

# TORCH OF REASON.



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

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## Reason.

Joy to the world! the light is come,  
The only lawful king;  
Let every heart prepare it room,  
And moral nature sing.

Joy to the earth! Now reason reigns;  
Let men their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and  
plains,  
Repeat the sounding joy.

No more let superstition grow,  
No thorns infest the ground;  
This light will make its blessings flow  
To earth's remotest bound.

—[Selected.]

## A Specimen from the Writings of the Holy Ghost.

JUST to give the English reader some faint idea of the infinite and tender mercies of Jehovah in sending his own Ghost, in whom he was well pleased, to write a Bible, I will quote here the first seven verses of Genesis in Hebrew, using, however, the Roman characters:—

BRASHYTHBRAALHYMATH  
HSHMYMVATHHARTSHARTN  
SHYTHHTHHVVBBHVCHSHK  
GNLPNYTHHVVRVCHALHY  
MMRCHPTHGNLPNYHMYM  
VYAMRALHYMYHYAVRVYH  
YAVRVYRAALHYMATHHAVER  
KYTVBVYBRLALHYMBYNHA  
VRVBYNHCHSHKVKRAALH  
YMLAVRYYMVLCHSHKRAL  
YLHVYHYNGRBVYHYBKRYV  
MACHDVYAMRALHYMYHYR  
KYGNBTHRKHMYMVYHYMB  
DYLBYNMYMLMYMVYGNSHA  
LHYMATHHRKYGNVYBDBLY  
NHMYMASHRMTCHTLRKYG  
NVBYNHMYMASHRMGNLLRK  
YGNVYHYKN.

It was so considerate of Jehovah to send his Ghost to furnish us with the foregoing beautiful sentences! The only thing to be regretted is that, since he sent the Ghost to write them, he did not come down himself to translate them. But his ways are not as our ways (for which let us be truly thankful), and he has vouchsafed unto us a composition without beginning of words or end of sentences, for which blessed be his holy name. As far back as the days of Nehemiah, as we have seen, the very Jews themselves do not seem to have been able to make head or tail of the language in which the Ghost had written, and only the learned rabbis, who, on the subject, peradventure, knew very little more than the vulgar, pretended to translate and expound.

Strictly speaking, no one language can be translated into any other. A language is not merely a vocabulary of verbal counters with their exact equivalents in other languages; it is a matrix in

which may be found the features and lineaments of the national life. I appeal to those who know the Classics best; and I make bold to ask the man who is deeply learned in Latin and who is a master of English, if he ever in all his life saw a rendering out of the one language into the other which was, in all respects, satisfactory. This can be predicted of Latin, a language known by thousands and well known by tens. Then what of this shepherd's jargon, Hebrew, that, properly speaking, in its written form, seems never to have been a language at all, but only a number of clumsy and ungainly scrawls, intended to assist the memory of a rude and all but illiterate people?

It is clear to the meanest capacity that the Ghost wrote in a language which was no language, but in an indefinite jargon of which the unlearned know nothing, and which no two learned human beings translate the same way. And yet this Scripture is "the very word of very God," and we have to believe in it under the penalty of being damned. For this and all his other tender mercies, glory be to God in the highest!

All that is sweet and beautiful and elevating in life is due to Christianity. Every preacher whines that and every baby knows it. But for the creed of the manager, our deportment would be that of bears and our morals that of goats—vestalities would be nowhere and bestiality everywhere.

We are, of course, stiff-necked; we have gone away backward, and have all deserved "God's wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come." But a really effective gospel-grinder, standing up on his hind-legs in a ranting-box well varnished, and telling us forever and forever how Jehovah kicked Adam out of Paradise for eating an apple, and how Jehovah's son, who was at the same time Jehovah's self, got nailed to a stick, is sufficient to keep us pure and holy and divorced from the world, the flesh, and the devil. If we only genuflect properly and howl "Amen," one professional gospel grinder will be sufficient to "save" about 700 of us from being pickled in brimstone, and from being gnawed by a worm of considerable length, and which no vermin-powder will destroy.

If you are determined to believe in the Scriptures, leave their history and all inquiries as to how they originated and how they have been preserved, severely alone.

Faith can flourish and triumph only where Ignorance is cultivated as a virtue. Clothe yourself with prejudice as with a garment, and array yourself in bigotry as with raiment, and obstinately refuse to investigate and to judge, and you may be able to believe that the Bible is the infallible word of God. —[God and His Book.]

## A First Cause.

BY JOHN STUART MILL.

THE argument for a First Cause admits of being, and is presented as a conclusion from the whole of human experience. Everything that we know (it is argued) had a cause, and owed its existence to that cause. How then can it be but that the world, which is but a name for the aggregate of all that we know, has a cause to which it is indebted for its existence?

The fact of experience however, when correctly expressed, turns out to be, not that everything which we know derives its existence from a cause, but only every event or change. There is in Nature a permanent element, and also a changeable: the changes are always the effects of previous changes; the permanent existences, so far as we know, are not effects at all. It is true we are accustomed to say not only of events, but of objects, that they are produced by causes, as water by the union of hydrogen and oxygen. But by this we only mean that when they begin to exist, their beginning is the effect of a cause. But their beginning to exist is not an object, it is an event. If it be objected that the cause of a thing's beginning to exist may be said with propriety to be the cause of the thing itself, I shall not quarrel with the expression. But that which in an object begins to exist, is that in it which belongs to the changeable element in nature; the outward form and the properties depending on mechanical or chemical combinations of its component parts. There is in every object another and a permanent element, viz., the specific elementary substance or substances of which it consists and their inherent properties. These are not known to us as beginning to exist: within the range of human knowledge they had no beginning, consequently no cause; though they themselves are causes or co-causes of everything that takes place. Experience, therefore, affords no evidences, not even analogies, to justify our extending to the apparently immutable, a generalization grounded only on our observation of the changeable.—[Three Essays on Religion.]

## Abolition of Revealed Religions.

BY HERBERT JUNIUS HARDWICKE, M.D.

THE amount of money that is annually spent in the support of priests and other ministers of the various religious bodies throughout the world is truly appalling. In great Britain and Ireland alone nearly eleven millions of money is expended each year in the support of the clergy, whose sole occupation consists in conducting the religious services of the various churches, and, if they feel so disposed, visiting the sick; their incomes being derived mostly from the overburdened people, who are the dupes of their insinuating subtlety.

How long will this condition of things last? How long will man continue to be oppressed by the arrogance and greed of the church on the one hand, and the tyranny of despotic rulers on the other? How long will darkness and superstition reign, and light and intelligence be stifled? Not one moment longer than the united will of the people allow it to continue. Once let the voice of the people be raised in unison, and their voice will be law. . .

Man is superior to his fellows only so far as his moral worth and intelligence are of a higher order; despotic rulers, hereditary legislators, all superstitious institutions and other organs of slavery being repugnant to the purposes of man's existence, and calculated utterly to demoralize the race, whose members should co-operate with each other, and devise means for the common welfare.

The only way of arriving at anything like a perfectly moral and prosperous condition of the community is by abolishing once for all every so-called revealed religion, and educating the masses, so as to raise them from the condition of abject mental slavery into which they have sunk under the baneful influence of priestcraft, and to teach each one to respect the dignity of his nature, and his moral obligations.

To effect this desirable end it would be necessary that the present mode of conducting religious exercises should undergo a radical modification; and instead of the old mythological doctrines of heaven, hell, the devil, the triune godhead and the incarnation being preached from the pulpit and taught in the cottage, an elevating humanism should be proclaimed, and the natural revelations of the unknown studied and unfolded to the multitude.—[The Popular Faith Unveiled.]