

of all that is mysterious and sublime, in the conceptions of divinity, and scattering to the winds the experience and reverence of a thousand generations, with great swelling words of vanity, teach their fellowmen, under the character of men of God, that there is no God; that the old landmarks of truth and righteousness are mere delusive conventionalities, which deeper thought and riper scholarship have dissipated, with a pitying smile at the weakness and credulity of the past! In such hands all old, time-honoured traces of the Divine,—all just conceptions of moral nature, relations and administration,—all that has constituted the faith and hope of ages, becomes revolutionized, and the effect of revolution is the dethronement of Jehovah, and the exaltation of man.

Such is largely the tone of the church thought of the day: the consequence of a claimed right to refuse acceptance of the revealed, till subjected to and approved by human reason. But, in the church, practical rationalism co-exists with theoretic disavowal of rationalistic principles. The moral cowardice that shrinks from open assertion of right to deal with the Divine on human principles, or boldly to repudiate the obligation of vows, covertly and insidiously moulds, modifies, explains away or holds in abeyance, old apostolic truths and modes of action, as inconsistent with more advanced thought,—with more comprehensive charity,—with the more friendly relations of the church to the world. Subordinating divine wisdom to human reason, efforts are made to accomplish the grand, eternal purposes of Revelation, without the fixed principles or power of supernaturalism; thus freeing the church from the so-called mysterious superstitious, as an impediment to rational progress, and yet originating a mystery deeper than that which is contemptuously denounced,—*the inexplicable phenomenon, of ends sought to be attained by means, not only utterly inadequate, but actually antagonistic to their production!*

Whence this claim of right to sit in judgment on the divine,—to dogmatize upon its very existence, and modes of development,—to unsettle the entire question of Inspiration,—and in its pretensions, yet pigmy form to overturn, by novel exposition, the convictions of ages? From without,—from the pew? No. From within,—from the very altar of God! Men styling themselves the representatives of the God of the Bible,—guides of their fellow-beings to immortality,—pledged to work out Scriptural ends by Scriptural means; these the men to whom old Heaven sent truth is less sacred than their individual views and objects; these the men who kindle strange fire upon the altar of God,—these the regenerators of a world, and all in the name of the