

PRICE 25 CENTS.

North Carolina in the 19th Century.

THE GREAT ECCLESIASTICAL TRIAL

OF

J. WILLIAMS THORNE,

REPRESENTATIVE FROM WARREN COUNTY,

Who was expelled for opinion sake,

BY THE

House of Representatives of North Carolina,

On February 24th, 1875.

FOR SALE BY

J. WILLIAMS THORNE,

Ridgeway, N. C.

Orders for the pamphlet may be sent to Mr. Thorne's address
at Raleigh, N. C., until March 20th, afterwards at
Ridgeway.

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“ THE GREAT ECCLESIASTICAL TRIAL. ”

*The North Carolina House of Representatives expels one
of its members for Heresy.*

“ By their fruits ye shall know them. ”—JESUS.

“ Mark now, how plain a tale shall put you down. ”

SHAKESPEARE.

On the 20th of February, 1875, the House of Representatives of the State of North Carolina resolved itself into a great Ecclesiastical Court for the trial of J. Williams Thorne, one of the members from Warren, on the charge of Infidelity.

A certain pamphlet written by J. Williams Thorne in reply to a lecture delivered by Jos. Barker, comparing Infidels and Christians, was the only evidence offered against him. This evidence was for a long time in the hands of the “ Committee on Privileges and Elections. ” But as the Committee could not agree, they reported the case back to the “ House ” for its judgment and decision. After four stormy and exciting sessions, the floor, lobbies and galleries being crowded with eager listeners, the “ House, ” or rather the Ecclesiastical Court, passed on the 24th of February at midnight, by a vote of 46 to 31, under the pressure of the inexorable previous question, the following resolution of expulsion :

WHEREAS. J. W. Thorne, the member from Warren county, has advocated and promulgated a most blasphemous document, subversive of the principles of the Constitution of North Carolina, and of sound morality; therefore,

Resolved, That the said J. W. Thorne be and he is hereby expelled from a seat on this floor.

The Constitution of North Carolina declares that all persons who shall deny the Being of Almighty God, are disqualified for holding any civil office of trust or profit in the State. This is the only religious test in it. Until the last half hour of the trial, the charge against me was, that I denied the existence of Almighty God. Finding that they could not sustain this charge, and that the House would refuse to expel me on it, they substituted, at the very last moment, the one given in the resolution of expulsion. At the same time they moved the "*previous question*," thereby refusing to grant me the opportunity which I demanded, of defending myself against this new charge. They refused even to postpone the vote until the next day, to be taken at 12 o'clock without debate. So fearful were they that a little delay might cause them to fail in their darling scheme of expelling me.

Ostensibly, I was expelled on account of my religion. But there can be no doubt that the real cause was my radical Republicanism. I have evidence that it was predetermined even before I took my seat. The following paragraph, published in the "*Daily News*," two days before I reached the Capital, is so full of falsehood, prejudice and intense dislike, as to make it evident that the merest shadow of an excuse was all that would be wanting to procure the passage of a resolution of expulsion: "The newly elected Representative in the House from Warren is a carpet-bag civil-righter and miscegenatist. Alas! poor Warren, you once gave us a decent negro representative, and while we thought you could not fall any lower, yet 'you have gone and done it' We had much rather seen Nathan Sledge, York Walker or Louis Parker come than old Thorne."

Surely, it is no wonder they expelled me, when, before I took my seat, their organ, the "*Daily News*," published to the world that any one of the above named persons, convicted of infamous crimes, would have been a representative more to their taste. This is unmistakable proof that pious Democrats, who are eager to preserve "the principles of the Constitution of North Carolina, and of sound morality," would prefer the vilest criminal as a legislator, to a "*civil righter*," who believes that the "*Golden Rule*," is as safe and beneficial in statesmanship as it is in private life. But it appears that I not only believe

in the "*Golden Rule*," as embodied in the "*Civil Rights Bill*," and in Jefferson's immortal declaration of the unalienable equal rights of all men.

But I am also a Miscegenatist! Who told you, Mr. "*News*," that I was a Miscegenatist? Bring forward your witness, and he shall have the fullest and amplest opportunity of proving the charge, before the Superior Court of Warren county. Never, either in theory or practice, has miscegenation had the slightest encouragement from me. The same is almost equally true of the party to which I belong. But can this be said as regards the Democracy? In Warren county I am acquainted with many persons of mixed blood, and I do not know of one who does not trace his lightness of color to Democratic fatherhood. A friend of mine who once lived in the State of Delaware tells a good and true story, illustrating this strong Democratic affinity for colored women. A gentleman who had once been a Democrat, changed to a Republican. He was a candidate for office, and was stumping his district. As usual the Democrats charged him with Miscegenation. In reply he said, "I know of more than two dozen children in my neighborhood of mixed blood, and they all, but one, have Democratic fathers. And of that exceptional one, I myself am the father. I assumed this relationship while I was a Democrat."

There certainly can be no question, that, if in the near or far future of our nation there shall arise any great good from this Anglo African admixture of blood, history will be forced to make her impartial record that almost the whole credit of its accomplishment will be justly due to the Democratic party. But if, as Messrs. Glenn and Foote think, this admixture of blood is destined to destroy the Anglo-Saxon race of this fair and beautiful South land, then surely, should they make all haste to correct their late egregious blunder, and come back to the Republican, the only pure race party on the continent.

Government is not a religious, but a secular necessity. A union of government with religion, says Jefferson, is about the worst possible. Gladstone once wrote a book in favor of the union of Church and State. In this book he undertook to show that a religion was as necessary to a government as it is to an individual. A government

without a religion, he asserted, could not perform its functions justly. But the book was ably reviewed by Macauley, who proved that human life and property were the most secure in those States where there was no established religion. He illustrated this by referring to the States of New England. All history proves, said Rayner in the North Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1835, that a government is always despotic in exact proportion as it is under the control of a church. The only real duty of government as regards religion, is to see that the different sects do not infringe on the rights of one another, nor those of humanity. The most dangerous power in the world is a man, or Church, or State, that conscientiously does wickedly for God's sake. Under this religious delusion, countless millions have suffered death and torture. Nor can the persecuting spirit be ever entirely exorcised from a nation, so long as the Church controls the government, or has even the slightest connection with it. No government has a right to inflict pains, penalties or disabilities on account of religious, any more than for scientific, opinions. That great expounder of law, the immortal Blackstone, has declared that "all persecution for diversity of opinions, however ridiculous and absurd they may be, is contrary to every principle of sound policy and civil freedom." Spinoza, Servetus and Shelley were better men, and would have been more safe as legislators, than such religious bigots as Calvin and Laud. The first were conservators of human happiness and human life. The last destroyed both for the glory of God.

The Democratic religious bigots of the "*House*," not being able to sustain the charge of Atheism, first made against me, have expelled me because I have "advocated and promulgated a most blasphemous doctrine, subversive of the principles of the Constitution of North Carolina and of sound morality." I propose to try these Democratic bigots by that grandly true test and unerring standard of religious faith, laid down by Jesus himself as the only sure guide for his followers. "By their fruits ye shall know them." When I took my seat in the "*House*," I made solemn affirmation that I would support the Constitution of North Carolina and of the United States. They with right hand on the Bible called God to witness that they would do the same. Let us examine their votes

and see how they have kept their oaths. According to the present Constitution of North Carolina I have the most unquestionable right to deny the Divine Authority of the Bible, or make objections to any portion of it. The conclusive proof of this is found in the fact that the framers of the present Constitution, left out all that portion of the religious test in the one immediately preceding it, which disqualified for holding civil office, "all persons who shall deny the truth of the Christian religion, or the divine authority of the Old or New Testament." Yet in the face of all this, they hesitated not to violate their sacred oaths of office, and expel me because I wrote a calm, dispassionate criticism of certain portions of the Bible, to which they cannot and dare not attempt to reply. Not content with this palpable violation of the great organic law of the State, and their own solemn oaths to support it, they passed unconstitutional municipal bills for Raleigh, Newbern and Wilmington of such an anti-republican character, that the old worn out rotten Borough system of Great Britain, now dead and forever passed away, was scarcely more unjust and shameless in its operation. By their municipal gerrymandering they annulled and blotted out in those cities all traces of a republican form of government, and substituted a moneyed oligarchy in its stead. In this way thousands of our colored citizens are as effectually robbed of their political and civil rights as they ever could be, under the rule of the most absolute monarch.

This is the way these religious bigots sustain and show their love for the principles of the Constitution. This is the way they live up to the "Golden Rule." This is the way they keep their solemn oaths of office. In truth the great principles of religious and civil liberty, as guaranteed in the Constitution, the "*Golden Rule*" itself, and the inviolable oath of office, are all as nothing, when in the way of a religious prejudice, or of their own selfish purposes. Like the Pharisees of old they talk much of their religion and of their "*sound morality*." But it is "by their fruits ye shall know them." And the fruits they bring forth are very bitter to the taste of God's weak and long oppressed children. They are indeed practical Atheists. If they really believed in God they would believe in the "*Golden Rule*," and its embodiment, the "*Civil Rights*

Bill. "If a man say, he believes in God, and yet hates and oppresses his weaker brother, he is a liar and the truth is not in him." This is severe language, but history proves it absolutely true of the whole tribe of religious bigots who persecute for opinions sake. And as for those who occupy high places in the Church calling ever in the fervor of their devotion, "Lord, Lord, have we not glorified thy name? Open unto us the door of thy heaven. Let us come into the joy of thy salvation," and yet refuse to lift the heavy hand of oppression from the weak and little ones of his children; shall they not hear these startling words from the great King of kings when he shall "come in the clouds of heaven" to judge the world: "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. Therefore, depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels." These solemn words may sound rather harsh, and the fire of punishment may seem a little hotter than these religious bigots could have anticipated as a reward for their Pharisaical self-righteousness; but it is a judgment of their own choosing, and they cannot object to the inevitable justice of the application to their case. Bating a little of its austerity, it is indeed one of the finest rebukes to hypocritical professors of religion, to be found in the whole Bible. I was expelled from the House of Representatives, not because I denied the existence of a God, (for I gave the most irrefragable proof that I never did,) not because I denied the miraculous conception of Jesus; not because I was not, but because I was a Christian, and was doing my best in a legislative capacity to carry out in practice that great fundamental principal of Christianity, the "Golden Rule." Very many of their acts of legislation go to prove that these bigots in religion have no faith in the "*Golden Rule*," no faith in Christianity, no faith in a just God.

I was arraigned before the "*House*" of Representatives on a charge of Atheism. They tried me on that charge; but they expelled me because I "advocated and promulgated a most blasphemous doctrine, subversive of the principles of the Constitution of North Carolina and of sound morality."

I shall now proceed to prove that the false charge on which these bigoted legislators expelled me, is true as ap-

plied to them. I have already shown who are the subverters of the principles of the Constitution of North Carolina. I will now show in such a manner that he who runs may read, who are the subverters of the "principles of sound morality." I shall arraign these Legislators who have assumed to dictate to others a standard of sound morality, before the civilized world. I shall appeal to that high court to give judgment on the charge against me. I shall call upon these wise censors of morals to bring forward the proof that there is a single word, sentence or thought in the "*Barker*" pamphlet "subversive of the soundest principles of morality."

In the trial before the House my accusers asserted that every word in the Bible from the beginning to the end was absolutely true. Messrs. Staples, Walker and Gudger were all understood to take the ground that he who denied the justice or the goodness of any portion of it, denied the existence of God himself. If God had been represented in the Bible as an immortal fiend, no exception could be taken to such a horribly wicked characterization, for God himself inspired it. But the Koran, the Shaster and other sacred books are also claimed as inspirations from God. How then shall we determine which is the truest and best inspiration? Surely we can only make a wise choice by applying our reason, our judgment and our conscience after a fair and candid consideration of the merits of all. This, it must be admitted, is the only way in which we could make an enlightened choice. And it is also equally certain that after we have made such choice this is the only way in which we can keep it. Those persons who sat in council and determined some books of the Bible to be Canonical and some Apocryphal, had no more right to do so than I have now to reject such portions of the Scriptures as I may deem inconsistent with reason and justice. Luther, indeed, in the exercise of that right of private judgment so dear to his Protestant followers, actually did reject two whole books of the New Testament as uncanonical. It is only then by an appeal to reason and conscience that we can determine what is good and what is evil in the Bible. If it be all good and "*sound morality*," nothing can shake it from its solid foundation. If not, like the house built on the sand, it will be sure to fall. Like all other books, the Bible must

stand on its own merits. A good book is not hurt by criticism.

I have been looking over my "*Barker*" pamphlet to see if I could find wherein it subverted the "principles of *sound morality*," as charged against it by the pious bigots who sat in judgment on its teachings. I took the alleged blasphemous tract in my hand and asked myself seriously and conscientiously what "*principles of sound morality*," are subverted by the "doctrines advocated and promulgated" in its pages, and here is my emphatic answer:

It advocates a total abstinence from all that can intoxicate, and temperance and purity in every act of life. It discourages the exercise of revengeful passion. It is opposed to all offensive wars, and only justifies those waged in defence of life or liberty. It advocates just and equal civil rights for every member of the human family without regard to sex, color or condition. It is in favor of free speech and free religion, and opposes every form of slavery and oppression, whether mental or physical, "that holds control over man." It recommends the establishment of free churches where the different forms of religious faith shall be as freely discussed as any other questions affecting the welfare of the race. It recognizes a God of infinite power and infinite goodness who sustains in harmony an infinitude of worlds, and an incomprehensible universe of universes. It recognizes the love and worship of this Supreme Being as our highest ideal of truth and good. It defends him against some false and blasphemous characterizations and vile imputations which we find in the Bible as inconsistent with and derogatory to his attributes of infinite power, wisdom and goodness. It gives historical proof, that, in proportion as the christian churches have endorsed these infamous and blasphemous characterizations of the Deity, they have endorsed and supported all forms of oppression and tyranny, as well as a merciless persecution for opinion's sake. It defends him against the degrading imputation that like a weak and vain earthly monarch, his happiness depends on the ceaseless flattery and adulation of his subjects. It defends him against the blasphemous charge of keeping up a fiery hell of intensest torment, not to reform his children who have disobeyed him, but to gratify forever and forevermore his unsatisfied revenge. In the matter of Jephthah's

vow, it does not call him a shylock, but defends him against the infamous charge that he ever made such a wicked shylock bargain with Jephthah or any one else. It defends him against the charge that he ever sanctified the selling or giving to strangers for food the flesh of such animals as died of themselves. It defends him against the charge that he gave his sanction to the following unspeakable enormity, as related in the 31st chapter of the book of Numbers: "Now, therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women children that have not known man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves." It defends him against the charge that the cruel and bloody-minded David was a man after his own heart. It denies that he gave his sanction to David's wicked prayer against his enemies in the 109th Psalm. It defends him against the scandalous charge that he ever sanctioned such "*sound morality*" as concubinage and Polygamy. It defends him against the charge of sanctioning such "*sound morality*" as that related of Lot and his daughters, just after they were saved from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. It defends him against the charge of blasting a fig tree, merely because "the time of figs was not yet." It defends him against the blasphemous charge of committing, through the agency of the Holy Ghost, a kind of mystical fornication with the Virgin Mary. It defends him against the charge that he struck Ananias and Sapphira dead for lying, and then, for all time to come, permitted other and more infamous liars to ply their vocation undisturbed.

I might give many more examples of a like character; but these are amply sufficient to show that I have not "advocated and promulgated a blasphemous doctrine, subversive of the principles of the Constitution of North Carolina and of sound morality." But that the House of Representatives of North Carolina have shown by their action against me that they endorse and believe all the false and wicked characterizations of the ever-living and just God, found in the Bible; and are, therefore, the real blasphemers—the real subverters of the principles of the Constitution and of sound morality.

Therefore, I arraign them before the bar of the civil-

ized world, and in the sacred cause of truth, justice, freedom and a pure and undefiled worship of the ever living and Infinite God, I ask and calmly await its sure judgment against them.

J. WILLIAMS THORNE.

The following is an exact copy of the "*Barker*" pamphlet. This was the only evidence brought against me.

COMPARING INFIDELS AND CHRISTIANS.

REPLY TO JOS. BARKER'S LECTURE.

By J. Williams Thorne.

Early in January last, I had the pleasure of hearing one of the three lectures, delivered in Coatesville, by the Rev. Joseph Barker. The lecture was, on the whole, eloquent and able. He said many good and true things, along with some others that seemed to reflect, unjustly, on the Liberals or Radicals in religion. At the close of the lecture, I proposed to Mr. Barker that we should discuss before the people of Coatesville, the great question involving the fate of Christianity, as a religion, and the "*Divine Authority of the Bible*."

This, Mr. Barker declined; alleging, that a hemorrhage of blood, with which he had, of late, been afflicted, rendered it unsafe for him to engage in an exciting discussion. Besides, since his conversion to the religion of Christianity, his life had become too valuable to the world to run such risk of losing it. I then proposed that we should talk the matter over, before a few friends, either in Mr. Windle's or Mr. Roberts' parlor. He was entirely willing, he said, to hear any thing I might have to say, but would make no reply.

This showed Mr. Barker's disinclination to debate, in so strong a light, that I did not feel at liberty to press the matter further.

Still, hoping Mr. Barker might be induced, on further consideration, to accept the challenge, I authorized Mr. Thos. Windle, in such case, to arrange the time and place of meeting to suit Mr. Barker and his friends. For more than two weeks after, while in Chester County, I held myself in readiness to attend to the discussion at the shortest notice. Even after I had gone South, Mr. Windle was authorized to arrange for me to come North, and meet Mr. Barker, on any fair and equal basis of discussion.

Just before I left for the South, I was informed that Mr. Barker would lecture in Market Hall, Coatesville, on the 4th of February, when, after the close of the *lecture*, a short time would be given to me or any other person, to ask questions or state objections. Of course, I could not be expected to remain in Chester County until February 4th, to the neglect of important business, merely to meet so very partial and slight an acceptance of my challenge.

But even this partial and slight acceptance would have been gladly met, had an opportunity to do so, been presented, during my stay in Chester County. And if, instead of the lecture on February 4th, there had been the offer of a full and free discussion, I should have been more than happy to set aside important business, and remain until that time.

Under these circumstances, I was not a little surprised, when, two weeks after the lecture on the 4th of February, I received an advertisement, announcing that Mr. Barker would lecture on the evening of that day, in Market Hall, Coatesville; and that, "*having been challenged by J. Williams Thorne, he would devote three-fourths of an hour with him or others for discussion.*"

For reasons already stated, it is well known in Coatesville, that I would not, as the advertisement implied, be present on the evening of the 4th of February at Mr. Barker's lecture. It is true, I did challenge Mr. Barker, but not to a "*three-fourths of an hour discussion,*" to come off at the close of his lecture. Still, had I been in Chester County, even so slight and partial an opportunity would have been embraced with the greatest alacrity. Surely, neither Mr. Barker, nor the "*Young Men's Christian Association*" who advertised the lecture, could, for a moment dream that such an advertisement of my name was a fair acceptance of my challenge.

As I do not expect, and can scarcely hope now, that Mr. Barker will give me a fair opportunity to meet him before the people. I propose to reply, through your paper, to the sweeping charge, made in his lecture in Coatesville, on the 6th of January, that as a class, those who denied the Divine authority of the Bible, were inferior in morals to those who thus accepted it.

It was barely possible, he said, that a man might be strictly moral, and yet be an Infidel. Still, it was a com-

bination of qualities not often met with. In all his long association with the Radicals, he had found but few truly good men. He had lived among them in Salem, Ohio, where they made a great outcry for liberty, but he soon found, that it was not only their own liberty that they wanted, but his as well. Then in deep disgust, he left them, and sought for himself a home in the wilds of Nebraska. There, surrounded by wild scenes and wild men, under the free open sky of heaven, he once more, found leisure and inclination to hold communion with the great God of the universe, as revealed in the Bible. There, amid sickness and death-bed suffering, for which he then could offer no consolation, he caught the first clear glimpse of his fallen state. There he first began to doubt his own doubting. Then he told us how with easy and joyous steps, he soon found himself back again into the bosom of God's Church. And now he intends to devote the remaining years of his life to the service of that Church in order that he may make some small amends for the great injury he did it, while under the dark shadow of Infidelity.

Such in substance, was Mr. Barker's statement, as I apprehended it. If I have in any wise, done him injustice, it will give me great pleasure to make such reparation as truth and justice demand.

"By their fruits ye shall know them," was one of the best of the many good sayings of Jesus. I propose to try Mr. Barker, the Christian Church and the Bible itself by this standard. And first; as to Mr. Barker; Has the world been made better by his restoration to the Christian Church? Is he now doing more good to the "*little*" and oppressed "*ones*" of humanity, than he did while a Liberal? According to his own account, immediately, on his conversion to Christianity, he returned to England and there, as editor of a newspaper, put himself in opposition to the leading Liberals in politics and religion. This he did, at the same time, declining to meet Mr. Bradlaugh, their acknowledged leader in public discussion. As a Liberal he suffered persecution in England for his advocacy of a Republican form of government and his maintenance of the equal rights of all men. But when he joined the Church of England, he no longer favored the formation of a Republic. He no longer mingled with the common people and sympathized with them in their efforts to establish

the equal rights of all. In England the Church and State are one. Mr. Barker, therefore, in selecting the Church of England as his refuge from Infidelity, became morally responsible for the wrongs and oppressions of the Government. As a Liberal he sought to reform the Government. As a Christian he sustains its oppressive aristocracy. When in this country, while a Liberal, he attended Anti-slavery Conventions and made eloquent speeches against slavery. When he became a Christian he ceased to oppose slavery, and was an earnest advocate of the independence of the slave-holding Confederacy.

In regard to the moral character of liberals; as a class they compare favorably with the members of any Evangelical Church I have ever known. In the neighborhood of Longwood, Chester Co., Pa., where liberals most abound and give character to the community, there is no where a more temperate, a more moral and orderly people. The Hicksite Quakers and Unitarians, who are, strictly speaking, Socinian, and do not believe in the divinity of Jesus, or that he is any more a part of the God-head, than any other equally wise and good man, have a world-wide fame for temperance, honesty, and a philanthropy that includes the whole human race. The poor and weak have ever found in them a heart-warm sympathy, and a friendly helping hand. In New England, the coming of the Evangelical Puritan was death to the Indian. In Pennsylvania, the coming of the half Infidel Quaker, was a blessed coming of peace and joy, never to be forgotten. Who were the leaders in the great Antislavery and Temperance movements? Surely, not the Evangelical Christian Churches. They did their utmost to strangle these great reforms in their infancy. It was Thomas Herttell, a professed Infidel of New York, who, in 1818, wrote and published the first "*tetotal*" temperance tract. The great antislavery leaders were forced to come out of the Evangelical Churches, in order to make effective war against Slavery. They found all the Evangelical Churches in close alliance with the Slave-holders, and in opposition to emancipation. Forty years ago, not a clergyman in Boston could be found, willing to speak from his pulpit against slavery. Not one would lend his pulpit to Wm. Lloyd Garrison, for the purpose of protesting against the great national evil. It was in an "*Infidel Hall*" that the Gospel of Antislavery was

first preached to the people of Boston. All over the land, the Evangelical Churches, either violently opposed, or refused to give any countenance to the Antislavery movement. Had the Evangelical Churches preached human justice and human morals, instead of the mystical superstition of the Trinity and Resurrection, there would have been, neither occasion nor need of the great Reform associations. The whole civilized world would, long ago, have united against the mighty Trinity of human evils, Intemperance, War and Slavery, and swept them out of existence.

The Evangelical Churches have always stood in the way of just and equal liberty. They have never invoked the favor of the Goddess, except for their own selfish purposes. Not one of them has ever originated, or made a first movement in any great moral reform, where its own immediate, selfish ends were not the primary cause. It was to accomplish ends, in themselves, not wholly good, that caused Martin Luther and Henry VIII to break away from the Romish Church. They had personal as well as moral reasons for their high appreciation of "*the right of private judgment*." The Evangelical Puritans of New England maintained "*the right of private judgment*" for themselves, but not for their brother heretics. They wanted liberty, but they wanted it all for themselves." *The Young Men's Christian Association* of New York, have, lately, thrown George Francis Train into Ludlow street jail, for publishing obscene extracts from the Bible, which they are sending forth among the people, and to the heathen of every land as the holiest and best of all books. They have done the same to Victoria C. Woodbull for daring to publish, not in a slandering spirit, but for the purification of a gross social atmosphere, an account of some obscene and immoral doings, which, they themselves, sunk as they are, away down, deep in the bottomless pit of hypocritical piety, have never raised a finger to suppress or reform.

The pious churchman may say or do almost anything that may please him; and it shall be no harm. Like a quotation from the Bible, however gross or evil it may seem, it must be good. Like the king of a great realm, however much he may play the tyrant, he can never do wrong. Henry Ward Beecher is more popular in his Church than ever, though the heavy charges preferred

against him remain unanswered. Vice-President Colfax is invited to address "*The Young Men's Christian Association*" in Philadelphia. He comes, and is received with all the demonstrations of joy and approval, that the pious young men know how to give, although covered all over with the Credit Mobilier scandal.

It is a rare sight to see an Infidel in jail, except when placed there by religious bigotry, on account of his opinion. Persons convicted of murder and other high crimes, are almost always found to be firm believers in the Bible. Statistics prove that there is less crime and immorality among the half Infidel, Hicksite Quakers and Unitarians than is to be found in an equal number of Evangelical Church members. When New England was almost wholly Evangelical, she persecuted heretics and believed in rum and slavery. Now she is largely Unitarian. As she became less and less Evangelical, she became more and more just, and more and more humane in her sympathies.

It was in the "*Dark Ages*," when Infidels were few, that Evangelical Orthodoxy reigned supreme over Europe. It was an Infidel heresy, the right of private judgment, that dispelled the thick clouds of moral and mental darkness, and began the great "*Reformation*" which can only end with the destruction "of all that for evil holds control over the minds of men."

As the Christian Church rose in power and influence, civilization declined. And now civilization is advancing in exact proportion as the Church loses its power and influence among men.

When any great national wrong is about to be abolished, and the people refuse to give it further protection, it is sure to fly to the Church as its last refuge place, and like the evil-doer of old, die there, holding fast to the horns of the altar. Whether in science, morals, statesmanship or religion, the Church has always been the last to give up an old error; the last to accept a new truth. So hath history written her impartial and unimpeachable verdict.

The Church has no positive influence against injustice or wrong. It never, knowingly, does any good thing that is unpopular. It is a mere weather vane, showing which way the popular wind blows.

During the late civil war; in the South, it was for Jefferson Davis. In the North, it was for Abraham Lincoln.

In the "*Revolutionary War*," it was for the British on one side of the Atlantic, and for the Americans on the other. In 1766, on the 18th of March, a bill for the repeal of the "*Stamp Act*" was before the "*House of Lords*." A large majority of the Lords temporal were in favor of its repeal; but all the Lords spiritual—the whole "*Bench of Bishops*" were in favor of *forcing the Americans to submit with fire and sword*." We owe it to such liberals as Franklin, Paine and Jefferson, that the United States' Constitution is wholly Humanitarian in its scope of operation, and without any religious test. Even at this late day it is the darling hope of some Evangelical bigots to have God or Jesus recognized in the great organic law of the nation.

The Evangelical Church has almost always, defended a popular wrong and opposed an unpopular right. This course is reversed by the unbelieving Infidel or Liberal. He is almost sure to oppose the popular wrong and defend the unpopular right. During the eighteenth century, while Infidels under the head of Voltaire, Diderote and D. Alembert were thundering against slavery and appression, every where, Evangelical bigots, were defending Slavery, and, even the "*Slave Trade*," from the Bible. In Massachusetts and Connecticut, Evangelical Puritans were setting in beautiful juxta position on their Statute books, "*Slave Laws*" and "*Blue Laws*," side by side. "It was only," says Hildreth, "the heretics of Providence who were willing to do the simple justice of giving equal liberty to white and black mankind." In the settlement of all the Southern Colonies, we find Evangelical religion harmoniously blending itself with Slavery. The celebrated defender of the Christian religion, John Locke, in his schedule of laws for South Carolina, inserted a provision in favor of slavery. Religion afterwards taught the people of South Carolina to fine a man for working his slaves on the Sabbath; but it altogether failed to teach him that slavery is a sin. In Georgia, slavery was at first prohibited, but afterwards introduced, under pretence of propagating the Gospel. Whitfield and Habersham, though as men, they were opposed to slavery; yet, as a means of spreading the Gospel, and as Christians they favored its introduction. The pious John Newton, the intimate friend of the poet Cowper, did not disdain to go out in a slave ship, engaged

in the slave trade, with Bibles and Hymn books to evangelize the heathen in Africa.

But even in Mahomedan countries, the people are represented as more honest and truthful, and far less avaricious than Christians. They are also more temperate than Christians, as wine and strong drink are strictly forbidden by the Mohammedan religion. Unlike the followers of Jesus, they never permitted any one to be held as a slave, who accepted the faith of Mahomet. Candid men will be surprised to learn that American slavery established by Evangelical Christian men, was of a more severe and rigid character than that of Mohammedan countries. In proof of this, Gen. Eaton, Consul of the United States at Tunis, in 1799, writes, that "Truth and justice demand from me the confession, that Christian slaves among the barbarians of Africa, are treated with more humanity than the African slaves among the Christians of civilized America." The tree is known by its fruit." We have arraigned the great Christian Church and tried it by its own standard. The fruit has been found neither pleasant nor wholesome. Very much of it has been proved to be destructive of human life and human happiness. In comparison with Mohammedism, in many essential points, it is impossible to give it the preference. Even among the heathen, in many instances, it has carried destruction instead of conservation. The fruit of the Bible is the Christian Church itself. Not, as we have shown, very good for humanity, but such as we might expect from so evil a tree. There is little in the history of the Jewish nation that a good man could wish to imitate. As a people they were proud, selfish, avarious, bigoted and to the last degree, barbarous and cruel. Nations so unfortunate as to border on them, or to lie in their path-way of conquest, had no right of life, liberty, or property, which they felt bound to respect. They waged an exterminating merciless war, against all the nations occupying land which they wished to possess. Not content with their own power to destroy, they claimed an alliance with the great God of the Universe, and that he had chosen them to assist him in doing such horrible wickedness.

It will be only necessary to touch, in the lightest manner, a few of the more prominent points in the history of this most peculiar people, so strangely chosen of the Lord,

to show, that while they must be to all the coming ages, an instructive warning, they have left no bright, or even safe example for mankind to follow.

Look at Abraham, so full of fanatic phrensy, that he was ready to illustrate a strong, blind, unreasoning faith in his God, by the commission of one of the greatest of crimes,—the sacrificial murder of his only son. It is enough to say, that no father can enact so absurd and wicked a farce now, and keep outside of prison or asylum walls. Read the story of Lot and his daughters after the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah; and then imagine, what must have been the moral condition of those destroyed, if it was worse than that of those who were saved. Jephthah's vow is a story of fanatical and tragic horror, scarcely equalled in the annals of mankind. The cruel bargain between God and Jephthah, was alike degrading and disgraceful to both parties engaged in it. Not for the empire of the world, should Jephthah have made such a rash vow. Not for the Empire of Heaven should God have permitted its fulfilment. Had He been a merciful God, He might, as in the case of Abraham, have substituted a ram or some other unimportant animal to be the first to meet the victorious Jephthah; or he might have generously waived the bloody sacrifice altogether, and accepted, in its stead, an offering of fruit; but in the selfish spirit of a Shylock, He determined to be satisfied with nothing less than the life blood of the only child—the loved—the beautiful—the accomplished daughter of the great Judge of Israel.

The Jews were a "*Holy people*," too holy to eat anything that died of itself; but they were not too holy to "give it unto the stranger that was within their gates, that he might eat it;" nor yet too holy to "sell it unto an alien" for the same purpose. What would we do, or what should be done with "*holy men*" who would dare to practice such morals now? "David was a man after God's own heart." Yet all, or nearly all the great features of his life exhibit him as a man of cruelty and blood. He committed adultery with the wife of Uriah, and then with the coolest and cruelest treachery betrayed unto death the unsuspecting husband, his long tried valiant chieftain—his most faithful friend. But the Lord was displeased with this conduct of David; and in order to properly punish him for it, he only, in his infinite justice, deemed it

necessary to avenge the murder of Uriah by destroying the offspring of David's adulterous amour—his first born of the beautiful Bethsheba. This is the Bible-way of discouraging the meanest and most detestable form of murder that ever disgraced human nature. David's punishment was not capital, but vicarious in its operation. David was a great king. He was, perhaps a little vain of his power. So he wanted to know the number of his men. In a little time he had them all counted—not a very grievous offence, one would suppose; but his God was even more angry with him than when he murdered Uriah. He gave him the choice of three evils; very terrible and destructive evils, to his innocent people; but not one of which affected him directly or personally. Without the least apparent concern or regard for the welfare of his unoffending people, he chose that which he supposed would be the least disagreeable or unjurious to himself. Then the Lord, in the unimpeachable "*justice of his judgment*," in order to punish David for numbering his men, slew seventy thousand of the innocent men numbered. This is, indeed, a fine moral example to set before the rulers of modern times. With such a shining light to follow, it is no wonder we have so many Christian tyrants to rule over the nations.

Still, there can be no doubt that David was a man after God's own heart; for he was just as merciless as the great Jewish God whom he loved and served. How did he treat his prisoners of war? Here is what the Bible says: "He put them under saws and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick kiln. And thus he did unto all the cities of the children of Ammon." This looks as if it might be the original type or model of the Romish Church inquisition. Perhaps the modes of torture in the Spanish branch of that institution were slight improvements on those of David. Still it is very certain that he has not been much surpassed in inventive cruelty, by the most ingenious Inquisition. One can scarcely help imagining how David would have enjoyed the luxury of torturing heretics, could he have lived and been King, Pope or Grand Inquisitor, in the days of that holy Institute for converting heretics by torture; over which the great Mother Church presided so long and so well. Surely, if in this great Mother

Church, he did not occupy the Papal Chair, he could not have been less than Grand Inquisitor. With the help of modern science joined to his great natural talents, he could have had no compeer in the use of ingenious devices of cruelty.

The "*Bible*" tells us that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Solomon were the best and wisest of men. Yet they kept both wives and concubines. Solomon, so renowned for his wisdom, had seven hundred of the former and three hundred of the latter. Modern christians who are ambitious to follow the example of the wise Solomon, only do so in the taking of concubines; not in the taking of many wives. While, on the other hand, the Mormon Saints follow their great example in the taking of many wives, but no concubines. Henry Ward Beecher is charged by Victoria C. Woodhull, with imitating, in a small way, this great exemplar of wisdom. But the "*Young Men's Christian Association*" of New York repel the charge, and affect to consider it as exceedingly disgraceful, if true. But what are we coming to? If they had Solomon himself in New York, he would fare no better at their hands than Victoria C. Woodhull or Brigham Young. It is evident they entirely ignore the great point in the case, that if it were right for wise and good men to have concubines in Palestine, it cannot be wrong for wise and good men, who love and admire David and Solomon, to have them in New York. But then, we must remember that the wisdom of Solomon was very different from the wisdom of the "*Young Men's Christian Association*" of New York. They have become wiser than Solomon—wiser than even the Bible itself. They are more refined and delicate in their morals than either Solomon or the Bible. It is true, they continue to circulate the Bible in its pure and simple state, among the distant heathen and other ignorant people, but only a very few choice portions of it do they now deem suitable to quote or read from the pulpit. They not only refuse to use or give public utterance to those parts of the Bible which they do not like; but they get angry and invoke the vengeance of the law on those unsanctified people who feel it their duty to do so. But we shall be told that we are not to look in the Old, but in the New Testament for a perfect example and guide. Jesus was indeed a great reformer. He was the

heretic or infidel of his time. He was to the Jews what Luther was to the Roman Catholic world. Like Luther, he abolished some useless forms and ceremonies, but he did nothing in favor of education—nothing that would help on the civilization of the world. All around him were the evils of Slavery and Intemperance, but he took no notice of them, and bore no direct testimony against them. His business on earth, seemed to be chiefly, to save the souls of men from eternal damnation. He had little care or concern for their bodies. It did not matter much, if men did suffer, in this life, from poverty, oppression or slavery. The suffering of the body was the surest means of saving the soul—our ideas of moral rectitude, will not justify some things which he did. It is no wonder that the Gergesene "*stock growers*" wanted him to leave their country, after he had permitted the cast-out devils to go into, and destroy their swine.

Then, we are told that Jesus came to a fig tree; and "finding no fruit thereon; as the time of figs was not yet;" he immediately cursed and blasted it. Surely, the owner of the fig tree, however he might fear the author of such needless destruction, would not be very favorably impressed with his moral character; nor could we blame him much, if he had desired his early departure.

"Take no thought for the morrow, of what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, or where withal ye shall be clothed," if fully, or even partially carried out, would make one great "*poor house*" of the world. The few who do carry it out, are either supported by their friends or find their way into some charitable institution. Such a precept is at war with that care and industry, on which the world's civilization is founded. The doctrine taught by Jesus, that men may live a whole life of wickedness, and yet be saved at the last hour, no one can fail to see, must operate as an encouragement to crime. Like the indulgences and pardonings of the Romish Church, it is a sort of charity-way, by which bad men can get into Heaven as readily as good ones. Who can tell how many thousands have been lured into the leading of immoral lives, by this eleventh hour doctrine? To console the murderer; as he stands on the gallows-scaffold, the Minister tells him, that through the redeeming blood of Jesus his purified soul will ascend to Heaven, and there with the blessed Redeemer live for-

ever more, amid scenes of bliss and glory, such as "eye hath not seen," nor the human heart imagined. This is the kind of consolation that Mr. Barker, as an infidel, could not give to the dying sinner, good men do not need such consolidation. They have nothing to fear. It is encouraging crime, thus to console bad ones.

Having shown that the fruits of Christianity have been generally evil, and that its influence has tended rather to darken than enlighten the world; I will now endeavor to show that we have no right to expect better fruits from this Christian tree than those we have obtained. I shall proceed to show that both fruit and tree are, essentially, of the same evil character.

The Christian system of Theology teaches the worship of God, as other systems of Theology teach the worship of *idols*—for the purpose of deprecating his vengeance. It is a selfish system, designed for the glory of God and humility of man. God is represented as an omnipotent despot, who created millions of human beings for no other purpose, but, that he might drink in their flattery and homage forever. Or, if they withheld this servile adoration they had the alternative of eternal damnation—an eternity of misery, from which they would gladly escape into utter annihilation; but which, "*in his infinite mercy,*" he denies them. It must, however, be confessed, that the favored few—the elect of his grace, who in return for their salvation, are doomed forever more, to stand before His throne and sing songs of glorification and worship, have scarcely a better time of it. They certainly deserve our warmest sympathy. The labor of Sisyphus, rolling up the hill, his ever returning stone, was but pleasant pastime, in comparison.

Even, admitting the Heaven of Christian Theology, to be in itself, desirable, it must, in many supposable cases, be contrary to any decent human nature. Can Heaven be Heaven to that parent who knows that his children are suffering the intensest torments of an everlasting hell? Before we could be happy, surrounded by such monstrous and appalling circumstances, it would be necessary to suppress all the best affections of our nature. We must become demons—utterly selfish, without a thought of any one's happiness but our own. The God of Christian Theology is not presented to us, in a loveable and attractive

form. We worship him through fear of punishment—as the Indian worships the devil,—not for love, but for fear of the injury he may do us, if we do not. Under the name of Providence, we are continually charging God with all manner of evil visitations, without ever suspecting, that we are, in the least degree damaging his reputation. The great unavoidable evils of life, are all of the Lord. Plague, Shipwreck, Famine and Frost-blight, are all the result of his will and power. We know that he could prevent them if he would; but we do not like, even to hint that it is his duty to do so, lest our impeachment of his wisdom might be considered impertinent, and call down further vengeance on our heads. We refuse to look into the nature of evils for their remedies. But make ourselves easy with the consoling assurance that God, in his infinite wisdom and mercy can never do wrong.

But with the exception of, now and then, a crowned head, wielding vast and despotic power, we are not so charitable toward our fellow man. Were he to inflict on us such evil, there would, surely, be for him, no worship. Scarcely, on the gallows, would there be a sufficient expiation for such crime. We would exterminate him as an enemy to the race. An act that is bad in a man can not be good in a God. If a parent had unlimited power and were to suffer his children to perish in war with each other; or if he permitted them to die for want of food, we would justly hold him accountable for the commission of a great crime against nature. But when God suffers countless millions of his children to be destroyed, and countless other millions, to become miserable, we only tell him, in a flattering, fawning way, how just and merciful he is, with the hope that in future, he will thus be persuaded to do better for us.

Jesus is said to be the “*meditator*” between us and God. We are told that he is constantly interceding with God for our salvation. Yet he resists, even the earnest entreaty of his “*beloved son*,” to exert his power in our favor and save us from the devil. It is true, he condescends to save a very few, but only for his Son’s sake. He would not save a single soul, if his own individual pleasure were alone consulted. The few he saves, he saves not out of kindness to them, but only to please his Son. For his own part, he would rather seen them all suffering the tortures of eternal

fire, in that hell which he has prepared for them and the devil. Even Jesus, when he came into the world, ostensibly to save sinners, was very sparing of his saving power. He forgave sins and cast out devils, only in a few instances. But, if, as we are told, he came expressly to save the world, why did he not cast the devil out at once? Why did he not convert the world into that virtuous and blissful Paradise, which God at first designed it? Why did he not convert those unbelieving Jews, who, thronging around him at the Cross, asked so eagerly for his crucifixion? Surely, the moral influence of such conversion, could not have been less than that afterward, exerted by the conversion of that "*chief of sinners*," "Saul of Tarsus." Jesus taught meekness and forgiveness of injuries on earth, where his enemies had the power in their own hands; but in that unknown future state of existence, beyond this, our earthly life, where he assumed to have all the power of omnipotence, he threatened them with the vengeance of everlasting punishment.

He waives judgment in the present life, but waits with cool malignity for that terrible retribution with which he intends to visit them hereafter. Man's present happiness is almost entirely ignored. The more we suffer here, the more certain will we be of a joyous eternity of life in the world to come. We reverse the laws of Nature. We look upon the ills of life as blessings in disguise. Even life itself becomes an evil—an obstruction in the way to heaven. Death appears a blessing, and long life our greatest misfortune—it makes us wait too long for heaven. "We mourn not for the dead, but for the living." We suppress reason and nature, but it is all for the glory of God. This is the great and all important consideration, selfish as it is. His followers soon catch the same selfish spirit. They do no good for the love of it, or because it makes human life more happy; but merely in order that they may be saved from hell. Good deeds are not enjoined upon men because of their justice and inherent loveliness, but because they will purchase salvation. Our present physical welfare is nothing. The salvation of the soul everything—the whole purpose of life.

With such a theology as this it is no wonder that religious zealots will burn the body in order to save the soul. It is no wonder that Christian rulers are so careless of the

physical welfare of their people ; believing as their religion teaches, that the poorer they are in this world's wealth the more sure will be their inheritance of the joys of heaven. The pious despot feels himself at ease ; his oppressed people are all going to heaven by that surest of all ways—poverty and suffering. He need not concern himself for them. As it is almost impossible for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, he may, very properly turn his sympathies toward those who are enjoying the good things of this life—the wealthy and the powerful—who can scarcely hope for the joys of heaven.

We spend time in absurd forms of worship, which ought to be devoted to mental and physical education. We build churches wherein men's minds become darkened and troubled about the necessarily unknown future. We should use them for better purposes—the investigation and discussion of our relations with the present living world around us. Let us make the present life good with good works, and there need be no fear for the future.

In the expression of these views I do not mean to be understood as in favor of the destruction or the suppression of all devotional feelings ; but only to indicate a more rational direction and use of them. The best we can do is to worship our highest ideal of truth and good ; still striving with unceasing effort in the great life movement, to make it higher and higher.

All that we can know or conceive of the grand, the good and the beautiful in the wide universe of nature, will ever claim our warmest love, and excite our tenderest adoration. That we are naturally devotional, is no good reason why we should devote ourselves to the worship of an unworthy, ignorant and wicked God. Let us cease to do so. Let us no longer choose the God of our worship blindly ; but only in the full sun-light blaze of reason and experience.

When the great Christian Church has sufficient confidence in its own principles to establish a free platform ; and when it not only does not fear, but invites the fullest and freest discussion of those principles on that free platform ; then, loosed from the bonds of a false, despotic religion, it will become a source of light and knowledge that cannot fail to bless the world, as it has never yet been blessed. It would, indeed, be well for the world, if the

Christian Church were thus free, instead of being as now, the great Bastile of the human mind; the greatest extinguisher of reason,—the mightiest engine of darkness that the spirit of superstition has ever invented for the humiliation of man.

J. WILLIAMS THORNE.

NOTE.—The foregoing article was intended for publication in one or more papers of Chester county, but owing to its length it was deemed advisable to issue it in pamphlet form.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

*Raleigh, Feb. 4th, 1875.**Mr. Moring, Chairman of the Committee on Privileges and
and Elections :—*

DEAR SIR:—I herewith present you with a circular, containing my latest public declaration of religious faith.

As the only religious test in the Constitution of North Carolina is, that no person shall hold civil office, who shall deny the being of Almighty God. And as I do solemnly aver that I never made, and do not now make such a denial, may I not reasonably hope that this will be entirely satisfactory to your Committee, and, that I shall thus be saved the trouble of confirming it by a thousand witnesses in a distant State.

Yours truly,

J. WILLIAMS THORNE.

In my defence, I submitted the following campaign circular. It will explain itself :

CITIENS OF WARREN COUNTY READ AND JUDGE
FOR YOURSELVES.

RIDGEWAY, N. C., May 27th, 1874.

J. F. Hawkins, Esq.,

DEAR SIR—I have just learned from Mr. Isaac F. Alston, that the letter from the Hon. Washington Townsend, Representative in Congress of the Chester and Delaware District, Pa., is now in the hands of a friend in the River District. This renders it impossible to get it in time for publication in the present circular.

I regret its omission; but regret it less, as it is known to be only a full corroboration, in every important particular, of the letter herewith given, from the Hon. E. W. Baily, representing Chester county in the Pennsylvania Legislature.

Please publish this note in the place of the "Townsend letter."

Yours truly,

J. WILLIAMS THORNE.

The following letter was written in reply to on "Editorial" notice of the "*Warrenton Gazette*." As it was refused admission into the columns of that paper, I take this

method of placing it before the people of Warren county. "Let justice be done and the heavens will not fall," though the Devil may, and ought to. In the language of the Apostle Paul—Prove all things and hold fast to that which is good.

BRODIE PLACE, May 12th, 1874.

Henry A. Foote, Esq.,

DEAR SIR—When I first came to Warren county, about five years ago, I was informed by Mr. Henry B. Hunter, that he had full knowledge of all the people of any note or importance in it, and that there were not two of them all who did not hate falsehood worse than the pestilence. In all that fine culture and easy winning manner which mark and distinguish the perfect Southern gentleman, there were, if possible, still fewer exceptions. I was, of course, delighted to hear so good an account of the people with whom I had elected to make my home. I was enraptured with visions of a New Arcadia, brighter than the fabled one of old. I saw the dawn of another "Golden Age" of innocence. It seemed that the "Ideal Republic" of Plato was about to be made real, and that Astræa would again come down from her bright place in the starry Heavens, and bless us with an ever during reign of justice and peace.

During all the five years I have been a citizen of Warren county, I have seen and heard nothing that could change the good opinion of its people. I have been warmly welcomed by both Democrats and Republicans. It has not, hitherto been necessary that I should agree, in a party sense, with my Democratic fellow citizens in order to secure their kindest consideration and respect. Under these circumstances, I confess, I was not a little surprised when I read in the "*Warrenton Gazette*" your unfriendly and unjust notice of my remarks before the Republican Convention of the 6th inst. Of course, as a true gentleman and lover of truth and fair play, you will be glad to have the opportunity of making the "*amende honorable*" by promptly publishing a correction of such of your statements as can be irrefragably proved to be without the least shadow of foundation. It was no doubt, through accident and a want of proper information that you wrote as you did in regard to me. You, surely, did not wish to sully the fair fame of a Warrenton gentleman by being ill-natured, unmannerly or unjust.

You seem to object to my standing as a candidate for the office of State Senator. Why, you ask, did I not get office in Chester county, Pa., where I was raised? I can only answer that I have never asked or sought for office either here

or there. I simply consent to the wishes of those who know me best, that I should stand, (not run) for the office of State Senator. Should I be elected to so responsible and honorable an office, it shall be my steadfast endeavor to represent justly and impartially the whole people of Warren county without regard to race, color or condition. If I have the least knowledge of the constitution of my own mind I shall set my face as a flint against all forms of fraud and corruption, come from whatever source they may.

To be the trusted agent of society in matters of high import, has always been deemed an honorable mark of confidence, and the man who betrays it, is justly considered the worst of traitors. In a true Republic, offices will not be greedily sought after, to subserve selfish purposes; but conscientiously, as duties of citizenship.

In regard to "Civil rights," I said it was absurd to refuse colored students admission to our white schools and colleges when they already honorably occupy seats in our State and National halls of Legislation. In West Point, Oberlin, Lincoln University and many other distinguished institutions of learning, the color of the student is no bar to his admission.

As to social rights they belong to the wide realms of taste, and are entirely outside of the law. It is not riding in the same carriage, sitting in the same Legislative hall or eating at the same table that makes social equality, any more than living in the same town or county makes social equals of all the inhabitants. Some of the most refined and highly educated people in the country, are colored. We cannot afford to let the prejudice of color be a bar to social intercourse, any more than we can afford to permit the color of the hair to do the same thing. In England and on the Continent color of itself has nothing to do with an entrance into the best society. Some year or more ago, Gladstone, then Prime Minister of Great Britain, did equal honor to himself and country by inviting to breakfast with him, the "*Colored Hampton Minstrels*." This, I suppose, you would say was "*swallowing the negro*," but it does not seem to have disturbed Mr. Gladstone's social position in the least. The truth is, if we fail or refuse to appreciate merit because found under a dark skin, it does and should lower our social position in the eyes of all good people.

You charge me with saying that "I think a man a fool who believes in a God." No such sentiment ever passed my lips. On the contrary, no one can resist the evidence everywhere around, in the wide Universe, of an irresistible

power—an unknown and unknowable mysterious Infinite. You may call it God, or by any other name you please, but it is the quick spirit that sustains and gives life to all things. The same idea is so happily expressed in a passage of Pope's Essay on Man that I cannot forbear transcribing it.

“All are but parts of one stupendous whole
Whose body Nature is and God the soul:
That changed through all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth as in the etherial frame;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glow in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full as perfect in a hair as heart;
As full as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns:
To him, no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects and equals all.”

But I am further charged “with believing that man is a spontaneous production of the earth.” I believe in no such nonsense. But I do believe in the theory proposed by Mr. Darwin, of the origin of the species. This theory has been adopted by such master minds as Lyell, Wallace, Huxley, and indeed by all the great scientists of the age. It is as well proved and unquestionable as Kepler's three great laws of the solar system. No one, who has at all kept pace with the progress of science can now doubt it.

You report Mr. Alfred Christmas as “asking me a few questions.” The whole audience will bear me witness that he put to me no questions of any kind on that day. Some one else questioned me in regard to my belief in a God. This I answered fully, and then retired quietly from the platform; there being no point of order taken, nor was there any confusion at that time. As to the reported statement of Mr. Alfred Christmas, that while he lived with me, a period of eighteen months, I invariably weighed out his rations one pound short, it is as “baseless as the fabric of a dream.” During the whole five years I have lived in Warren county, I have neither weighed out rations to him nor any one else. From the very outset that business was delegated to one or the other of my two sons. They, I believe, have performed the service justly, and to the entire satisfaction of all those concerned. Of this there is the most overwhelming testimony of the colored people themselves. The fact that Shocco township is almost unanimously in favor of my nomination for the office of State Senator, does not look as if I had been robbing the people of their rations.

In my address at Warrenton I alluded to the corrupting influence of alcoholic liquors, and advocated a total abstinence from all that can intoxicate. Its use, even as a medicine, or as a sacrament, was severely censured. Just as I was about leaving the platform, Mr. Hyman informed the audience that if I did not drink wine, I both made and sold it. This required explanation, which I promptly gave. It is true that I take the pure and unfermented juice of the scuppernong grape, and after subjecting it to the purifying process of a boiling heat, it is, while still at its highest temperature, put into bottles and sealed hermetically. In this state it will keep sweet like sealed fruit, for an indefinite period of time. It is used in Chester county, Pa., by the most *ultra* temperance people, for medicinal and sacramental purposes. It is as utterly destitute of Alcohol as sealed fruit or the uncrushed grape itself. Could it be everywhere substituted for alcoholic wines, there would be achieved a great and blessed revolution in the health and morals of the world.

One word in regard to the story about the bull. Let me advise you when next you want an amusing story, to look into "Gulliver's Travels," "Baron Munchausen," or the "Arabian Night's Entertainment." You will find plenty of them far more entertaining and just as true.

In closing, allow me to congratulate you on the great pleasure which, as a high minded Warrenton gentleman, I am sure you will feel, in having an opportunity to make honorable amends for your unjust and unfriendly notice of me in your last paper.

Yours truly,

J. WILLIAMS THORNE.

P. S. I have just been informed by the editor of the *Warrenton Gazette*, that Mr. Alfred Christmas will publish in the next number of that paper that I was in the habit of playing cards with him on Sunday and winning back the money which I had paid him on Saturday evening. I do not know how he can have the unblushing effrontery to make such a statement. I never played a game of cards in my life, either with him or with any one else. I am utterly ignorant of all the forms of card playing, and have no desire to be made wiser in that respect. I despise gambling in every shape it can assume. Betting, lotteries and stock gambling have ever had my most intense and steadfast abhorrence. After the vice of drunkenness there is scarcely any other that has exerted such an evil influence on society as gambling.

In conclusion, permit to say that I never could have condescended to notice these vile slanders, were it not that they might come to the ears of some, who having little or no knowledge of me, might be misled by them. In my own neighborhood where I am well known, they can hurt none but the utterer.

J. WILLIAMS THORNE.

The following letters from the Hon Washington Townsend and the Hon. E. W. Baily; the first representing the Chester and Delaware district in the lower House of Congress; the other representing Chester county in the Pennsylvania Legislature, will, I presume, be sufficient vouchers for my character in my native county:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Harrisburg, April 28th, 1874.

Mason Williams,

DEAR SIR—Allow me a stranger to you to say a word in behalf of my friend and co-laborer in the cause of Republican principles, for the last twenty-five years, J. Williams Thorne, who, I understand, has consented to allow his name to be used as a candidate for State Senator in the old North State.

I have a personal knowledge of his early and continued efforts in behalf of the equal rights of *all men*, and must say that no truer man lived in the county of Chester, Pa., than J. Williams Thorne, and the freedman of the South who fails to give him his undivided support is unworthy the name of Republican. His election to the position will be hailed by his numerous friends in the North as a recognition of sterling worth, and, my word for it, no colored man will ever have cause to regret his action the day he insists in elevating him to the office of State Senator.

Yours truly,

E. W. BAILY.

Devotion, when enlightened by reason and guided by conscience, is one of the most refining and civilizing elements of human character. Not so, when under the influence of superstition and darkened by ignorance. It then becomes one of the mightiest foes to human happiness, one of the greatest hindrances in the way of man's progress, both in science and in morals, that the world has ever known. If we are just and kind to our fellow creatures, the God of our worship will be just and kind also. If we

believe in the "Golden Rule," we will worship a God whose character illustrates it.

It has been charged by my political opponents, that I do not believe in a God, and that the devotional or religious element is wanting in my character. The following poems, written many years ago, will show better than anything I could now say, how much foundation there is for such a charge.

J. WILLIAMS THORNE.

A Paraphrase of a Sermon by Jesse Kersey, an eminent Minister of the Society of Friends.

Our Heavenly Father, kindly wise,
Has spread before our sight,
The loveliness of earth and skies,
To claim our praise aright—

That while our eyes with rapture see
Each good and pleasant thing,
Our tender gratitude may be
An unfeigned offering.

The blossomed shrubs that charm the grove—
The streamlets flowing there,
And song of wild birds as they rove
In the soft vernal air—

Were they not given to endear our hearts
To him who reigns above?
Whose ever bountious hand imparts
Such unasked gifts of love.

Is not the earth with plenty filled?
Do not the fields overflow,
And almost without culture yield,
Whate're the clime can grow?

And shall our stubborn hearts refuse
The grateful song to raise?
And while each pleasant gift we use
Neglect the giver's praise?

Do not the gales that round us breathe
Fresh fragrance as they rove—
The flowers that careless blow beneath,
And the blue Heavens above—

The rivers as they ceaseless run,
The restless Ocean's flow—
And the still burning quenchless sun,
Their Heavenly Author show?

Do not the stars that shine so bright,
 In the deep wilds of space,
 Seem as the Maker's guiding light,
 To our last resting place?

And while we in these orbs of fire,
 His holy hand descry,
 Do they not tender hopes inspire,
 Of immortality?

Then let us praise him and adore,
 In early youth's fresh bloom—
 Nor cease till life's pulse beat no more,
 And the last summons come.

Devotion's fires so purely bright,
 Shall cheer our lives along—
 "And He who was our morning light,
 Shall be our evening song."

J. WILLIAMS THORNE.

THE VENERABLE DEAD.

Manibus date lilia plenis,
 Purpureos spargam flores—VIRGIL.

Give lillies with full hands:
 Let us scatter purple flowers.

If there be aught deriving birth,
 Not of the lowly things of earth,
 It is that consecrated zeal
 With which the pilgrim heart will kneel,
 And bless the long forsaken sod,
 Where once its holy idol trod;
 Or, where beneath the green turf lies,
 The sainted or the greatly wise,
 Will bow in homage at that shrine,
 And worship as a thing divine.

When mingling with our kindred clay,
 Some dearest one has passed away,
 It wilt a tender joy impart,
 Half-solacing the grief-worn heart
 With its own deep devotion's glow;
 Oft' times in pilgrimage to go
 Where "dust to dust" beneath the shade
 By drooping elm and willow made,
 The worship'd idol form is laid
 Upon love's altar there to lay
 What may our kind remembrance say;
 Though in such season of the year,
 Our footsteps be not wanting there,

Yet, chiefly in the Spring's sweet time,
When wild flowers brighten all the clime,
With lillies and the wild trees' bloom,
We'll consecrate the lonely tomb.

How thrills the heart, as all alone
We stand by the sepulchral stone,
Which tells the philosophic fame
Of Newton's, Bacon's mighty name;
Or, that which bears to future hour;
The record of a Milton's power,
In wild imaginings to stray
Where never muse had led the way;
Or Shakspeare's more than magic skill,
To sway the passions at his will;
We idolize the genious flame,
That gave them everlasting fame,
And venerate whate'er we know,
Their touch made sacred long ago—
Kiss tearfully the pillar stone,
That tells those master spirits flown;
And if it be in the Spring's bright hour,
Scatter the fragrant lilly flower.

And should we chance to linger by
Where once they trod, and now they lie;
Those conquerers of olden time,
Or, in the Greek or Roman clime,
We'll yield the slender tribute due,
And while the purple flowers we strew,
Mingle our tears of sorrow too,
That such high energy of soul,
Attained not to its proper goal,
To love and bless all human kind,
And in return like blessing find.

But let the greatly good receive
All that the human heart can give
Of veneration's warmest glow,
Though all the token we bestow
May be with full hands on their tomb
To scatter the wild roses bloom.

J. W. THORNE.

"THE SLEEP OF DEATH."

Consanguineus Lethi, Sopor.—VIRGIL.

After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.—SHAKSPEARE.

Let us look on death calmly and wisely—
Not with unmanly fears. 'Tis a sweet sleep
That all, or soon or late, must slumber in.

I lay me down beneath the flowers,
 A blue sky bending o'er me,
 Regretting not life's finished hours,
 Nor aught of bliss they bore me.

The summer winds, will they not bear
 Their sunny light clouds on?
 And trees their flowers and verdure wear,
 As they have ever done?

Sweet harmonies of life and love
 Still charm the earth and air?
 As since the light with darkness strove,
 They have done everywhere.

The rivers, restless as they go
 By cliff and wooded hill;
 As in time past shall they not flow
 In power and beauty still?

O'er me still spread the heavens sublime,
 Around the mighty deep—
 With slumberers of all by-gone time,
 Shall I not sweetly sleep?

J. WILLIAMS THORNE.

In 1844 the Lyceum Association, of Ercildoun, Chester county, Pa., was expelled from the public school-house, where it had been accustomed to hold its meetings, on account of its liberal religious views. In 1845 the people built a new hall, "to caste, to sect, to color, unconfined." At the dedication on the 1st of August, that year, the following dedicatory poem was read. The reader will readily see the appropriateness of its publication just now.

DEDICATION OF THE PEOPLE'S HALL AT ERCILDOUN.

BY J. W. THORNE.

In the wide universe of Nature's works,
 In all that we behold around, above,
 We read a living language, not like that
 Ephemeral thing, the creature of a day,
 By man so called, but as the universe
 Enduringly immortal—a language
 That has ever been, and ever more must be,
 The one unchanging oracle to man,
 From its eternal fane there ever comes,
 In unambiguous tones—"Be free! Be free!"
 It comes on the wild winds that sweep the sky
 In the dark winter hours. In the free airs
 That in the summer morn kiss the free flowers,
 In all that mingled harmony of sounds,
 That winds and waters make on every shore,
 All over the green earth. And the free voice,
 That makes a muse of every living thing,

That walks the earth or flutters in the sky,
 And the light cluds that in the summer eve,
 Linger so sweetly in the suns bright rays,
 Tell in their hues of beauty, man be free!
 The same sweet voice is whispered from the stars,
 As all unthralled, they make eternal sheen
 In the dim sky of night, the mountain heights
 That reared amid the clouds with lightning voice,
 Hold converse with the genius of the storm,
 And the wild restless ocean roll, tell back
 In their sublimity the same free tones,
 From the free universe a voice comes forth —
 Let man be free! The people heard that voice,
 And builded this free hall. No pompous dome,
 Like some which men have reared to idol gods,
 Its unassuming walls were builded up.
 With no sublimer aim than that of man,
 It hath no creed, nor rules by penal laws,
 But as the o'erarching temple of the sky,
 'Tis free to all the brotherhood of man.
 All fetterless her limbs, truth wages here
 Against her foes what war so'er she will,
 And error too is free, too weak to move,
 Much less to bear a chain where truth is free,
 If we look into the past and present world,
 Strangely commingled scenes of joy and woe,
 Or grieve, or gladden the beholding eye,
 Men do not live in peace and mutual love,
 The tender smile of innocence and joy,
 In human faces is not always seen,
 The breezes do not uniformly bear
 The breath of blooming health upon their wings
 The human form looks not sublimely forth,
 Graceful, erect and stately in its mein.
 The lingering life decay—intemperance brings
 Has made it but the mockery of man;
 And death's dark impress on the cheek of youth
 Dims the bright roses Nature planted there,
 The grave even above the grave victorious seems,
 Plateas, Marathons and Waterloo's,
 Are hallowed by the blood which they have drank.
 The most successful murderers of their race
 Are worshipped as its idols, while the poor,
 Houseless, hunger tempted ones, whose utmost skill
 Can compass but the murders of a few,
 Are murdered ignominiously in turn,
 The poor oppressed one's sigh is ever breathed
 On every fragrant breath, that makes so sweet,
 The summer evening sky, and sorrow's tears
 Are mingled with the dew drops of the morn;
 Gemming the same sweet flowers, even friendship's smile
 Is oftentimes but a courtly robe that hides
 From public gaze the dark deceit beneath,
 The glittering bribe hypocrisy holds out,
 To lure to ruin those who trust its sheen,

Like to these flowers, that gorgeous blow themselves
 In the pure air, the better to conceal
 The poisonous honey they secrete within.
 Oh! these are evils; and these could not be,
 Did man more clearly read in Nature's book
 Her never swerving laws that govern all
 In harmony with beauty and with bliss,
 But slavery is a cloud that comes between
 And blots the book of Nature from our view,
 Till the sweet language of the universe
 Is as a stranger tongue—chief source of ill,
 For o'er the mind its darkening shade it flings,
 Dimming its truthward fires. The starlit sky
 Looks ever lovingly on the charmed soul
 And covers it with beauty, but no voice
 Of answering love arises to that sky.
 That all might more and more familiar grow
 With that instructive page—the open book
 Of univertal nature, this free hall
 Was reared with the warm wish and youthful hope
 That Truth's unfettered power might soon dispel
 The slavery clouds that come before our eyes,
 Eclipsing the pure light that ever more
 Goes sweetly forth from nature's holy fane.
 But there are other halls, the same free sky
 Looks lovingly upon them as on this,
 And the free airs that flutter in that sky,
 In the same free-toned voice commune with them,
 And holy men they say assemble oft—
 Within their walls to worship a holy God.
 Why was this builded here? Call up the dead,
 Those martyred ones from out their grass grown graves,
 All over the green earth, whose blood was shed
 For daring to be free. Oh! bid them tell.
 The living dead why was this builded here?
 May we not warmly hope that yet these walls
 In no far future hour, will echo back
 To the free universe its own free voice,
 In one sweet union strain, one joyous song,
 Of all mankind—the world—the world is free!

TUESDAY, 3½ P. M., February 9th, 1875.

The Committee on Privileges and Elections met for the investigation of the charge against J. Williams Thorne.

A pamphlet marked A, offered as evidence and admitted as true by Thorne.

Mr. Thorne offered himself as a witness and made his affirmation as follows: (refusing to uplift his hand.)

He offers a circular addressed to citizens of Warren Co., (marked B,) as embodying his views as to the existence of God.

I do not deny the existence of a God, but acknowledge it.

I belong to the Society of "*Progressive Friends*," am trustee of their Church property, and I hold their religious views.

Question by one of the Committee. Do you believe in the Bible entire, as the revelation of God? Answer. I do not believe in it entire, but I do so largely. Question by Chairman, Do you believe in the God of the Bible? Answer. I believe in a Supreme, self-existent God, who is doubtless the God mentioned in the Bible, but I do not believe in many of the characteristics ascribed to him. (Question by Mr. Normont,) Did you ever deny the existence of a God? Answer. If I ever have, directly or by implication, I hereby solemnly repudiate such sentiment. Affirmed and subscribed.

J. WILLIAMS THORNE.

Annie Pusey, witness for J. Williams Thorpe, affirms as follows: I have known J. Williams Thorne for thirty years or more. Have lived in his family most of the time. Have never heard him deny the existence of a God. Have heard him say that he believed in a Supreme Ruler of the Universe. He has belonged to the Society of Progressive Friends for more than twenty years, which is a religious society.

ANNIE PUSEY.

Lizzie Walton affirmed as follows: Have known J. Williams Thorne, intimately for more than a year past. By reputation, all my life. Have never heard him deny the existence of a Supreme Being—but have heard him assert it. He belongs to the Society of Progressive Friends, which is a religious society, and is a trustee of the property of said society.

L. T. WALTON.

B. H. Lippincott, introduced by J. Williams Thorne, affirms and says: I have known J. Williams Thorne nine or ten years. Have never heard him deny the existence of a God. Have heard him assert his belief in the existence of a God. He is a member of the Society of Progressive Friends,

B. H. LIPPINCOTT.

Mr. Thorne re-called. Question—Do you believe in a state of future rewards and punishments? Answer. As I understand it, I do. That is, punishment always follows crime, either here or hereafter. Question, Do you believe

in Almighty God? Answer. I do as firmly as I believe in my own existence or that of the Universe.

J. WILLIAMS THORNE.

The Committee on Privileges and Elections to whom was referred House Bill 116, requiring this Committee to enquire into the right of J. Williams Thorne, of Warren County, to a seat in this House have taken such testimony as they could get, and report the same to the House, and ask to be discharged from the further consideration of the matter.

MORING, *Chairman*

On Tuesday, Feb. 23d, at 12 o'clock, I addressed the House in my defence, as follows :

MR. SPEAKER:—I feel a delicacy in addressing this House in my own behalf. Still, as St. Paul said on a somewhat similar occasion, I thank you for the opportunity. I do not know whether, like St. Paul, I shall pass the ordeal of trial successfully, but I think I can say, that, like St. Paul, I have the advantage in my defence, of having a just cause not difficult to defend. "'Tis only in the gods, we are told, to grant success, but to deserve it is a greater merit than success itself." Lord Coke once said that he who is his own Attorney has a fool for his client. That proposition may, as a general rule, be true. But in my case the proof is so clear, that I am not, and never was an Atheist, that I think I can safely run the risk of being my own attorney. Overwhelmed and surrounded as I am, by my political opponents, I feel a little as Daniel may be supposed to have felt, when cast into the den of lions. But, as in the case of Daniel, trusting in the justice of my cause, I have no fear that the magnanimous lions will either bite or tear me. Indeed, dropping the figure, I do not know that I ought to use the word magnanimous. Standing, as I do, before my judges, the members of this House, with the most absolute proof that I never denied the existence of a God, I ask only for your justice.

Mr. Speaker, I am fifty-eight years old. I was born a member of the Society of Friends. I now belong to the most liberal of the three divisions of that Society—the "*Progressive Friends*." I presented to Mr. Moring, Chairman of your Committee, a letter from Isaac Mendenhall, a prominent member of the Society, affirming to

these facts before a Magistrate in Hamorton, Chester County, Pa.

I have also, thirteen letters from prominent clergymen and laymen in Eastern Pennsylvania, proving that in my native State I never bore the reputation of being an Atheist. I could, if necessary, corroborate this testimony by ten thousand witnesses from my native county of Chester. In regard to the "*Barker*" pamphlet, read before the House on last Saturday, it not only does not deny the existence of a God, but in several places expressly recognises him. But the question has been raised here, in regard to what kind of a God the Constitution of North Carolina requires me not to deny. It has been asserted on this floor, that the God of the Constitution can be no other than the God of the Bible. But the Bible itself has no standard idea of God. Indeed, the God of the Bible is presented in its pages in almost infinite varieties of character. These variations of the God-idea, extend from Anthropomorphism all the way to Pantheism. This is equally true of the different christian sects. They have as many different ideas of God as we find in the Bible. How then shall we be able to determine which of the many Bible characterizations of God is the one recognised in the Constitution of North Carolina? The truth is, the framers of the Constitution had no reference whatever, to any of the Bible characterizations of God, or they would not have left out that portion of the religious test in the old Constitution which requires a belief in the divine authority of both the Old and New Testament. The state of the case seems to be this: In the present Constitution we cannot deny the Being of Almighty God, without disqualification for holding civil office; but we may deny any or all of the characterizations of Him, as found in the Bible, without such disqualification. In the old Constitution, Jews were excluded from holding civil office, because they denied the divine authority of the New Testament. And the Constitution in force from 1776 until 1835, excluded Catholics from holding civil office because they did not believe in the Protestant religion. We may see in this how the public mind has gradually advanced in liberality, until the religious test is at last narrowed down to one single point, a belief in the Being of Almighty God.

It was owing to the labors of those great statesmen

Macon, Gaston, Bryan and Rayner, chiefly, that Catholic disability was swept from the Constitution of 1835. It was the darling hope and wish of those enlightened men that every one of these disgraceful, inquisitorial religious tests should, as soon as may be, disappear from that sacred instrument. It cannot be, and I will not believe, that a State, once so fruitful in the growth of free minded men, is barren of them now. Those suns of enlightened statesmanship have set; but it is in the eternal progress of things that other suns shall arise as bright as they, and dispel the last vestige of superstitious darkness from our political sky.

All the churches, Evangelical and Liberal, differ widely in their characterization of God. All differ as to the teachings and true meaning of various portions of the Bible. The God of the Calvinistic Presbyterian differs as much from the God of the Universalist as from the God of Mohammed. How then shall we determine which of the various characterizations is in accordance with the God of the Constitution? If we attempt the stupendous task of defining the idea of God as conceived by all the various religious faiths, we shall have to institute a great Inquisitorial Court for every General Assembly, to sit and give judgment on the religious qualification of its members. But this is absurd, and would lead to a worse state of things, a worse condition of religious despotism than that which made Galileo and Buffon deny the truth of their great discoveries in science.

The Constitution does not require me to define my idea of God. It simply says I shall not deny his existence. The Hindoo worshipper of bishnu, the North American Indian who believes in the Great Spirit, and the Mahomedan and Jew who believe in one only God and deny the divinity of Jesus, could all, in accordance with the spirit and letter of the Constitution, hold office in this State. There were many instances in the history of the settlement of this country in which the wild Indian worshipper of the Great Spirit showed a nicer sense of justice than the highly civilized believer in the whole Bible. In proof of this, I cannot forbear reciting a splendid specimen of Indian eloquence as related by Lord Erskine: "Who is it," said the jealous lord of the Western forest, "encroached upon by the restless foot of English adventure; who is it that

causes this river to rise in the high mountains and to empty itself again in the ocean? Who is it that causes to blow the loud winds of Winter and calms them again in Summer? The same Being who gave to you a habitation on the other side of the great waters and gave ours to us, and by this title we will defend it." Wm. Penn, in his settlement of Pennsylvania, applied the Golden Rule in his dealings with the Indians, and in return, found those simple worshippers of the Great Spirit more just and kind than the civilized persecuting believers in the whole Bible, who had driven him and his Friends into the wilderness.

This continent has never given birth to a statesman who has done so much for the establishment of civil and religious liberty as Thomas Jefferson. It was through his influence more than that of any other man that there is no religious test in the Constitution of the United States. He did not forget his native State, but is the author of "an act for establishing Religious Freedom," passed in the Assembly of Virginia in the beginning of the year 1786. I hope before the close of this trial to have it read to the *House*. It is one of the best and most irrefragable arguments ever produced in favor of the most entire mental and religious freedom. It deserves and will stand side by side in immortality with his immortal Declaration of Independence. He wanted no other epitaph on his tomb except the simple statement that he was the author of those two great charters of human liberty.

When the *Barker* pamphlet was read on Saturday, it was denounced by members of this House as a most infamous production. I have only to say in reply that I am an earnest seeker after truth, and stand ready and willing to be convinced of the falsehood and infamy of any of its statements. I do not cling to error for the love of it; but will be glad to have the opportunity to discuss the merits of the offensive pamphlet at any suitable time and place. In the language of the great Milton—"Let Truth and Falsehood grapple. Whoever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter." Between the old and the new, the past and the imminent future, just struggling for existence, there ever has been and ever must be a ceaseless contest.

"New occasions teach new duties,
Time makes ancient good uncouth,
He must upward still and onward,
Who would keep abreast of Truth."

It is well for human nature that it is so. But the struggle should be a kindly one, not persecuting and deadly. If what I have said in the Barker pamphlet in regard to the influence of christianity in the dark ages be offensive to sensitive christian ears, allow me to say, that the view I have taken of that dark period of human history is sustained by Hallam in his history of the Middle Ages, by Gibbon in his Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, and especially by Buckle, in his history of Civilization.

I might occupy your precious time much longer, but I will not now. I am willing to rest my case here, hoping to have an opportunity to reply when the argument against me is concluded.

On Tuesday evening, at 7½ o'clock, the House again met, sitting as an Ecclesiastical Court on my case.

I offered the first clause of the thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, as a declaration of belief in God which I was willing to accept as my own:

"There is but one living and true God; everlasting, without body, parts or passions; of infinite power, wisdom and goodness; the maker of all things visible and invisible."

The Clerk having read this, I addressed the House as follows:

MR. SPEAKER:—I do not know that I can make a more explicit statement of my belief in God than the one just read by the Clerk. The greatest theologians have told us that God is incomprehensible. I shall not, therefore, be expected to define more closely the undefinable. "I am that I am," is a simple but sublime expression of the incomprehensible God. Like unto this, and expressing the same mystic incomprehensibility of the God-idea, is the inscription on the temple of Isis: "I am that which was, which is and ever will be. My vail has never been raised." We might as well attempt to define infinitude of space and infinitude of time, as to attempt to fix the idea of an infinite God. Whenever we do attempt to define him, we are sure to degrade him by mingling with his infinitude of power the weaknesses and passions of human nature. All the religious sects have done this, more or less; and then persecuted one another unto death on account of their own antagonistic human characterizations. Look at the

Lambeth articles, predestinating some to everlasting misery and others to eternal happiness, without regard to any merit or demerit, or power in either to alter their destiny. It is because the Evangelical Churches teach, for the most part, an unreasonable faith in unreasonable dogmas, that they have so little practical moral influence over the minds of men. The "Barker" pamphlet was written to arouse the churches to the necessity of preaching a more humanitarian religion.

At this point I was interrupted by the question: Do you believe in the immortality of the soul?

In answer I will say, that I do not deny, and never have denied, the soul's immortality; but, on the other hand, I am not absolutely sure of it. The wisest and best of men have had their doubts in regard to the unknown future of the soul. I am willing to hope for its immortality. In the old Testament it is not a recognized doctrine, except, perhaps, in the Book of Job. The philosopher, Plato, believed in it.

There are about six or eight millions of spiritualists who say they can and will, in a short time, demonstrate the existence of disembodied souls. I shall be glad to see and make their acquaintance.

I was then asked: Do you believe in a future state of rewards and punishments? I believe that punishment always follows crime, both here and hereafter. In whatever phase of existence we may find ourselves, we cannot escape moral responsibility. Under all circumstances good brings happiness and evil misery.

The next question was by Mr. Walker: "Where is Hell?" I answer that I really do not know; and not knowing myself, I looked into Buck's Theological Dictionary to see if he could tell me; but I found he did not know. So gentlemen, you are at liberty to locate the disagreeable thing in any place, you may judge most convenient to have it. Milton says, the "Devil bears Hell within and round about him." I suppose all other wicked personages or spiritual entities do the same. If it be true that the Kingdom of Heaven is within you, unless ye be reprobates, it must be equally true that the Kingdom of Hell is in those of an opposite character.

Here, the colloquial debated ended.

MR. SPEAKER:—I have but a few words more to say, when with the utmost confidence in the justice of my judges, I will rest my case in their hands. I know you will agree with me that the Great God of the Universe needs no defence from you or from me. The strength of our weak and puny hands would be as nothing when weighed against an infinitude of power. Surely Omnipotence has not delegated his weak creature man to assist him in punishing his enemies. Surely God has no attribute that will justify an interference of any of his children with the conscience or religion of his brother. In the words of a great poet:—

“Let not this weak, unknowing hand
Presume thy bolts to throw,
Nor deal damnation around the land,
On each I judge thy foe.”

Said the great Jefferson:—“Error may be safely tolerated if truth is left free to combat it.” Indeed it is only where Truth is tied hand and foot, that error reigns. Even in that fettered condition she often gets the better of a lie. For all history vindicates Bryant’s immortal words:—

“Truth crushed to earth will rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers ;
But Error wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies amid her worshippers.”

Thanking you, gentlemen, for your patient attention, I submit myself with confidence to your just judgment.

On Wednesday evening, Feb. 24th, at 7½ o’clock, the great Ecclesiastical Court again assembled.

By the advice of my friends, I abstained from making any speech in my defence that evening. Before the trial closed, however, I was satisfied that it would have been better for me to have spoken in my defence. For in the language of the *News* reporter, several young baristers made furious attacks on the unbeliever.” Two or three times I interrupted them, Mr. Staples having stated that he who denied any portion of the Bible necessarily denied the existence of God. I called on him to answer if he meant to say that the Jews and Martin Luther were unbelievers in God? The first denying the whole New Testament, and the second two books of it.

While on the floor I took occasion to say that there was no relation whatever between a belief in God and a belief

in the Bible. All the world believed in a God. Not a forth of them in the Bible. In illustration I recited the first and last stanzas of Pope's Universal prayer.

Father of all, in every age,
In every clime adored;
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove or Lord,

* * * *

To Thee whose Temple is all space,
Whose Altars, Earth, Seas, Skies,
One chorus let all beings raise,
All Nature's Incense rise.

This, I insisted, was the Universal God-Idea, recognized by all nations and all religions of the Earth.

In the course of the debate, Mr. Walker, in his earnest and excited speech against me, fell without mercy, in the little formula of my belief in God, offered to the "*House*," the night before. After he had thoroughly committed himself, I interrupted him with the information that he was attacking the first clause of the first of the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England.

Do you mean, I asked, to advocate the expulsion of members of the Church of England from seats on this floor?

Such was the religious excitement against me, that night, that I do not think the recantation of the wicked opinions of the odious pamphlet, nor yet the joining of an evangelical church, would have saved me. I never before felt so livingly the priceless value of the great example of those martyred ones of bygone times, whose blood was shed for daring to be free. I realized, as never before, that it was their firmness in resisting religious despotism, even unto bonds and death, that achieved for us so much of mental freedom, as made it only a seat in the "*House of Representatives*," and not my life that was at stake.

The following paragraph in regard to me and my pamphlet, taken from the "*Daily News*," the leading Democratic paper in Raleigh, will show that during the memorable week of the great Ecclesiastical Court sessions, the spirit of persecution ran so high that nothing but the law prevented the lighting up, in Raleigh, of such fires as were once lighted up in Smithfield:

"IN DEMAND.—The demand for Thorne's pamphlets exceeds even that of hot cakes for breakfast. 'Where

can I get one of those pamphlets?' is the question propounded to us from one end of Fayetteville street to the other. We are pleased, however, to state that only twenty-five have been thrown on this market, and some one should hunt those up and cremate them. If the works of Tom Paine and Voltaire are dangerous reading, then is Thorne's pamphlet the more. The bad names of these infamous authors live only in history, while Thorne, more infamous, still, here in our midst, and a member of the General Assembly of North Carolina, the acknowledged leader of 2,500 ignorant Warren county negroes, may wield some influence, pernicious though it be. For the sake of our young men and boys, as well as those misguided negroes that sent him here, the whole edition of the pamphlet ought to be seized and used as fuel to cremate the author."

Indeed, the whole course of the Evangelical Ecclesiastical Court was a complete and demonstrative proof of the charges made in the "*Barker*" pamphlet against the evangelical churches. If they had faith in the truth of the Bible teachings, they would come forward and show the falsity of those charges, instead of denouncing and persecuting their author. If I should charge an innocent man with the commission of an infamous crime, he would sue me for libel and prove his innocence. It would not satisfy him merely to call me hard names.

It is an understood and admitted fact among the most orthodox theologians, that all evangelical believers have not equally refined and enlightened ideas of Deity. The ignorant and gross man will create a God for himself, after his own image. The man of exalted culture and goodness will conceive and worship a God of similar characterization. From this it will be readily seen, that no man can dictate and determine the kind of God that will best suit the nature, the culture and condition of his brother. If, then, religion has any influence over the morals of men, it is a demonstrable fact that those people and those nations that are the most just and merciful, and do the most real good to their fellow-creatures, must have the highest and best, the most exalted, ideas of God and religion. "By their fruits ye shall know them," is just as true now as in the days when Jesus taught it in Galilee. If it be true, as travellers affirm, that Mahometans are more honest

and just than we are, then their ideal characterization of God must be higher and juster than ours. I do not see how we are to escape this logical conclusion if we admit that religion has any influence over the moral character of men. Any enforced idea of God must result in hypocrisy more injurious to morals than honest unbelief. The African's worship of "*Mumbo Jumbo*" is better for him than a more enlightened form of religion which he can neither understand nor accept.

If the worship of his *Mumbo Jumbo* God makes the African more moral than the worship of the Jewish God makes us civilized Americans, it is difficult to see why, in accordance with the Constitution of North Carolina, a believer in the African deity should not be eligible to any civil office in the gift of the people. Macon and Gaston, in the Constitutional Convention of 1835, both took this view of the case, and sustained it by the most unanswerable argument. It is egotistical bigotry of the very worst kind to dogmatically assume, that our own ideal of God is the only right or proper one for all mankind. The heathen, who, in their blindness, bow down to idols of wood and stone, do not necessarily thereby deny the existence of the ever living God of the Universe. They worship them as symbols of the most High, just as the members of the great "*Mother Church*" worship the cross in memory of Him who, for their sake, suffered on it an ignominious death. Buck, in his Theological Dictionary, a standard orthodox authority, speaks right out, and tells us "that it would be loss of time to refute those who suppose the God of Mahomet to be different from the true God, and only a fictitious deity or idol of his own creation."

The "Great Spirit" of the wild Indian of North America is as true a recognition of the God of the Universe as the Jehovah of the Jews. The Persian worships the sun, not as a senseless idol, but as a glorious symbol of that Supreme light and power, which sustains and rules by inexorable law, the universe of life around him. The ideal conception of the God of boyhood is very different from that of matured manhood, yet both are ideals or inspirations of the same universal God.

Genius, education and wealth are great powers; but they may be wielded, either for good or for evil. The nations reputed to be the most highly educated and civilized

are not always the justest and best. It frequently happens that "on the side of the oppressor there is power," and that the poor have none to help or defend them. Then, the history, written by oppressive power of its own doings, is sure to be delusory and unjust. When this nation held millions of slaves, history wrote of it as a great and free republic. The Evangelical religions of this sham republic, walked hand in hand with the government in its oppression. They could see nothing wrong in slavery. They were just as good as the government, not one step in advance of it. At length "justice, though, for a long time lame of foot," overtook the nation and it was convulsed with civil war. It paid the heavy penalty sure to be demanded sooner or later for all wrongs and oppressions.

Why did not the popular religions of this Republic interpose? Why did they not call it to a timely repentance and save it? It was only necessary to do equal justice to all the people within its bounds, and there neither would nor could have been the bloody convulsion that did take place.

The Evangelical churches have always been as a stumbling block in the way of human progress and reform. The reason is plain. In their very structure they are a conservative despotism. They are founded on the model of the old Jewish Theocracy, which, as Tallyrand once wittily said of Russia, was "a despotism tempered by assassination." In the Evangelical churches, there is neither justice, free speech, nor even common sense. These great elemental powers of human freedom and happiness, are forced to lie prostrate under the heel of an ignorant, superstitious and despotic priesthood. They have ever refused to let truth and error have a fair grapple. So truth is ever bound in chains, and over her triumphant error reigns supreme amid the clouds and darkness of her gloomy empire.

Under these circumstances it will not appear strange that the battle for freedom and moral reform has always to be fought outside of the Evangelical churches. They never raise a finger in behalf of any reform until victory has already declared in its favor. How could it be otherwise? Look at the Lambeth articles adopted by the highest dignitaries of the church in Queen Elizabeth's reign? How much more just and sensible are they than the "*Mumbo Jumbo*" theology of the coast of Africa. In-

deed, I doubt if any barbarous or savage nation ever originated so absurd and wicked an idea of God. That the reader may see and judge for himself, I give them as they appear in Buck's Theological Dictionary :

Lambeth Articles. The Lambeth articles were so called, because drawn up at Lambeth palace, under the eye and with the assistance of archbishop Whitgift, bishop Bancroft, bishop Vaughan, and other eminent dignitaries of the Church. That the reader may judge how Calvinistic the clergy were under the reign of queen Elizabeth, we shall here insert them. "1. God hath from eternity predestinated certain persons to life, and hath reprobated certain persons unto death. 2. The moving or efficient cause of predestination unto life is not the foresight of faith, or of perseverance, or of good works, or of any thing that is in the persons predestinated; but the alone will of God's good pleasure. 3. The predestinati are a pre-determined and certain number which can neither be lessened nor increased. 4. Such as are not predestinated to salvation shall inevitably be condemned on account of their sins. 5. The true, lively, and justifying faith, and the Spirit of God justifying, is not extinguished, doth not utterly fail, doth not vanish away in the elect, either finally or totally. 6. A true believer, that is, one who is endued with justifying faith, is certified by the full assurance of faith that his sins are forgiven, and he shall be everlastingly saved by Christ. 7. Saving grace is not allowed, is not imparted, is not granted to all men, by which they may be saved, if they will. 8. No man is able to come to Christ, unless it be given him; and unless the Father draw him; and all men are not drawn by the Father, that they may come to his Son. 9. It is not in the will or power of every man to be saved."

With such a religion as this it is no wonder that England persecuted the dissenting sects and paid, but little regard to the welfare of her people in any part of her wide empire. It is no wonder that in later times, she did her best to subjugate her colonies in America, and ground India to powder in order to gratify her thirst for power and her unappeasable avarice.

We boast of our enlightened religion and civilization. Yet among the nations of the civilized world war never ceases. The peaceful Christians are now the most war—

waging people in the world. They have also been most distinguished for enslaving, for oppressing and for exterminating the weaker races.

Soon after the Puritans landed on Plymouth Rock, they commenced on exterminating war on the Indian tribes around, pleading the Israelitish invasion and extermination of the people of the promised land, as a full justification. The simple minded natives vanished as if a pestilence had overtaken them.

The great Evangelical Christian nations have exerted their power, not to conserve or protect the weak and little ones, but to enslave or destroy them. When the statute books of New England were full of Blue laws, she was energetically engaged in carrying on the slave trade. When William Penn and his friends were on their way to America, the Governor of Massachusetts Bay colony wrote to his agent in London, "to way-lay and seize ye heretics, Wm. Penn and his ungodly crew and carry them to Barbadoes and sell them for rum and sugar. By which you will not only extend the glory of God, but make great gain for God's people."

It is a remarkable circumstance, that among the rude and simple nations of the earth, there is but little bigotry and persecution on account of different religious opinions. They have never gone deep enough into metaphysical nonsense to be able to dispute about transubstantiation, predestination, or the mystical Trinity. Travellers who have explored the central portions of Africa report that the people are mild and gentle in their manners, and almost entirely free from wars and religious persecutions. It is only on the coast, where they have been demoralized by the evangelical slave-traders who have furnished them with rum and incited them to war, in order to make slaves of the prisoners, that this is not strictly true. I do not know what kind of a God they worship, but if "by their fruits ye shall know them," be as just and sure a rule in determining the character of a God as it is of a man, then is their belief in God as sufficient a test for the holding of civil office in this State, as a belief in the God of Jewish characterization, which the House of Representatives has resolved is the only true God, and the one recognized in the Constitution of North Carolina.

If we look a very little way back into the history of our

State we shall readily see how much and in what way the evangelical tests in the Constitution have influenced the sound morals of her people. When her constitutional test for holding office was a belief in the divine authority of the Old and New Testaments, her "*principles of sound morality*" permitted her to abrogate, at pleasure, the marriage and parental relationship of her colored people. The same "*principles of sound morality*" permitted her white citizens to sell men and women in the market place. In accordance with the same "*principles of sound morality*" they sometimes sold their own children in the persons of those of mixed blood. So that it is demonstrably true of North Carolina, as it is of New England and, indeed, of all the other States, that in exact proportion as she became less evangelical in her religion, she became more free and humanitarian in her constitution and laws. As the Bible test vanished from the Constitution, slavery and all its enormities vanished with it.

On the next day after my expulsion I was surprised to see the same members of the House who voted to unseat me on account of disbelief in certain portions of the Bible, vote to exclude the whole Bible from the public schools. If the Bible should be read by matured minds on account of the pure religion and good principles it inculcates, surely, for the same reason, it should be introduced into our public schools, that the tender minds of our children may have the benefit of its moral teachings. For my own part, I am emphatically in favor of its being read in all our schools, just as I am in favor of the reading of any other book of such general interest to the people. We ought not, and we cannot well afford to be ignorant of it. Let it be more thoroughly read, and it will be more justly appreciated. When read with that freedom of judgment with which we read other books, its reading, either in schools or elsewhere, cannot fail of beneficial results. It gives me pleasure to say here, that while I have criticised sharply some of its morality and some of its characterizations of God, there are large portions of it which I read frequently and value highly.

This exclusion of the Bible from the schools is certainly a worse infidelity than that with which I have been charged. I deny a small portion of it. My accusers give that strongest of all proofs, "the unequivocal, authentic deed," that they deny or dislike the whole book.

But I have said enough to show that the real reason of my expulsion was not a theological, but a political one. I have said enough to show, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that there was no constitutional reason for unseating me. It remains for me to do justice to those Democratic members who, in the face of so tremendous a prejudice, so fearlessly and so ably defended me.

"'Tis only in the Gods to grant success ;
They did more—they deserved it."

Mr. Pinnix, of Davidson county, made an admirable legal and constitutional argument against my expulsion. Mr. Mendenhall, a Democratic "*Friend*," from the Friends' settlement in Guilford county, was both learned and able in my defence. Mr. Tate spoke earnestly against my expulsion. Mr. Glenn, our recalcitrant Republican, from Yadkin, made one of his most eloquent speeches in defence of religious liberty. Mr. Staples, as elsewhere, noticed, spoke in favor of expulsion. Messrs. Gudger and Walker, in the language of the "*News*," "made furious attacks on the disbeliever." They are young yet, both in years and Theology. By and by, they will take a soberer view of the case ; and when they know me better, will see less to condemn. Major Foote spoke and voted against me, "He believed in every word of the Bible." The story of Jonah and the Whale was true ; and that of Lot and his daughters. "*Sound morality*." (Please answer, Major.) Mr. Finger could not vote to expel me as an Atheist ; but ultimately, voted against me on the charge of subverting the principles of sound morality. On the charge of denying the existence of a God, he made an effective speech in my defense. Mr. Moring, Chairman of the Committee, when he introduced the Barker Pamphlet to the "*House*," did me the honor, (and I thank him for it) to say that it was a very able production. But, if able, it was so, because its statements and arguments were unanswerable. Mr. Strong, an able Democratic lawyer in Raleigh, voted in my favor. Altogether, there were eight or ten Democrats who voted against my expulsion.

On the Republican side, Mr. Norment was able and persistent against the right of the House to expel me on account of my religious opinions. Messrs. Moore, Lloyd, Bre-wington, Crews and Good, all colored Republicans, made energetic speeches in my favor. Of all the Republican members, only two, Mr. Trivett and Mr. Candler, white, voted for

my expulsion. Next day a protest, signed by Mr. Norment and about a dozen other Republican members, was recorded on the House Journal.

In conclusion, if I have said anything needlessly offensive; if I have inadvertently made any statement not in accordance with the fact; any argument that will not bear the severest scrutiny, it will give me sincere pleasure to make, in the promptest manner, such amends as truth and justice demand. I write in their cause, and shall never, knowingly, betray them.

J. WILLIAMS THORNE.

The following is the celebrated Virginia religious toleration act, written by Thomas Jefferson, and referred to in my defence before the House:

AN ACT for establishing Religious Freedom, passed in the Assembly of Virginia in the beginning of the year 1786.

Well aware that Almighty God had created the mind free; that all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burdens, or by civil incapacitations, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and are a departure from the plan of the Holy Author of our religion, who being Lord both of body and mind yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either, as was in his Almighty power to do; that the impious presumption of legislators and rulers, civil as well as ecclesiastical, who, being themselves but fallible and uninspired men, have assumed dominion over the faith of others, setting up their opinions and modes of thinking as only true and infallible, and as such endeavoring to impose them on others, hath established and maintained false religions over the greatest part of the world, and through all time; that to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical; that even the forcing him to support this or that teacher of his own religious persuasion, is depriving him of the comfortable liberty of giving his contributions to the particular pastor whose moral she would make his pattern, and whose powers he feels most persuasive to righteousness, and is withdrawing from the ministry those temporal rewards which, proceeding from an approbation of their personal conduct, are an additional incitement to earnest and

unremitting labors for the instruction of mankind; that our civil rights have no dependance on our religious opinions, more than our opinions in physics or geometry; that therefore the proscribing any citizen as unworthy the public confidence by laying upon him an incapacity of being called to the offices of trust and emolument, unless he profess or renounce this or that religious opinion, is depriving him injuriously of those privileges and advantages to which, in common with his fellow-citizens, he has a natural right; that it tends also to corrupt the principles of that very religion it is meant to encourage, by bribing, with a monopoly of worldly honors and emoluments, those who will externally profess and conform to it; that though indeed those are criminal who do not withstand such temptation, yet neither are those innocent who lay the bait in their way; that to suffer the civil magistrate to intrude his powers into the field of opinion, and to restrain the profession or propagation of principles, on the supposition of their ill tendency, is a dangerous fallacy, which at once destroys all religious liberty, because he being of course judge of that tendency, will make his opinions the rule of judgment, and approve or condemn the sentiments of others only as they shall square with or differ from his own; that it is time enough for the rightful purposes of civil government, for its officers to interfere when principles break out into overt acts against peace and good order; and finally, that truth is great and will prevail, if left to herself, that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict, unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate, errors ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them.

Be it therefore enacted by the General Assembly, That no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by arguments to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities.

And though we well know that this Assembly, elected by the people for the ordinary purposes of legislation only,

have no power to restrain the acts of succeeding Assemblies constituted with the power equal to our own, and that therefore to declare this act irrevocable, would be of no effect in law, yet we are free to declare, and do declare, that the rights hereby asserted are of the natural rights of mankind, and that if any act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present or to narrow its operation, such act will be an infringement of natural right.

The following extracts are from the speeches of Macon and Gaston, referred to in my defence :

Mr. Macon said, he took the broad ground that man was alone responsible to his Creator for his religious faith, and that no human power had any right to interpose in the matter, or to prescribe any particular opinions as a test of fitness for office. If a Hindoo were to come among us, and was fully qualified to discharge the duties of any office to which he might aspire, his religious belief would not constitute an objection, in his opinion, why he should be debarred. Who made man a judge, that he should presume to interfere in the sacred rights of conscience? He had always thought that a mixture of politics and religion was the very essence of hypocrisy.

Mr. M. said, some gentlemen had expressed the opinion that this article, as it now stood, could do no harm. Who can tell to what the spirit of proscription, on which it is based, may lead. A spark may fire the world. Events push each other along, and one passion but serves to enkindle another. So far as he was individually concerned, it mattered not what provisions were incorporated in the Constitution. His time had most come. But this Article was the only feature in the old Constitution which he had ever heard objected to, out of the State; and the objection was always coupled with an expression of surprise, that it could have got a foothold in a State where the principles of liberty were so well understood. There were times, when a man, if a true patriot, must stake himself for the good of his country. The present was a crisis of that kind.—MACON.

Divine truth needs not the support of human power, either to convince the understanding or to regulate the heart. Dare not to define divine truth, for it belongs not

to your functions, and you may set up falsehood and error in its stead. * * * I shall not be content with anything short of the total abrogation of all religious tests.—GASTON.

The following letters and testimonials are a few of the many I have received from Chester County and parts adjacent, showing that in my native county, where best known, I never bore the reputation of being an Atheist. These letters were offered to the Committee and to the House, but were not read before either.

J. WILLIAMS THORNE.

HAMORTON, CHESTER COUNTY, PA.

To Whom it may Concern :

This is to certify that J. Williams Thorne, late of Chester county, Pa., and now a citizen of North Carolina, is a member of the religious society of Progressive Friends, of Longwood, Chester county, also one of the trustees having in charge the property of said Society.

ISAAC MENDENHALL,

One of the trustees of said Society.

Personally appeared before me, a Justice of the Peace, in and for the county of Chester, the above named Isaac Mendenhall, who being duly affirmed according to law, says that the above statement is true and correct.

Affirmed and subscribed before me this third day of February, A. D. 1875.

E. N. HARLAN,

Justice of Peace,

Hamorton, Chester Co., Pa.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 3d, 1875.

DEAR SIR: Your favor of 1st inst. is received, in which you inform me that you are arraigned before the Committee on Elections and Privileges to answer the charge made against you that you do not believe in the existence of a God, and requesting me to state what reputation you had in Chester County on that subject.

I can only say that I have known you as a lecturer and debater on moral reforms for a dozen years perhaps. Your

reputation was that of a radical reformer, seeking to reform the abuses and sufferings arising from War, Intemperance, denial of female suffrage, and slavery, and anxious to promote the welfare of all men.

I have no recollection of ever having heard you speak of the subject of the existence or non-existence of a God, neither have I ever heard it attributed to you that you denied the existence of a God.

I have often had conversations with you, concerning moral reforms in which we did not always agree, but I never heard a sentiment escape your lips, which induced me to believe you were an Atheist.

Yours Truly,

W. TOWNSEND.

J. WILLIAMS THORNE, ESQ.

P. S. I congratulate you on your election. In matters of legislation I am sure that your *heart* will be in the right place, wherever your *judgment* may be.

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,

SENATE CHAMBER, Harrisburg, Feb. 4th, 1875.

To the Committee on Elections

of the House of Representatives of N. Carolina,

GENTLEMEN:—The undersigned members of the Senate and House of Representatives of Pennsylvania, having learned that the qualifications of J. Williams Thorne, formerly of Chester county, Pa., are questioned because of alleged Atheism, represent: That personally or by reputation, they have known the said Mr. Thorne for years; that they live in the vicinity of his former home; that in former years he was prominent in political and other discussions, and that neither by word or act has he ever given ground for the allegation of Atheism, and that we believe him innocent of the charge.

THOS. V. COOPER,

Senator for Delaware Co.,

ROBT. L. MCCLELLAN,

Senator for Chester Co.,

JOHN B. WARFEL,

Senator from Lancaster Co.,

E. W. BAILY,

House of Reps., Pa.,

JOHN P. EDGE,

House of Reps., Pa.,

GEO. F. SMITH,

House of Reps., Pa.,

WM. M. BROWN,

House of Reps., Pa.

COATESVILLE, PA., Feb. 4, 1875.

I do not know what Mr. J. Williams Thorne believes about the existence of Almighty God, but, I can say that, so far as I know, he has never been charged, in this community, with denying the existence of a Supreme Being.

JAMES ROBERTS,

Pastor of Coatesville Presby'n Church.

The undersigned, citizens of Coatesville, Chester Co., Pennsylvania, being personally or by reputation acquainted with J. Williams Thorne, a member elect of the North Carolina Legislature, and having learned that he has been arraigned before the Committee on Elections and Privileges of said Legislature on the charge of a disbelief in a God, have no hesitation in saying, that while his belief may have differed in many respects from ours, we have never heard him deny the existence of a God, nor have we ever heard him characterized as an Atheist or the disbelief in a God imputed to him in this community in which he was born and resided up to the time of his removal to the State of North Carolina.

WILLIAM T. HUNT,
WM. R. ASH,
BENJ. T. LEWIS,
ROBERT YOUNG,
J. M. BUSHONG,
JESSE SHALLCROSS,
JOS. N. WOODWARD,
CALEB MERCER,
JOS. C. KAUFFMAN,
CHAS. L. COOK,
H. C. NIELDS,
JOHN E. STOTT,

F. G. PARKE,
Q. LEWIS POTTS,
W. B. MINSTER,
GEO. H. WINDLE,
MOSES RAMBO,
JOSEPH GRAHAM,
ELLIS SPEAKMAN,
C. N. SPEAKMAN,
WASH. MILLER,
ROBERT L. BLACK,
THOS. H. WINDLE,
O. H. BRANSON.

WEST CHESTER, PENN., Feb. 4, 1875.

To all whom it may concern :

We, the undersigned, being personally acquainted with J. Williams Thorne, (formerly of Chester County, Penn.,) but now of Ridgeway, North Carolina, having heard that he has been charged with atheism, beg leave to express our utter disbelief in the truth of the accusation.

J. W. BARNARD,
JOSEPH J. LEWIS,
WM. M. HAYES,
A. WANGER,
WALTER HIBBARD,

WM. WHITEHEAD,
ROB'T C. SMEDLEY,
WM. DAREINGTON,
WM. H. DOCK.

WILMINGTON, DEL., Feb. 5th, 1875.

To all whom it may concern :

The undersigned having long *known* and *loved* J. W. Thorne, are prepared to say that so far from his denying the existence of God, we know few men who from their earliest life have more constantly and consistently *lived* in the conviction and consciousness of *His Preseuce and Power*.

F. ISRAEL,	ANNE K. PUESY,
D. H. KENT,	THOMAS WORRELL,
JOHN WAINWRIGHT,	ALLEN GAWTHROP,
SEYMOUR PRESTON,	MARY A. GAWTHROP,
MARY A. GRAY,	REBECCA MOORE,
LEA PUSEY,	

WEST CHESTER, Feb. 7th, 1875.

J. Williams Thorne, Esq.,

DEAR SIR:—I have just been informed that you have been prevented from taking the position to which you have been elected, because of a report of your disbelief in Almighty God.

Now to those who are interested in this matter, I would say, that I have lived in the same neighborhood all my life, and can say that you (J. W. Thorne) did not bear the reputation of being an Atheist or a disbeliever in Almighty God.

You can present this to the committee on this subject, and I would say further to them that any amount of testimony can be obtained to disprove the charge made against you.

Yours truly,

WM. B. MORRISON, *Sheriff*.

333 WALNUT ST., Philadelphia, Feb. 5, 1875.

J. Williams Thorne :

DEAR FRIEND:—I have thy favor of the 3d inst. I can freely say that I have never heard thee deny the existence of a God, although I have known thee long, and often heard thee speak in public and in private.

Very truly,

E. W. DAVIS.

If Col. Folk, of Lenoir, is in town, or W. H. Bailey, of Charlotte, and it is necessary for a reference for me, call

on them, or thee might on Mr. A. D. Jenkins, or the Secretary of State, to whom Col. Folk introduced me.

E. M. D.

No. 214 MAIN ST., COATSVILLE, PA.,

February 4th, 1875.

J. Williams Thorne :

DEAR SIR:—I am in receipt of yours of Feb. 1st, stating that you have been arraigned before the Committee on Elections and Privileges upon the charge of denying the existence of a God.

In reply I have to say I have frequently been in discussion with you upon *Theological Questions*, and while there seemed to be material difference in our opinions, I have no recollection of you in a single instance either directly or by intimation, denying the existence of a Supreme Power. It having always been understood that you did believe in a God, but your exact ideas pertaining to God were perhaps not fully understood.

Very respectfully,

THOS. H. WINDLE.

GERMANTOWN, PA., Feb. 5, 1875.

J. Williams Thorne :

Your note reached me to-day. In reply I can merely say that I have, on several occasions, been present when you took a part in political discussions; but I never understood you to deny the existence of God, though you often seemed to call in question many of our traditional notions of the Deity, and to doubt the authority or validity of much that we preachers have to say about Him.

I do not understand by what process the Legislature can go back of your own declaration that *you do not now deny the existence of God*.

Respectfully,

CHAS. G. AMES,

Minister Unitarian Society.

OFFICE OF THE "CHESTER VALLEY UNION,"

COATESVILLE, PA., Feb. 5, 1875.

J. Williams Thorne, Esq.,

DEAR SIR:—I was somewhat surprised to hear of the action of the House of Representatives of North Caro-

lina, in charging you with being an Atheist. They certainly do not know you as well as I do, for while we differ materially on religion, yet I know you have expressed to me your belief in a God. Very respectfully,

WM. J. KAUFMAN, *Proprietor*.

WEST CHESTER, PA., Feb. 9, 1875.

DEAR SIR:—I was pained to see by the papers that you have been charged with atheism. I take pleasure in saying to you that while you have been criticised for disunity with some of the creeds and dogmas of the Evangelical churchmen, I have never heard them speak of you as an atheist. I have known you to lead among us the practical life of a christian, and have heard you express belief and faith in God. Yours truly, J. W. BARNARD,

Attorney Counsellor and Barrister at Law.

To HON. J. WILLIAMS THORNE.

CHRISTIANA, Feb. 6, 1875.

J. W. Thorne, Esq.:

RESPECTED FRIEND:—Yours of the 3d inst. is now before us and contents considered. We need scarcely say that we are both pained and astonished to learn that you are arraigned before a Legislative Committee of the House of Representatives in the State of North Carolina, on the charge of denying the existence of a God. Some of us have known you intimately for thirty years, and we unhesitatingly and unequivocally say that we have never known you either in public or private conversation to deny the existence of a God.

It is true we have frequently heard you oppose the opinions advanced by certain church members in reference to the attributes of God, you always taking the position, that the true christian God was not a being of hatred, carnage and injustice, but rather a God of mercy, love and justice. In conclusion, will say that the undersigned fully concur in the above statements of facts, and remain,

Yours most respectfully,

SAML. SLOKOM,

JOS. D. C. POWNALL,

HENRY MOORE,

JOHN T. PEARL,

HUGH RAMBO, Dem.,

J. D. HARRAR, Dem.

A. W. CAIN,

W. P. BRINTON,

B. F. TILLUM,

R. T. WARNER,

H. LINTON, Dem.,

NATIONAL BANK OF CHESTER VALLEY,
COATESVILLE, PA., Feb. 8, 1875.

J. Williams Thorne, Esq. :

DEAR SIR: I am in receipt of yours of the 5th inst.

Having known you by sight and reputation for about forty years, and during the last few more intimately, I never heard that you ever denied the existence of a Supreme Being.

Your testimony in our Courts of Justice I never heard objected to, as it would have been had such been your avowed belief, such sentiments disqualifying a man from being a competent witness in this Commonwealth.

Yours truly, F. F. DAVIS, *Cashier.*

HESTONVILLE, PHILA., Feb. 10, 1875.

J. Williams Thorne, Esq.,

DEAR SIR:—I am surprised to hear, by a letter just received from Christiana, that you have been accused of being an Atheist. I was born and grew up in the same neighborhood with you, and have lived and preached for a good part of twenty years near your residence, and I have always supposed you were a member of the Society of Friends, that excellent body of Christians so numerous in our part of Pennsylvania. I never heard the charge of Atheism brought against you. I know some persons were prejudiced against you, and at one time you had your barn burnt on account of your opposition to the "gap gang," a set of kidnappers, robbers and ruffians (of good social connections) who held that community in awe. What these refined and pious cut-throats and scoundrels thought of your religious views I do not know, as I had not the honor to be in their confidence.

One thing I do know, that if Southerners are bent on driving northern emigrants, by hook or crook, on one pretext or another, out of politics, in their adopted States, the late Democratic victories will be speedily reversed. They were a protest against Republican thievery in cities, counties, States and in the nation, and in part, a protest against Grant's incompetency. They were *not* evidences that the people have *gone back* on the principles of the Republican party. You perhaps do not know that at the last Presidential election I voted for the Democratic candidate, and that since then I have generally voted for the

candidates of that party, and rejoiced last fall in the defeat of Butler and the overthrow of the *spoils* party in this State and elsewhere.

When the war was over, many obscure Republicans like myself agreed with Sumner, Andrew, Greeley and Beecher, that the utmost lenience should be shown to the South. And the abounding corruption of the dominant party, through the incoming of all the carrion crows from the two old parties, made us the more willing to see a change in the political complexion of the country. But when we see attacks made on emigrants from our own neighborhood, whom we know *not* to be *carpet-baggers*, but settlers in good faith, who on their visits to the North make every effort to put Southern character and society in a favorable light, (as we all know *you did*,) we begin to feel that the South is "joined to her idols,"—learning nothing, forgetting nothing. We look wistfully again towards Grant and Sheridan, and hunt up the telegram about "banditti."

Respectfully,

W. Y. P. NOBLE.

ADRIAN, MICH., March 10th, 1875.

J. Williams Thorne:

DEAR FRIEND:—I have received your noble and masterly reply to Joseph Barker's lecture comparing infidels and christians, over and over again, to see if I could discover anything in it that would justify such a charge against you as a disbelief in a God, but I have failed to notice anything of the kind. Your criticism of the professed Christian Church, and its religious text book, certainly was fair and bore evidence of its having been written in a good spirit. Then your closing remarks savored much of a high order of inspiration, and is worthy of the careful consideration of every intelligent mind.

Yours as ever in the cause of human progress,

SAMUEL D. MOORE,
Box 405, Adrian, Michigan.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Raleigh, Feb. 16, 1875.

Messrs. Moring, Dortch and others, Committee on Privileges and Elections.

DEAR SIRS:—As your Committee will be in session this evening, and, in order that there may be no misap-

prehension in regard to my case, I beg leave to make a statement as to my belief in the existence of a God.

I do solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm, that I believe in the same Almighty God, recognized in the Constitution of North Carolina, as the God of all the various religious sects, but divested of all the erroneous and peculiar characteristics ascribed to him by any of them.

If this is not sufficiently explicit, you will confer an obligation on me by stating what confession of religious faith will be satisfactory. It will give me great pleasure to do anything I can, conscientiously, to relieve you, from what I know, must be an unpleasant duty.

In regard to my simple Quaker form of affirmation, by turning to page 633, of Battle's Revisal, you will find that I am fully sustained by the law of North Carolina, which expressly declares that Quakers, Moravians, Dunkers and Menonites shall be permitted to take such simple form of affirmation.

Yours truly,

J. WILLIAMS THORNE.

I received kind and appreciative letters from J. Nevin Pomeroy, Esq., and Rev. J. Pomeroy, of Parkesburg, Chester county, Pa., certifying that I never bore the reputation of being an atheist in my native county, but they are mislaid and therefore cannot appear in the present edition of this pamphlet. J. W. T.

The following card will explain my reasons for a very offensive vote to the Democrats which I gave in the House just before the sittings of the great Ecclesiastical Court:

"We publish the following communication at the request of and in justice to Mr. Thorne, it having been refused an insertion in the columns of the *News*.—*Era* :

I see by the *News* of Feb. 19th, that you censure me for casting my vote against the bill forbidding white children to be bound to colored masters or mistresses. I have only to say, that I cast my vote as I did, because I conscientiously believed the bill to be in violation not only of the "golden rule," but of all constitutional law. And furthermore, that the object to be obtained by the passage of the bill is a matter entirely outside of all law, and only to be rightly determined by the wishes of the parties concerned.

I also opposed the bill because, in its operation, there

might arise, in the present mixed condition of the races, many cases in which it would be either very difficult or impossible to determine the question of color.

The bill would have met my approbation had the two words "white" and "colored" been struck out. The binding out of children is a species of child-slavery that ought never to have had existence, and cannot be too quickly abolished.

J. WILLIAMS THORNE.

The following card was placed on the desk of every member of the House on the morning of the last day of the "Great Ecclesiastical Court" trial:

CARD FROM MR. THORNE.

[*Advance Sheet of the Era, of February 25*]

RALEIGH, Feb. 22, 1875.

Editor of the Era:

DEAR SIR:—I see in the *News*, of yesterday, that I am represented as having testified that I believe only in part in the God of the Bible. This statement is liable to misapprehension. I believe, absolutely in the God of the Bible; but I do not believe in all the characterization of Him found in that book. The Jew, the Catholic, the Calvinist, the Unitarian and the Universalist, all differ very widely and oppositely in their characterization of God; yet no one dreams of questioning the eligibility to office of any of them. I claim, on the same ground, the same constitutional eligibility to office; and that I can not be justly or legally deprived of it on account of any peculiar ideal conception of Almighty God I may entertain or avow.

I am charged, also, with the authorship of an infamous pamphlet. But it is not stated wherein the infamy of it lies. That pamphlet was written in defence of the ever-living, self-existent Almighty God of the Universe, against the infamous slanders of many of his ignorant, and some of his wicked worshippers. Every position taken is sustained, either by quotations from the Bible itself, or from authentic history. If any part of that pamphlet can be shown to be unfair or erroneous in its statements, I shall take the greatest pleasure in making all due correction in the promptest manner.

J. WILLIAMS THORNE.

NOTE.—The vote of expulsion was 45 to 32.