

It is just such religious "instruction" and theological "argument" as this that helps to make infidels. If the acceptance of Biblical religion requires the abrogation of reason and the abolition of common sense, in these days of little faith it may be expected that such "religion" will fall into general contempt. But true religion requires no such stultification of man's rational powers. On the contrary it stimulates them and demands their proper exercise.

The idea that any power in the universe could make an oyster swallow a man as easily as a man can swallow an oyster, is so absurd that it is difficult to abstain from invective in treating it. As well might it be claimed that Deity could cause two and two to make five, or a substance to exist and not exist at the same instant, as to assert such nonsense as the *Baptist Teacher* sets forth as a Divine possibility.

Bible miracles, so-called, are not violations of natural laws, as some people imagine. They denote the exercise of power that is uncommon. But they are all accountable on a common-sense theory.

The story told in the Book of Jonah, whether it be a narration of facts as it seems to be, or, as some students maintain, only a religious apologue designed to illustrate a principle, like the parables of the Savior, is not difficult of belief or in contradiction to reason. It says: "Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah." It does not describe the fish except that it was "great." As to Jonah's condition from the time he entered the fish to the time when he called upon the Lord and was vomited up again, it might have been cataleptic, or such as to be suspensory of all animation. That would be much less marvelous than the authenticated accounts of East Indian fakirs buried and brought forth alive after long periods of interment.

We do not believe that any of the remarkable occurrences narrated in holy writ were violations of natural laws, but manifestations of power on principles which, while above present common comprehension, are strictly in conformity to laws as truly natural as those with which we are familiar.

That with God "all things are possible," is true within the bounds of reason. That is to say, with Him all possible things are possible. Impossibilities are not "things," but fictions. To attempt to promote belief in manifest absurdities only serves to defeat the intended object; it weakens faith and often destroys it. God works through and by means of those universal laws which he has instituted,

and will do nothing inconsistent with Himself. That mortals cannot always comprehend His works does not place them beyond the realms of reason nor prove that they are contrary to nature. And in the light of the developments of modern times, the terms impossible, incredible and supernatural should be used with the greatest caution.

### THE EUROPEAN ASPECT.

European affairs continue in a state of complicated agitation. Germany is making another effort to get on the friendly side of Russia, and to isolate France. Tempting offers are to be made to the Czar in the shape of decided commercial advantages.

There is probably one way in which Germany can secure immunity for some time to come from being assailed by Russia—by giving her consent for the latter to occupy Constantinople. This was hinted at in the pamphlet recently published and which created a sensation in the Fatherland. Its authorship was attributed to Prince Bismarck. It was asserted in the publication that the ex-Chancellor favored the policy of allowing Russia to carry out her eastern programme. There can be no doubt that, at least, the present pro-Russian commercial movement on the part of Germany is part of the details of a design to break the treaty recently formed between Germany and France.

Austria would never consent willingly to the advance of Russia upon Constantinople, but if Germany shall favor the scheme it will be "Hobson's choice" with the first named country. Standing alone, Austria would amount to nothing against the designs of the Czar, and if the purpose of Russia were to be carried out she would be broken up. The slavish population of the Austrian dependencies would go with Russia. If the former country were to be isolated by Germany and she decided not to tamely submit to the danger of being annihilated, she would naturally look to Great Britain for support, the British Empire being a decidedly interested party in a contemplated Russian occupation of Constantinople.

France is in constant danger from the fickle character of the masses of her populace. The recent massacre, at Fourmies, of a woman, several children and eight men, by the troops, during a labor agitation, seems to have shaken the country, causing an intense feeling against the government and the soldiery. The event has placed the existence of the present ministry in jeopardy, and revolutions are not difficult to precipitate in France.

The present aspect of European af-

fairs is very remarkable. It is kaleidoscopic in the constant changes that are occurring. There are international combinations and counter-combinations and their annihilation to make way for the formation of others. Some of those compacts are seemingly entered into as preparatory to the inauguration of aggressive measures, while others are consummated as a defensive process to guard against outgrowing possibilities of hostility.

### SCHWATKA'S EXPLORING EXPEDITION.

THERE is now on its way to Alaska an exploring expedition that has hopes and expectations of making known many of the unexplored portions of that interesting country and the adjacent British regions. The expedition will be under command of Lieut. Frederick Schwatka.

The patron of the expedition is the *New York Ledger*, which adds another name to the already long list of enterprising literary supporters of expeditions equipped for the purpose of geographical research and exploration. This is especially true in America, where so much unexplored country has been opened and made known through the instrumentality of the literary world as patrons as well as distributors of the useful and interesting information acquired thereby.

The *DESERET NEWS* has secured from Lieut. Schwatka, the exclusive right to a series of articles, twelve to fifteen in number, descriptive of the doings of "The New York Ledger Alaskan Expedition." This series will be amply illustrated from sketches and photographs, and to secure which the expedition will go fully prepared. The field of proposed exploration lies in the unknown regions between the Yukon river of the British Territory, the Tanana river on the north and the Atna river to the west, although the westward boundary may possibly be extended to Behring Sea if the season will permit after the Atna is reached. So far as known from the few explorations on the boundaries of this unexplored tract, and the information acquired from Indians, this is undoubtedly an extremely interesting and picturesque region, and we can promise our readers the probability of a very entertaining series of articles describing it from the pen of the commander.

The scientific department is under charge of Dr. C. Willard Hayes of the United States Geological Survey, Washington, D. C., Major Powell, the well-known and energetic chief of that government bureau, having assigned