

# TORCH OF REASON.

"TRUTH BEARS THE TORCH IN THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH."—*Lucretius*.

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## Never Despair.

THE opal-hued and many-perfumed  
Morn  
From Gloom is born;  
From out the sullen depth of ebon Night  
The stars shed light;  
Gems in the rayless caverns of the earth  
Have their slow birth;  
From wondrous alchemy of winter hours  
Come summer flowers;  
The bitter waters of the restless main  
Give gentle rain;  
The fading bloom and dry seed bring  
once more  
The year's fresh store;  
Just sequences of clashing tones afford  
The full accord;  
Through weary ages, full of strife and  
ruth,  
Thought reaches truth;  
Through efforts, long in vain, prophetic  
need  
Begets the deed;  
Nerve then thy soul with direct need to  
cope;  
Life's brightest hope  
Lies latent in fate's deadliest lair—  
Never despair!

—[Selected.]

## The Wonderful New Eye of Science.

BY CAMILLE FLAMMARION.

THE lens of photographic apparatus is really a new Eye which supplements ours, and which, more wonderful still, surpasses it.

This great eye is endowed with four considerable advantages over ours: it sees more quickly, farther, longer, and, wonderful faculty, it receives and retains the impress of what it sees.

Never before in the history of humanity have we been able to penetrate so deeply into the abysses of immensity. This new eye, which transports us across space, also enables us to retrace the stages of a past eternity.

Infinite space! Eternity! Contemporaneous astronomy plunges us into and submerges us in them.

Ah! Astronomy could wish that the leaders of the peoples, the legislators, the politicians, might use their faculties to examine and comprehend a celestial chart. This calm contemplation would perhaps be more useful to humanity than all the diplomatic discourses that could be pronounced. If they comprehended how small the earth is, perhaps they would cease to cut it up in pieces. Peace would reign in the world; social prosperity would succeed the ruinous, shameful and infamous folly of war, which wastes and desolates Europe. Political divisions would be effaced, and then, and then only, would men be free to elevate themselves by the study of the universe, the knowledge of nature, and to live in the enjoyment of the intellectual life. Alas! we have not yet pro-

gressed so far; and the photographic eye will reveal many celestial mysteries before the human eye shall see reason and knowledge establish their reign on our little revolving ball.—[Cosmopolitan.]

## Essay on Dreams.

BY THOMAS PAINE.

EVERY new religion, like a new play, requires a new apparatus of dresses and machinery, to fit the new characters it creates. The story of Christ in the New Testament brings a new being upon the stage, which it calls the Holy Ghost; and the story of Abraham the father of the Jews, in the Old Testament, gives existence to a new order of beings it calls angels. There was no Holy Ghost before the time of Christ, nor angels before the time of Abraham. We hear nothing of these winged gentlemen, till more than two thousand years, according to the Bible chronology, from the time they say the heavens, the earth and all therein were made. After this they hop about as thick as birds in a grove. The first we hear of pays his addresses to Hagar in the wilderness; then three of them visit Sarah; another wrestles a fall with Jacob; and these birds of passage, having found their way to earth and back, are continually coming and going. They eat and drink, and up again to heaven.

One would think that a system loaded with such gross and vulgar absurdities as scripture religion is, could never have obtained credit; yet we have seen what priestcraft and fanaticism could do, and credulity believe.

From angels in the Old Testament we get to prophets, to witches, to seers of visions and dreamers of dreams, and sometimes we are told, as in 1 Sam., 9:15, that God whispers in the ear. At other times we are not told how the impulse was given, or whether sleeping or waking. In 2 Sam., 24:1, it says, "And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go number Israel and Judah." And in 1 Chron., 21:1, when the same story is again related, it is said, "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel."

Whether this was done sleeping or waking we are not told, but it seems that David, whom they call "a man after God's own heart," did not know by what spirit he was

moved; and as to the men called inspired penmen, they agree so well about the matter that in one book they say that it was God, and in the other that it was the devil.

Yet this is the trash the church imposes upon the world as the word of God! This is the collection of tales and contradictions called the Holy Bible! This is the rubbish called revealed religion!

The idea that writers of the Old Testament had of a God was boisterous, contemptible and vulgar. They make him the Mars of the Jews, the fighting God of Israel, the conjuring God of their priests and prophets. They tell as many fables of him as the Greeks told of Hercules.

They make their God to say exultingly, "I will get me honor upon Pharaoh, and upon his host, upon his chariots and upon his horsemen." And that he may keep his word, they make him set a trap in the Red Sea, in the dead of the night, for Pharaoh, his host and his horses, and drown them as a rat-catcher would so many rats. Great honor, indeed! The story of Jack the Giant Killer is better told!

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

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

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

Is man ever to be the dupe of priestcraft, the slave of superstition? Is he never to have just ideas of his Creator? It is better

not to believe there is a God than to believe of him falsely. When we behold the mighty universe that surrounds us and dart our contemplation into the eternity of space, filled with innumerable orbs, revolving in eternal harmony, how paltry must the tales of the Old and New Testaments, profanely called the word of God, appear to thoughtful man! The stupendous wisdom and unerring order that reign and govern throughout this wondrous whole and call us to reflection, put to shame the Bible!

I shall conclude this Essay on Dreams with the two first verses of the 34th chapter of Ecclesiasticus, one of the books of the Apocrypha:

1 "The hopes of a man void of understanding are vain and false, and dreams lift up fools.

2 "Whoso regardeth dreams is like him that catcheth at a shadow and followeth after the wind."— [Age of Reason.]

## Inspired Infidelity.

[Ecclesiastes 9:2-10.]

ALL things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.

For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten.

Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun.

Let thy garments be always white, and let thy head lack no ointment.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.—[The Preacher.]

The belief in a Providence is not consistent with the general laws of Nature, and those who profess to believe it act as if they believed it not. Such an absurd doctrine can only be useful to kings and priests and other deceivers of mankind, who use the word Providence to give their transactions an authority that must not be called in question, and under which authority they carry on the most malevolent practices.—[Seaver.]