds, and which serves to shut out, not all light, but *all the light they do not want*.”

The Presbyterians have provided for a *revision* of their creed, though they have stultified themselves by certain restrictions, *shutting out the light they do not want!* Let us hope that the time will soon come when men will be honest enough and brave enough to follow the truth wherever it may lead. Let there be perfect veracity above all things, more especially in matters of religion. It is not a question of courtesies which deceive no one. To profess what is not believed is immoral. Immorality and untruth can never lead to morality and virtue; all language which conveys untruth, either in substance or appearance, should be amended so that words can be understood in their recognized meanings, without equivocal explanations or affirmations. Let historic facts have their true explanation.

CHAPTER II. SACERDOTALISM IMPEACHED

“The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money.”—Micah 3: 11.

“Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests’ offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.”—1 Sam. 2: 36.

THE cognomens priest, prophet, presbyter, preacher, parson, and pastor have certain things in common, and these titles may therefore be used interchangeably.

As far back as history extends, the office or order now represented by the clerical profession existed. It was as common among pagan tribes in the remotest periods as among Jews and Christians in more modern times. Service done to the gods by the few in behalf of the many is the primary idea of the priestly function. It has always and everywhere been the profession and prerogative of the priests to pretend to approach nearest to the gods and to propitiate them; on account of which they have always been supposed to have special influence with the reigning deity and to be the authorized expounders and interpreters of the divine oracles. The priesthood has always been a *caste*, a “*holy order*,” and it was no less so among ancient Jews than among modern Christians. In all churches clergymen *ex-officio* exercise certain sacred prerogatives. They occupy select seats in every sanctuary. They lead in every act of worship. They preside over every sacred ceremony. They exclusively administer the ordinances of religion. They baptize the children and give or withhold the “Holy Communion.” They celebrate our marriages, visit our sick, and conduct our funerals. In Romish churches and in some of our Protestant churches they pretend to pronounce “absolution” and to seal the postulant for the heavenly rest. It is not necessary, now and here, to speak of the evil influence that these pretensions exert upon the common people, nor of the light in which intelligent, thinking women and men commonly regard them; but it is appropriate to note the reflex influence which such assumptions have upon the clergy themselves, disqualifying them for such rational presentation of doctrinal truth as their hearers have a right to expect.

The pride of his order makes it humiliating for the priest to admit that what he does not know is worth knowing. Claiming to be the authorized expounder of God’s will, how can he admit that he can possibly be in error in any matter relating to religion? In view of the high pretensions of his order, founded, as he claims, upon a plenary-inspired and infallible book-revelation, and he professing to be specially called and sanctified by God himself as his representative, it would be ecclesiastical treason to admit, even by implication, that he is not in possession of all truth. Regarding his creed as a finality, his mind becomes narrow, circumscribed, and unprogressive. He was taught from childhood that “to doubt is to be damned,” and through all his novitiate he was warned against being unsettled by the delusions of reason and the wiles of infidelity. His professional education has been narrow, one-sided, sectarian. He has seldom, if ever, read anything outside of his own denominational literature, and has heard little from anybody but his own theological professors and associates. He suspects that Humboldt, Spencer, Huxley, and Tyndall are all infidels, and that the sum and substance of Evolution, as taught by Darwin, is that man is the lineal descendant of the monkey.

Some persons think that ministers are often selected from among weaklings in the family fold. However, this may be, the absorption of the “holy-orders” idea, and the natural self-assurance and self-satisfaction that belong to a caste profession, render delusive the hope that anything original can ever come from such a source. Whether weak at first or not, the habits of thought and the peculiar training of young ecclesiastics are almost sure to dwarf them intellectually for life. The theological student has become the *butt* in wide-awake society everywhere, and his appearance in public is the occasion for jests and ridicule over his sanctimonious vanity and silly pride. The extreme clerical costume which he is sure to assume excites the disgust of sensible people, though he may march

through the street and up the aisle with the regulation step of the “order,” and suppose himself to be the object of reverent admiration on the part of all beholders. No wonder that the churches complain that few young men of ability enter the ministry in these modern times.

The priestly office has always been deemed one of great influence, so that ancient kings were accustomed to assume it. This was true of the kings of ancient Egypt, and the practice was kept up among the Greeks and Romans. Even Constantine, the first Christian emperor (so called), continued to exercise the function of a pagan priest after his professed conversion to Christianity, and he was not initiated into the Christian Church by baptism until just before his death. One excommunicated king lay for three days and nights in the snow in the courtyard before the Pope would grant him an audience! The “Pontifex-Maximus” idea of the Roman emperors was the real foundation of the “temporal power” claimed by the bishops of Rome. Kingcraft and priestcraft have always been in close alliance. When the king was not a priest he always used the priest; and the priest has generally been willing to be used on the side of the king as against the people when liberally subsidized by the reigning potentate. Moreover, priestcraft has always been ambitious for power, and sometimes has been so influential as to make the monarch subservient to the monk. More than one proud crown has been humbly removed in token of submission to priestly authority, and powerful sovereigns have been obliged to submit to the most menial exactions and humiliations at ecclesiastical mandates. The priestly rôle has always been to utilize the religious sentiment for the subjection of the credulous to the arbitrary influence of the caste or order.

Priestcraft never could afford to have a conscience, so admitted, and therefore it has not shrunk from the commission of any crime that could augment its dominion. Its greatest success has been in the work of demoralization. It has always been the corrupter of religion. The ignorance and superstition of the people and the perversions of the religious sentiment, innate in man, have been the stock in trade of the craft in all ages, and are to-day.

It will be shown later how the whole system of dogmatic theology, Romish and Protestant (for the system is the same), has been formed so as to aggrandize the priest, perpetuate his power, and hold the masses in strict subjection. This is a simple matter of fact. History is philosophy teaching by example, and often repeats itself, and it seldom gives an example of a priestly caste or “holy” order of men leading in a great practical reform. The dominant priestly idea is to protect the interests of the *order*, not to promote the welfare of the people.

In view of these principles and facts, and others which might be presented, it is reasonable to conclude that we cannot expect the whole living, unadulterated truth, even if they had it, from the professional clergy. The caste idea renders it essentially unnatural and philosophically impossible.

But there are other potent reasons why such expectation is vain. All Christendom is covered with numerous sects in the form of ecclesiastical judicatories, each claiming to be the true exponent of all religious truth. The Romish Church is pre-eminently priestly and autocratic. The priesthood is the Church, and the people only belong to the Church; that is, belong to the priesthood, and that, too, in a stronger sense than at first seems to attach to the word *belong*. Then the priesthood itself is subdivided into castes.:

“Great fleas have little fleas upon their backs to bite ’em,
And little fleas have lesser fleas; and so—ad infinitum”

When Patrick J. Ryan was installed Archbishop in Philadelphia, an office conferred by a foreign potentate, our own city newspapers in flaming headlines called it “The Enthronement of a Priest!” And so it was. He sat upon a throne and received the honors of a prince. He is called “His Grace,” and wears the royal purple in the public streets. Bishops are higher than the “inferior clergy,” and the priest, presbyter, or elder is of a higher caste than the deacon, and all are higher and more holy than the people. All ministers exercise functions which would be deemed sacrilege in a layman. The same

odious spirit of caste prevails in fact, if not so prominently in form, in all orthodox denominations, especially as to the distinction between the clergy and the laity. Even Quakers have higher seats for “recommended ministers.”

Moreover, priests have laid down creeds containing certain affirmations and denials which are called “Articles of Religion,” to which all students of divinity and candidates for holy orders must subscribe before they can be initiated into the sacred arcana.

The professor in the theological seminary, who perhaps was selected for the chair quite as much for his conservatism as for his learning, has taken a pledge, if not an oath, that he will teach the young aspirant for ecclesiastical honors nothing at variance with the standards of his denomination; which covenant he is very sure to keep (having other professors and aspirants for professorships to watch him) in full view of the penalty of dismissal from his chair and consequent ecclesiastical degradation. The very last place on this earth where one might expect original research, thorough investigation, and fearless proclamation of the whole truth is in a theological school. A horse in a bark-mill becomes blind in consequence of going round and round in the same circular path; and the theological professor in his treadmill cannot fail to become purblind as regards all new truth.

What can be expected from the *graduates* of such seminaries?

The theological novitiate sits with trembling reverence at the feet of the venerable theological Gamaliel. From his sanctified lips he is to learn all wisdom. Without his approbation he cannot receive the coveted diploma. Without his recommendation he will not be likely to receive an early call to a desirable parish.

The student is *obliged* to find in the Bible just what his Church requires, and nothing more and nothing less. In order to be admitted into the clerical caste and have holy hands laid upon his youthful head he must believe or profess to believe, *ipsissima verba*, just what the “Confession” and “Catechism” contain. The Rev. Dr. Samuel Miller once said in a sort of confidential undertone, “What is the use of examining candidates for the ministry at all as to what they believe? The fact that they apply for admission shows that they intend to answer all questions as we expect them to answer; else, they very well know, we would not admit them.”

The ecclesiastical system is emphatically an iron-bedstead system. If a candidate is too long, it cuts him shorter; and if too short, it stretches him. He must be made to fit. Then, after “ordination” or “consecration,” the new-fledged theologian enters upon his public work so pressed by the cares of his charge and the social and professional demands upon his time that he finds it impossible to prepare a lecture and two original sermons a week; so he falls back upon the “notes” he took from the lips of his “old professor” in the divinity school, or upon some of those numerous “skeletons” and “sketches” of sermons expressly published for the “aid” of busy young ministers; and he gives to “his people” a dish of theological hash, if not of re-hash, instead of pouring out his own living words that should breathe and thoughts that should burn.

Hence it is easy to see why one scarcely ever gets a fresh, living truth from the pulpit. It is almost always the same old, old story of commonplace fossils that the wide-awake world has outgrown long ago, and that modern science has fearlessly consigned to the “bats and the moles” of the Dark Ages. No wonder the pulpit platitudes fail to attract the masses of earnest men, especially in our great cities.

Then if a clergyman should discover, after years of thought and study, that he has been in error in some matters, and that a pure rational interpretation of the Bible is possible, and he really feels that the creeds, as well as the Scriptures, need revising, what can he do? If he lets his new light shine, he will share the fate of Colenso, Robertson Smith, Augustus Blauvelt, Professor Woodrow, and scores of others. He knows that heresy-hunters are on the scent of his track. The mad-dog cry of *Heretic* would be as fatal as a sharp shot from the ecclesiastical rifle. Proscription, degradation, ostracism, stare him in the face. Few men who have the *esprit de corps* of ecclesiasticism and a reasonable regard for personal comfort and preferment are heroic enough to face the social exclusion, financial ruin, and beggary for themselves and families which are almost sure to follow a trial and condemnation

for heresy. If the newly-enlightened minister escapes the inquisition of a heresy trial by declaring himself independent, he has a gauntlet to run in which many poisoned arrows will be sure to pierce his quivering spirit. It is true that some sects have no written creed and no trials for heresy; but even among them there is an *implied* standard of what is “regular,” and more than one grand soul knows by a sorrowful experience, what it is to belong to the “left wing” of the Liberal army, and to follow the “spirit of truth” outside of the implied creed.

Another reason why the whole truth cannot be expected from the regular clergy is, the influence of their pecuniary dependence upon those to whom they minister. The Jews have always been great borrowers and imitators. It was quite natural that they should adopt the “price-current list” of the ancient Phœnicians, whose priests not only exacted the tribute of “first-fruits,” but a fee in kind of each sacrifice. Then the judicial functions exercised by Jewish priests became a fruitful source of revenue, as the fines for certain offences were paid to the priests (2 Kings 12: 16; Hosea 4: 8; Amos 2: 8). According to 2 Sam. 8: 18 and 2 Kings 10: 11, also 12: 2, the priests of the royal sanctuaries became the grandees of the realm, while the petty priests were generally poor enough—just as is well known to be the case among the Christian clergy of to-day, some receiving a salary of twenty-five thousand dollars and more per annum, while many of the “inferior clergy” hardly average two hundred and fifty dollars a year.

That the Christian clerical profession was borrowed from the Jews, just as the latter copied it from the heathen, is evident from the fact that Paul, while refusing for himself pecuniary support, preferring to “work with his own hands” (weaving tent-cloth), “living in his own hired house,” nevertheless defended the principle of ministerial support, mainly on the ground of the Mosaic law (Deut. 25: 4), “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn” (1 Cor. 9: 9; 1 Tim. 5: 18). It is a striking illustration of the inconsistency of the modern clergy that they quote, in reference to a salaried ministry, the words ascribed to Jesus (Matt. 10: 10), “The workman is worthy of his meat,” or, as it is rendered in Luke 10: 7, “The laborer is worthy of his hire,” very conveniently forgetting to quote the connecting words requiring them to “provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in their purse, nor scrip for their journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves,” but to enter unceremoniously into any house, accepting any proffered hospitality, “eating such things as might be set before them.” The fact is, the first disciples of Jesus, according to our Gospels, were mendicant monks, leading lives of asceticism and poverty. There is no evidence that one of them ever received a salary; they made themselves entirely dependent on public charity and hospitality. The idea of a “church living” or “beneficed clergy” or a salaried ministry never entered into the mind of Him of whom it is said he “had not where to lay his head.”

It is enough for the present argument to emphasize the point that, in the very nature of things, it is not reasonable to expect the whole truth from a salaried ministry. Those who have a large salary naturally desire to retain it; those who have small and insufficient salaries naturally desire to have them increased.

This can only be done by carefully preserving a good orthodox standing according to the sectarian *shibboleth*, and in pleasing the people who rent the pews or who dole out their penurious subscriptions for “the support of the gospel.” High-salaried ministers are most likely to be proud, arrogant, bigoted, sectarian. Starveling ministers become broken in spirit, fawning, and crouching, and they generally have an unconscious expression of appeal for help, of importunity and expectancy, stamped upon their faces. The millstone of pecuniary dependence hangs so heavily about their necks that they seldom hold up their heads like men, and they can never utter a new truth or a startling sentiment without pausing to consider what effect it may have on the bread and butter of a dependent and generally numerous family. Ministers with high salaries are almost sure to be spoiled, and those with low ones are sure to be stultified and dwarfed intellectually and morally; so that we cannot depend upon either class for the highest and latest truths. Those who have a “living,” provided in a State Church, and those who depend upon voluntary contributions from the people, are alike manacled and

handicapped. We must look elsewhere than to the modern pulpit for that truth which alone can give freedom and true manliness. Perfect indifference as to ecclesiastical standing, backed by pecuniary independence, is an essential condition for untrammelled investigation and the fearless proclamation of the whole truth.

It was noticed in the recent convention of scientists in this city (the American Association) that it was the salaried professors in Church colleges who professed to find no conflict between Geology and Genesis. It will always be so until the ecclesiastical tyranny is greatly weakened or destroyed, and men can utter their boldest thoughts without fear or favor, and when teachers can afford to have a conscience by making themselves free from Church control and menial dependence upon those to whom they minister for the necessities of a mere livelihood. Science itself has made progress only as it has been fearless of priestly maledictions; and when it shall throw off the incubus of Church patronage it will astonish the world in showing the eternal antagonisms between the dogmas of the dominant theology and the essential truths of natural religion and morality.

CONCLUSIONS.

The following conclusions follow from what has been said:

The clerical fraternity claims to be more than a mere profession. It is essentially a caste, a "holy order," borrowed from the ancient paganism, but somewhat modified by Judaism and a perverted Christianity.

From such a caste or order the whole truth is not to be expected, especially when the truth would show the order to be an imposture. The assumptions of peculiar sanctity, official pre-eminence, functional prerogatives, and special spiritual authority make such a hope unnatural and quite impossible.

The church system, with its tests of orthodoxy, its ecclesiastical handcuffs, and its worse than physical thumb-screws, puts an end to all independent thinking, and results in an enforced conformity inconsistent with intellectual progress and the discovery and full publication of the whole truth.

The pecuniary stipend upon which professional preachers are dependent has a demoralizing and degrading influence, so that the doctrinal teaching of the pulpit should not be received without hesitation and distrust. The common law excludes the testimony of interested witnesses, and, though modern statutes admit such testimony, the courts take it for what it is worth, but always with many grains of allowance. "A gift perverteth judgment," and self-interest may sway the convictions of a man who intends and desires to be fairly honest.

The existing systems of ministerial education and support deter many superior men from entering the profession, and have placed preaching upon a commercial or mercantile basis, which has manacled and crippled the pulpit, and must sooner or later result in the consideration of the question whether the services of the clergy are worth what they cost, and whether the truth must not be sought for in some other direction. More than two hundred and fifty thousand priests and ministers (of whom about one hundred thousand are in the United States) are maintained at an annual expense of more than five hundred millions of dollars; and, as a rule, where priests are most numerous, people are poorest and public morality lowest.

A member of the Canadian Parliament (Hon. James Beatty) has recently published a book in which he opposes the whole system of a salaried clergy on scriptural and other grounds; and many other thoughtful men are beginning to inquire how it is that the Society of Friends get along so well without a "hireling ministry."

It is a great mistake to suppose that we must look mainly to professional clergymen for instruction in divine things. It is a significant fact that the most able and important books that have been published within the last decade have been written by laymen or by persons, like Emerson, who have outgrown the narrow garments of a caste profession and have laid them off. How to get along without professional ministers has been well answered by Capt. Robert C. Adams (quoted in the writer's book, *Man—Whence and Whither?* pp. 218, 219).

If ministers would give up the *holy-orders* idea, cast into the sea the millstone incumbrance of pecuniary dependence, engage earnestly in some legitimate work to support themselves, they would then for the first time begin to realize what soul-freedom is, and they could then preach with an intelligence and power and with a satisfaction to themselves of which they now know nothing. Let them try it for themselves and learn a lesson. Whether the clerical order is so divine an institution that we have no right to call it into question or to abolish it altogether, is a question that must be practically considered soon.

There is a deep impression widely prevailing among thoughtful and sincerely religious persons that the infidelity of the pulpit is largely responsible for the prevailing skepticism of the age. The word “infidelity” is here specially used in a strict philological sense—*infidele*, not faithful, unfaithfulness to a trust—but it is also used in its more general sense of *disbelief* in certain religious dogmas.

We impeach and arraign the clergy (admitting a few honorable exceptions) on the general charge of *infidelity* in the strictest and broadest sense of the word—

1st. In that they fail to qualify themselves to be the leaders of thought in the great, living questions affecting religion and morality. We have elsewhere said: “Not one minister in a thousand ‘discerns the signs of the times’ or is prepared for the crisis. Few pastors ever read anything beyond their own denominational literature. Their education is partial, one-sided, professional. They cling to mediaeval superstitions with the desperate grasp of drowning men. The great majority of the clergy are not men of broad minds and wide and deep research, and have not the ability to meet the vexed questions of to-day.”

It is an admitted policy, especially among the orthodox clergy (so called), not to read or to listen to anything that might unsettle their faith in what they have accepted as a finality; whereas no man can intelligently *believe* anything until he has candidly considered the reasons assigned by other men for not believing what he does. “He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbor cometh and searcheth him.”

Professor Fisher, the champion of Yale-College orthodoxy, has recently admitted in the *North American Review* that at least one of the causes of the decline of clerical authority and influence is the increased intelligence of the laity. If the people cannot get what they desire from the pulpit, they will seek it from the platform and the press. Truth is no longer to be concealed in cloisters and smothered in theological seminaries, but it is to be proclaimed from housetops and in language understood in every-day life.

It was once said that “the lips of the priest give knowledge,” but it may now be truly said that modern scientists and philosophers among the laity are the principal teachers of mankind, and that publications like the *North American Review* and *The Forum*, and last, but not least, the secular daily newspapers, are doing more to instruct the people in living truths than the whole brood of ecclesiastical parrots.

2d. We charge that many professional clergymen suppress things which they do believe to be true, and not unfrequently suggest things, at least by implication, which they do know to be false.

Dr. Edward Everett Hale recently published an article in the *North American Review* entitled “Insincerity in the Pulpit;” and the Rev. Dr. Phillips Brooks of Boston, who recently received episcopal honors in Massachusetts, has confirmed in the *Princeton Review* what Dr. Hale charged in the *North American Review* regarding clerical disingenuousness. Dr. Brooks wrote thus:

“A large acquaintance with clerical life has led me to think that almost any company of clergymen, talking freely to each other, will express opinions which would greatly surprise, and at the same time greatly relieve, the congregations who ordinarily listen to these ministers.... How many men in the ministry to-day believe in the doctrine of verbal inspiration which our fathers held? and how many of us have frankly told the people that we do not believe it?... How many of us hold that the everlasting punishment of the wicked is a clear and certain truth of revelation? But how many of us who do not have ever said a word?”

The same principle of prevarication and deceit was practised by the early Fathers of the Christian Church, who not only concealed the truth from the masses of the people, but did not hesitate to deceive and mislead them.

Mosheim, an ecclesiastical historian of high authority, testifies that “in the fourth century it was an almost universally adopted maxim that it was an act of virtue to deceive and lie when by such means the interests of the Church might be promoted.” He further says of the fifth century, “Fraud and impudent imposture were artfully proportioned to the credulity of the vulgar.”

Milman, in his *History of Christianity*, says: “It was admitted and avowed that to deceive into Christianity was so valuable a service as to hallow deceit itself.” He further says in the same historical work, “That some of the Christian legends were deliberate forgeries can scarcely be questioned.” There is not a Bible manuscript or version that has not been manipulated by ecclesiastics for century after century. Many of these priests were both ignorant and vicious. From the fifth to the fifteenth century crimes not fit to be mentioned prevailed among the clergy.

Dr. Lardner says that Christians of all sorts were guilty of fraud, and quotes Cassaubon as saying, “In the earliest times of the Church it was considered a capital exploit to lend to heavenly truth the help of their own inventions.” Dr. Thomas Burnet, in a Latin treatise intended for the clergy only, said, “Too much light is hurtful to weak eyes;” and he recommended the practice of deceiving the common people for their own good. I *know* that this same policy is in vogue in our day. This same nefarious doctrine of the exoteric and esoteric, one thing for the priest and another for the people, is far from being dead in this nineteenth century. It has always been, and now is, the real priestly policy to keep the common people in ignorance of many things; and if all do not accept the maxim of Gregory, that “Ignorance is the mother of Devotion,” many ministers *privately* hold in our day that “where ignorance is bliss ’Tis folly to be wise.”

3d. The third article of impeachment, under the general charge of infidelity is, that sacerdotalists teach dogmas which they do not believe themselves. They do not all believe, *ex animo*, the distinctive dogmas of the orthodox creeds—that God is angry with the great body of mankind, that his wrath is a burning flame, and that there is, as to a majority of men, but a moment’s time and a point of space between them and eternal torture more terrible than imagination can conceive or language describe. It is well said that “Actions speak louder than words;” and we need only ask the question, “Do ministers who profess to believe these horrible dogmas preach as if they really believed them?” Notice the general deportment of the clergy at the summer resort, at the seaside, or on the mountain-top, and say whether they can possibly believe what for eight or nine months they have been preaching in their now closed churches. Listen to the private conversation of our evangelists at the camp-meeting or at the meetings of ecclesiastical bodies, and then conclude, if you can, that they believe what they teach.

Take, if you please, the case of one of our best-known evangelical ministers, a member of the strictest of our orthodox sects, who spends a large proportion of his time in studying the ways of insects, and who would chase a pismire across the continent to find out its habits. Can a pastor believe in his heart the dogmas of the Westminster Confession, and yet devote so much time to ants? It is impossible. He may deceive himself; he cannot deceive others.

4th. Our fourth article of impeachment under the general charge is, that the pulpit is the great promoter of skepticism called infidelity, in that it insists upon the belief of dogmas which are absurd upon their face, such as the miraculous conception of Jesus, the dogma of the Trinity, the origin and fall of man, vicarious atonement, predestination, election and reprobation, eternal torture for the majority, and many other absurdities which no rational mind can now consistently accept.

True, these dogmas may be found in the Bible; and when men are told with weekly reiterations that the Bible is purely divine, supernatural, and infallible, and they find that it is purely human, natural, and very fallible, they cannot believe the Bible, though they find many inspiring and helpful things in it. When ministers tell thinking men that they must believe all or reject all, they accept

the foolish alternative and reject all. And so it might be further shown how, in very many ways, the pulpit is the great promoter of skepticism and infidelity, and that the professed teachers of religion are its greatest enemies, its most effective clogs and successful antagonists. No wonder that the most thoughtful and intelligent men and women in every community have drifted away from the popular faith, and are anxiously inquiring, What next?

President Thomas Jefferson, in writing to Timothy Pickering, well said:

“The religion-builders have so distorted and deformed the doctrines of Jesus, so muffled them in mysticisms, fancies and falsehoods, have caricatured them into forms so monstrous and inconceivable, as to shock reasonable thinkers to revolt them against the whole, and drive them rashly to pronounce its founder an impostor.” Writing to Dr. Cooper, he said: “*My opinion is that there would never have been an infidel if there had never been a priest.*”

We would not abolish the office, or, if you please, the profession, of *public moral teacher*, but we would banish from the world the caste idea, the *holy-order* pretence. When simple-minded young men and grave and surpliced bishops talk about taking “holy orders,” sensible and thoughtful men know that they are talking holy nonsense. No man has a right to assume that he is more holy than other men, or that he has authority to exercise religious functions that other men have not.

Nor have we any objection that moral teachers should be paid for their services as other teachers are paid; but when educated men can afford to teach without pecuniary compensation, we think it would be well for them to do so; and when the teacher of morals adopts the example of St. Paul, “working with his own hands” and “living in his own hired house,” we think the world will be the better for it. Let us hope that the day will soon dawn when clergymen will consider themselves moral teachers only, and for ever repudiate the false pretence of special authority and priestly sanctimoniousness, and clearly understand that mediocrity and stupidity will not much longer be tolerated because of the so-called sacredness of a profession.

That the estimate here made of sacerdotalists may not seem extreme and unjustifiable, I add the testimony of one of the most honored ecclesiastics of the Established Church of England, Canon Farrar, who in a recent sermon on priestcraft said: “In all ages the exclusive predominance of priests has meant the indifference of the majority and the subjection of the few. It has meant the slavery of men who will not act, and the indolence of men who will not think, and the timidity of men who will not resist, and the indifference of men who do not care.” Alas that “holy hands” should so often be laid “upon skulls that cannot teach and will not learn”!

Let me here quote from Professor Huxley an admirable statement of the facts in the case:

“Everywhere have they (sacerdotalists) broken the spirit of wisdom and tried to stop human progress by quotations from their Bibles or books of their saints. In this nineteenth century, as at the dawn of modern physical science, the cosmogony of the semi-barbarous Hebrew is the incubus of the philosopher and the opprobrium of the orthodox. Who shall number the patient and earnest seekers after truth, from the days of Galileo until now, whose lives have been embittered and their good name blasted by the mistaken zeal of bibliolaters? Who shall count the host of weaker men whose sense of truth has been destroyed in the effort to harmonize impossibilities; whose life has been wasted in the attempt to force the generous new wine of science into the old bottles of Judaism, compelled by the outcry of the same strong party? It is true that if philosophers have suffered, their cause has been amply avenged. Extinguished theologies lie about the cradle of every science as the strangled snakes beside that of Hercules; and history records that whenever science and orthodoxy have been fairly opposed, the latter has been forced to retire from the lists, bleeding and crushed if not annihilated, scotched if not slain. But orthodoxy learns not, neither can it forget; and though at present bewildered and afraid to move, it is as willing as ever to insist that the first chapter of Genesis contains the beginning and the end of sound science, and to visit with such petty thunderbolts as its half-paralyzed hands can hurl those who refuse to degrade nature to the level of primitive Judaism.” “Religion,” he also elsewhere writes, “arising like all other knowledge out of the action and interaction

of man's mind, has taken the intellectual coverings of Fetishism, Polytheism, of Theism or Atheism, of Superstition or Rationalism; and if the religion of the present differs from that of the past, it is because the theology of the present has become more scientific than that of the past; not because it has renounced idols of wood and idols of stone, but it begins to see the necessity of breaking in pieces the idols built up of books and traditions and fine-spun ecclesiastical cobwebs, and of cherishing the noblest and most human of man's emotions by worship, 'for the most part of the silent sort,' at the altar of the *unknown and unknowable*"... "If a man asks me what the politics of the inhabitants of the moon are, and I reply that I know not, that neither I nor any one else have any means of knowing, and that under these circumstances I decline to trouble myself about the subject at all, I do not think he has any right to call me a skeptic." Again: "What are among the moral convictions most fondly held by barbarous and semi-barbarous people? They are the convictions that authority is the soundest basis of belief; that merit attaches to a readiness to believe; that the doubting disposition is a bad one, and skepticism a sin; and there are many excellent persons who still hold by these principles."... "Yet we have no reason to believe that it is the improvement of our faith nor that of our morals which keeps the plague from our city; but it is the improvement of our natural knowledge. We have learned that pestilences will only take up their abode among those who have prepared unswept and ungarnished residences for them. Their cities must have narrow, unwatered streets full of accumulated garbage; their houses must be ill-drained, ill-ventilated; their subjects must be ill-lighted, ill-washed, ill-fed, ill-clothed; the London of 1665 was such a city; the cities of the East, where plague has an enduring dwelling, are such cities; we in later times have learned somewhat of Nature, and partly obey her. Because of this partial improvement of our natural knowledge, and that of fractional obedience, we have no plague; but because that knowledge is very imperfect and that obedience yet incomplete, typhus is our companion and cholera our visitor."

CHAPTER III. THE FABULOUS CLAIMS OF JUDAISM

“Not giving heed to Jewish fables.”—Tit. 1: 14.

“Neither give heed to fables.”—1 Tim. 1: 4.

“But refuse profane and old wives’ fables.”—1 Tim. 4: 7.

IT is impossible to understand modern Christian ecclesiasticism without a careful study of ancient Judaism. It is reported that Jesus himself said, “*Salvation is of the Jews.*” The gospel was to be preached “to the Jews first.” The common belief to-day is, that the Christian Church represents the substance of what Judaism was the promise, and that the New Testament contains the fulfilment and realization of what was foreshadowed in the Old Testament.

All well-informed theologians understand that the Christian Church is held to have had its origin in what is denominated the “call of Abraham,” and that what is known in orthodox parlance as the “Abrahamic covenant” lies at the foundation of the orthodox theory of grace and of all other systems of doctrine falsely designated as evangelical. It is a suggestive fact that while Christians hold that their religion is the very quintessence and outcome of Judaism, they most cordially hate the Jews, and the Jews in return, have a supreme contempt for Christians and stoutly deny the relationship of parent and child.

Now that the descent of the Jews from the Chaldean Abram, whom they affect to call their father, is discredited by all scholars who reject the inspirational and infallible theory of the Old Testament, it is very difficult to find out the real origin of this strange people. All modern writers on Jews and Judaism admit that outside of the Old Testament there is little or no history of the Jews down to the time of Alexander, and that there is very little reliable history even in the collection of books known as the Hebrew Scriptures. It cannot be doubted now that the Pentateuch, improperly called the five books of Moses, was mostly written after the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, about 538 b. c., and what is found in these books mainly corresponds with the religion and literature of the Assyrians, and was learned during their sojourn in that country, and not, as has ignorantly been supposed, from the mythical Abram, the reputed immigrant from Ur of the Chaldees. What is recorded in the Pentateuch, not being mentioned in other Old-Testament writings, shows that such records had no existence when those books were written, and therefore could have no recognition. It will be shown hereafter that there is little or nothing in the Pentateuch that is strictly original, much less strictly historical. Indeed, the tales of the Old Testament generally were written for a religious or patriotic purpose, with little regard for time, place, or historical accuracy. Persons, real or mythical, are often used to represent different tribes, while allegory is the rule rather than the exception in what is ignorantly accepted as history. This is admitted by many eminent Christian writers.

The word “Jew” first occurs in 2 Kings 16: 6 to denote the inhabitants of Judea, but they should properly have been called “Judeans.” The very name *Jew* is probably mythological, derived from *Jeoud*, the name of the only son of Saturn, though, like Abraham, he had several other sons. It cannot be doubted that the stories of Saturn and Abraham are slightly varied versions of the same fable.

The Jews never deserved to be called a *nation*, at least not until in comparatively modern times. They were inclined from the first to mingle with and intermarry with other peoples, and so became *mongrels* at an early period.

There was no race distinction, we are told, between the Canaanites, Idumeans, and Israelites. Ishmael married an Egyptian woman, and so did Joseph, the son of Jacob. Esau married a daughter of Ishmael, also two other women, called daughters of Canaan, one a Hittite and the other a Hivite. Judah and Simeon each married Canaanites. We read in Judges 3: 5, 6, “The children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites; and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their [own] daughters to their sons, and served their gods.”

In Ezekiel 16th it is written: "Thus saith the Lord God unto Jerusalem, Thy birth and thy nativity was in the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite and thy mother an Hittite. Your mother was an Hittite and your father an Amorite—thine elder sister, Samaria, and thy youngest sister, Sodom."

In Deut. 7: 7 the Jews are told, "The Lord did not set his love upon you because ye were more in number than any other people, for ye were *fewest* of all people." In Josh. 12: 24 they are reminded that it was necessary to "send them hornets which drove them (the Canaanites) out before you, even the two kings of the Amorites;" and in Ex. 23: 28, 29 it is said, "I will send hornets before thee which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before thee. I will not drive them out from before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field multiply against thee." This does not look as if the Jews were very numerous or valorous in the little territory not much larger than the State of Connecticut.

Josephus makes certain notes to show that the Lacedemonians claimed original kinship with the Jews, and some writers make the same claim for the Afghans and several other peoples. Nothing is more certain, in my judgment, than that the Jews are the most thoroughly *mongrel* race upon the face of the earth. That they have certain idiosyncrasies in common, and even certain distinguishing *facial* and other physical marks, can easily be accounted for on other grounds than the assumption of unity of race.

The common story of the origin of the Jews is certainly fabulous. Major-General Forlong, of the British Army, says: "They were probably in the beginning a wandering tribe of Bedouin Arabs who got possession of the rocky parts of Palestine, which were never made better by their presence. They are a comparatively modern people. The first notice of Jews is possibly that of certain Shemitic rulers in the Aram paying tribute about 850 b. c. to Vul-Nirari, the successor of Shalmaneser of Syria; regarding which, however, much more is made by biblicists than the simple record warrants. This is the case also where Champollion affirms that mention is made on the Theban temples of the capture of certain towns of the land we call Judæa, this being thought to prove the existence of Jews. Similar assumption takes place in regard to the hieratic papyri of the Leyden Museum, held to belong to the time of Rameses II., an inscription read on the rocks of El-Hamamat, and the discovery of some names like Chedorlaomer in the records of Babylonia; but this is all the (so-called) evidence as to the existence of ancient Jews which has been advanced; and the most is made of it in Dr. Birch's opening address on the *Progress of Biblical Archaeology* at the inauguration of the Archaeological Society. Of Jews we hear nothing during all the Thothmik wars, unless they be included among the phallic-worshipping Hermonites who were mentioned as inhabiting the highlands of Syria. We have no real historical evidence of the persons or kingdoms of David or Solomon, though we may grant the Jewish stories *cum grano salis*, seeing how outrageously they have always exaggerated in everything pertaining to their own glorification.

"The only logical conclusion justifiable when we give up the inspiration theory is, that Arabs and Syro-Phœnicians were known to Assyrians and Egyptians, and this none would deny. Indeed, we readily grant, with Dr. Birch, that under the nineteenth and twentieth Egyptian dynasties the influence of the Aramæan nations is distinctly marked; that not only by blood and alliances had the Pharaohs been closely united with the princes of Palestine and Syria, but that the language of the period abounds in Semitic words quite different from the Egyptian, with which they were embroidered and intermingled. Could it possibly be otherwise? Is it not so to this day? Is a vast and rapidly-spawning Shemitic continent like Arabia not to influence the narrow delta of a river adjoining it or the wild highlands of Syria to the north? Of course Arabs or Shemites were everywhere spread over Egypt, Syria, and Phœnicia, as well as in their ancient seats of empire in Arabia, Irak (Kaldia), and on the imperial mounds of Kalneh and Koyunjik; but not necessarily as Jews. I cannot find that these last were anything more than a peculiar religious sect of Arabs who settled down from their pristine nomadic habits and obtained a *quasi* government under petty princes or sheiks, such as we have seen take place in the case of numerous Arabian and Indian sects.

“Only about two hundred years or so after their return from Babylon did the Jews seem to consolidate into a nation, and the collection and translation of their old mythic records—deciphered with much difficulty by the diligent librarians of Ptolemy Philadelphus from “old shreds and scraps of leather”—no doubt materially aided in consolidating the people and in welding them into what they became—clans proud of a sort of a mythic history built up by Ezra and other men acquainted with Babylonian records and popular cosmogonies.”

No efforts, say the leaders of the Biblical Archaeological Society, have been able to find either amidst the numerous engravings on the rocks of Arabia Petrea or Palestine, *any save Phœnician inscriptions*; not even a record of the Syro-Hebrew character, which was once thought to be the peculiar property of Hebrews. Most of those inscriptions hitherto discovered do not date anterior to the Roman empire. Few, if *any* monuments (of Jews) have been found in Palestine or the neighboring countries of any useful antiquity save the Moabite Stone, and the value of this last is all in favor of my previous arguments on these points. At the pool of Siloam we have an “inscription in the Phœnician character as old as the time of the Kings;... it is incised upon the walls of a rock-chamber apparently dedicated to Baal, who is mentioned on it. So that here, in a most holy place of this peculiar people, we find only Phœnicians, and these worshipping the Sun-god of Fertility, as was customary on every coast of Europe from unknown times down to the rise of Christianity.”

The Biblical Archaeological Society and British Museum authorities tell us frankly and clearly that no Hebrew square character can be proved to exist till after the Babylonian captivity, and that, at all events, this inscription of Siloam shows “that the curved or Phœnician character was in use in Jerusalem itself under the Hebrew monarchy, as well as the conterminous Phœnicia, Moabitis, and the more distant Assyria. No monument, indeed,” continues Dr. Birch, “of greater antiquity inscribed in the square character (Hebrew) has been found as yet *older than the fifth century A. D.* [the small capitals are mine], and the coins of the Maccabean princes, as well as those of the revolter Barcochab, are impressed with *Samaritan* characters. So that here we have the most complete confirmation of all that I assert as to the mythical history of a Judean people prior to a century or so b. c., and even then only under such a government as Babylonian administrators had taught them to form and the lax rule of the Seleukidæ, followed by intermittent Roman government, permitted of.”

Another modern writer says: “Soon after the death of Alexander the Jews first came into notice under Ptolemy I. of Egypt, and some of their books were collected at the new-built city of Alexandria.”

Such was the insignificance of the Jews as a people that the historical monuments preceding the time of Alexander the Great, who died 323 years b. c., make not the slightest mention of any Jewish transaction. The writings of Thales, Solon, Pythagoras, Democritus, Plato, Herodotus, and Xenophon, all of whom visited remote countries, contain no mention of the Jews whatever. Neither Homer nor Aristotle, the preceptor of Alexander, makes any mention of them. The story of Josephus, that Alexander visited Jerusalem, has been proved to be a fabrication. Alexander’s historians say nothing about it. He did pass through the coast of Palestine, and the only resistance he encountered was at Gaza, which was garrisoned by Persians (Wytttenbach's *Opuscula*, vol. ii. pp. 416, 421).

For half a century after its destruction, says Dr. Robinson, there is no mention of Jerusalem in history; and even until the time of Constantine its history presents little more than a blank (vol. i. pp. 367, 371).

General Forlong says: “The area of Judea and Samaria is, according to the above authority, 140 X 40 = 5600 square miles, which I think is certainly one-fourth too much, my own triangulation of it giving only 4500, or a figure of about 130 X 35. I will, however, concede the allotment of 5600, but we must remember that, as a rule, the whole is a dismal, rocky, arid region, with only intersecting valleys, watered by springs and heavy rain from November to February inclusive, and having scorching heats from April to September. Even the inhabitable portions of the country could only support the very sparsest population, and I speak after having marched over it and also a considerable portion of the

rest of the world. In India we should look upon it as a very poor province; in some respects very like the hilly tracts of Mewar or Odeypoor in Kajpootana, but in extent, population, and wealth it is less than that small principality.

“The chief importance of Palestine in ancient history was due to its lying on the high-road between the great kingdoms of Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria, and as giving the Arabs a hiding- and abiding-place which they—Jews included—could not obtain if they ventured out on the plains south and east. The holes and fastnesses of the hills were their safeguards, and, as they assure us, very much used indeed. The Jewish strip is divided into Samaria as a centre, with Galilee north and Judea south, giving to the two former eight-tenths, and the latter two-tenths; that is, two tribes; $5600 \times \frac{2}{10}$ so that the Judean area would be about $5600 \times \frac{8}{10} = 20$ square miles, against the 4480 of the latter; and the population would be somewhat in this proportion, for the extreme barrenness of all the country south and east of Jerusalem would be in some degree made up for by this town being perhaps a little larger than those in the north.

“We are thus prepared to state the population of the entire land in terms of its area, as was done for the Judean capital, and with equally startling results. The whole Turkish empire yields at present less than twenty-four persons to the square mile, and in the wild and warring ages we are here concerned with we may safely say that there were less than twenty per square mile, of which half were females and one-third of the other half children and feeble persons, unable to take the field whether for war or agriculture. The result is disastrous to much biblical matter, and far-reaching; upsetting the mighty armies of Joshua and the Judges, no less than those of David and Solomon, who are thought for a few short years to have united the tribes: nay, the stern facts of figures destroy all the subsequently divided kings or petty chiefs who lasted down to the sixth century or so b. c., and show us that Jews have ever been insignificant in the extreme, especially when compared with the great peoples who generally ruled them, and far and wide around them.

“So that this paltry thirty thousand to forty thousand is the very most which the twelve tribes could, and only for these few years, bring to the front. In general, the tribes warred with one another and with their neighbors, so that, for the purposes of foreign war, the Jewish race represented only two or three tribes at a time, or, say, ten thousand able men. Thus one tribe—as, for example, Judah—would have only from three thousand to four thousand men in all, supposing every man left his fields and home to fight, while Assyrian armies not unusually numbered one hundred thousand to two hundred thousand men.”

In the above statistics also we have taken a greater area than I think the tribes occupied. There is not a sign of a Jewish people till about what is called their “Eastern Captivity,” and the Rev. Mr. Rodwell writes in the *Trans. of the Biblical Archaeological Society* that “*the Hebrew of the Bible is no other than a dialectic variety of the Canaanitish or Phœnician tongue expressed in the Chaldean character, not brought, as has been taught, by Abram himself from Ur of the Chaldees, but adopted by the Israelites during their long captivities.*” “Could it possibly be otherwise when we look at the facts? The Jews were a poor, ignorant, weak Arab tribe, living on the outskirts of a land occupied for long ages previously by the most famous race of all antiquity—a people from whom Greece, Rome, and Carthage alike borrowed the ideas of their earliest art and architecture. Homer called this race *Phens Poludaialoi*—‘artists of varied skill,’ and later Romans prized them above all others for their constructive talent. Pliny, Seneca, and Varro praise them in words which will never die; Jews said that David solicited their skilled labor, and that Solomon's temple, small and simple though it was, could not be raised without their help; nay, though Ezra says he had these ensamples before him, and had seen all the fine buildings of Babylon, yet he too had to solicit their aid, else the walls of the city of Jehovah and Zerub-babel's second shrine could never have been constructed. In all arts, trades, and manufactures this extraordinary people excelled every ancient race, and from the very earliest times down and into the Roman period. Is it surprising, then, that their language and customs prevailed wherever their skilled aid was required? that Africa in its writing was no less Punic—that

is, Phœnician—than Libyan, guided by these wondrous Pheni or “Tyrii bilingues”? The history of Britain during some past generations as the first great manufacturing country of modern times shows how civilization, power, and progress must ever follow industry and usefulness, and Phœnicians to a great extent in early days controlled ‘the sinews of war’ where this was their interest; but it too often proved more profitable to deal in swords and helmets than in ‘Tyrian purple’ and costly brocade stuffs. Manufacturers are not much given to writing, and these Pheni have been so parsimonious in their vowels and lavish and indifferent in the use of b’s, dfs, r’s, and s’s that few philological students have attempted the translation of Phœnician writings, though Phœnician, and not Hebrew, is what alone we find traces of in Syria and Palestine.”

It has been substantially said by William Henry Burr, in a work not now in the market, that “very erroneous ideas prevail in regard to the magnitude of the nation and country of the Jews and their importance in history. Most maps of ancient Palestine assign far too much territory to that nation. They make the greatest length of the country from 160 to 175 miles, and its greatest breadth from 70 to 90, inclosing an area of from 10,000 to 12,000 square miles—a little larger than the State of Vermont. They not only include the entire Mediterranean coast for 160 miles, but a considerable mountain-tract on the north, above Dan, and a portion of the desert on the south, below Beer-sheba, besides running the eastern boundary out too far. Moreover, they lengthen the distances in every direction. From Dan to Beersheba, the extreme northern and southern towns, the distance on Mitchell’s map is 165 miles, and on Colton’s, 150; but on a map accompanying *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, by Edward Robinson, D. D., which is one of the most recent and elaborate, and will doubtless be accepted as the best authority, the distance is only 128 miles.

“Now, the Israelites were never able to drive out the Canaanites from the choicest portion of the country—the Mediterranean coast—nor even from most parts of the interior (Judges 1: 16-31; 1 Kings 9: 20, 21). The Phœnicians, a powerful maritime people, occupied the northern portion of the coast, and the Philistines the southern; between these the Jebusites or some other people held control, so that the Israelites were excluded from any part of the Mediterranean shore. The map of their country must therefore undergo a reduction of a strip on the west at least 10 miles wide by 160 long, or 1600 square miles. A further reduction must be made of about 400 square miles for the Dead Sea and Lake of Tiberias. This leaves at most 9000 square miles by Colton’s map. But on this map the extreme length of the country is 175 miles, which is 47 miles too great: for the whole dominion of the Jews extended only from Dan to Beersheba, which Dr. Robinson places only 128 miles apart. We must therefore make a further reduction of an area about 47 by 60 miles, or 2800 square miles. Then we must take off a slice on the east, at least 10 miles broad by 60 long, or 600 square miles. Thus we reduce the area of Colton’s map from 11,000 square miles to 5600—a little less than the State of Connecticut.

“But now, if we subtract from this what was wilderness and desert, and also what was at no time inhabited and controlled by the Israelites, we further reduce their habitable territory about one-half. The land of Canaan being nearly all mountainous and bounded on the south and east by a vast desert which encroached upon the borders of the country, a great part of it was barren wilderness. Nor did but one-fifth of the Israelites (two and a half tribes) occupy the country east of the Jordan, which was almost equal in extent to that on the west, the proper Land of Promise. The eastern half, therefore, must have been but thinly populated by the two and a half tribes, who were only able to maintain a precarious foothold against the bordering enemies. So, then, it is not probable that the Israelites actually inhabited and governed at any time a territory of more than 3000 square miles, or not much if any larger than the little State of Delaware. At all events, it can hardly be doubted that Delaware contains more good land than the whole country of the Jews ever did.

“The promise to Abraham in Gen. 15: 18 is ‘from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates.’ But the Jewish possessions never reached the Nile by 200 miles. In Ex. 33: 31 the promise is renewed, but the river of Egypt is not named. The boundaries are ‘from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines (the

Mediterranean), and from the desert to the river.’ By ‘the river’ was doubtless meant the Euphrates; and assuming that by ‘the desert’ was meant the eastern boundary (though Canaan was bounded on the south also by the same great desert which reached to the Red Sea), we have in this promise a territory 600 miles long by an average of about 180 broad, making an area of about 100,000 square miles, or ten times as much as the Jews ever could claim, and nearly one-half of it uninhabitable. So, then, the promise was never fulfilled, for the Israelites were confined to a very small central portion of their land of promise, and whether they occupied 3000 or 12,000 square miles in the period of their greatest power, the fact is not to be disputed that their country was a very small one.

“Lamartine describes the journey from Bethany to Jericho as singularly toilsome and melancholy—neither houses nor cultivation, mountains without a shrub, immense rocks split by time, pinnacles tinged with colors like those of an extinct volcano. ‘From the summit of these hills, as far as the eye can reach, we see only black chains, conical or broken peaks, a boundless labyrinth of passes rent through the mountains, and those ravines lying in perfect and perpetual stillness, without a stream, without a wild animal, without even a flower, the relics of a convulsed land, with waves of stone’ (vol. ii., p. 146).”

But lest it may be thought that these dismal features are due to modern degeneracy, let us take the testimony of an early Christian Father, St. Jerome, who lived a long time in Bethlehem, four miles south of Jerusalem. In the year 414 he wrote to Dardanus thus: “I beg of those who assert that the Jewish people after coming out of Egypt took possession of this country (which to us, by the passion and resurrection of our Saviour, has become truly the land of promise), to show us what this people possessed. Their whole dominions extended only from Dan to Beersheba, hardly 160 Roman miles in length (147 geographical miles). The Scriptures give no more to David and Solomon, except what they acquired by alliance after conquest.... I am ashamed to say what is the breadth of the land of promise, lest I should thereby give the pagans occasion to blaspheme. It is but 47 miles (42 geographical miles) from Joppa to our little town of Bethlehem, beyond which all is a frightful desert” (vol. ii., p. 605).

Elsewhere he describes the country as the “refuse and rubbish of nature.” He says that “from Jerusalem to Bethlehem there is nothing but stones, and in the summer the inhabitants can scarcely get water to drink.”

“In the year 1847, Lieut. Lynch of the U. S. Navy was sent to explore the river Jordan and the Dead Sea. He and his party with great difficulty crossed the country from Acre to the Lake of Tiberias, with trucks drawn by camels. The only roads from time immemorial were mule-paths. Frequent détours had to be made, and they were compelled actually to make some portions of their road. Even then the last declivity could not be overcome until all hands turned out and hauled the boats and baggage down the steep places; and many times it seemed as if, like the ancient herd of swine, they would all rush precipitately into the sea. Over three days were required to make the journey, which in a straight line would be only twenty-seven miles. For the first few miles they passed over a pretty fertile plain, but this was the ancient Phœnician country, which the Jews never conquered. The rest of the route was mountainous and rocky, with not a tree visible nor a house outside the little walled villages (pp. 135 to 152).

“The ancient Sea of Galilee has a prominent place in Jewish geography and commerce, yet on this insignificant body of water, twelve miles long by seven wide, all the commerce of the Jews was carried on, except when they had the use of a port on the Red Sea.

“In a book entitled *The Holy Land, Syria, etc.*, by David Roberts, R. A. (London, 1855), the valley of the Jordan is thus described:

“A large portion of the valley of the Jordan has been from the earliest time almost a desert. But in the northern part the great number of rivulets which descend from the mountains on both sides produce in many places a luxuriant growth of wild herbage. So too in the southern part, where similar rivulets exist, as around Jericho, there is even an exuberant fertility; but those rivulets seldom reach the Jordan and have no effect on the middle of the Ghor. The mountains on each side are rugged

and desolate, the western cliffs overhanging the valley at an elevation of 1000 or 1200 feet, while the eastern mountains fall back in ranges of from 2000 to 2500 feet.”

What was the size of ancient Jerusalem? We know pretty nearly what it is now and how many inhabitants it contains. It is three-quarters of a mile long by half a mile wide, and its population is not more than ,500 (*Biblical Researches*, vol i., p. 421), a large proportion of whom are drawn thither by the renowned sanctity of the place. Dr. Robinson measured the wall of the city, and found it to be only 12,978 feet in circumference, or nearly two and a half miles (vol. i., p. 268).

“In a book entitled *An Essay on the Ancient Topography of Jerusalem*, by James Fergusson (London, 1847), a diagram is given of the walls of ancient and modern Jerusalem, from which it appears that the greatest length of the city was at no time more than 6000 feet, or a little more than a mile, and its greatest width about three-quarters of a mile; while the real Jerusalem of old was but a little more than a quarter that size.

“With these measurements Mr. Fergusson undertakes to estimate the probable population of the ancient city, as follows:

“If we allow the inhabitants of the first-named cities fifty yards to each individual, and that one-half of the new city was inhabited at the rate of one person to each one hundred yards, this will give a permanent population of 23,000 souls. If, on the other hand, we allow only thirty-three yards to each of the old cities, and admit that the whole of the new was as densely populated as London, or allowing one hundred yards to each inhabitant, we obtain 37,000 souls for the whole; which I do not think it at all probable that Jerusalem ever could have contained as a permanent population.’ “In another part of the book (p. 47) he says:

“If we were to trust Josephus, he would have us believe that Jerusalem contained at one time, or could contain, two and a half or three millions of souls, and that at the siege of Titus 1,100,000 perished by famine and the sword, 97,000 were taken captive, and 40,000 allowed by Titus to go free.

“In order to show the gross exaggeration of these numbers, he cites the fact that the army of Titus did not exceed, altogether, 30,000, and that Josephus himself enumerates the fighting-men of the city at 23,400, which would give a population something under 100,000. But even this he believes to be an exaggeration. For, says he,

““In all the sallies it cannot be discovered that at any time the Jews could bring into the field 10,000 men, if so many.... Titus enclosed the city with a line four and a half miles in extent, which, with his small army, was so weak a disposition that a small body of the Jews could easily have broken through it; but they never seem to have had numbers sufficient to be able to attempt it.’

“The author guesses that the Jews might have mustered at the beginning of the siege about 10,000 men, and that the city might have contained altogether about 40,000 inhabitants, permanent and transient, in a space which in no other city in the world could accommodate 30,000 souls. But the wall of Agrippa was built, as the same author states, twelve or thirteen years after the Crucifixion; hence prior to that time the area of Jerusalem was only 756,000 yards, and it was capable of containing only 23,000 inhabitants at most, but probably never did contain more than 15,000.

“Allowing to Jerusalem, in the period of the greatest prosperity of the Jews, a population of even 20,000, is it at all probable that the whole country could have contained anything like even the lowest estimate to be gathered from the Scripture record? In 1 Chron. 21: 5, 6 we read that the number of ‘men that drew the sword of Israel and Judah amounted to 1,570,000, not counting the tribes of Levi and Benjamin. In 2 Sam. 24: 9, the number given at the same census is 1,300,000, and no omission is mentioned. Assuming the larger number to be correct, and adding only one-eighth for the two tribes of Levi and Benjamin, which may have been the smallest, we have 1,766,000 fighting-men. This would give, at the rate of one fighting-man to four inhabitants, a total population of over 7,000,000 souls. But if we adopt a more reasonable ratio, of one to six, we have a population of over 10,500,000 souls. And then we omit the aliens. These numbered 153,600 working-men only two years later (2 Chron. 2: 17), and the total alien population, therefore, must have been about 500,000, which,

added to the census, would make the total population from 7,500,000 to 11,000,000, or more. Can any intelligent man believe that a mountainous, barren country, no larger than Connecticut, without commerce, without manufactures, without the mechanical arts, without civilization, ever did or could subsist even two millions of people? Much less can it be believed that it subsisted 'seven nations greater and mightier than the Israelitish nation itself' (Deut. 7: 1)—i e. not less than 14,000,000.

"That the Jews were a very barbarous people is undeniable. Slavery necessarily makes a people barbarous. Not only were the Israelites a nation of slaves, according to their own record, but after their entry into Canaan they were six times reduced to bondage in their own land of promise. During a period of 281 years they were in slavery 111 years.

"That the Jews were far behind their surrounding neighbors in civilization is shown by the fact that in the first battle they fought under their first king, Saul, they had in the whole army 'neither sword nor spear in the hand of any of the people,' except Saul and Jonathan (1 Sam. 13:22). Nor was any 'smith found throughout all the land of Israel' (ver. 19), but 'all the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock' (ver. 20.) This was 404 years after the Exodus and only 75 years prior to the building of Solomon's temple. Their weapons of war were those of the rudest savage.

"As another evidence of the barbarism of the Jews, when David resolved to build a house for himself he had no native artisans, but had to send to Hiram, king of Tyre, for masons and carpenters (2 Sam. 5: 11). Even the wood itself had to be brought from Tyre, it would seem that even in those days, as now, the mountains of Canaan were destitute of trees—a sure sign of a sterile country. The wood of course had to be carried overland. Wheel-carriages were unknown to the Israelites, except in the form of chariots of iron used by their enemies, which prevented Judah, even with the help of the Lord, from driving out the inhabitants of the valleys (Judg. 1: 19). David captured 1000 chariots in about the sixteenth year of his reign, of which he preserved only 100, disabling all the horses (1 Ghron. 18: 3.) Prior to this event neither chariots nor horses had been used by the Israelites, nor was much use made of them by the subsequent kings. Oxen and asses were their beasts of burden; camels were rare even long after Solomon's reign. How, then, was the wood brought from Tyre over the mountains, unless it was carried on the backs of oxen or asses or dragged along the ground?"

That a considerable number of Jews at one time sojourned in Egypt is highly probable. How they got there, and how they came to leave, is not so certain. An eminent Egyptologist writes in a leading London journal:

"The presence of large numbers of Semites in ancient Egypt has always been a puzzle to historians, and what first led to their migrating from Mesopotamia to the land of the Pharaohs has never hitherto been made clear. Quite recently, however, the British Museum has become possessed of a number of cuneiform tablets which throw considerable light on the subject. Early in the present year a number of these tablets were offered for sale in Cairo. They had been dug up from the grave of a royal scribe of Amenophis III. and IV. of the eighteenth dynasty, which had given up its records, and not only records, but seals and papyri of great historical and artistic value. Some went to the Boulak Museum, some to Berlin, others to private persons, and eighty-one have found their way to the British Museum. These last have now been arranged and catalogued by Mr. Budge, the well-known Egyptologist, whose investigations have brought to light a most interesting chapter in the history of ancient Egypt. Not only do the tablets explain the historical crux mentioned above, but they introduce us to the family life of the early kings. They picture to us the splendors of the royal palaces; they enable us to assist at the betrothal of the kings' daughters and to follow the kings to their hunting-grounds. Most of the tablets are letters addressed to Amenophis III., and some are from Tushratta, king of Mesopotamia.

"Amenophis III. was a mighty hunter, and once on a shooting-trip into Mesopotamia after big game he, like a king in a fairy-tale, met and loved Ti, the daughter of Tushratta. They were married in due time, and Ti went down into Egypt with three hundred and seventeen of her principal ladies.

This brought a host of their Semitic countrymen along, who found in Egypt a good field for their business capacities, and gradually, like the modern Jews in Russia, got possession of the lands and goods of their hosts. The influence of the Semitic queen is attested by the very fact that this library of cuneiform tablets was preserved. And under the feeble sovereigns who followed, her countrymen doubtless held their own. But at last came the nineteenth dynasty and the Pharaoh 'who knew not Joseph.' Then they were set to brick-making and pyramid-building, till the outbreak which led to the Red Sea triumph.

"Mr. Budge, of the British Museum, has translated three of the letters. One is from Tushratta to Ameno-phis. After many complimentary salutations, he proposes to his son-in-law that they should continue the arrangement made by their fathers for pasturing doublehumped camels, and in this way he leads up to the main purport of his epistle. He says that Manie, his great-nephew, is ambitious to marry the daughter of the king of Egypt, and he pleads that Manie might be allowed to go down to Egypt to woo in person. The alliance would, he considers, be a bond of union between the two countries, and he adds, as though by an after-thought, that the gold which Amenophis appears to have asked for should be sent for at once, together with 'large gold jars, large gold plates, and other articles made of gold.' After this meaning interpolation he returns to the marriage question, and proposes to act in the matter of the dowry in the same way in which his grandfather acted, presumably on a like occasion. He then enlarges on the wealth of his kingdom, where 'gold is like dust which cannot be counted,' and he adds an inventory of presents which he is sending, articles of gold, inlay, and harness, and thirty eunuchs."

In speaking of the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt, Dr. Knappert says: "According to the tradition preserved in Genesis, it was the promotion of Jacob's son, Joseph, to be viceroy of Egypt that brought about the migration of the sons of Israel from Canaan to Goshen. The story goes that this Joseph was sold as a slave by his brothers, and after many changes of fortune received the viceregal office at Pharaoh's hands through his skill in interpreting dreams. Famine drives his brothers, and afterward his father, to him, and the Egyptian prince gives them the land of Goshen to live in. It is by imagining all this that the legend tries to account for the fact that Israel passed some time in Egypt. But we must look for the real explanation in a migration of certain tribes which could not establish or maintain themselves in Canaan, and were forced to move farther on."

The author of the *Religion of Israel* says: "The history of the religion of Israel must start from the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt. Formerly it was usual to take a much earlier starting-point, and to begin with a discussion of the religious ideas of the patriarchs. And this was perfectly right so long as the accounts of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were considered historical. But now that a strict investigation has shown us that these stories are entirely unhistorical, of course we have to begin the history later on." The author of *The Spirit History of Man* says: "The Hebrews came out of Egypt and settled among the Canaanites. They need not be traced beyond the Exodus; that is their historical beginning. It was very easy to cover up this remote event by the recital of mythical traditions, and to prefix to it an account of their origin in which the gods (patriarchs) should figure as their ancestors."

But how about the Jewish exodus from Egypt? What was the real cause? Whom shall we credit, the writer of the book called Exodus or other writers? What follows differs very much from the Hebrew story.

Lysimachus relates that "a filthy disease broke out in Egypt, and the oracle of Ammon, being consulted on the occasion, commanded the king to purify the land by driving out the Jews (who were infected with leprosy, etc.), who were hateful to the gods. The whole multitude of the people were accordingly collected and driven out into the wilderness."

Diodorus Siculus says: "In ancient times Egypt was afflicted with a great plague, which was attributed to the anger of God on account of the multitude of foreigners in Egypt, by whom the rites of the native religion were neglected. The Egyptians accordingly drove them out. The most notable

of them went under Cadmus and Danaus to Greece, but the greater number followed Moses, a wise and valiant leader, to Palestine.”

Tacitus, the Roman historian, says: “In this clash of opinions one point seems to be universally admitted—a pestilential disease, disfiguring the race of man and making the body an object of loathsome deformity, spreading all over Egypt. Bocchoris, at that time the reigning monarch, consulted the oracle of Jupiter Hammon, and received for answer that the kingdom must be purified by exterminating the infected multitude, as a race of men detested by the gods. After diligent search the wretched sufferers were collected together, and in a wild and barren desert abandoned to their misery. In that distress, while the vulgar herd was sunk in deep despair, Moses, one of their number, reminded them that by the wisdom of his counsels they had been already rescued out of impending danger. Deserted as they were by men and gods, he told them that if they did not repose their confidence in him as their chief by divine commission they had no resource left. His offer was accepted. Their march began, they knew not whither. Want of water was their chief distress. Worn out with fatigue, they lay stretched on the bare earth, heartbroken, ready to expire, when a troop of wild asses, returning from pasture, went up the steep ascent of a rock covered with a grove of trees. The verdure of the herbage round the place suggested the idea of springs near at hand. Moses traced the steps of the animals, and discovered a plentiful vein of water. By this relief the fainting multitude was raised from despair.”

In a learned work on Egypt by Mr. William Oxley of England, published in 1884, the author writes: “Taking the records as we find them, if they are real history, and as Palestine is contiguous to Egypt, we should naturally expect to find some reference to the Israelites in the Egyptian annals, but what does appear in regard to Palestine is certainly not favorable to the assumption that it was the home of the Israelites as a nation. I cull the following from such materials as are at present within reach, partly taken from the *Records of the Past*:

“It has been generally acknowledged by Egyptian biblicists that ‘the cruel bondage of the Israelites, culminated under the reign of Rameses II., nineteenth dynasty, and that the Exodus took place under his successor, Menephtah I., 1326 b. c., who was drowned in the Red Sea with all his host in his attempt to bring the wanderers back again. But, as I have already said, the tomb of this very king at Thebes contains an inscription to the effect that he had lived to a good old age, and was a child of good-fortune from his cradle to the grave. In the annals of Rameses III., who reigned some fifty or sixty years after the Israelites *ought to have been* settled in their own land, many references are made to the country in which they were located (according to biblical accounts). The king goes to what is known to us as Palestine, Phœnicia, and Syria to receive the annual tribute from the chiefs/ whom he calls Khetas. In the enumeration of his conquests, extending from Egypt east and northward, he enumerates thirty-eight tribes and peoples, and says: ‘I have smitten every land, and have taken every land in its extent.’ In his reminder to the God Ptah of the benefits he had conferred on the god, the king says: ‘I gave to thy temple from the store-houses of Egypt, Tar-neter, and Kharu (i. e. Palestine and Syria) more numerous offerings than the sand of the sea, as well as cattle and slaves’ (Syrians). He also built a temple to Ammon in the same country, to which ‘the nations of the Rutenna came and brought their tribute.’ Making full allowance for the usual Egyptian flattery, the fact is clear that in the time of this king the Israelites could not have been a settled and distinct people; and the incident of their Exodus would have been too fresh and recent to be passed over without some comment by this vainglorious monarch.

“From a papyrus translated in the *Records of the Past* (ii. 107), entitled *Travels of an Egyptian*, who gives a full account of Palestine, etc., it appears there was a fortress there which had been built by Rameses II., and which was still belonging to Egypt. This would be about 1350 B. C.; but not the slightest hint of any such people as Israelites, although he tells us ‘he visited the country to get information respecting the country, with the manners and customs of its inhabitants.’

“The next is Rameses XII., some two hundred years after the Exodus, who is the hero of the story of the possessed princess. He was in Mesopotamia at the time when the chief of the Bakhten brought his daughter, who afterward became queen of Egypt. ‘His Majesty was there registering the annual tributes of all the princes of the countries,’ among whom he enumerates Tar-neter (Palestine), but no mention of Israelites.

“I find no further trace until the time of Herodotus (about 420 B. c.); and here we come on historical ground. This great historian travelled through Egypt and Palestine in the reign of one of the kings of the Persian dynasty, about forty or fifty years after the alleged return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, and when the temple had been built and the city fortified. He repeatedly alludes to the Phœnicians and Syrians, whose country extended from the coast of the Levant down to the Egyptian frontier, including the isthmus and Sinaitic Peninsula. He says that Necho (about 670 b. c.) fought with the Syrians, and took a large city, Cadytis; but he makes no mention of Jews nor yet of Jerusalem. If they had been there, it is incredible that such a careful and grasping historian should have explored the land without noticing them in some way or other.

“The next is from a tablet erected to Alexander II. by Ptolemy, at that time viceroy under the Persian king, but who soon after himself became king of Egypt, 305 b. c. The inscription states that ‘Alexander marched with an army of Ionians to the Syrians’ land, who were at war with him. He penetrated its interior and took it at one stroke, and led their princes, cavalry, ships, and works of art to Egypt.’

“Next follows the third Ptolemy, 238 b. c. (see the Decree of Canopus, *Records of the Past*, viii., 81), who invaded the two lands of Asia, and brought back to Egypt all the treasures which had been carried away by Cambyses and his successors. He ‘imported corn from East Rutenna and Kafatha’—i. e. from Syria and Phœnicia. It was the father of this king who is credited with sending to Judea for the seventy-two men who translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek; and yet neither of these Ptolemaic kings makes mention of Judea, Jerusalem, or the Jews! The inference is obvious: *they were not there*.

“Many historiographers, when writing of Jewish annals, use the Ptolemaic and other monumental and papyrian accounts as applying to the Jews, and consequently use the term ‘Jews,’ but this is unwarrantable, inasmuch as the accounts themselves speak of ‘Syrians, Phœnicians,’ etc., but *not* of ‘Jews.’ According to the best cyclopædists, ‘there is little or nothing known of the Jews or Jerusalem until the time of Christ;’ and even then it is taken chiefly from Josephus, who, to my view, is scarcely admissible as a chronographer of actual history. No mention is made by the Ptolemies—say 250 or even less years b. c.—of the Jews of Jerusalem, and as the Roman emperor Hadrian (from 117 to 138 A. D.) is credited with changing the name of the city to *Ælia Capitolina*, it could only have been known as Jerusalem for a few centuries at most. The Arch of Titus in Rome is taken as conclusive proof that it was erected to commemorate his victories over the rebellious Jews and the successful siege of Jerusalem. But even this, I apprehend, is taken chiefly from Josephus. When in Rome last year I closely inspected this arch, expecting to find an inscription to this effect, but I was disappointed at seeing only a Latin one over the arch, which reads (in English): ‘The Senate and Roman People to the Divine Titus, (Son) of the divine Vespasian,’ and another, by Pius VII., recording its restoration. It is true, I saw the alto-reliefs on the inside of the arch, showing a table, trumpets, and a seven-branched lamp; but these were used in many temples, and would as well refer to the Syrian or Phœnician temples, which undoubtedly existed at that time, and in the absence of direct Roman testimony to the name of the city and people (of which I am unaware), it cannot be accepted as indubitable evidence of its reference to a city called and known to them as Jerusalem, and to a people known to them as Jews. Unless this can be established, it only amounts to an inference resting on Josephus.

“As the result of my researches, I place Jewish historians, so called, upon the same footing as the Christian ecclesiastical ones, whose works, while containing a base of more or less historical reference and truth, are yet too much overweighted with unhistorical myths to be regarded as genuine,

sober history. To my view, the Jews were, at the period I am referring to, in a not dissimilar position to the Druses of Lebanon of the present day. As is well known to a certain class of writers who have come in contact with them, they form a community held together not so much by national ties as by semi-religious ones, which are based upon Cabalistic and theurgic rites and ceremonies. Like what I conceive the Jews to have been in the centuries preceding the Christian era, they are an *order* rather than a nation, the remains of systems which have continued and survived from ancient times. In this light the Jewish records are intelligible as writings veiled in allegory, treating of their mystic lore, albeit expressed in verbiage that bears a literal meaning upon its surface. I give this as the only solution that presents itself of the mysterious problem under review.”

I now propose to state a few points from the Jewish writings themselves (collated from Bishop Colenso) to show the fabulous character of the history of this pretentious people.

The number of fighting-men who marched out of Egypt is nowhere estimated at less than 600,000, and if this represented only one-fourth of the population, the latter must have reached 3,000,000. If we cut this down one-third, so as to be sure of our figures, we make it 2,000,000 souls.

The number of the children of Israel who went into Egypt was 70 (Ex. 1: 5). They sojourned in Egypt 215 years. It could not have been 430 years, as would appear from Ex. 11:40. The marginal chronology makes the period 215 years, and there were only four generations to the Exodus—namely, Levi, Kohath, Amram, and Moses (Ex. 6: 16, 18, 20). How could these people have increased in 215 years from 70 souls so as to number 600,000 warriors? It would have required an average number of 46 children to each father. The 12 sons of Jacob had between them only 53 sons. At this rate of increase, in the fourth generation there would have been only 6311 males (provided they were all living at the time of the Exodus), instead of 1,000,000. If we add the fifth generation, who would be mostly children, the total number of males would not have exceeded 28,465.

All the first-born males from a month old and upward, of those that were numbered, were 22,273 (Num. 3: 43). The lowest computation of the whole number of the people at that time is 2,000,000. The number of males would be 1,000,000. Dividing the latter number by the number of first-born, gives 44, which would be the average number of boys in each family, or about 88 children by each mother. Or, if where the first-born were females, the males were not counted, the number of children by each mother would be reduced to 44.

Dan in the first generation had but one son (Gen. 46: 23), and yet in the fourth generation his descendants had increased to 62,700 warriors (Num. 2: 26), or 64,400 (Num. 26: 43). Each of his sons and grandsons must have had about 80 children of both sexes. On the other hand, the Levites increased the number of “males from a month old and upward” during the 38 years in the wilderness only from 22,000 to 23,000 (Num. 3: 39; 26: 62), and the tribe of Manasseh during the same time increased from 32,200 (Num. 1: 35) to 52,700 (26: 34).

The whole population of Israel were instructed in one single day to keep the passover, and actually did keep it (Ex. 12). At the first notice of any such feast Jehovah said, “I will pass through the land of Egypt this night.*” The passover was to be killed “at even” on the same day that Moses received the command.

The women were at the same time ordered to borrow jewels of their neighbors, the Egyptians. After midnight of the same day the Israelites received notice to start for the wilderness. No one was to go out of his house till morning, when they were to take their hurried flight with their cattle and herds. How could 2,000,000 people, scattered about over a wide district, as they must have been with their cattle and herds, have gotten ready and taken a simultaneous hurried flight at twelve hours’ notice?

The Israelites, with their flocks and herds, reached the Red Sea, a distance of from fifty to sixty miles over a sandy desert, in three days! Marching fifty abreast, the able-bodied warriors alone would have filled up the road for seven miles, and the whole multitude would have made a column twenty-two miles long, so that the last of the body could not have been started until the front had advanced that distance—more than two days’ journey for such a mixed company. Then the sheep and

cattle must have formed another vast column, covering a much greater tract of ground in proportion to their number. Upon what did these two millions of sheep and oxen feed in the journey to the Red Sea over a desert region, sandy, gravelly, and stony alternately? How did the people manage with the sick and infirm, and especially with the seven hundred and fifty births that must have taken place in the three days' march?

Judah was forty-two years old when he went down with Jacob into Egypt, being three years older than his brother Joseph, who was then thirty-nine. For "Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh" (Gen. 41: 46); and from that time nine years elapsed (seven of plenty and two of famine) before Jacob came down into Egypt. Judah was born in the fourth year of Jacob's double marriage (Gen. 29: 35), being the fourth of the seven children of Leah born in seven years; and Joseph was born of Rachel in the seventh year (Gen. 30: 24, 26; 21: 41). In these forty-two years of Judah's life the following events are recorded in Gen. 38:

He grows up, marries, and has three sons. His eldest son grows up, marries, and dies. The second son marries his brother's widow and dies. The third son, after waiting to grow to maturity, declines to marry the widow. The widow then deceives Judah himself, and bears him twins—Pharez and Zarah. One of these twins grows up and has two sons—Hez-ron and Hamul—born to him before Jacob goes down into Egypt.

In Ex. 30:11-13, Jehovah commanded Moses to take a census of the children of Israel, and in doing it to collect half a shekel of the sanctuary as atonement-money. This expression "shekel of the sanctuary" is put into the mouth of Jehovah six or seven months before the tabernacle was made. In Ex. 38: 26 we read of such a tribute being paid, but nothing is there said of any *census* being taken, only that the number of those who paid, from twenty years old and upward, was 603,550 men. In Num. 1: 1-46, more than six months after this occasion, an account of an actual census is given, but no *atonement-money* is mentioned. If in the first instance a census was taken, but accidentally omitted to be mentioned, and in the second instance the tribute was paid, but accidentally omitted likewise, it was nevertheless surprising that the number of adult males should have been identically the same (603,550) on both occasions, six months apart.

Aaron and his two sons were the only priests during Aaron's lifetime. They had to make all the burnt-offerings on a single altar nine feet square (Ex. 37: 1), besides attending to other priestly duties for 2,000,000 people. At the birth of every child both a burnt-offering and a sin-offering had to be made. The number of births must be reckoned as at least two hundred and fifty a day, for which consequently five hundred sacrifices would have to be offered daily—an impossible duty to be performed by three priests. For poor women pigeons were accepted instead of lambs. If half of them offered pigeons, and only one instead of two, it would have required 90,000 pigeons annually for this purpose alone. Where did they get the pigeons? How could they have had them at all under Sinai? There were thirteen cities where the presence of these three priests was required (Josh. 21: 19). The three priests had to eat a large portion of the burnt-offerings (Num. 18: 10) and all the sin-offerings—two hundred and fifty pigeons a day—more than eighty for each priest.

In keeping the second passover under Sinai, 150,000 lambs must have been killed—i. e. one for each family (Ex. 12: 3, 4). The Levites slew them, and the three priests had to sprinkle the blood from their hands (1 Chron. 30: 16; 35: 11). The killing had to be done "between two evenings" (Ex. 12: 6), and the sprinkling had to be done in about two hours. The killing must have been done in the court of the tabernacle (Lev. 1: 3, 5; 17: 2-6). The area of the court could have held but 5000 people at most. Here the lambs had to be sacrificed at the rate of 1250 a minute, and each of the three priests had to sprinkle the blood of more than 400 lambs every minute for two hours.

The number of warriors of the Israelites, as recorded at the Exodus, was 600,000 (Ex. 7: 37); subsequently it was 603,550 (Ex. 38: 25-28), and at the end of their wanderings it was 601,730 (Num. 26: 51). But in 2 Chron. 13:3, Abijah, king of Judah, brings 0,000 men against Jeroboam, king of

Israel, with 0,000, and “there fell down slain of Israel 500,000 chosen men” (ver. 17). On another occasion, Pekah, king of Israel, slew of Judah in one day, 120,000 valiant men (2 Chron. 28: 6.)

The Israelites at their Exodus were provided with tents (Ex. 16: 16), in which they undoubtedly encamped and dwelt. They did not dwell in tents in Egypt, but in “houses” with “doors,” “sideposts,” and “lintels.” These tents must have been made either of hair or of skin (Ex. 26: 7, 14; 36: 14, 19)—most probably of the latter—and were therefore much heavier than the modern canvas tents. At least 200,000 were required to accommodate 2,000,000 people. Supposing they took these tents from Egypt, how did they carry them in their hurried march to the Red Sea? The people had burdens enough without them. They had to carry their kneading-troughs with the dough unleavened, their clothes, their cooking utensils, couches, infants, aged and infirm persons, and food enough for at least a month’s use, or until manna was provided for them in the wilderness, which was “on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure out of the land of Egypt” (Ex. 16:1). One of these tents, with its poles, pegs, etc., would be a load for a single ox, so that they would have needed 0.000 oxen to carry the tents. But oxen are not usually trained to carry goods on their backs, and will not do so without training. Then it is written:

“These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel” (Deut. 1: 1).

“And Moses called all Israel and said unto them” (Deut. 5:1).

“There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them” (Josh. 8: 35).

How was it possible to do this before at least

2,000,000 people? Could Moses or Joshua, as actual eye-witnesses, have expressed themselves in such extravagant language? Surely not.

The camp of the Israelites must have been at least a mile and a half in diameter. This would be allowing to each person on the average a space three times the size of a coffin for a full-grown man. The ashes, offal, and refuse of the sacrifices would therefore have to be carried by the priest in person a distance of three-quarters of a mile “without the camp, unto a clean place” (Lev. 4:11, 12.) There were only three priests—namely, Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar—to do all this work for 2,000,000 people. All the wood and water would have to be brought into this immense camp from the outside. Where could the supplies have been got while the camp was under Sinai, in a desert, for nearly twelve months together? How could so great a camp have been kept clean?

But how huge does the difficulty become if we take the more reasonable dimensions of twelve miles square for this camp; that is, about the size of London! Imagine at least half a million of men having to go out daily a distance of six miles and back to the suburbs for the common necessities of nature, as the law directed.

The Israelites undoubtedly had flocks and herds of cattle (Ex. 34: 3). They sojourned nearly a year before Sinai, where there was no food for cattle; and the wilderness in which they sojourned nearly forty years is now and was then a desert (Deut. 32: 10; 8: 15). The cattle surely did not subsist on manna!

Among other prodigies of valor, 12,000 Israelites are recorded in Num. 31 as slaying all the male Midianites, taking captive all the females and children, siezing all their cattle and flocks, numbering 808,000 head, taking all their goods and burning all their cities, without the loss of a single man. Then they killed all the women and children except 32,000 virgins, whom they kept for themselves. There would seem to have been at least 80,000 females in the aggregate, of whom 48,000 were killed, besides (say) 20,000 boys. The number of men slaughtered must have been about 48,000. Each Israelite therefore must have killed 4 men in battle, carried off 8 captive women and children, and driven home 67 head of cattle. And then after reaching home, as a pastime, by command of Moses, he had to murder 6 of his captive women and children in cold blood.

Now, I respectfully submit that, judging from the account of the Exodus of the Jews, which they have written themselves, we cannot credit it. The narrative is full of contradictions, and is so absurd and incredible, and even impossible, that we must regard it as a *huge myth*. There may have been an Exodus from Egypt, of which this account is an exaggeration, but it bears so many evidences of the *fabulous* that we cast it aside and are led to doubt whether the Jews were ever in Egypt except as tramps and vagabonds, and to suspect that the whole story is an *adapted* history of some great exodus of some ancient tribes written for a *purpose*.

I think it has been shown that the Jews were not the people that they have been supposed to be. They are a modern people in the world's history, antedated by many highly-civilized and powerful nations. They are not descendants of Abram, as will be shown more fully hereafter, and their population never reached the fabulous numbers that are given in what is called their sacred history. Indeed, there is so much of the *fabulous* about them, so much of *false pretence* that upon the very face is impossible and incredible, that the wonder is that Christians should ever have seriously thought of regarding them and their institutions as the source and substance of what Christianity is. We have no prejudice against the Jews. We cast no reflection upon the so-called Hebrews of the present day. They are not responsible for their ancestors, any more than Gladstone, Huxley, Tyndall, Spencer, and other brainy Englishmen are responsible for the savagery and barbarism of *their* forefathers.

It has been our object in this chapter to show the *Munchausenish* character of Jewish history, upon which the whole superstructure of modern theology rests. If anybody is proud of his descent from such a people, he is welcome to the glory.

CHAPTER IV. MOSES AND THE PENTATEUCH

“But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.”—2 Cor. 3:15.

THE first five books of the Old Testament, supposed by many to have been written by Moses, are called the Pentateuch. In the early chapters of Genesis, in the “Authorized Version,” there is placed at the head of the page in the margin, “a. m. 1,” which mean Anno Mundi—the year of the world—one, and immediately below it are the letters “b. c.”—which mean Before Christ—“4004.” This is the system of chronology established by Archbishop Ussher, and means that 4004 years before Christ the world was *one* year old. It is claimed that Moses promulgated the law about 1451 b. c., and this must have been about two thousand five hundred and fifty-three years after the Creation, which added to 1890, the present date, would make the world just five thousand eight hundred and ninety-four years old. Lyell, a most judicious geologist estimated the delta of the Mississippi at one hundred thousand years, and some persons think these figures should have been doubled. Professor John Fiske thinks the glacial period began two hundred and forty thousand years ago, and that human beings inhabited Europe at least one hundred and sixty thousand years earlier, thus giving an antiquity to our race of not less than four hundred thousand years. Other scientists talk of hundreds of thousands, and even *millions*, of years, but we attach no importance to specific figures. We simply insist upon an antiquity which very far exceeds six thousand years.

Learned Egyptologists place Rameses II., the Pharaoh of the Jewish captivity, whose mummy is now to be seen in the museum at Cairo, at 1390 years b. c. It seems strange that his mummy should be on exhibition in a museum when “he and all his hosts were swallowed up in the Red Sea.” If we are told that Rameses II. was succeeded by Sethi II., we find from Egyptian records that both of these kings lived to a good old age, and the mummy of each has been preserved, and not even a hint is given that either of them was drowned. But we have, according to the tables of Abydos and Bunsen, which are generally accepted, three thousand six hundred and twenty years before Christ as the time in which Menes, the first monarch of Egypt, reigned, making two thousand two hundred and thirty years as the period of the Egyptian monarchy before the reign of Rameses II.

But I contend that Egyptian civilization extends back at least seven thousand years, and Miss Amelia Edwards, the Egyptologist, who has recently lectured in our Pennsylvania University course, thinks ten thousand years not too high an estimate. In support of ibis hypothesis, the great antiquity of man, which no scholar now disputes, carries us back many thousands of years beyond Menes, and there are many facts which favor the assumption that the valley of the Nile was one of the places inhabited for an indefinite period. The works of art—monuments, architecture, paintings, etc.—show an antiquity that cannot be estimated. Manetho, an Egyptian priest, who wrote a history of Egypt, by request of Ptolemy II., two hundred and eighty-six years before Christ, carries us back more than seven thousand years.

The Pentateuch is a compilation by several authors, and hence its patchwork character. Professors Ewald and Kuenen and others have proved this, and Dean Stanley, of the English Establishment, has admitted it. Some portions may have been compiled eight hundred or nine hundred years before Christ, but not the two contradictory accounts of the creation and fall of man. The Assyrian cuneiform tablets, which were discovered in 1873 and 1874 a. d., and which are now in the British Museum, show that this ancient people had this story about two thousand years before the time of Moses. The Jews learned it in Babylon, and none of the other Old-Testament writings contain any notice of it, because it was not known until after the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, five hundred and eighteen years before Christ. Is it not reasonable to suppose that the various Old-Testament writers would have made some reference to the Pentateuch had they known

of its existence? Professor François Lenormant of the National Library of France, a most learned archaeologist and palaeontologist, and a most devout Christian, in his *Beginnings of History* admits that the Jews borrowed substantially the story of the creation and the fall from more ancient nations, and furnishes the original copies. The legends recorded in Genesis are found among many ancient peoples who lived many centuries before Moses; and Berosus, a priest of the temple of Belus, who wrote two hundred and seventy-six years before Christ, affirms that fragments of Chaldean history can be traced back 15 Sadi or 150,000 years. I have mentioned these things because they are germane to what is to follow.

There is good reason for thinking that the book of Deuteronomy was written about six hundred and twenty-one years before Christ, and the remaining books of the Pentateuch were of later date, coming down to four hundred and fifty years before Christ. This Professor Kuenen has demonstrated beyond controversy in his *Religion of Israel*, to which I must refer for his arguments in detail. The best scholarship of the world does not believe that what is called the Law of Moses was written prior to the fifth or sixth century before Christ, and learned men in Holland, Germany, and England, as well as the most advanced thinkers in America, now accept this opinion. Professor Robertson Smith, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, adopts this view, and Dean Stanley, in his *Jewish Church*, does not leave us in doubt as to his opinion.

Take the following as an example of what I mean (Gen. 12:6): “And the Canaanite was then in the land;” whereas the expulsion of the Canaanites did not occur until several centuries after the death of Moses, when this must have been written. In Gen. (36: 31) we read, “Before there reigned any king over Israel.” This must have been two hundred years after the death of Moses. “The nations that were before you” (Lev. 13: 8) of course presupposes that the Canaanites had already been subdued. “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth” (Num. 12:13), could hardly have been written by Moses himself. The expression “unto this day” frequently occurs, and shows that the time was long after the events took place. It is also implied in various places that the writer resided in Palestine, and so it could not have been Moses. In Deuteronomy (19: 14) we read, “Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor’s landmark which they of old time have set in thine inheritance.” They had no landmark to remove, unless this was written concerning the land of Canaan long after the death of Moses. They are reproached for not keeping the Sabbath in the past for a long time, and this is given as a reason for the Captivity; and hence Leviticus 26:34, 35, 43 was written after the Captivity, which began in 597 b. c. In Gen. 14:14, Lot is taken prisoner and rescued from his captors, whom they “pursued unto Dan.” Now, there was no such place as Dan until after the entrance into Canaan. We read in Judg. 18:27, 29 that this city was called Laish, which was burned by the Israelites, and then they built a city, and they called it “Dan, after the name of their father: howbeit the name of the city was Laish at first.” This “trout in the milk” is as striking as if some one should write of Chicago when the Declaration of Independence was signed. In Gen. 36:31 we read, “And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.” This passage shows that it was written after there had been kings in Israel, and could not have been written by Moses. I could show similar incongruities concerning the manna in Gen. 16: 35, compared with Josh. 5: 12. So Deut. 24: 14 must have been written after the entrance into Canaan, as until then they had no *lands*, and there were no gates and no “strangers within their gates.” The same might be said of the fourth commandment of the Decalogue: the Israelites had no *gates* until after they entered Canaan. It could not have been written by Moses in the wilderness of Arabia.

These illustrations might be produced indefinitely, but enough have been given to show that the Pentateuch was written several hundred years after the death of Moses, and that we are justifiable in fixing the date for most of it in the fourth, fifth, or sixth century before the Christian era. The Pentateuch abounds in duplicate traditions of the same transactions, and also in diversity and contradictions. These numerous repetitions are fatal to the supposition that it was written by Moses. If Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, we should expect to find a good many hints of this in

other parts of the Bible; whereas we have no reference to Sinai and its awful thunders, and, although Moses is mentioned in the New Testament, it only shows the existence of traditions to that effect at that time. Not until the time that Christianity arose, about thirteen hundred years after the death of Moses, did the tradition obtain currency that he was the author of the Pentateuch.

The fact is, the Jews are a comparatively modern people, and were not known as a nation until the time of Alexander the Great (356-325 b. c.), and Herodotus, by never mentioning them, so indicates. While the Hindoos, Egyptians, Grecians, Romans, Chaldeans, and Babylonians had their men of science, literature, and law, whose fame only brightens with the flight of time, the Jews have no *history* except what was written by themselves, and that is so absurd, impossible, and contradictory that nobody can believe it.

Everybody knows that the ancient Jews were the constitutional imitators of other peoples. They have always been the second-hand clothes-dealers of the world. As a race they never have been noted for originality, but have always been ready to borrow what belonged to other people, and then, with characteristic self-complacency, have claimed to be the “original Jacobs” of everything good and great. We intend this as no reflection upon the Jews of the present day.

Staniland Wake, an English writer, in his great work on the *Evolution of Morality*, vol. ii., page 59, thus expresses his views: “Judging from this fact, many persons imagine—or at least, from the superstitious reverence that they have for the Decalogue, appear to do so—that until the time of the Hebrew lawgiver the most ordinary rules of morality were unknown. The mere fact of Egypt being the starting-point of the Exodus ought to be sufficient to disabuse the mind of this idea, without reference to the contents of the code itself. But the moral laws given in the Decalogue are of so primitive a character that it is absurd to suppose, except on the assumption that the Hebrews were at that period in a condition of pure savagery, that God would personally appear to give his immediate sanction to them. The commands, Honor thy father and thy mother, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor, Thou shalt not covet, were simply *reiterations* of laws to which the Hebrews had been subject during their whole sojourn in Egypt, and which must, in fact, have been familiar to them before their ancestors left their traditional Chaldean home.”

Then we must bear in mind that Moses himself was an Egyptian by birth, and that he was brought up at the court of Pharaoh until he was forty years of age, and in Acts 7: 22 we are told that “Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.”

The whole matter relating to the Pentateuch is thus summed up by the late Prof. John Wm. Draper, M. D., LL.D., late of the University of New York, in his *Conflict between Religion and Science*: “No man may dare to impute them (the books of the Pentateuch) to the inspiration of Almighty God, their inconsistencies, incongruities, and impossibilities, as exposed by many learned and pious modern scholars, both German and English, are so great. It is the decision of these critics that Genesis is a narrative based upon legends; that Exodus is not historically true; that the whole Pentateuch is *unhistoric* and *un-Mosaic*: it contains the most extraordinary contradictions and impossibilities, sufficient to involve the credibility of the whole—imperfections so conspicuous that they would destroy the authenticity of any modern historical work.”... “To the critical eye they all present peculiarities which demonstrate that they were written on the banks of the Euphrates, and not in the desert of Arabia. They contain many Chaldaisms.”... “From such Assyrian sources the legends of the creation of the earth and heavens, the Garden of Eden, the making of man from clay and the woman from one of his ribs, the temptation of the serpent, etc.,... were obtained by Ezra.” “I agree in the opinion of Hupfeld, that the discovery that the Pentateuch is put together out of the various sources of original documents is beyond all doubt, is not only one of the most important and most pregnant with consequences for the interpretation of the historical books of the Old Testament—or rather for the whole of theology and history—but it is also one of the most certain discoveries which have been made in the domain of criticism and the history of literature.”

But not only do the laws of Egypt antedate the laws accredited to Moses, but the Hindoos had laws which were yet more ancient. The writings of Buddha, who died in 477 b. c., refer to older books and quote from them, and these again refer to still older books, until we reach laws which existed many thousands of years before the Law of Moses, as the laws of Manu were drawn from the “immemorial customs” of the nation and constitute a kind of *common law*. “The most accurate scholars point to India as the origin of Egyptian civilization,” says Le Renouf, the learned Egyptologist.

If Egyptian literature was derived in a remote period from India, what must be the date of old India’s laws as compared with the laws of the Hebrews? It is no wonder that Max Müller, professor in the orthodox University of Oxford, says (in *Chips*, vol. i., p. 11): “After carefully examining every possible objection that can be made against the date of the Vedic hymns, their claim to that high antiquity which is ascribed to them has not, as far as I can judge, been shaken.” The same learned Sanskrit scholar says, “The opinion that the pagan religions were mere corruptions of the religion of the Old Testament, once supported by men of high authority and great learning, is now as completely surrendered as the attempt at explaining Greek and Latin as corruptions of Hebrew” (*Science of Religion*, p. 24). This great Sanskrit scholar admits in many places in his voluminous writings the greater antiquity of the pagan scriptures, and gives many weighty reasons to show how impossible and absurd it is to suppose that they have been changed and interpolated to adapt them to more modern times.

The Vedas, the sacred writings of the Hindoos, according to Sir William Jones the Orientalist, “cannot be denied to have an antiquity the most distant.” According to the Brahmans, they are coeval with the creation, and the Sama-Veda says, “They were formed of the soul of Him who exists by, or of, himself.” The Hindoo laws were codified by Manu and copied by all antiquity, notably by Rome in the compilation or digest of the laws of all nations called the Code of *Justinian*, which has been adopted as the foundation of all modern legislation. I could, did time permit, furnish the laws of Manu, the Justinian Code, and the Civil Code of Napoleon in parallel columns, in a way to show their common origin beyond a doubt. Laws of betrothal and marriage, paternal authority, tutelage, and adoption; property, contract, deposit, loan, sale, partnership, donation, and testamentary bequest, —all were elaborately promulgated by the Code of Manu in 2680 *slocas*.

Laws were arranged under eighteen principal heads, concerning as many different causes for which laws are enacted: Debts, deposits and loans for use, sale without ownership, gifts, non-payment of wages, agreements, sale and purchase, disputes, boundaries, assaults, slander, robbery and violence, adultery, altercation between man and wife, inheritance, and gaming. “The court of Brahma with four faces” is where four learned Brahmans sat in judgment, one of whom was the king’s chief counsellor.

One of their trite sayings was, “When justice, having been wounded by iniquity, approaches the court, and the judges extract not the arrow or dart, they also shall be wounded by it.”

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