

BLASPHEMY.

MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

TO

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AND THE AUTHOR OF

“CHRIST V. SPIRITUALISM.”

BLASPHEMY:

Who are the Blasphemers? The "Orthodox" Christians, or "Spiritualists?"

Webster defines blasphemy: "1, *An indignity offered to God by words or writing*; 2, *That which derogates from the prerogatives of God.*" John the Divine says that "God is love." Admitting both Webster's and John's definition to be correct, it is difficult to conceive how a greater indignity can be offered to God than in charging him with being addicted to "eternal hate," "wrath," "vindictiveness," "revenge," or any degrading vices or propensities that fallible men are liable to.

Now, *Spiritualists* are often accused of blasphemy, and especially by the Orthodox clericals: let us examine the subject a little, and learn, if we can, who are the blasphemers—*Spiritualists*, or their accusers.

In general, *Spiritualists* hold that John's definition of God is true, and that the great incomprehensible Power that sustains and controls the universes is altogether lovely in his attributes, and has done all things well, and after the exact pattern intended; and that, in spite of man's inability to discern the wisdom and goodness of his plans, everything will eventually work together for the good of his creatures, and insure to all a never-ending progress and developement toward a better and a higher state of being. Holding the fall of Adam, as accepted by the Churches, to be a mere allegory, or myth, they have no belief either in the necessity or the fact of a vicarious atonement, but regard Jesus of Nazareth as a most eminent reformer and enlightener, such as seems intended in the Divine economy shall be raised up, from time to time, to meet the progressive knowledge and wants of humanity. That Jesus received power and inspiration through divinely appointed messengers from higher spheres, to say and do many wonderful things, *Spiritualists* believe; but they hold that these spiritual gifts afford no proof that the physical instrument through which they were exercised was necessarily of especial Divine origin; much less that he should be endowed with the infinite attributes of the Godhead, as is claimed by the Orthodox Churches. This, if admitted to be conclusive testimony, would seem to prove too much for their argument; for it would then follow that all the instruments who have done or now do the seemingly miraculous works that Jesus did, must likewise be endowed with personal attributes of Deity. Moreover, *Spiritualists* hold that Jesus of Nazareth, so far from claiming any especial Divine origin, repeatedly took occasion to disabuse the superstitious and *hero-worship*-inclined followers, to whom he mostly

addressed his beautiful discourses, of any such idea. We find him not only reproving his followers, but rebuking even the devil for tempting him to usurp prerogatives belonging only to God. He also tells his disciples, both when clothed in flesh and when he appeared to them in his spiritual body, that those who truly believe in the gospel he enunciated, should not only be endowed with power to do the *miraculous* works that he himself did, but even *greater* works. And it is a remarkable fact, that church contemners of what is called "modern Spiritualism" might do well to note, that, when the risen Jesus, whom they have Deified, sent forth his *despised* disciples of that day "into all the world, he instructed them with his latest words how they might distinguish those who *believed* aright in the gospel he commissioned them to preach, enumerating certain signs that should "follow them that believe," which, singularly enough, are substantially the same that very generally attend upon the ministry of the *despised* "spirit medium" of *this day*, but very seldom on that of the ordained ministers of the popular churches. The Orthodox ministers of that day charged Jesus of Nazareth and his disciples with being blasphemers, and workers of miracles through the power of the devil, precisely as those of the Orthodox churches in our day charge against the "spirit mediums" who do the works that Jesus declared all should do who *believed* in (or rightly received) him and his gospel. Who, then, are the blasphemers—the "Spiritualists," or the "Orthodox?"

If infinite love is the all-pervading attribute of the God of Jesus Christ and his apostle John, then I again say that nothing more blasphemous can be uttered, than to charge him with being a God of hate and malignancy, after the manner of Calvinistic Orthodoxy—as may be abundantly proved from the written testimony of its very highest authorities. John Calvin, the chief corner-stone and founder of the Presbyterian sect, says,—“Children bring their condemnation with them from their mother’s womb, being liable to punishment, not for the sin of another, but for their own; for, although they have not produced the fruits of their iniquity, they have the seed inclosed in themselves. Nay, their whole nature is, as it were, a seed of sin; therefore, it cannot but be odious to and abominable to God.”

I submit that this one dogma of Calvin, alone entitles the church he founded to lay claim to one of the seven heads of the murderous beast seen by the Revelator, that was destined to pervert and trample upon the gospel of Jesus, all of which were inscribed with the name of "Blasphemy."

Now, hear what the Rev. Jonathan Edwards (the American Calvin,) has to say: "Reprobate infants are vipers of vengeance, which Jehovah will hold over hell in the tongs of his wrath, until they turn and spit venom in his face." And Emmons, an other reverend Calvinist, in his sixteenth published sermon: "The happiness of the elect in heaven will in part consist in witnessing the torments of the damned in hell; and among these, it may be their own children, parents, husbands, wives, and friends on earth. One part of the business of the blessed is to celebrate the doctrine of reprobation. While the decree of reprobation is eternally executing on the vessels of wrath, the smoke of their tor-

ment will be eternally ascending in view of the vessels of mercy ; who instead of taking the part of these miserable objects, will say, *Amen ! Halleluiah ! Praise the Lord !* ”

Up to the present time, the priest and the parson, as they ever have been, are the most deadly foes of human progress ; and while with braggart lies they claim that the advance of civilization among the *superior* Caucasian race, over that of all others, has resulted from their labors, they stand as they have ever stood, a barrier against all attempts to ameliorate our laws or benefit the condition of the poor. It is they who erect and sustain the gallows—it is they who shut the people from libraries on Sunday ! Go, say they, as you see fit, to the “church” or the grog shop for your recreation on the “Lord’s Day,” but to the free library you shall not resort, for that of all institutions is the deadliest foe of ignorance, priestcraft and the church. A thousand criminals may die in prisons, in cellars, or in garrets, unheeded by priests and parsons ; but let one of these be brought to his end on the gallows, and like crows, that flock about a dying sheep, the black-coated gentry gather around the despairing sinner, that they may *spectacle* themselves before the world, and make the real or coined confession of the culprit minister to their own or the church’s glory. But tame indeed, oh, how infinitely tame are all the millions of horrors that the priest has inflicted in secret and in public on mankind, when compared with the ghastly system of everlasting punishment that Edwards and his creedists *founded* (and logically so in some measure) upon that dark and bloody code of Jehovah and the Jews, that Constantine and his council of priests bound in the same volume with its opposite, the Gospel of Jesus, some fifteen centuries ago, and in the plenitude of imperial and priestly power *dubbed*, and forced upon the acceptance of mankind as being in every line and letter the “Word of God.” As in that day, the system of theology then founded upon the Bible, originated through and in the interests of imperial and priestly despotism—so it has continued ever since. And I again repeat that there never has been a code of morals or a system of worship invented or practiced on earth that inculcates precepts, doctrines, and dogmas more debasing and imbruting to humanity (when carried out in full,) or blasphemously derogatory to the Divine Being, and his attributes of *love, mercy, justice, and truth*, than is embodied in the creeds of most of the churches of to-day, and forced upon the acceptance of infantile minds in our Sunday and other Orthodox schools.

How sickening to the heart of enlightened humanity to know that through the teachings and discipline of that blasphemous order of men (who have ever “garnished the sepulchers of the prophets, whom their fathers killed” in other days, and murdered those of their own day), begun with the child at the poor bigoted priest-ridden mother’s breast, the religious heart and mind of Christendom has been so fearfully warped, perverted and emasculated as to surrender its reason and intellect, and bow in blind obedience at the feet of a monstrous image that priests have made in their own likeness, “and exalted,” in their temples and creeds, “above all that is called God,” by *Jesus of Nazareth* as well as by *Spiritualists*.

What should we think of a fallible earthly potentate, who, for dis-

obeying his commands in the matter of eating tempting but forbidden fruit, placed purposely or inadvertently in their way, should condemn not only his children, but his children's children to the severest torture for life he could invent. And what if, repenting of his hasty judgment, the father should, from some fancied and *incomprehensible* necessity, consent to partake—in some little degree—of their torment that they might be relieved, would the act be of a quality to demand excessive praise, think ye? On the contrary, if such a Father was endued with any of the nobler traits of humanity, would not the bestowal of excessive praise, much less Divine honors, upon him because of his having made so small a personal sacrifice for the attainment of so great a good for his children, carry with it under the circumstances, an implied censure galling to his better nature? And might not the eternal sing-song laudation at length acquire a mocking tone in his ear, as if the cringing sycophants would say, "We, your poor helpless slaves and children, always supposed you to be a horribly cruel demon, only acting out your nature when you condemned your poor children to such unspeakable torments; but now that you have relieved them, at the cost of some inconvenience to yourself, we think somewhat better of you, but still fear that you may relapse into your former vindictive nature and serve us all as you did them; and for this, rather than from any sentiment of love, we offer you unceasing homage!" And yet, Orthodox divines would fain have us believe that the bestowal of Divine honors is acceptable to Jesus in heaven, because he consented to suffer a few days' agony on the cross that countless myriads of human beings might be saved from eternal torments infinitely more terrible than any earthly potentate or even priestly inquisitor ever had the ingenuity to invent, or the power to inflict!

From the bottom of my heart and inmost soul, I thank my God that, with all my imperfections, weaknesses and sins, I feel that without an entire change of nature, I could never "enter on my list of friends" the man who, whilst removed from all fear of suffering himself, could look down unmoved, even from the highest heaven, upon the meanest reptile of earth, writhing in Edward's ghastly hell. Nay, more; when it came to be fully apprehended, as is taught by Calvinistic and other Orthodox divines, that the whole of God's great universes of suns and planets might pass away at the rate of only a particle of microscopic dust in cycles of myriads of centuries, multiplied by myriads, and the ineffable torments of the poor creature not have been appreciably diminished in duration—as Edwards, Emmons, and others teach—is the lot of the nearest and dearest earth-relations of the blessed in heaven. When, I say, this horrifying thought should be fully realized, I feel that my better nature would not only reject as a friend, but revolt almost to loathing from any *man, angel, God, or devil*, who would not gladly undergo greater mortal agonies for the redemption of the poor unreasoning creature, than we are taught in churches and Sunday schools to believe mankind must eternally offer divine honors to Jesus of Nazareth, for undergoing to save countless myriads of the human race. To me the thought seems too horrible to entertain without upsetting the citadel of human reflection and reason; and if I believed that such enormi-

ties existed in the providences of God, my prayer would be, to be relieved alike from the horrors of heaven and the pains of hell, and that my soul might go out forever in annihilation.

But it may be said that men are always growing better than their religious creed, and that there are no such horribly awful doctrines taught in our day, as those I have inveighed against. I grant the rule may fairly apply to the majority of "the hearers of the Word"; but I hold that the real "Godly priest" affords an exception to it. "Once a parson, always a parson," is not only a trite, but true saying.

Through testimony from the Spirits, I learn that the *lowest strata* of the lowest spirit sphere, instead of being "paved with infants' skulls," is the place assigned for the early probation of the most wicked men, and that its mosaic is thickly studded with the dark spirits of cruel and bloody tyrants and other murderers, and with those of multitudes of persecuting popes, bishops, inquisitors, and priests; some of whom, tormented by blood-stained consciences, have been gnashing their teeth, in *chains* of spiritual darkness, for hundreds and even thousands of years, without having yet discovered a way, (in the words of Jesus) to "escape the damnation of hell." There, all bigots and persecutors, who have delighted in inflicting pain and death on their fellow creatures have ever gone, and there they will continue to go, as no intelligent reader of the record can fail to perceive that the abominations against which Jesus hurled the fearful "woes" are, one and all, those that most Papal and Orthodox Protestants, prelates, and priests are, as ever, peculiarly inclined to in the present day. Nor can there be a doubt but that, if Jesus was to rise from the dead and attempt to repeat the same words in the Orthodox churches of to-day that he formerly uttered in the Jewish temple, (were it not that *Spiritualists* and Infidels would protect him,) the Orthodox "children of those Orthodox priests that killed the prophets" and Jesus of Nazareth of yore, would seize upon the person of the *seamless-coated* vagabond, and offer him up at Calvary's Mount, or Smithfield's *stake*, a holocaust to the heathen Moloch they have installed in their temples of idol and hero-worship, and blasphemously inscribed with his loved and loving name. It is true that the horrible religious doctrines of Calvin (who, I learn, is yet in darkness,) are not as openly avowed at the "corner of the street" and from the "house tops," or belched forth from the pulpit as they were a few years ago; but this is due rather to the outside pressure of public opinion than to the better culture of the priest. The congregations may have grown wiser and better than their creed, but their parson remains at heart the same. "The *snake* is not killed, but only scotched," and still seeks, in its wily, creeping, stealthy ways, to imbue its deadly poison into the mind and heart of every man, woman, and child it can approach; whether through the press, the confessional, or the Sunday school.

With such awful conceptions of the Deity taught in their infant Sabbath schools, and covertly cultivated and enforced in the pulpit by thousands of "raw-head and bloody bone" ministers and priests, how can we expect the status of morality in the (so-called) Christian nation to be other than what it is—a *shame* and *reproach* even to the heathen.

I trust there are no readers of the foregoing remarks who will accuse me of manifesting an unchristian spirit in the discussion ; but that on the contrary, they will credit me with having striven, as far as I have ability, to imitate Jesus of Nazareth in his considerate tenderness of spirit, when speaking of ordinary criminals and sinners. And, further, should they notice that I have in anywise failed in extending a proper Christ-like severity towards those "serpents and vipers" and other Orthodox "hypocrites, whited sepulchers," and "blind leaders of the blind," &c., that Jesus so often and eloquently thus characterizes, that it will not be attributed to any intention on my part of avoiding imitating the pattern and example that was set by the gentle Nazarene for his followers, in these as well as in all other respects ; but because I am not gifted with his power of language to give my sentiments the full force of expression, that he possessed and applied so infinitely more pungently and effectively than any other denouncers of the ungodly, persecuting, murderous crew of priests and Pharisees, have ever been Divinely, or otherwise inspired to do.

In closing, I flatter myself that I have succeeded in proving, in the judgment of all *unorthodox* and unprejudiced readers, that, by the mere assertion, maintenance, and propagandism of their atrocious dogmas and doctrines, the Orthodox Christians commit more heinous and intense blasphemy against the great God of the universes, (in whose loving embrace—as *Spiritualists* hold—all His creatures repose in unquestionable safety, secure in the consciousness that, in their progress, all things, however dark may be their surroundings, will be made to work for the eternal good of all,) than any man or men, by mere exertion of their organs of speech, though their lives were devoted to profanity, have the power to commit. Addressing his childlike disciples, the spirit through the organism of Jesus said, "It were better that a millstone were hanged about a man's neck, and he drowned in the depths of the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones." And how, in the name of all that is *holy*, let me repeat, can a greater offence be committed against "little children" than to entice or force them into a Sabbath school, and, whilst their minds are plastic, and as easily crooked and twisted to any shape as a young and growing vine, train and teach them to regard their loving Heavenly Father in the light of a brutal monster, who made the first man and woman after so bungling a pattern that they committed, within a few days of their creation, and before they had acquired knowledge or experience sufficient even to know that they were *naked*, a sin so unpardonable in the eyes of their malignant creator, by the mere eating of some tempting fruit that he had seemingly placed in their way for the express purpose of enticing them to disobey him, as to subject not only themselves, but countless myriads of their progeny, to eternal torment in such awful hells as Calvin, Edwards, Faber, and other reverend fathers of the Orthodox churches describe ? How blasphemously insulting too, to the benign attributes of the God that Jesus and the *Spiritualists* trust in, and so lovingly revere, to distort and poison the minds and souls of these little unreasoning children, by teaching them to believe that with the exception of the miserable failure of the plan to save mankind from the

terrible consequences of "the fall" by the universal *drowning* experiment, the great Creator (although, as *Barnes* says, he could, at any time, save the world if he wished to) neglected for centuries even to propose his latest and final method of salvation, to come in the far-off future, through the vicarious atonement of His only (to be) begotten son—a raw-head and bloody-bones experiment that the aforesaid Rev. Dr. Barnes asserts, (and is evident to all) has proven as fallacious and fruitless as all previous ones; and, above all, to instill into the minds of these helpless infants the murderous, malignant, and truly infernal doctrine that, whilst, at the most, a small number of each loving earth-family *only* are to be saved and go to glory in that *dreadful* Calvinistic and Orthodox Kingdom of Heaven, the joy of these few is to be enhanced by witnessing the eternal torments of a majority of those who sucked the same dotting mother's breast, and were dandled on the same loving father's knee as themselves.

In some respects, the quality of vegetables and mental growth seems to be the same. Begin with a vine or even a tree, when it is young, and its stem and branches may be trained in any direction and made to grow in any form. But when it has attained to maturity, it is even less difficult to bend, in almost any direction, the full-grown natural tree or vine, than it is to straighten out that which had been artificially crooked; and the more intricate and unnatural the folds, so much the more difficult to reclaim them. If skilfully intertwined, they will "break" rather than "re-bend" to the position Nature designed them to occupy. So with the human mind. Give it over, in infancy, to the manipulation of the priest—that traditional enemy of God and his prophets, that John saw was to usurp the dominion over the great-hearted Divine truths taught by Jesus of Nazareth, throughout all the nations of the earth, and cover it all over in their countless idolatrous temples, with "names of blasphemy"—I say, give this *fungus* of humanity,—the *priest*—exclusive dominion over the mind of the child, and he can readily, by his manipulations, train it to assume any form of thought or worship that best suits his interests, tastes, or superstitious belief; and the more inconsistent, unreasonable, monstrous, past comprehending, mysterious, and intricate are the doctrines and dogmas he foists upon the impressible material, the more difficult (if not impossible,) will it be for truth to enter and re-assert its authority. In view of this acknowledged and self-evident truism, does it not become the duty of "Spiritualists," and of all liberals and honest-hearted skeptics and "Infidels," to exert themselves to the utmost to save as many of these little "infant brands" from the burning and soul-destroying influence of Orthodox teachings in Sabbath schools, even at the risk of these being subjected to other degrading earth vices and influences more repulsive externally, but not half so injurious to their eternal welfare, as are the blasphemous conceptions of the Deity and other malignant dogmas they imbibe and suck in, as it were, with their mother's milk, in Orthodox Sabbath schools.

ZEPH.