

DRESDEN EDITION

THE WORKS
OF
Robert G. Ingersoll

"THE DESTROYER OF WEEDS, THISTLES AND THORNS IS
A BENEFACTOR, WHETHER HE SOWETH GRAIN OR NOT"

IN TWELVE VOLUMES
VOLUME I

LECTURES

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TO
 EVA A. INGERSOLL,
 MY WIFE,
 A WOMAN WITHOUT SUPERSTITION,
 THIS VOLUME
 IS DEDICATED.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME I

THE GODS (1872.)

An Honest God is the Noblest Work of Man - Resemblance of Gods to their Creators - Manufacture and Characteristics of Deities - Their Amours Deficient in many Departments of Knowledge - Pleased with the Butchery of Unbelievers - A Plentiful Supply Visitations - One God's Laws of War - The Book called the Bible - Heresy of Universalism - Faith an unhappy mixture of Insanity and Ignorance - Fallen Gods, or Devils Directions concerning Human Slavery - The first Appearance of the Devil - The Tree of Knowledge - Give me the Storm and Tempest of Thought - Gods and Devils - Natural Productions - Personal Appearance of Deities - All Man's Ideas suggested by his Surroundings - Phenomena Supposed to be Produced by Intelligent Powers - Insanity and Disease attributed to Evil Spirits - Origin of the Priesthood - Temptation of Christ - Innate Ideas - Divine Interference - Special Providence - The Crane and the Fish - Cancer as a proof of Design - Matter and Force - Miracle Passing the Hat for just one Fact - Sir William Hamilton on Cause and Effect - The Phenomena of Mind - Necessity and Free Will - The Dark Ages - The Originality of Repetition - Of what Use have the Gods been to Man? Paley and Design - Make Good Health Contagious - Periodicity of the Universe and the Commencement of Intellectual Freedom - Lesson of the ineffectual attempt to rescue the Tomb of Christ from the Mohammedans - The Cemetery of the Gods - Taking away Crutches - Imperial Reason .

HUMBOLDT

(1869.)

The Universe is Governed by Law - The Self-made Man - Poverty generally an Advantage - Humboldt's Birth-place - His desire for Travel - On what Humboldt's Fame depends - His Companions and Friends - Investigations in the New World - A Picture Subjects of his Addresses - Victory of the Church over Philosophy - Influence of the discovery that the World is governed by Law - On the term Law - Copernicus Astronomy - Aryabhatta - Descartes - Condition of the World and Man when the morning of Science Dawned - Reasons for Honoring Humboldt - The World his Monument.

THOMAS PAINE

(1870.)

With his Name left out the History of Liberty cannot be Written - Paine's Origin and Condition - His arrival in America with a Letter of Introduction by Franklin - Condition of the Colonies - "Common Sense" - A new Nation Born - Paine the Best of Political Writers - The "Crisis" - War not to the Interest of a trading Nation - Paine's Standing at the Close of the Revolution - Close of the Eighteenth Century in France - The "Rights of Man" - Paine Prosecuted in England - "The World is my Country" - Elected to the French Assembly - Votes against the Death of the King - Imprisoned - A look behind the Altar - The "Age of Reason" - "His Argument against the Bible as a Revelation" - Christianity of Paine's Day - A Blasphemy Law in Force in Maryland - The Scotch "Kirk" - Hanging of Thomas Aikenhead for Denying the Inspiration of the Scriptures - "Cathedrals and Domes, and Chimes and Chants" - "Science" - "He Died in the Land his Genius Defended."

INDIVIDUALITY

(1873.)

"His Soul was like a Star and Dwelt Apart" - "Disobedience one of the Conditions of Progress." - Magellan The Monarch and the Hermit - Why the Church hates a Thinker - The Argument from Grandeur and Prosperity - Travelers and Guideboards - A Degrading Saying - Theological Education - Scotts, Henrys and McKnights - The Church the Great Robber - Corrupting the Reason of Children - Monotony of Acquiescence: For God's sake, say No - Protestant Intolerance: Luther and Calvin - Assertion of Individual Independence a Step toward Infidelity - Salute to Jupiter - The Atheistic Bug - Little Religious Liberty in America - God in the Constitution, Man Out - Decision of the Supreme Court of

Illinois that an Unbeliever could not testify in any Court - Dissimulation - Nobody in this Bed - The Dignity of a Unit.

HERETICS AND HERESIES

(1874.)

Liberty, a Word without which all other Words are Vain - The Church, the Bible, and Persecution - Over the wild Waves of War rose and fell the Banner of Jesus Christ - Highest Type of the Orthodox Christian - Heretics' Tongues and why they should be Removed before Burning - The Inquisition Established Forms of Torture- Act of Henry VIII for abolishing Diversity of Opinion - What a Good Christian was Obligated to Believe - The Church has Carried the Black Flag - For what Men and Women have been Burned - John Calvin's Advent into the World - His Infamous Acts - Michael Servetus Castalio - Spread of Presbyterianism - Indictment of a Presbyterian Minister in Illinois for Heresy - Specifications - The Real Bible.

THE GHOSTS

(1877.)

Dedication to Ebon C. Ingersoll - Preface - Mendacity of the Religious Press - "Materialism"- Ways of Pleasing the Ghosts - The Idea of Immortality not Born of any Book - Witchcraft and Demonology - Witch Trial before Sir Matthew Hale- John Wesley a Firm - Believer in Ghosts - "Witch-spots" - Lycanthropy - Animals Tried and Convicted - The Governor of Minnesota and the Grasshoppers - A Papal Bull against Witchcraft - Victims of the Delusion - Sir William Blackstone's Affirmation - Trials in Belgium - Incubi and Succubi - A Bishop Personated by the Devil - The Doctrine that Diseases are caused by Ghosts - Treatment - Timothy Dwight against Vaccination - Ghosts as Historians - The Language of Eden - Leibnitz, Founder of the Science of Language - Cosmas on Astronomy- Vagaries of Kepler and Tycho Brahe - Discovery of Printing, Powder, and America - Thanks to the Inventors - The Catholic Murderer and the Meat - Let the Ghosts Go.

THE LIBERTY OF MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD

(1877.)

Liberty sustains the same Relation to Mind that Space does to Matter - The History of Man a History of Slavery - The Infidel - Our Fathers in the good old Time - The iron Arguments that Christians Used - Instruments of Torture -A Vision of the Inquisition - Models of Man's Inventions - Weapons, Armor, Musical Instruments, Paintings, Books, Skulls - The Gentleman in the Dug-out -

Homage to Genius and Intellect - Abraham Lincoln - What I mean by Liberty - The Man who cannot afford to Speak his Thought is a Certificate of the Meanness of the Community in which he Resides - Liberty of Woman - Marriage and the Family - Ornaments the Souvenirs of Bondage -The Story of the Garden of Eden - Adami and Heva - Equality of the Sexes -The word "Boss"-The Cross Man -The Stingy Man - Wives who are Beggars - How to Spend Money- By the Tomb of the Old Napoleon - The Woman you Love will never Grow Old -Liberty of Children -When your Child tells a Lie - Disowning Children - Beating your own Flesh and Blood - Make Home Pleasant - Sunday when I was a Boy - The Laugh of a Child- The doctrine of Eternal Punishment - Jonathan Edwards on the Happiness of Believing - Husbands whose Wives are in Hell - The Liberty of Eating and Sleeping - Water in Fever - Soil and Climate necessary to the production of Genius - Against Annexing Santo Domingo - Descent of Man - Conclusion.

ABOUT FARMING IN ILLINOIS (1877.)

To Plow is to Pray; to Plant is to Prophecy, and the Harvest Answers and Fulfills -The Old Way of Farming - Cooking an Unknown Art -Houses, Fuel, and Crops The Farmer's Boy - What a Farmer should Sell - Beautifying the Home Advantages of Illinois as a Farming State - Advantages of the Farmer over the Mechanic - Farm Life too Lonely -On Early Rising - Sleep the Best Doctor Fashion Patriotism and Boarding Houses - The Farmer and the Railroads - Money and Confidence - Demonetization of Silver- Area of Illinois - Mortgages and Interest - Kindness to Wives and Children - How a Beefsteak should be Cooked - Decorations and Comfort - Let the Children Sleep- -Old Age.

WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?

Preface -The Synoptic Gospels -Only Mark Knew of the Necessity of Belief -Three Christs Described -The Jewish Gentleman and the Piece of Bacon -Who Wrote the New Testament? -Why Christ and the Apostles wrote Nothing Infinite Respect for the Man Christ- Different Feeling for the Theological Christ -Saved from What? - Chapter on the Gospel of Matthew -What this Gospel says we must do to be Saved -Jesus and the Children -John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards conceived of as Dimpled Darlings - Christ and the Man who inquired what Good Thing he should do that he might have Eternal Life -Nothing said about Belief -An Interpolation Chapter on the Gospel of Mark -The Believe or be Damned Passage, and why it was written -The last Conversation of Christ with his Disciples -The Signs that Follow them that Believe - Chapter on the Gospel of Luke -Substantial Agreement with Matthew and Mark - How Zaccheus achieved Salvation - The two Thieves on the Cross - Chapter on the Gospel of John - The Doctrine of Regeneration, or the New Birth - Shall we Love our Enemies while

God Damns His? - Chapter on the Catholics Communication with Heaven through Decayed Saints - Nuns and Nunneries - Penitentiaries of God should be Investigated - The Athanasian Creed expounded - The Trinity and its Members - Chapter on the Episcopalians - Origin of the Episcopal Church - Apostolic Succession an Imported Article - Episcopal Creed like the Catholic, with a few Additional Absurdities - Chapter on the Methodists Wesley and Whitfield Their Quarrel about Predestination Much Preaching for Little Money Adapted to New Countries - Chapter on the Presbyterians John Calvin, Murderer Meeting between Calvin and Knox - The Infamy of Calvinism - Division in the Church - The Young Presbyterian's - Resignation to the Fate of his Mother - A Frightful, Hideous, and Hellish Creed- Chapter on the Evangelical Alliance - Jeremy Taylor's Opinion of Baptists - Orthodoxy not Dead - Creed of the Alliance - Total Depravity, Eternal Damnation - What do You Propose? The Gospel of Good-fellowship, Cheerfulness, Health, Good Living, Justice - No Forgiveness - God's Forgiveness Does not Pay my Debt to Smith - Gospel of Liberty, of Intelligence, of Humanity- One World at a Time - "Upon that Rock I Stand."

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

IN presenting to the public this edition of the late ROBERT G. INGERSOLL'S works, it has been the aim of the publisher to make it worthy of the author and a pleasure to his friends and admirers. No one can be more conscious than he of the magnitude of the task undertaken, or more keenly feel how far short it must fall of adequate accomplishment.

When it is remembered that countless utterances of the author were never caught from his eloquent lips, it is matter for congratulation that so much has been preserved. The authorized addresses, arguments and articles that have already appeared in print and passed the review of the author's more or less careful inspection, will be readily recognized as accurate and complete; but in this latest and fullest compilation are many emanations from his heart and brain that have never had his scrutiny, were not revised by him, and that yet, by general judgment, should not be lost to the world.

These unedited sundries consist of fragments of speeches and incomplete articles discovered amongst the author's literary remains and for unknown reasons left in more or less unfinished form. It has been the publisher's ambition to gather these fugitive pieces and place them in this edition by the side of the saved treasures. Whether the work has been well or ill done a generous public must decide, while the sole responsibility must rest with, as it has been assumed by, the publisher.

In carrying out the design of the present edition, the publisher gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Mr. Ingersoll's family, who has freely placed at his disposal many papers, inscriptions, monographs, memoranda and pages of valuable material.

Recognition is also here made of the kind courtesy of the press and of publishers of magazines who have generously permitted the publication of articles originally written for them.

Finally, the publisher gives his thanks to all the devoted friends of the author who in many ways, by suggestion and unselfish labor, have aided in getting out this work. Of these, none have been more unremitting in service, and to none is the publisher more indebted, than to Mr. I. Newton Baker, Mr. Ingersoll's former private secretary, to Dr. Edgar C. Beall, and to Mr. George E. Macdonald for the fine Tables of Contents and the very valuable Index to this edition.

C. P. FARRELL.

New York, July, 1900.

THE GODS

AN HONEST GOD IS THE NOBLEST WORK OF MAN.

EACH nation has created a god, and the god has always resembled his creators. He hated and loved what they hated and loved, and he was invariably found on the side of those in power. Each god was intensely patriotic, and detested all nations but his own. All these gods demanded praise, flattery, and worship. Most of them were pleased with sacrifice, and the smell of innocent blood has ever been considered a divine perfume. All these gods have insisted upon having a vast number of priests, and the priests have always insisted upon being supported by the people, and the principal business of these priests has been to boast about their god, and to insist that he could easily vanquish all the other gods put together.

These gods have been manufactured after numberless models, and according to the most grotesque fashions. Some have a thousand arms, some a hundred heads, some are adorned with necklaces of living snakes, some are armed with clubs, some with sword and shield, some with bucklers, and some have wings as a cherub; some were invisible, some would show themselves entire, and some would only show their backs; some were jealous, some were foolish, some turned themselves into men, some into swans, some into bulls, some into doves, and some into Holy Ghosts, and made love to the beautiful daughters of men. Some were married all ought to have been and some were considered as old bachelors from all eternity. Some had children, and the children were turned into gods and worshiped as their fathers had been. Most of these gods were revengeful, savage, lustful, and ignorant. As they generally depended upon their priests for information, their ignorance can hardly excite our astonishment.

These gods did not even know the shape of the worlds they had created, but supposed them perfectly flat. Some thought the day could be lengthened by stopping the sun, that the blowing of horns could throw down the walls of a city, and all knew so little of the real nature of the people they had created, that they commanded the people to love them. Some were so ignorant as to suppose that man could believe just as he might desire, or as they might command, and that to be governed by observation, reason, and experience was a most foul and damning sin. None of these gods could give a true account of the creation of this little earth. All were woefully deficient in geology and astronomy. As a rule, they were most miserable legislators, and as executives, they were far inferior to the average of American presidents.

These deities have demanded the most abject and degrading obedience. In order to please them, man must lay his very face in the dust. Of course, they have always been partial to the people who created them, and have generally shown their partiality by assisting those people to rob and destroy others, and to ravish their wives and daughters. Nothing is so pleasing to these gods as the butchery of unbelievers. Nothing so enrages them, even now, as to have some one deny their existence.

Few nations have been so poor as to have but one god. Gods were made so easily, and the raw material cost so little, that generally the god market was fairly glutted, and heaven crammed with these phantoms. These gods not only attended to the skies, but were supposed to interfere in all the affairs of men. They presided over everybody and everything. They attended to every department. All was supposed to be under their immediate control. Nothing was too small nothing too large; the falling of sparrows and the motions of the planets were alike attended to by these industrious and observing deities. From their starry thrones they frequently came to the earth for the purpose of imparting information to man. It is related of one that he came amid thunderings and lightnings in order to tell the people that they should not cook a kid in its mother's milk. Some left their shining abodes to tell women that they should, or should not, have children, to inform a priest how to cut and wear his apron, and to give directions as to the proper manner of cleaning the intestines of a bird.

When the people failed to worship one of these gods, or failed to feed and clothe his priests, (which was much the same thing,) he generally visited them with pestilence and famine. Sometimes he allowed some other nation to drag them into slavery to sell their wives and children; but generally he glutted his vengeance by murdering their first-born. The priests always did their whole duty, not only in predicting these calamities, but in proving, when they did happen, that they were brought upon the people because they had not given quite enough to them.

These gods differed just as the nations differed; the greatest and most powerful had the most powerful gods, while the weaker ones were obliged to content themselves with the very off-scourings of the heavens. Each of these gods promised happiness here and hereafter to all his slaves, and threatened to eternally punish all who either disbelieved in his existence or suspected that some other god might be his superior; but to deny the existence of all gods was, and is, the crime of crimes. Redden your hands with human blood; blast by slander the fair fame of the innocent; strangle the smiling child upon its mother's knees; deceive, ruin and desert the beautiful girl who loves and trusts you, and your case is not hopeless. For all this and for all these you may be forgiven. For all this, and for all these, that bankrupt court established by the gospel, will give you a discharge; but deny the existence of these divine ghosts, of these gods, and

the sweet and tearful face of Mercy becomes livid with eternal hate. Heaven's golden gates are shut, and you, with an infinite curse ringing in your ears, with the brand of infamy upon your brow, commence your endless wanderings in the lurid gloom of hell an immortal vagrant an eternal outcast a deathless convict.

One of these gods, and one who demands our love, our admiration and our worship, and one who is worshiped, if mere heartless ceremony is worship, gave to his chosen people for their guidance, the following laws of war: "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, *then proclaim peace unto it.* And it shall be if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it. And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thy hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. But the women and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thy self, and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies which the Lord thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these people which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, *thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth.*"

Is it possible for man to conceive of anything more perfectly infamous? Can you believe that such directions were given by any being except an infinite fiend? Remember that the army receiving these instructions was one of invasion. Peace was offered upon condition that the people submitting should be the slaves of the invader; but if any should have the courage to defend their homes, to fight for the love of wife and child, then the sword was to spare none not even the prattling, dimpled babe.

And we are called upon to worship such a God; to get upon our knees and tell him that he is good, that he is merciful, that he is just, and that he is love. We are asked to stifle every noble sentiment of the soul, and to trample under foot all the sweet charities of the heart. Because we refuse to stultify ourselves - refuse to become liars - we are denounced, hated, traduced and ostracized here, and this same god threatens to torment us in eternal fire the moment death allows him to fiercely clutch our naked helpless souls. Let the people hate, let the god threaten we will educate them, and we will despise and defy him.

The book, called the Bible, is filled with passages equally horrible, unjust and atrocious. This is the book to be read in schools in order to make our children loving, kind and gentle! This is the book to be recognized in our Constitution as the source of all authority and justice!

Strange! that no one has ever been persecuted by the church for believing God bad, while hundreds of millions have been destroyed for thinking him good. The Orthodox Church never will forgive the Universalist for saying "God is love." It has always been considered as one of the very highest evidences of true and undefiled religion to insist that all men, women and children deserve eternal damnation. It has always been heresy to say, "God will at last save all."

We are asked to justify these frightful passages, these infamous laws of war, because the Bible is the word of God. As a matter of fact, there never was, and there never can be, an argument, even tending to prove the inspiration of any book whatever. In the absence of positive evidence, analogy and experience, argument is simply impossible, and at the very best, can amount only to a useless agitation of the air. The instant we admit that a book is too sacred to be doubted, or even reasoned about, we are mental serfs. It is infinitely absurd to suppose that a god would address a communication to intelligent beings, and yet make it a crime, to be punished in eternal flames, for them to use their intelligence for the purpose of understanding his communication. If we have the right to use our reason, we certainly have the right to act in accordance with it, and no god can have the right to punish us for such action.

The doctrine that future happiness depends upon belief is monstrous. It is the infamy of infamies. The notion that faith in Christ is to be rewarded by an eternity of bliss, while a dependence upon reason, observation, and experience merits everlasting pain, is too absurd for refutation, and can be relieved only by that unhappy mixture of insanity and ignorance, called "faith." What man, who ever think, can believe that blood can appease God? And yet, our entire system of religion is based upon that belief. The Jews pacified Jehovah with the blood of animals, and according to the Christian system, the blood of Jesus softened the heart of God a little, and rendered possible the salvation of a fortunate few. It is hard to conceive how the human mind can give assent to such terrible ideas, or how any sane man can read the Bible and still believe in the doctrine of inspiration.

Whether the Bible is true or false is of no consequence in comparison with the mental freedom of the race.

As long as man believes the Bible to be infallible, that book is his master. The civilization of this century is not the child of faith, but of unbelief - the result of free thought.

All that is necessary, as it seems to me, to convince any reasonable person that the Bible is simply and purely of human invention of barbarian invention is to read it. Read it as you would any other book; think of it as you would of any other; get the bandage of reverence from your eyes; drive from your heart the phantom of fear; push from the throne of your brain the cowed form of superstition then read the Holy Bible, and you will be amazed that you ever, for one moment, supposed a being of infinite wisdom, goodness and purity, to be the author of such ignorance and of such atrocity.

Our ancestors not only had their god-factories, but they made devils as well. These devils were generally disgraced and fallen gods. Some had headed unsuccessful revolts; some had been caught sweetly reclining in the shadowy folds of some fleecy cloud, kissing the wife of the god of gods. These devils generally sympathized with man. There is in regard to them a most wonderful fact: In nearly all the theologies, mythologies and religions, the devils have been much more humane and merciful than the gods. No devil ever gave one of his generals an order to kill children and to rip open the bodies of pregnant women. Such barbarities were always ordered by the good gods. The pestilences were sent by the most merciful gods. The frightful famine, during which the dying child with pallid lips sucked the withered bosom of a dead mother, was sent by the loving gods. No devil was ever charged with such fiendish brutality.

One of these gods, according to the account, drowned an entire world, with the exception of eight persons. The old, the young, the beautiful and the helpless were remorselessly devoured by the shoreless sea. This, the most fearful tragedy that the imagination of ignorant priests ever conceived, was the act, not of a devil, but of a god, so-called, whom men ignorantly worship unto this day. What a stain such an act would leave upon the character of a devil! One of the prophets of one of these gods, having in his power a captured king, hewed him in pieces in the sight of all the people. Was ever any imp of any devil guilty of such savagery?

One of these gods is reported to have given the following directions concerning human slavery: "If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years shall he serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master has given him a wife and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out free. Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him unto the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever.

According to this, a man was given liberty upon condition that he would desert forever his wife and children. Did any devil ever force upon a husband, upon a father, so cruel and so heartless an alternative? Who can worship such a god? Who can bend the knee to such a monster? Who can pray to such a fiend?

All these gods threatened to torment forever the souls of their enemies. Did any devil ever make so infamous a threat? The basest thing recorded of the devil, is what he did concerning Job and his family, and that was done by the express permission of one of these gods, and to decide a little difference of opinion between their serene highnesses as to the character of "my servant Job."

The first account we have of the devil is found in that purely scientific book called Genesis, and is as follows:

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made, and he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever. Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So he drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life."

According to this account the promise of the devil was fulfilled to the very letter. Adam and Eve did not die, and they did become as gods, knowing good and evil.

The account shows, however, that the gods dreaded education and knowledge then just as they do now. The church still faithfully guards the dangerous tree of knowledge, and has exerted in all ages her utmost power to keep mankind from eating the fruit thereof. The priests have never ceased repeating the old falsehood and the old threat: "Ye shall not eat of it; neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." From every pulpit comes the same cry, born of the same fear: "Lest they eat and become as gods, knowing good and evil." For this reason, religion hates science, faith detests reason, theology is the sworn enemy

of philosophy, and the church with its flaming sword still guards the hated tree, and like its supposed founder, curses to the lowest depths the brave thinkers who eat and become as gods.

If the account given in Genesis is really true, ought we not, after all, to thank this serpent? He was the first schoolmaster, the first advocate of learning, the first enemy of ignorance, the first to whisper in human ears the sacred word liberty, the creator of ambition, the author of modesty, of inquiry, of doubt, of investigation, of progress and of civilization.

Give me the storm and tempest of thought and action, rather than the dead calm of ignorance and faith! Banish me from Eden when you will; but first let me eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge!

Some nations have borrowed their gods; of this number, we are compelled to say, is our own. The Jews having ceased to exist as a nation, and having no further use for a god, our ancestors appropriated him and adopted their devil at the same time. This borrowed god is still an object of some adoration, and this adopted devil still excites the apprehensions of our people. He is still supposed to be setting his traps and snares for the purpose of catching our unwary souls, and is still, with reasonable success, waging the old war against our God.

To me, it seems easy to account for these ideas concerning gods and devils. They are a perfectly natural production. Man has created them all, and under the same circumstances would create them again. Man has not only created all these gods, but he has created them out of the materials by which he has been surrounded. Generally he has modeled them after himself, and has given them hands, heads, feet, eyes, ears, and organs of speech. Each nation made its gods and devils speak its language not only, but put in their mouths the same mistakes in history, geography, astronomy, and in all matters of fact, generally made by the people. No god was ever in advance of the nation that created him. The Negroes represented their deities with black skins and curly hair. The Mongolian gave to his a yellow complexion and dark almond-shaped eyes. The Jews were not allowed to paint theirs, or we should have seen Jehovah with a full beard, an oval face, and an aquiline nose. Zeus was a perfect Greek, and Jove looked as though a member of the Roman senate. The gods of Egypt had the patient face and placid look of the loving people who made them. The gods of northern countries were represented warmly clad in robes of fur; those of the tropics were naked. The gods of India were often mounted upon elephants; those of some islanders were great swimmers, and the deities of the Arctic zone were passionately fond of whale's blubber. Nearly all people have carved or painted representations of their gods, and these representations were, by the lower classes, generally treated as the real gods, and to these images and idols they addressed prayers and offered sacrifice.

"In some countries even at this day, if the people after long praying do not obtain their desires, they turn their images off as impotent gods, or upbraid them in a most reproachful manner, loading them with blows and curses. 'How now, dog of a spirit,' they say, 'we give you lodging in a magnificent temple, we gild you with gold, feed you with the choicest food, and offer incense to you; yet, after all this care, you are so ungrateful as to refuse us what we ask.'

Hereupon they will pull the god down and drag him through the filth of the street. If, in the meantime, it happens that they obtain their request, then, with a great deal of ceremony, they wash him clean, carry him back and place him in his temple again, where they fall down and make excuses for what they have done. 'Of a truth,' they say, 'we were a little too hasty, and you were a little too long in your grant. Why should you bring this beating on yourself. But what is done cannot be undone. Let us not think of it any more. If you will forget what is past we will gild you over brighter again than before.'

Man has never been at a loss for gods. He has worshiped almost everything, including the vilest and most disgusting beasts. He has worshiped fire, earth, air, water, light, stars, and for hundreds of ages prostrated himself before enormous snakes. Savage tribes often make gods of articles they get from civilized people. The Todas worship a cow-bell. The Kotas worship two silver plates, which they regard as husband and wife, and another tribe manufactured a god out of a king of hearts.

Man, having always been the physical superior of woman, accounts for the fact that most of the high gods have been males. Had woman been the physical superior, the powers supposed to be the rulers of Nature would have been women, and instead of being represented in the apparel of man, they would have luxuriated in trains, low-necked dresses, laces and back-hair.

Nothing can be plainer than that each nation gives to its god its peculiar characteristics, and that every individual gives to his god his personal peculiarities.

Man has no ideas, and can have none, except those suggested by his surroundings. He cannot conceive of anything utterly unlike what he has seen or felt. He can exaggerate, diminish, combine, separate, deform, beautify, improve, multiply and compare what he sees, what he feels, what he hears, and all of which he takes cognizance through the medium of the senses; but he cannot create. Having seen exhibitions of power, he can say, omnipotent. Having lived, he can say, immortality. Knowing something of time, he can say, eternity. Conceiving something of intelligence, he can say, God. Having seen exhibitions of malice, he can say, devil. A few gleams of happiness having fallen athwart the

gloom of his life, he can say, heaven. Pain, in its numberless forms, having been experienced, he can say, hell. Yet all these ideas have a foundation in fact, and only a foundation. The superstructure has been reared by exaggerating, diminishing, combining, separating, deforming, beautifying, improving or multiplying realities, so that the edifice or fabric is but the incongruous grouping of what man has perceived through the medium of the senses. It is as though we should give to a lion the wings of an eagle, the hoofs of a bison, the tail of a horse, the pouch of a kangaroo, and the trunk of an elephant. We have in imagination created an impossible monster. And yet the various parts of this monster really exist. So it is with all the gods that man has made.

Beyond nature man cannot go even in thought — above nature he cannot raise — below nature he cannot fall.

Man, in his ignorance, supposed that all phenomena were produced by some intelligent powers, and with direct reference to him. To preserve friendly relations with these powers was, and still is, the object of all religions. Man knelt through fear and to implore assistance, or through gratitude for some favor which he supposed had been rendered. He endeavored by supplication to appease some being who, for some reason, had, as he believed, become enraged. The lightning and thunder terrified him. In the presence of the volcano he sank upon his knees. The great forests filled with wild and ferocious beasts, the monstrous serpents crawling in mysterious depths, the boundless sea, the flaming comets, the sinister eclipses, the awful calmness of the stars, and, more than all, the perpetual presence of death, convinced him that he was the sport and prey of unseen and malignant powers. The strange and frightful diseases to which he was subject, the freezing and burnings of fever, the contortions of epilepsy, the sudden palsies, the darkness of night, and the wild, terrible and fantastic dreams that filled his brain, satisfied him that he was haunted and pursued by countless spirits of evil. For some reason he supposed that these spirits differed in power that they were not all alike malevolent that the higher controlled the lower, and that his very existence depended upon gaining the assistance of the more powerful. For this purpose he resorted to prayer, to flattery, to worship and to sacrifice. These ideas appear to have been almost universal in savage man.

For ages all nations supposed that the sick and insane were possessed by evil spirits. For thousands of years the practice of medicine consisted in frightening these spirits away. Usually the priests would make the loudest and most discordant noises possible. They would blow horns, beat upon rude drums, clash cymbals, and in the meantime utter the most unearthly yells. If the noise-remedy failed, they would implore the aid of some more powerful spirit.

To pacify these spirits was considered of infinite importance. The poor barbarian, knowing that men could be softened by gifts, gave to these spirits that which to him seemed of the most value. With bursting heart he would offer the blood of his dearest child. It was impossible for him to conceive of a god utterly unlike himself, and he naturally supposed that these powers of the air would be affected a little at the sight of so great and so deep a sorrow. It was with the barbarian then as with the civilized now one class lived upon and made merchandise of the fears of another. Certain persons took it upon themselves to appease the gods, and to instruct the people in their duties to these unseen powers. This was the origin of the priesthood. The priest pretended to stand between the wrath of the gods and the helplessness of man. He was man's attorney at the court of heaven. He carried to the invisible world a flag of truce, a protest and a request. He came back with a command, with authority and with power. Man fell upon his knees before his own servant, and the priest, taking advantage of the awe inspired by his supposed influence with the gods, made of his fellowman a cringing hypocrite and slave. Even Christ, the supposed son of God, taught that persons were possessed of evil spirits, and frequently, according to the account, gave proof of his divine origin and mission by frightening droves of devils out of his unfortunate countrymen. Casting out devils was his principal employment, and the devils thus banished generally took occasion to acknowledge him as the true Messiah; which was not only very kind of them, but quite fortunate for him. The religious people have always regarded the testimony of these devils as perfectly conclusive, and the writers of the New Testament quote the words of these imps of darkness with great satisfaction.

The fact that Christ could withstand the temptations of the devil was considered as conclusive evidence that he was assisted by some god, or at least by some being superior to man. St. Matthew gives an account of an attempt made by the devil to tempt the supposed son of God; and it has always excited the wonder of Christians that the temptation was so nobly and heroically withstood. The account to which I refer is as follows:

"Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when the tempter came to him, he said: 'If thou be the son of God, command that these stones be made bread.' But he answered, and said: 'It is written: man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God.' Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city and setteth him upon a pinnacle of the temple and said unto him: 'If thou be the son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, lest at any time thou shall dash thy foot against a stone.' Jesus said unto him: 'It is written again, thou shall not tempt the Lord thy God.' Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain and showed him all the

kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and said unto him: 'All these will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' "

The Christians now claim that Jesus was God. If he was God, of course the devil knew that fact, and yet, according to this account, the devil took the omnipotent God and placed him upon a pinnacle of the temple, and endeavored to induce him to dash himself against the earth. Failing in that, he took the creator, owner and governor of the universe up into an exceeding high mountain, and offered him this world - **this grain of sand** - if he, the God of all the worlds, would fall down and worship him, a poor devil, without even a tax title to one foot of dirt! Is it possible the devil was such an idiot? Should any great credit be given to this deity for not being caught with such chaff? Think of it! The devil the prince of sharpers - **the king of cunning** - the master of finesse, trying to bribe God with a grain of sand that belonged to God!

Is there in all the religious literature of the world anything more grossly absurd than this?

These devils, according to the Bible, were of various kinds some could speak and hear, others were deaf and dumb. All could not be cast out in the same way. The deaf and dumb spirits were quite difficult to deal with. St. Mark tells of a gentleman who brought his son to Christ. The boy, it seems, was possessed of a dumb spirit, over which the disciples had no control. "Jesus said unto the spirit: 'Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him' "Whereupon, the deaf spirit (having heard what was said) cried out (being dumb) and immediately vacated the premises. The ease with which Christ controlled this deaf and dumb spirit excited the wonder of his disciples, and they asked him privately why they could not cast that spirit out. To whom he replied: "This kind can come forth by nothing but prayer and fasting." Is here a Christian in the whole world who would believe such a story if found in any other book? The trouble is, these pious people shut up their reason, and then open their Bible.

In the olden times the existence of devils was universally admitted. The people had no doubt upon that subject, and from such belief it followed as a matter of course, that a person, in order to vanquish these devils, had either to be a god, or to be assisted by one. All founders of religions have established their claims to divine origin by controlling evil spirits and suspending the laws of nature. Casting out devils was a certificate of divinity. A prophet, unable to cope with the powers of darkness was regarded with contempt. The utterance of the highest and noblest sentiments, the most blameless and holy life, commanded but little respect, unless accompanied by power to work miracles and command spirits.

This belief in good and evil powers had its origin in the fact that man was surrounded by what he was pleased to call good and evil phenomena. Phenomena affecting man pleasantly were ascribed to good spirits, while those affecting him unpleasantly or injuriously, were ascribed to evil spirits. It being admitted that all phenomena were produced by spirits, the spirits were divided according to the phenomena, and the phenomena were good or bad as they affected man. Good spirits were supposed to be the authors of good phenomena and evil spirits of the evil so that the idea of a devil has been as universal as the idea of a god.

Many writers maintain that an idea to become universal must be true; that all universal ideas are innate, and that innate ideas cannot be false. If the fact that an idea has been universal proves that it is innate, and if the fact that an idea is innate proves that it is correct, then the believers in innate ideas must admit that the evidence of a god superior to nature, and of a devil superior to nature, is exactly the same, and that the existence of such a devil must be as self-evident as the existence of such a god. The truth is, a god was inferred from good, and a devil from bad, phenomena. And it is just as natural and logical to suppose that a devil would cause happiness as to suppose that a god would produce misery. Consequently, if an intelligence, infinite and supreme, is the immediate author of all phenomena, it is difficult to determine whether such intelligence is the friend or enemy of man. If phenomena were all good, we might say they were all produced by a perfectly beneficent being. If they were all bad, we might say they were produced by a perfectly malevolent power; but, as phenomena are, as they affect man, both good and bad, they must be produced by different and antagonistic spirits; by one who is sometimes actuated by kindness, and sometimes by malice; or all must be produced of necessity, and without reference to their consequences upon man.

The foolish doctrine that all phenomena can be traced to the interference of good and evil spirits, has been, and still is, almost universal. That most people still believe in some spirit that can change the natural order of events, is proven by the fact that nearly all resort to prayer. Thousands, at this very moment, are probably imploring some supposed power to interfere in their behalf. Some want health restored; some ask that the loved and absent be watched over and protected, some pray for riches, some for rain, some want diseases stayed, some vainly ask for food, some ask for revivals, a few ask for more wisdom, and now and then one tells the Lord to do as he may think best. Thousands ask to be protected from the devil; some, like David, pray for revenge, and some implore even God, not to lead them into temptation. All these prayers rest upon, and are produced by, the idea that some power not only can, but probably will, change the order of the universe. This belief has been among the great majority of tribes

and nations. All sacred books are filled with the accounts of such interferences, and our own Bible is no exception to this rule.

If we believe in a power superior to nature, it is perfectly natural to suppose that such power can and will interfere in the affairs of this world. If there is no interference, of what practical use can such power be? The Scriptures give us the most wonderful accounts of divine interference: Animals talk like men; springs gurgle from dry bones; the sun and moon stop in the heavens in order that General Joshua may have more time to murder; the shadow on a dial goes back ten degrees to convince a petty king of a barbarous people that he is not going to die of a boil; fire refuses to burn; water positively declines to seek its level, but stands up like a wall; grains of sand become lice; common walking-sticks, to gratify a mere freak, twist themselves into serpents, and then swallow each other by way of exercise; murmuring streams, laughing at the attraction of gravitation, run up hill for years, following wandering tribes from a pure love of frolic; prophecy becomes altogether easier than history; the sons of God become enamored of the world's girls; women are changed into salt for the purpose of keeping a great event fresh in the minds of men; an excellent article of brimstone is imported from heaven free of duty; clothes refuse to wear out for forty years; birds keep restaurants and feed wandering prophets free of expense; bears tear children in pieces for laughing at old men without wigs; muscular development depends upon the length of one's hair; dead people come to life, simply to get a joke on their enemies and heirs; witches and wizards converse freely with the souls of the departed, and God himself becomes a stone-cutter and engraver, after having been a tailor and dressmaker.

The veil between heaven and earth was always rent or lifted. The shadows of this world, the radiance of heaven, and the glare of hell mixed and mingled until man became uncertain as to which country he really inhabited. Man dwelt in an unreal world. He mistook his ideas, his dreams, for real things. His fears became terrible and malicious monsters. He lived in the midst of furies and fairies, nymphs and naiads, goblins and ghosts, witches and wizards, sprites and spooks, deities and devils. The obscure and gloomy depths were filled with claw and wing - with beak and hoof - with leering looks and sneering mouths - with the malice of deformity - with the cunning of hatred, and with all the slimy forms that fear can draw and paint upon the shadowy canvas of the dark.

It is enough to make one almost insane with pity to think what man in the long night has suffered; of the tortures he has endured, surrounded, as he supposed, by malignant powers and clutched by the fierce phantoms of the air. No wonder that he fell upon his trembling knees that he built altars and reddened them even with his own blood. No wonder that he implored ignorant priests and impudent magicians for aid. No wonder that he crawled groveling in

the dust to the temple's door, and there, in the insanity of despair, besought the deaf gods to hear his bitter cry of agony and fear.

The savage as he emerges from a state of barbarism, gradually loses faith in his idols of wood and stone, and in their place puts a multitude of spirits. As he advances in knowledge, he generally discards the petty spirits, and in their stead believes in one, whom he supposes to be infinite and supreme. Supposing this great spirit to be superior to nature, he offers worship or flattery in exchange for assistance. At last, finding that he obtains no aid from this supposed deity - finding that every search after the absolute must of necessity end in failure finding that man cannot by any possibility conceive of the conditionless he begins to investigate the facts by which he is surrounded, and to depend upon himself.

The people are beginning to think, to reason and to investigate. Slowly, painfully, but surely, the gods are being driven from the earth. Only upon rare occasions are they, even by the most religious, supposed to interfere in the affairs of men. In most matters we are at last supposed to be free. Since the invention of steamships and railways, so that the products of all countries can be easily interchanged, the gods have quit the business of producing famine. Now and then they kill a child because it is idolized by its parents. As a rule they have given up causing accidents on railroads, exploding boilers, and bursting kerosene lamps. Cholera, yellow fever, and small-pox are still considered heavenly weapons; but measles, itch and ague are now attributed to natural causes. As a general thing, the gods have stopped drowning children, except as a punishment for violating the Sabbath. They still pay some attention to the affairs of kings, men of genius and persons of great wealth; but ordinary people are left to shirk for themselves as best they may. In wars between great nations, the gods still interfere; but in prize fights, the best man with an honest referee, is almost sure to win.

The church cannot abandon the idea of special providence. To give up that doctrine is to give up all. The church must insist that prayer is answered - that some power superior to nature hears and grants the request of the sincere and humble Christian, and that this same power in some mysterious way provides for all.

A devout clergyman sought every opportunity to impress upon the mind of his son the fact that God takes care of all his creatures; that the falling sparrow attracts his attention, and that his loving kindness is over all his works. Happening, one day, to see a crane wading in quest of food, the good man pointed out to his son the perfect adaptation of the crane to get his living in that manner. "See," said he, "how his legs are formed for wading! What a long slender

bill he has. Observe how nicely he folds his feet when putting them in or drawing them out of the water! He does not cause the slightest ripple. He is thus enabled to approach the fish without giving them any notice of his arrival." "My son," said he, it is impossible to look at that bird without recognizing the design, as well as the goodness of God, in thus providing the means of subsistence." "Yes," replied the boy, "I think I see the goodness of God, at least so far as the crane is concerned; but after all, father, don't you think the arrangement a little tough on the fish?"

Even the advanced religionist, although disbelieving in any great amount of interference by the gods in this age of the world, still thinks that in the beginning, some god made the laws governing the universe. He believes that in consequence of these laws a man can lift a greater weight with, than without, a lever; that this god so made matter, and so established the order of things, that two bodies can not occupy the same space at the same time; so that a body once put in motion will keep moving until it is stopped; so that it is a greater distance around, than across a circle; so that a perfect square has four equal sides, instead of five or seven. He insists that it took a direct interposition of Providence to make the whole greater than a part, and that had it not been for this power superior to nature, twice one might have been more than twice two, and sticks and strings might have had only one end apiece. Like the old Scotch divine, he thanks God that Sunday comes at the end instead of in the middle of the week, and that death comes at the close instead of at the commencement of life, thereby giving us time to prepare for that holy day and that most solemn event. These religious people see nothing but design everywhere, and personal, intelligent interference in everything. They insist that the universe has been created, and that the adaptation of means to ends is perfectly apparent. They point us to the sunshine, to the flowers, to the April rain, and to all there is of beauty and of use in the world. Did it ever occur to them that a cancer is as beautiful in its development as is the reddest rose? That what they are pleased to call the adaptation of means to ends, is as apparent in the cancer as in the April rain? How beautiful the process of digestion! By what ingenious methods the blood is poisoned so that the cancer shall have food! By what wonderful contrivances the entire system of man is made to pay tribute to this divine and charming cancer! See by what admirable instrumentalities it feeds itself from the surrounding quivering, dainty flesh! See how it gradually but surely expands and grows! By what marvelous mechanism it is supplied with long and slender roots that reach out to the most secret nerves of pain for sustenance and life! What beautiful colors it presents! Seen through the microscope it is a miracle of order and beauty. All the ingenuity of man cannot stop its growth. Think of the amount of thought it must have required to invent a way by which the life of one man might be given to produce one cancer? Is it possible to look upon it and doubt

that there is design in the universe, and that the inventor of this wonderful cancer must be infinitely powerful, ingenious and good?

We are told that the universe was designed and created, and that it is absurd to suppose that matter has existed from eternity, but that it is perfectly self-evident that a god has.

If a god created the universe, then, there must have been a time when he commenced to create. Back of that time there must have been an eternity, during which there had existed nothing absolutely nothing except this supposed god. According to this theory, this god spent an eternity, so to speak, in an infinite vacuum, and in perfect idleness.

Admitting that a god did create the universe, the question then arises, of what did he create it? It certainly was not made of nothing. Nothing, considered in the light of a raw material, is a most decided failure. It follows, then, that the god must have made the universe out of himself, he being the only existence. The universe is material, and if it was made of god, the god must have been material. With this very thought in his mind, Anaximander of Miletus said: "Creation is the decomposition of the infinite."

It has been demonstrated that the earth would fall to the sun, only for the fact, that it is attracted by other worlds, and those worlds must be attracted by other worlds still beyond them, and so on, without end. This proves the material universe to be infinite. If an infinite universe has been made out of an infinite god, how much of the god is left?

The idea of a creative deity is gradually being abandoned, and nearly all truly scientific minds admit that matter must have existed from eternity. It is indestructible, and the indestructible cannot be created. It is the crowning glory of our century to have demonstrated the indestructibility and the eternal persistence of force. Neither matter nor force can be increased nor diminished. Force cannot exist apart from matter. Matter exists only in connection with force, and consequently, a force apart from matter, and superior to nature, is a demonstrated impossibility.

Force, then, must have also existed from eternity, and could not have been created. Matter in its countless forms, from dead earth to the eyes of those we love, and force, in all its manifestations, from simple motion to the grandest thought, deny creation and defy control.

Thought is a form of force. We walk with the same force with which we think. Man is an organism that changes several forms of force into thought-force. Man is a machine into which we put what we call food, and produce what we call thought. Think of that wonderful chemistry by which bread was changed into the divine tragedy of Hamlet!

A god must not only be material, but he must be an organism, capable of changing other forms of force into thought-force. This is what we call eating. Therefore, if the god thinks, he must eat; that is to say, he must of necessity have some means of supplying the force with which to think. It is impossible to conceive of a being who can eternally impart force to matter, and yet have no means of supplying the force thus imparted.

If neither matter nor force were created, what evidence have we, then, of the existence of a power superior to nature? The theologian will probably reply, "We have law and order, cause and effect, and beside all this, matter could not have put itself in motion."

Suppose, for the sake of the argument, that there is no being superior to nature, and that matter and force have existed from eternity. Now, suppose that two atoms should come together, would there be an effect? Yes. Suppose they came in exactly opposite directions with equal force, they would be stopped, to say the least. This would be an effect. If this is so, then you have matter, force and effect without being superior to nature. Now, suppose that two other atoms, just like the first two, should come together under precisely the same circumstances, would not the effect be exactly the same? Yes. Like causes, producing like effects, is what we mean by law and order. Then we have matter, force, effect, law and order without a being superior to nature. Now, we know that every effect must also be a cause, and that every cause must be an effect. The atoms coming together did produce an effect, and as every effect must also be a cause, the effect produced by the collision of the atoms, must as to something else have been a cause. Then we have matter, force, law, order, cause and effect without a being superior to nature. Nothing is left for the supernatural but empty space. His throne is a void, and his boasted realm is without matter, without force, without law, without cause, and without effect.

But what put all this matter in motion? If matter and force have existed from eternity, then matter must have always been in motion. There can be no force without motion. Force is for ever active, and there is, and there can be no cessation. If, therefore, matter and force have existed from eternity, so has motion. In the whole universe there is not even one atom in a state of rest.

A deity outside of nature exists in nothing, and is nothing. Nature embraces with infinite arms all matter and all force. That which is beyond her grasp is destitute of both, and can hardly be worth the worship and adoration even of a man.

There is but one way to demonstrate the existence of a power independent of and superior to nature and that is by breaking, if only for one moment, the continuity of cause and effect. Pluck from the endless chain of existence one little link; stop for one instant the grand procession, and you have shown beyond all contradiction that nature has a master. Change the fact, just for one second, that matter attracts matter, and a god appears.

The rudest savage has always known this fact, and for that reason always demanded the evidence of miracle. The founder of a religion must be able to turn water into wine - cure with a word the blind and lame, and raise with a simple touch the dead to life. It was necessary for him to demonstrate to the satisfaction of his barbarian disciple, that he was superior to nature. In times of ignorance this was easy to do. The credulity of the savage was almost boundless. To him the marvelous was the beautiful, the mysterious was the sublime. Consequently, every religion has for its foundation a miracle — that is to say, a violation of nature — that is to say, a falsehood.

No one, in the world's whole history, ever attempted to substantiate a truth by a miracle. Truth scorns the assistance of miracle. Nothing but falsehood ever attested itself by signs and wonders. No miracle ever was performed, and no sane man ever thought he had performed one, and until one is performed, there can be no evidence of the existence of any power superior to and independent of nature.

The church wishes us to believe. Let the church, or one of its intellectual saints, perform a miracle, and we will believe. We are told that nature has a superior. Let this superior, for one single instant, control nature, and we will admit the truth of your assertions.

We have heard talk enough. We have listened to all the drowsy, idealess, vapid sermons that we wish to hear. We have read your Bible and the works of your best minds. We have heard your prayers, your solemn groans and your reverential amens. All these amount to less than nothing. We want one fact. We beg at the doors of your churches for just one little fact. We pass our hats along your pews and under your pulpits and implore you for just one fact. We know all about your mouldy wonders and your stale miracles. We want this year's fact. We ask only one. Give us one fact for charity. Your miracles are too ancient. The witnesses have been dead for nearly two thousand years. Their reputation for

"truth and veracity" in the neighborhood where they resided is wholly unknown to us. Give us a new miracle, and substantiate it by witnesses who still have the cheerful habit of living in this world. Do not send us to Jericho to hear the winding horns, nor put us in the fire with Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego. Do not compel us to navigate the sea with Captain Jonah, nor dine with Mr. Ezekiel. There is no sort of use in sending us fox-hunting with Samson. We have positively lost all interest in that little speech so eloquently delivered by Balaam's inspired donkey. It is worse than useless to show us fishes with money in their mouths, and call our attention to vast multitudes stuffing themselves with five crackers and two sardines. We demand a new miracle, and we demand it now. Let the church furnish at least one, or forever after hold her peace.

In the olden time, the church, by violating the order of nature, proved the existence of her God. At that time miracles were performed with the most astonishing ease. They became so common that the church ordered her priests to desist. And now this same church the people having found some little sense admits, not only, that she cannot perform a miracle, but insists that the absence of miracle the steady, unbroken march of cause and effect, proves the existence of a power superior to nature. The fact is, however, that the indissoluble chain of cause and effect proves exactly the contrary.

Sir William Hamilton, one of the pillars of modern theology, in discussing this very subject, uses the following language: "The phenomena of matter taken by themselves, so far from warranting any inference to the existence of a god, would on the contrary ground even an argument to his negation. The phenomena of the material world are subjected to immutable laws; are produced and reproduced in the same invariable succession, and manifest only the blind force of a mechanical necessity."

Nature is but an endless series of efficient causes. She cannot create, but she eternally transforms. There was no beginning, and there can be no end.

The best minds, even in the religious world, admit that in material nature there is no evidence of what they are pleased to call a god. They find their evidence in the phenomena of intelligence, and very innocently assert that intelligence is above, and in fact, opposed to nature. They insist that man, at least, is a special creation; that he has somewhere in his brain a divine spark, a little portion of the "Great First Cause." They say that matter cannot produce thought; but that thought can produce matter. They tell us that man has intelligence, and therefore there must be an intelligence greater than his. Why not say, God has intelligence, therefore there must be an intelligence greater than his? So far as we know, there is no intelligence apart from matter. We cannot conceive of thought, except as produced within a brain.

The science, by means of which they demonstrate the existence of an impossible intelligence, and an incomprehensible power is called, metaphysics or theology. The theologians admit that the phenomena of matter tend, at least, to disprove the existence of any power superior to nature, because in such phenomena we see nothing but an endless chain of efficient causes nothing but the force of a mechanical necessity. They therefore appeal to what they denominate the phenomena of mind to establish this superior power.

The trouble is, that in the phenomena of mind we find the same endless chain of efficient causes; the same mechanical necessity. Every thought must have had an efficient cause. Every motive, every desire, every fear, hope and dream must have been necessarily produced. There is no room in the mind of man for providence or chance. The facts and forces governing thought are as absolute as those governing the motions of the planets. A poem is produced by the forces of nature, and is as necessarily and naturally produced as mountains and seas. You will seek in vain for a thought in man's brain without its efficient cause. Every mental operation is the necessary result of certain facts and conditions. Mental phenomena are considered more complicated than those of matter, and consequently more mysterious. Being more mysterious, they are considered better evidence of the existence of a god. No one infers a god from the simple, from the known, from what is understood, but from the complex, from the unknown, and, incomprehensible. Our ignorance is God; what we know is science.

When we abandon the doctrine that some infinite being created matter and force, and enacted a code of laws for their government, the idea of interference will be lost. The real priest will then be, not the mouth-piece of some pretended deity, but the interpreter of nature. From that moment the church ceases to exist. The tapers will die out upon the dusty altar; the moths will eat the fading velvet of pulpit and pew; the Bible will take its place with the Shastras, Puranas, Vedas, Eddas, Sagas and Korans, and the fetters of a degrading faith will fall from the minds of men.

"But," says the religionist, "you cannot explain everything; you cannot understand every thing; and that which you cannot explain, that which you do not comprehend, is my God."

We are explaining more every day. We understand more every day; consequently your God is growing smaller every day.

Nothing daunted the religionist then insists that nothing can exist without a cause, except cause, and that this uncaused cause is God.

To this we again reply: Every cause must produce an effect, because until it does produce an effect, it is not a cause. Every effect must in its turn become a cause. Therefore, in the nature of things, there cannot be a last cause, for the reason that a so-called last cause would necessarily produce an effect, and that effect must of necessity become a cause. The converse of these propositions must be true. Every effect must have had a cause, and every cause must have been an effect. Therefore there could have been no first cause. A first cause is just as impossible as a last effect.

Beyond the universe there is nothing, and within the universe the supernatural does not and cannot exist.

The moment these great truths are understood and admitted, a belief in general or special providence becomes impossible. From that instant men will cease their vain efforts to please an imaginary being, and will give their time and attention to the affairs of this world. They will abandon the idea of attaining any object by prayer and supplication. The element of uncertainty will, in a great measure, be removed from the domain of the future, and man, gathering courage from a succession of victories over the obstructions of nature, will attain a serene grandeur unknown to the disciples of any superstition. The plans of mankind will no longer be interfered with by the finger of a supposed omnipotence, and no one will believe that nations or individuals are protected or destroyed by any deity whatever. Science, freed from the chains of pious custom and evangelical prejudice, will, within her sphere, be supreme. The mind will investigate without reverence, and publish its conclusions without fear. Agassiz will no longer hesitate to declare the Mosaic cosmogony utterly inconsistent with the demonstrated truths of geology, and will cease pretending any reverence for the Jewish Scriptures. The moment science succeeds in rendering the church powerless for evil, the real thinkers will be outspoken. The little flags of truce carried by timid philosophers will disappear, and the cowardly parley will give place to victory lasting and universal.

If we admit that some infinite being has controlled the destinies of persons and peoples, history becomes a most cruel and bloody farce. Age after age, the strong have trampled upon the weak; the crafty and heartless have ensnared and enslaved the simple and innocent, and nowhere, in all the annals of mankind, has any god succored the oppressed.

Man should cease to expect aid from on high. By this time he should know that heaven has no ear to hear, and no hand to help. The present is the necessary child of all the past. There has been no chance, and there can be no interference.

If abuses are destroyed, man must destroy them. If slaves are freed, man must free them. If new truths are discovered, man must discover them. If the naked are clothed; if the hungry are fed; if justice is done; if labor is rewarded; if superstition is driven from the mind; if the defenseless are protected and if the right finally triumphs, all must be the work of man. The grand victories of the future must be won by man, and by man alone.

Nature, so far as we can discern, without passion and without intention, forms, transforms, and retransforms forever. She neither weeps nor rejoices. She produces man without purpose, and obliterates him without regret. She knows no distinction between the beneficial and the hurtful. Poison and nutrition, pain and joy, life and death, smiles and tears are alike to her. She is neither merciful nor cruel. She cannot be flattered by worship nor melted by tears. She does not know even the attitude of prayer. She appreciates no difference between poison in the fangs of snakes and mercy in the hearts of men. Only through man does nature take cognizance of the good, the true, and the beautiful; and, so far as we know, man is the highest intelligence.

And yet man continues to believe that there is some power independent of and superior to nature, and still endeavors, by form, ceremony, supplication, hypocrisy and sacrifice, to obtain its aid. His best energies have been wasted in the service of this phantom. The horrors of witch craft were all born of an ignorant belief in the existence of a totally depraved being superior to nature, acting in perfect independence of her laws; and all religious superstition has had for its basis a belief in at least two beings, one good and the other bad, both of whom could arbitrarily change the order of the universe. The history of religion is simply the story of man's efforts in all ages to avoid one of these powers, and to pacify the other. Both powers have inspired little else than abject fear. The cold, calculating sneer of the devil, and the frown of God, were equally terrible. In any event, man's fate was to be arbitrarily fixed forever by an unknown power superior to all law, and to all fact. Until this belief is thrown aside, man must consider himself the slave of phantom masters — neither of whom promises liberty in this world nor in the next.

Man must learn to rely upon himself. Reading bibles will not protect him from the blasts of winter, but houses, fires, and clothing will. To prevent famine, one plow is worth a million sermons, and even patent medicines will cure more diseases than all the prayers uttered since the beginning of the world.

Although many eminent men have endeavored to harmonize necessity and free will, the existence of evil, and the infinite power and goodness of God, they have succeeded only in producing learned and ingenious failures. Immense efforts have been made to reconcile ideas utterly inconsistent with the facts by which we are surrounded, and all persons who have failed to perceive the pretended reconciliation, have been denounced as infidels, atheists and scoffers. The whole power of the church has been brought to bear against philosophers and scientists in order to compel a denial of the authority of demonstration, and to induce some Judas to betray Reason, one of the saviors of mankind.

During that frightful period known as the "Dark Ages," Faith reigned, with scarcely a rebellious subject. Her temples were "carpeted with knees," and the wealth of nations adorned her countless shrines. The great painters prostituted their genius to immortalize her vagaries, while the poets enshrined them in song. At her bidding, man covered the earth with blood. The scales of Justice were turned with her gold, and for her use were invented all the cunning instruments of pain. She built cathedrals for God and dungeons for men. She peopled the clouds with angels and the earth with slaves. For centuries the world was retracing its steps going steadily back toward barbaric night! A few infidels — a few heretics cried, "Halt!" to the great rabble of ignorant devotion, and made it possible for the genius of the nineteenth century to revolutionize the cruel creeds and superstitions of mankind.

The thoughts of man, in order to be of any real worth, must be free. Under the influence of fear the brain is paralyzed, and instead of bravely solving a problem for itself, tremblingly adopts the solution of another. As long as a majority of men will cringe to the very earth before some petty prince or king, what must be the infinite abjectness of their little souls in the presence of their supposed creator and God? Under such circumstances, what can their thoughts be worth?

The originality of repetition, and the mental vigor of acquiescence, are all that we have any right to expect from the Christian world. As long as every question is answered by the word "God," scientific inquiry is simply impossible. As fast as phenomena are satisfactorily explained the domain of the power, supposed to be superior to nature must decrease, while the horizon of the known must as constantly continue to enlarge.

It is no longer satisfactory to account for the fall and rise of nations by saying, "It is the will of God." Such an explanation puts ignorance and education upon an exact equality, and does away with the idea of really accounting for anything whatever.

Will the religionist pretend that the real end of science is to ascertain how and why God acts? Science, from such a standpoint would consist in investigating the law of arbitrary action, and in a grand endeavor to ascertain the rules necessarily obeyed by infinite caprice.

From a philosophical point of view, science is knowledge of the laws of life; of the conditions of happiness; of the facts by which we are surrounded, and the relations we sustain to men and things by means of which, man, so to speak, subjugates nature and bends the elemental powers to his will, making blind force the servant of his brain.

A belief in special providence does away with the spirit of investigation, and is inconsistent with personal effort. Why should man endeavor to thwart the designs of God? Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature? Under the influence of this belief, man, basking in the sunshine of a delusion, considers the lilies of the field and refuses to take any thought for the morrow. Believing himself in the power of an infinite being, who can, at any moment, dash him to the lowest hell or raise him to the highest heaven, he necessarily abandons the idea of accomplishing anything by his own efforts. As long as this belief was general, the world was filled with ignorance, superstition and misery. The energies of man were wasted in a vain effort to obtain the aid of this power, supposed to be superior to nature. For countless ages, even men were sacrificed upon the altar of this impossible god. To please him, mothers have shed the blood of their own babes; martyrs have chanted triumphant songs in the midst of flame; priests have gorged themselves with blood; nuns have forsworn the ecstasies of love; old men have tremblingly implored; women have sobbed and entreated; every pain has been endured, and every horror has been perpetrated.

Through the dim long years that have fled, humanity has suffered more than can be conceived. Most of the misery has been endured by the weak, the loving and the innocent. Women have been treated like poisonous beasts, and little children trampled upon as though they had been vermin. Numberless altars have been reddened, even with the blood of babes; beautiful girls have been given to slimy serpents; whole races of men doomed to centuries of slavery, and everywhere there has been outrage beyond the power of genius to express. During all these years the suffering has supplicated; the withered lips of famine have prayed; the pale victims have implored, and Heaven has been deaf and blind. Of what use have the gods been to man?

It is no answer to say that some god created the world, established certain laws, and then turned his attention to other matters, leaving his children weak, ignorant and unaided, to fight the battle of life alone. It is no solution to declare

that in some other world this god will render a few, or even all, his subjects happy. What right have we to expect that a perfectly wise, good and powerful being will ever do better than he has done, and is doing? The world is filled with imperfections. If it was made by an infinite being, what reason have we for saying that he will render it nearer perfect than it now is? If the infinite "Father" allows a majority of his children to live in ignorance and wretchedness now, what evidence is there that he will ever improve their condition? Will God have more power? Will he become more merciful? Will his love for his poor creatures increase? Can the conduct of infinite wisdom, power and love ever change? Is the infinite capable of any improvement whatever?

We are informed by the clergy that this world is a kind of school; that the evils by which we are surrounded are for the purpose of developing our souls and that only by suffering can men become pure, strong, virtuous and grand.

Supposing this to be true, what is to become of those who die in infancy? The little children, according to this philosophy, can never be developed. They were so unfortunate as to escape the ennobling influences of pain and misery, and as a consequence, are doomed to an eternity of mental inferiority. If the clergy are right on this question, none are so unfortunate as the happy, and we should envy only the suffering and distressed. If evil is necessary to the development of man, in this life, how is it possible for the soul to improve in the perfect joy of Paradise?

Since Paley found his watch, the argument of "design" has been relied upon as unanswerable. The church teaches that this world, and all that it contains, were created substantially as we now see them; that the grasses, the flowers, the trees, and all animals, including man, were special creations, and that they sustain no necessary relation to each other. The most orthodox will admit that some earth has been washed into the sea; that the sea has encroached a little upon the land, and that some mountains may be a trifle lower than in the morning of creation. The theory of gradual development was unknown to our fathers; the idea of evolution did not occur to them. Our fathers looked upon the then arrangement of things as the primal arrangement. The earth appeared to them fresh from the hands of a deity. They knew nothing of the slow evolutions of countless years, but supposed that the almost infinite variety of vegetable and animal forms had existed from the first.

Suppose that upon some island we should find a man a million years of age, and suppose that we should find him in the possession of a most beautiful carriage, constructed upon the most perfect model. And suppose, further, that he should tell us that it was the result of several hundred thousand years of labor and of thought; that for fifty thousand years he used as flat a log as he could find,

before it occurred to him, that by splitting the log, he could have the same surface with only half the weight; that it took him many thousand years to invent wheels for this log; that the wheels he first used were solid, and that fifty thousand years of thought suggested the use of spokes and tire; that for many centuries he used the wheels without linch-pins; that it took a hundred thousand years more to think of using four wheels, instead of two; that for ages he walked behind the carriage, when going down hill, in order to hold it back, and that only by a lucky chance he invented the tongue; would we conclude that this man, from the very first, had been an infinitely ingenious and perfect mechanic? Suppose we found him living in an elegant mansion, and he should inform us that he lived in that house for five hundred thousand years before he thought of putting on a roof, and that he had but recently invented windows and doors; would we say that from the beginning he had been an infinitely accomplished and scientific architect?

Does not an improvement in the things created, show a corresponding improvement in the creator?

Would an infinitely wise, good and powerful God, intending to produce man, commence with the lowest possible forms of life; with the simplest organism that can be imagined, and during immeasurable periods of time, slowly and almost imperceptibly improve upon the rude beginning, until man was evolved? Would countless ages thus be wasted in the production of awkward forms, afterwards abandoned? Can the intelligence of man discover the least wisdom in covering the earth with crawling, creeping horrors that live only upon the agonies and pangs of others? Can we see the propriety of so constructing the earth, that only an insignificant portion of its surface is capable of producing an intelligent man? Who can appreciate the mercy of so making the world that all animals devour animals; so that every mouth is a slaughter house, and every stomach a tomb? Is it possible to discover infinite intelligence and love in universal and eternal carnage?

What would we think of a father, who should give a farm to his children, and before giving them possession should plant upon it thousands of deadly shrubs and vines; should stock it with ferocious beasts, and poisonous reptiles; should take pains to put a few swamps in the neighborhood to breed malaria; should so arrange matters, that the ground would occasionally open and swallow a few of his darlings, and besides all this, should establish a few volcanoes in the immediate vicinity, that might at any moment overwhelm his children with rivers of fire? Suppose that this father neglected to tell his children which of the plants were deadly; that the reptiles were poisonous; failed to say anything about the earthquakes, and kept the volcano business a profound secret; would we

pronounce him angel or fiend? And yet this is exactly what the orthodox God has done.

According to the theologians, God prepared this globe expressly for the habitation of his loved children, and yet he filled the forests with ferocious beasts; placed serpents in every path; stuffed the world with earthquakes, and adorned its surface with mountains of flame.

Notwithstanding all this, we are told that the world is perfect; that it was created by a perfect being, and is therefore necessarily perfect. The next moment, these same persons will tell us that the world was cursed; covered with brambles, thistles and thorns, and that man was doomed to disease and death, simply because our poor, dear mother ate an apple contrary to the command of an arbitrary God.

A very pious friend of mine, having heard that I had said the world was full of imperfections, asked me if the report was true. Upon being informed that it was, he expressed great surprise that any one could be guilty of such presumption. He said that, in his judgment, it was impossible to point out an imperfection. "Be kind enough," said he, "to name even one improvement that you could make, if you had the power." "Well," said I, "I would make good health catching, instead of disease." The truth is, it is impossible to harmonize all the ills, and pains, and agonies of this world with the idea that we were created by, and are watched over and protected by an infinitely wise, powerful and beneficent God, who is superior to and independent of nature.

The clergy, however, balance all the real ills of this life with the expected joys of the next. We are assured that all is perfection in heaven — there the skies are cloudless — there all is serenity and peace. Here empires may be overthrown; dynasties may be extinguished in blood; millions of slaves may toil beneath the fierce rays of the sun, and the cruel strokes of the lash; yet all is happiness in heaven. Pestilences may strew the earth with corpses of the loved; the survivors may bend above them in agony yet the placid bosom of heaven is unruffled. Children may expire vainly asking for bread; babes may be devoured by serpents, while the gods sit smiling in the clouds. The innocent may languish unto death in the obscurity of dungeons; brave men and heroic women may be changed to ashes at the bigot's stake, while heaven is filled with song and joy. Out on the wide sea, in darkness and in storm, the shipwrecked struggle with the cruel waves while the angels play upon their golden harps. The streets of the world are filled with the diseased, the deformed and the helpless; the chambers of pain are crowded with the pale forms of the suffering, while the angels float and fly in the happy realms of day. In heaven they are too happy to have sympathy; too busy singing to aid the imploring and distressed. Their eyes are

blinded; their ears are stopped and their hearts are turned to stone by the infinite selfishness of joy. The saved mariner is too happy when he touches the shore to give a moment's thought to his drowning brothers. With the indifference of happiness, with the contempt of bliss, heaven barely glances at the miseries of earth. Cities are devoured by the rushing lava; the earth opens and thousands perish; women raise their clasped hands towards heaven, but the gods are too happy to aid their children. The smiles of the deities are unacquainted with the tears of men. The shouts of heaven drown the sobs of earth.

Having shown how man created gods, and how he became the trembling slave of his own creation, the questions naturally arise: How did he free himself even a little, from these monarchs of the sky, from these despots of the clouds, from this aristocracy of the air? How did he, even to the extent that he has, outgrow his ignorant, abject terror, and throw off the yoke of superstition?

Probably, the first thing that tended to disabuse his mind was the discovery of order, of regularity, of periodicity in the universe. From this he began to suspect that everything did not happen purely with reference to him. He noticed that whatever he might do, the motions of the planets were always the same; that eclipses were periodical, and that even comets came at certain intervals. This convinced him that eclipses and comets had nothing to do with him, and that his conduct had nothing to do with them. He perceived that they were not caused for his benefit or injury. He thus learned to regard them with admiration instead of fear. He began to suspect that famine was not sent by some enraged and revengeful deity, but resulted often from the neglect and ignorance of man. He learned that diseases were not produced by evil spirits. He found that sickness was occasioned by natural causes, and could be cured by natural means. He demonstrated, to his own satisfaction at least, that prayer is not a medicine. He found by sad experience that his gods were of no practical use, as they never assisted him, except when he was perfectly able to help himself. At last, he began to discover that his individual action had nothing whatever to do with strange appearances in the heavens; that it was impossible for him to be bad enough to cause a whirlwind, or good enough to stop one. After many centuries of thought, he about half concluded that making mouths at a priest would not necessarily cause an earthquake. He noticed, and no doubt with considerable astonishment, that very good men were occasionally struck by lightning, while very bad ones escaped. He was frequently forced to the painful conclusion (and it is the most painful to which any human being ever was forced) that the right did not always prevail. He noticed that the gods did not interfere in behalf of the weak and innocent. He was now and then astonished by seeing an unbeliever in the enjoyment of most excellent health. He finally ascertained that there could be no possible connection between an unusually severe winter and his failure to give a sheep to a priest. He began to suspect that the order of the universe was not

constantly being changed to assist him because he repeated a creed. He observed that some children would steal after having been regularly baptized. He noticed a vast difference between religion and justice, and that the worshipers of the same god, took delight in cutting each other's throats. He saw that these religious disputes filled the world with hatred and slavery. At last he had the courage to suspect, that no god at any time interferes with the order of events. He learned a few facts, and these facts positively refused to harmonize with the ignorant superstitions of his fathers. Finding his sacred books incorrect and false in some particulars, his faith in their authenticity began to be shaken; finding his priests ignorant upon some points, he began to lose respect for the cloth. This was the commencement of intellectual freedom.

The civilization of man has increased just to the same extent that religious power has decreased. The intellectual advancement of man depends upon how often he can exchange an old superstition for a new truth. The church never enabled a human being to make even one of these exchanges; on the contrary, all her power has been used to prevent them. In spite, however, of the church, man found that some of his religious conceptions were wrong. By reading his Bible, he found that the ideas of his God were more cruel and brutal than those of the most depraved savage. He also discovered that this holy book was filled with ignorance, and that it must have been written by persons wholly unacquainted with the nature of the phenomena by which we are surrounded; and now and then, some man had the goodness and courage to speak his honest thoughts. In every age some thinker, some doubter, some investigator, some hater of hypocrisy, some despiser of sham, some brave lover of the right, has gladly, proudly and heroically braved the ignorant fury of superstition for the sake of man and truth. These divine men were generally torn in pieces by the worshipers of the gods. Socrates was poisoned because he lacked reverence for some of the deities. Christ was crucified by a religious rabble for the crime of blasphemy. Nothing is more gratifying to a religionist than to destroy his enemies at the command of God. Religious persecution springs from a due admixture of love towards God and hatred towards man.

The terrible religious wars that inundated the world with blood tended at least to bring all religion into disgrace and hatred. Thoughtful people began to question the divine origin of a religion that made its believers hold the rights of others in absolute contempt. A few began to compare Christianity with the religions of heathen people, and were forced to admit that the difference was hardly worth dying for. They also found that other nations were even happier and more prosperous than their own. They began to suspect that their religion, after all, was not of much real value.

For three hundred years the Christian world endeavored to rescue from the "Infidel" the empty sepulcher of Christ. For three hundred years the armies of the cross were baffled and beaten by the victorious hosts of an impudent impostor. This immense fact sowed the seeds of distrust through out all Christendom, and millions began to lose confidence in a God who had been vanquished by Mohammed. The people also found that commerce made friends where religion made enemies, and that religious zeal was utterly incompatible with peace between nations or individuals. They discovered that those who loved the gods most were apt to love men least; that the arrogance of universal forgiveness was amazing; that the most malicious had the effrontery to pray for their enemies, and that humility and tyranny were the fruit of the same tree.

For ages, a deadly conflict has been waged between a few brave men and women of thought and genius upon the one side, and the great ignorant religious mass on the other. This is the war between Science and Faith. The few have appealed to reason, to honor, to law, to freedom, to the known, and to happiness here in this world. The many have appealed to prejudice, to fear, to miracle, to slavery, to the unknown, and to misery hereafter. The few have said, "Think!" The many have said, "Believe!"

The first doubt was the womb and cradle of progress, and from the first doubt, man has continued to advance. Men began to investigate, and the church began to oppose. The astronomer scanned the heavens, while the church branded his grand forehead with the word, "Infidel;" and now, not a glittering star in the entire vast expanse bears a Christian name. In spite of all religion, the geologist penetrated the earth, read her history in books of stone, and found, hidden within her bosom, souvenirs of all the ages. Old ideas perished in the retort of the chemist, and useful truths took their places. One by one religious conceptions have been placed in the crucible of science, and thus far, nothing but dross has been found. A new world has been discovered by the microscope; everywhere has been found the infinite; in every direction man has investigated and explored and nowhere, in earth or stars, has been found the footstep of any being superior to or independent of nature. Nowhere has been discovered the slightest evidence of any interference from without.

These are the sublime truths that enabled man to throw off the yoke of superstition. These are the splendid facts that snatched the scepter of authority from the hands of priests.

In that vast cemetery, called the past, are most of the religions of men, and there, too, are nearly all their gods. The sacred temples of India were ruins long ago. Over column and cornice; over the painted and pictured walls, cling and creep the trailing vines. Brahma, the golden, with four heads and four arms;

Vishnu, the somber, the punisher of the wicked, with his three eyes, his crescent, and his necklace of skulls; Siva, the destroyer, red with seas of blood; Kali, the goddess; Draupadi, the white-armed, and Krishna, the Christ, all passed away and left the thrones of heaven desolate. Along the banks of the sacred Nile, Isis no longer wandering weeps, searching for the dead Osiris... The shadow of Typhoon's scowl falls no more upon the waves. The sun rises as of yore, and his golden beams still smite the lips of Memnon, but Memnon is as voiceless as the Sphinx. The sacred fanes are lost in desert sands; the dusty mummies are still waiting for the resurrection promised by their priests, and the old beliefs, wrought in curiously sculptured stone, sleep in the mystery of a language lost and dead. Odin, the author of life and soul, Vili and Ve, and the mighty giant Ymir, strode long ago from the icy halls of the North; and Thor, with iron glove and glittering hammer, dashes mountains to the earth no more. Broken are the circles and cromlechs of the ancient Druids; fallen upon the summits of the hills, and covered with the centuries' moss, are the sacred cairns. The divine fires of Persia and of the Aztecs have died out in the ashes of the past, and there is none to rekindle, and none to feed the holy flames. The harp of Orpheus is still; the drained cup of Bacchus has been thrown aside; Venus lies dead in stone, and her white bosom heaves no more with love. The streams still murmur, but no naiads bathe; the trees still wave, but in the forest aisles no dryads dance. The gods have flown from high Olympus. Not even the beautiful women can lure them back, and Danse lies unnoticed, naked to the stars. Hushed forever are the thunders of Sinai; lost are the voices of the prophets, and the land once flowing with milk and honey, is but a desert waste. One by one, the myths have faded from the clouds: one by one, the phantom host has disappeared, and one by one, facts, truths and realities have taken their places. The supernatural has almost gone, but the natural remains. The gods have fled, but man is here.

Nations, like individuals, have their periods of youth, of manhood and decay. Religions are the same. The same inexorable destiny awaits them all. The gods created by the nations must perish with their creators. They were created by men, and like men, they must pass away. The deities of one age are the by-words of the next. The religion of our day, and country, is no more exempt from the sneer of the future than the others have been. When India was supreme, Brahma sat upon the world's throne. When the scepter passed to Egypt, Isis and Osiris received the homage of mankind. Greece, with her fierce valor, swept to empire, and Zeus put on the purple of authority. The earth trembled with the tread of Rome's intrepid sons, and Jove grasped with mailed hand the thunderbolts of heaven. Rome fell, and Christians from her territory, with the red sword of war, carved out the ruling nations of the world, and now Christ sits upon the old throne. Who will be his successor?

Day by day, religious conceptions grow less and less intense. Day by day, the old spirit dies out of book and creed. The burning enthusiasm, the quenchless zeal of the early church has gone, never, never to return. The ceremonies remain, but the ancient faith is fading out of the human heart. The worn-out arguments fail to convince, and denunciations that once blanched the faces of a race, excite in us only derision and disgust. As time rolls on, the miracles grow mean and small, and the evidences our fathers thought conclusive utterly fail to satisfy us. There is an "irrepressible conflict" between religion and science, and they cannot peaceably occupy the same brain nor the same world.

While utterly discarding all creeds, and denying the truth of all religions, there is neither in my heart nor upon my lips a sneer for the hopeful, loving and tender souls who believe that from all this discord will result a perfect harmony; that every evil will in some mysterious way become a good, and that above and overall there is a being who, in some way, will reclaim and glorify every one of the children of men; but for those who heartlessly try to prove that salvation is almost impossible; that damnation is almost certain; that the highway of the universe leads to hell; who fill life with fear and death with horror; who curse the cradle and mock the tomb, it is impossible to entertain other than feelings of pity, contempt and scorn.

Reason, Observation and Experience — the Holy Trinity of Science — have taught us that happiness is the only good; that the time to be happy is now, and the way to be happy is to make others so. This is enough for us. In this belief we are content to live and die. If by any possibility the existence of a power superior to, and independent of, nature shall be demonstrated, there will then be time enough to kneel. Until then, let us stand erect.

Notwithstanding the fact that infidels in all ages have battled for the rights of man, and have at all times been the fearless advocates of liberty and justice, we are constantly charged by the church with tearing down without building again. The church should by this time know that it is utterly impossible to rob men of their opinions. The history of religious persecution fully establishes the fact that the mind necessarily resists and defies every attempt to control it by violence. The mind necessarily clings to old ideas until prepared for the new. The moment we comprehend the truth, all erroneous ideas are of necessity cast aside.

A surgeon once called upon a poor cripple and kindly offered to render him any assistance in his power. The surgeon began to discourse very learnedly upon the nature and origin of disease; of the curative properties of certain medicines; of the advantages of exercise, air and light, and of the various ways in which health and strength could be restored. These remarks were so full of good sense, and discovered so much profound thought and accurate knowledge that the

cripple, becoming thoroughly alarmed, cried out, "Do not, I pray you, take away my crutches. They are my only support, and with out them I should be miserable indeed!" "I am not going," said the surgeon, "to take away your crutches. I am going to cure you, and then you will throw the crutches away yourself."

For the vagaries of the clouds the infidels propose to substitute the realities of earth; for superstition, the splendid demonstrations and achievements of science; and for theological tyranny, the chainless liberty of thought.

We do not say that we have discovered all; that our doctrines are the all in all of truth. We know of no end to the development of man. We cannot unravel the infinite complications of matter and force. The history of one monad is as unknown as that of the universe; one drop of water is as wonderful as all the seas; one leaf, as all the forests; and one grain of sand, as all the stars.

We are not endeavoring to chain the future, but to free the present. We are not forging fetters for our children, but we are breaking those our fathers made for us. We are the advocates of inquiry, of investigation and thought. This of itself is an admission that we are not perfectly satisfied with all our conclusions. Philosophy has not the egotism of faith. While superstition builds walls and creates obstructions, science opens all the highways of thought. We do not pretend to have circumnavigated everything, and to have solved all difficulties, but we do believe that it is better to love men than to fear gods; that it is grander and nobler to think and investigate for yourself than to repeat a creed. We are satisfied that there can be but little liberty on earth while men worship a tyrant in heaven. We do not expect to accomplish every thing in our day; but we want to do what good we can, and to render all the service possible in the holy cause of human progress. We know that doing away with gods and supernatural persons and powers is not an end. It is a means to an end: the real end being the happiness of man.

Felling forests is not the end of agriculture. Driving pirates from the sea is not all there is of commerce.

We are laying the foundations of the grand temple of the future not the temple of all the gods, but of all the people wherein, with appropriate rites, will be celebrated the religion of Humanity. We are doing what little we can to hasten the coming of the day when society shall cease producing millionaires and mendicants gorged indolence and famished industry truth in rags, and superstition robed and crowned. We are looking for the time when the useful shall be the honorable; and when REASON, throned upon the world's brain, shall be the King of Kings, and God of Gods.

HUMBOLDT

THE UNIVERSE IS GOVERNED BY LAW.

GREAT men seem to be a part of the infinite-brothers of the mountains and the seas. Humboldt was one of these. He was one of those serene men, in some respects like our own Franklin, whose names have all the lustre of a star. He was one of the few, great enough to rise above the superstition and prejudice of his time, and to know that experience, observation, and reason are the only basis of knowledge. He became one of the greatest of men in spite of having been born rich and noble in spite of position. I say in spite of these things, because wealth and position are generally the enemies of genius, and the destroyers of talent.

It is often said of this or that man, that he is a self-made man that he was born of the poorest and humblest parents, and that with every obstacle to overcome he became great. This is a mistake. Poverty is generally an advantage. Most of the intellectual giants of the world have been nursed at the sad and loving breast of poverty. Most of those who have climbed highest on the shining ladder of fame commenced at the lowest round. They were reared in the straw-thatched cottages of Europe; in the log-houses of America; in the factories of the great cities; in the midst of toil; in the smoke and din of labor, and on the verge of want. They were rocked by the feet of mothers whose hands, at the same time, were busy with the needle or the wheel.

It is hard for the rich to resist the thousand allurements of pleasure, and so I say, that Humboldt, in spite of having been born to wealth and high social position, became truly and grandly great.

In the antiquated and romantic castle of Tegel, by the side of the pine forest, on the shore of the charming lake, near the beautiful city of Berlin, the great Humboldt, one hundred years ago to-day, was born, and there he was educated after the method suggested by Rousseau, Campe, the philologist and critic, and the intellectual Kunth being his tutors. There he received the impressions that determined his career; there the great idea that the universe is governed by law, took possession of his mind, and there he dedicated his life to the demonstration of this sublime truth.

He came to the conclusion that the source of man's unhappiness is his ignorance of nature.

After having received the most thorough education at that time possible, and having determined to what end he would devote the labors of his life, he turned his attention to the sciences of geology, mining, mineralogy, botany, the distribution of plants, the distribution of animals, and the effect of climate upon man. All grand physical phenomena were investigated and explained. From his youth he had felt a great desire for travel. He felt, as he says, a violent passion for the sea, and longed to look upon nature in her wildest and most rugged forms. He longed to give a physical description of the universe a grand picture of nature; to account for all phenomena; to discover the laws governing the world; to do away with that splendid delusion called special providence, and to establish the fact that the universe is governed by law.

To establish this truth was, and is, of infinite importance to mankind. That fact is the death knell of superstition; it gives liberty to every soul, annihilates fear, and ushers in the Age of Reason.

The object of this illustrious man was to comprehend the phenomena of physical objects in their general connection, and to represent nature as one great whole, moved and animated by internal forces.

For this purpose he turned his attention to descriptive botany, traversing distant lands and mountain ranges to ascertain with certainty the geographical distribution of plants. He investigated the laws regulating the differences of temperature and climate, and the changes of the atmosphere. He studied the formation of the earth's crust, explored the deepest mines, ascended the highest mountains, and wandered through the craters of extinct volcanoes.

He became thoroughly acquainted with chemistry, with astronomy, with terrestrial magnetism; and as the investigation of one subject leads to all others, for the reason that there is a mutual dependence and a necessary connection between all facts, so Humboldt became acquainted with all the known sciences.

His fame does not depend so much upon his discoveries (although he discovered enough to make hundreds of reputations) as upon his vast and splendid generalizations.

He was to science what Shakespeare was to the drama.

He found, so to speak, the world full of unconnected facts all portions of a vast system parts of a great machine; he discovered the connection that each bears to all; put them together, and demonstrated beyond all contradiction that the earth is governed by law.

He knew that to discover the connection of phenomena is the primary aim of all natural investigation. He was infinitely practical.

Origin and destiny were questions with which he had nothing to do. His surroundings made him what he was.

In accordance with a law not fully comprehended, he was a production of his time.

Great men do not live alone; they are surrounded by the great; they are the instruments used to accomplish the tendencies of their generation; they fulfill the prophecies of their age.

Nearly all of the scientific men of the eighteenth century had the same idea entertained by Humboldt, but most of them in a dim and confused way. There was, however, a general belief among the intelligent that the world is governed by law, and that there really exists a connection between all facts, *or that all facts are simply the different aspects of a general fact*, and that the task of science is to discover this connection; to comprehend this general fact or to announce the laws of things.

Germany was full of thought, and her universities swarmed with philosophers and grand thinkers in every department of knowledge.

Humboldt was the friend and companion of the greatest poets, historians, philologists, artists, statesmen, critics, and logicians of his time.

He was the companion of Schiller, who believed that man would be regenerated through the influence of the Beautiful; of Goethe, the grand patriarch of German literature; of Weiland, who has been called the Voltaire of Germany; of Herder, who wrote the outlines of a philosophical history of man; of Kotzebue, who lived in the world of romance; of Schleiermacher, the pantheist; of Schlegel, who gave to his countrymen the enchanted realm of Shakespeare; of the sublime Kant, author of the first work published in Germany on Pure Reason; of Fichte, the infinite idealist; of Schopenhauer, the European Buddhist who followed the great Gautama to the painless and dreamless Nirvana, and of hundreds of others, whose names are familiar to and honored by the scientific world.

The German mind had been grandly roused from the long lethargy of the dark ages of ignorance, fear, and faith. Guided by the holy light of reason, every department of knowledge was investigated, enriched and illustrated.

Humboldt breathed the atmosphere of investigation; old ideas were abandoned; old creeds, hallowed by centuries, were thrown aside; thought became courageous; the athlete, Reason, challenged to mortal combat the monsters of superstition.

No wonder that under these influences Humboldt formed the great purpose of presenting to the world a picture of Nature, in order that men might, for the first time, behold the face of their Mother.

Europe becoming too small for his genius, he visited the tropics in the new world, where in the most circumscribed limits he could find the greatest number of plants, of animals, and the greatest diversity of climate, that he might ascertain the laws governing the production and distribution of plants, animals and men, and the effects of climate upon them all. He sailed along the gigantic Amazon - the mysterious - Orinoco traversed the Pampas - climbed the Andes until he stood upon the crags of Chimborazo, more than eighteen thousand feet above the level of the sea, and climbed on until blood flowed from his eyes and lips. For nearly five years he pursued his investigations in the new world, accompanied by the intrepid Bonpland. Nothing escaped his attention. He was the best intellectual organ of these new revelations of science. He was calm, reflective and eloquent; filled with a sense of the beautiful, and the love of truth. His collections were immense, and valuable beyond calculation to every science. He endured innumerable hardships, braved countless dangers in unknown and savage lands, and exhausted his fortune for the advancement of true learning.

Upon his return to Europe he was hailed as the second Columbus; as the scientific discoverer of America; as the revealer of a new world; as the great demonstrator of the sublime truth, that the universe is governed by law.

I have seen a picture of the old man, sitting upon a mountain side — above him the eternal snow — below, the smiling valley of the tropics, filled with vine and palm; his chin upon his breast, his eyes deep, thoughtful and calm — his forehead majestic — grander than the mountain upon which he sat — crowned with the snow of his whitened hair, he looked the intellectual autocrat of this world.

Not satisfied with his discoveries in America, he crossed the steppes of Asia, the wastes of Siberia, the great Ural range, adding to the knowledge of mankind at every step. His energy acknowledged no obstacle, his life knew no leisure; every day was filled with labor and with thought.

He was one of the apostles of science, and he served his divine master with a self-sacrificing zeal that knew no abatement; with an ardor that constantly increased, and with a devotion unwavering and constant as the polar star.

In order that the people at large might have the benefit of his numerous discoveries, and his vast knowledge, he delivered at Berlin a course of lectures, consisting of sixty-one free addresses, upon the following subjects:

- Five, upon the nature and limits of physical geography.
- Three, were devoted to a history of science.
- Two, to inducements to a study of natural science.
- Sixteen, on the heavens.
- Five, on the form, density, latent heat, and magnetic power of the earth, and to the polar light.
- Four, were on the nature of the crust of the earth, on hot springs earthquakes, and volcanoes.
- Two, on mountains and the type of their formation.
- Two, on the form of the earth's surface, on the connection of continents, and the elevation of soil over ravines.
- Three, on the sea as a globular fluid surrounding the earth.
- Ten, on the atmosphere as an elastic fluid surrounding the earth, and on the distribution of heat.
- One, on the geographic distribution of organized matter in general.
- Three, on the geography of plants.
- Three, on the geography of animals, and
- Two, on the races of men.

These lectures are what is known as the COSMOS, and present a scientific picture of the world - of infinite diversity in unity - of ceaseless motion in the eternal grasp of law.

These lectures contain the result of his investigation, observation, and experience; they furnish the connection between phenomena; they disclose some of the changes through which the earth has passed in the countless ages; the history of vegetation, animals and men, the effects of climate upon individuals and nations, the relation we sustain to other worlds, and demonstrate that all phenomena, whether insignificant or grand, exist in accordance with inexorable law.

There are some truths, however, that we never should forget: Superstition has always been the relentless enemy of science; faith has been a hater of demonstration; hypocrisy has been sincere only in its dread of truth, and all religions are inconsistent with mental freedom.

Since the murder of Hypatia in the fifth century, when the polished blade of Greek philosophy was broken by the club of ignorant Catholicism, until to-day, superstition has detested every effort of reason.

It is almost impossible to conceive of the completeness of the victory that the church achieved over philosophy. For ages science was utterly ignored; thought was a poor slave; an ignorant priest was master of the world; faith put out the eyes of the soul; the reason was a trembling coward; the imagination was set on fire of hell; every human feeling was sought to be suppressed; love was considered infinitely sinful; pleasure was the road to eternal fire, and God was supposed to be happy only when his children were miserable. The world was governed by an Almighty's whim; prayers could change the order of things, halt the grand procession of nature, could produce rain, and avert pestilence, famine and death in all its forms. There was no idea of the certain; all depended upon divine pleasure or displeasure rather; heaven was full of inconsistent malevolence, and earth of ignorance. Everything was done to appease the divine wrath; every public calamity was caused by the sins of the people; by a failure to pay tithes, or for having, even in secret, felt disrespect for a priest. To the poor multitude, the earth was a kind of enchanted forest, full of demons ready to devour, and theological serpents lurking with infinite power to fascinate and torture the unhappy and impotent soul. Life to them was a dim and mysterious labyrinth, in which they wandered weary, and lost, guided by priests as bewildered as themselves, without knowing that at every step the Ariadne of reason offered them the long lost clue.

The very heavens were full of death; the lightning was regarded as the glittering vengeance of God, and the earth was thick with snares for the unwary feet of man. The soul was supposed to be crowded with the wild beasts of desire; the heart to be totally corrupt, prompting only to crime; virtues were regarded as deadly sins in disguise; there was a continual warfare being waged between the Deity and the Devil, for the possession of every soul; the latter generally being considered victorious. The flood, the tornado, the volcano, were all evidences of the displeasure of heaven, and the sinfulness of man. The blight that withered, the frost that blackened, the earthquake that devoured, were the messengers of the Creator.

The world was governed by Fear.

Against all the evils of nature, there was known only the defense of prayer, of fasting, of credulity, and devotion. Man in his helplessness endeavored to soften the heart of God. The faces of the multitude were blanched with fear, and wet with tears; they were the prey of hypocrites, kings and priests.

My heart bleeds when I contemplate the sufferings endured by the millions now dead; of those who lived when the world appeared to be insane; when the heavens were filled with an infinite HORROR who snatched babes with dimpled hands and rosy cheeks from the white breasts of mothers, and dashed them into an abyss of eternal flame.

Slowly, beautifully, like the coming of the dawn, came the grand truth, that the universe is governed by law; that disease fastens itself upon the good and upon the bad; that the tornado cannot be stopped by counting beads; that the rushing lava pauses not for bended knees, the lightning for clasped and uplifted hands, nor the cruel waves of the sea for prayer; that paying tithes causes, rather than prevents famine; that pleasure is not sin; that happiness is the only good; that demons and gods exist only in the imagination; that faith is a lullaby sung to put the soul to sleep; that devotion is a bribe that fear offers to supposed power; that offering rewards in another world for obedience in this, is simply buying a soul on credit; that knowledge consists in ascertaining the laws of nature, and that wisdom is the science of happiness. Slowly, grandly, beautifully, these truths are dawning upon mankind.

From Copernicus we learned that this earth is only a grain of sand on the infinite shore of the universe; that everywhere we are surrounded by shining worlds vastly greater than our own, all moving and existing in accordance with law. True, the earth began to grow small, but man began to grow great.

The moment the fact was established that other worlds are governed by law, it was only natural to conclude that our little world was also under its dominion. The old theological method of accounting for physical phenomena by the pleasure and displeasure of the Deity was, by the intellectual, abandoned. They found that disease, death, life, thought, heat, cold, the sea sons, and the winds, the dreams of man, the instinct of animals, - in short, that all physical and mental phenomena are governed by law, absolute, eternal and inexorable.

Let it be understood that by the term LAW is meant the same invariable relations of succession and resemblance predicated of all facts springing from like conditions. Law is a fact not a cause. It is a fact, that like conditions produce like results: this fact is LAW. When we say that the universe is governed by law, we mean that this fact, called law, is incapable of change; that it is, has been, and forever will be, the same inexorable, immutable FACT, inseparable from all phenomena. Law, in this sense, was not enacted or made. It could not have been otherwise than as it is. That which necessarily exists has no creator.

Only a few years ago this earth was considered the real center of the universe; all the stars were supposed to revolve around this insignificant atom. The German mind, more than any other, has done away with this piece of egotism. Purbach and Mullerus, in the fifteenth century, contributed most to the advancement of astronomy in their day. To the latter, the world is indebted for the introduction of decimal fractions, which completed our arithmetical notation, and formed the second of the three steps by which, in modern times, the science of numbers has been so greatly improved; and yet, both of these men believed in the most childish absurdities, at least in enough of them, to die without their orthodoxy having ever been suspected.

Next came the great Copernicus, and he stands at the head of the heroic thinkers of his time, who had the courage and the mental strength to break the chains of prejudice, custom, and authority, and to establish truth on the basis of experience, observation and reason. He removed the earth, so to speak, from the centre of the universe, and ascribed to it a two-fold motion, and demonstrated the true position which it occupies in the solar system.

At his bidding the earth began to revolve. At the command of his genius it commenced its grand flight mid the eternal constellations round the sun. For fifty years his discoveries were disregarded. All at once, by the exertions of Galileo, they were kindled into so grand a conflagration as to consume the philosophy of Aristotle, to alarm the hierarchy of Rome, and to threaten the existence of every opinion not founded upon experience, observation, and reason.

The earth was no longer considered a universe, governed by the caprices of some revengeful Deity, who had made the stars out of what he had left after completing the world, and had stuck them in the sky simply to adorn the night.

I have said this much concerning astronomy because it was the first splendid step forward! The first sublime blow that shattered the lance and shivered the shield of superstition; the first real help that man received from heaven; because it was the first great lever placed beneath the altar of a false religion; the first revelation of the infinite to man; the first authoritative declaration, that the universe is governed by law; the first science that gave the lie direct to the cosmogony of barbarism, and because it is the sublimest victory that the reason has achieved.

In speaking of astronomy, I have confined myself to the discoveries made since the revival of learning. Long ago, on the banks of the Ganges, ages before Copernicus lived, Aryabhatta taught that the earth is a sphere, and revolves on its own axis. This, however, does not detract from the glory of the great German.

The discovery of the Hindu had been lost in the midnight of Europe in the age of faith, and Copernicus was as much a discoverer as though Aryabhatta had never lived.

In this short address there is no time to speak of other sciences, and to point out the particular evidence furnished by each, to establish the dominion of law, nor to more than mention the name of Descartes, the first who undertook to give an explanation of the celestial motions, or who formed the vast and philosophic conception of reducing all the phenomena of the universe to the same law; of Montaigne, one of the heroes of common sense; of Galvani, whose experiments gave the telegraph to the world; of Voltaire, who contributed more than any other of the sons of men to the destruction of religious intolerance; of August Comte, whose genius erected to itself a monument that still touches the stars; of Guttenberg, Watt, Stephenson, Arkwright, all soldiers of science, in the grand army of the dead kings.

The glory of science is that it is freeing the soul - breaking the mental manacles — getting the brain out of bondage — giving courage to thought — filling the world with mercy, justice, and joy.

Science found agriculture plowing with a stick — reaping with a sickle — commerce at the mercy of the treacherous waves and the inconstant winds — a world without books — without schools — man denying the authority of reason, employing his ingenuity in the manufacture of instruments of torture, in building inquisitions and cathedrals. It found the land filled with malicious monks — with persecuting Protestants, and the burners of men. It found a world full of fear; ignorance upon its knees; credulity the greatest virtue; women treated like beasts of burden; cruelty the only means of reformation.

It found the world at the mercy of disease and famine; men trying to read their fates in the stars, and to tell their fortunes by signs and wonders; generals thinking to conquer their enemies by making the sign of the cross, or by telling a rosary. It found all history full of petty and ridiculous falsehood, and the Almighty was supposed to spend most of his time turning sticks into snakes, drowning boys for swimming on Sunday, and killing little children for the purpose of converting their parents. It found the earth filled with slaves and tyrants, the people in all countries downtrodden, half naked, half starved, without hope, and without reason in the world.

Such was the condition of man when the morning of science dawned upon his brain, and before he had heard the sublime declaration that the universe is governed by law.

For the change that has taken place we are indebted solely to science the only lever capable of raising mankind. Abject faith is barbarism; reason is civilization. To obey is slavish; to act from a sense of obligation perceived by the reason, is noble. Ignorance worships mystery; Reason explains it: the one grovels, the other soars.

No wonder that fable is the enemy of knowledge. A man with a false diamond shuns the society of lapidaries, and it is upon this principle that superstition abhors science.

In all ages the people have honored those who dishonored them. They have worshiped their destroyers; they have canonized the most gigantic liars, and buried the great thieves in marble and gold. Under the loftiest monuments sleeps the dust of murder.

Imposture has always worn a crown.

The world is beginning to change because the people are beginning to think. To think is to advance. Everywhere the great minds are investigating the creeds and the superstitions of men the - phenomena of nature, and the laws of things. At the head of this great army of investigators stood Humboldt - the serene leader of an intellectual host - a king by the suffrage of Science, and the divine right of Genius.

And to-day we are not honoring some butcher called a soldier - some wily politician called a statesman - some robber called a king, nor some malicious metaphysician called a saint. We are honoring the grand Humboldt, whose victories were all achieved in the arena of thought; who destroyed prejudice, ignorance and error not men; who shed light not blood, and who contributed to the knowledge, the wealth, and the happiness of all mankind.

His life was pure, his aims lofty, his learning varied and profound, and his achievements vast.

We honor him because he has ennobled our race, because he has contributed as much as any man living or dead to the real prosperity of the world. We honor him because he honored us because he labored for others because he was the most learned man of the most learned nation because he left a legacy of glory to every human being. For these reasons he is honored throughout the world.

Millions are doing homage to his genius at this moment, and millions are pronouncing his name with reverence and recounting what he accomplished.

We associate the name of Humboldt with oceans, continents, mountains, and volcanoes - with the great palms — the wide deserts — the snow-lipped craters of the Andes with primeval forests and European capitals — with wildernesses and universities — with savages and savants with the lonely rivers of unpeopled wastes — with peaks and pampas, and steppes, and cliffs and crags - with the progress of the world — with every science known to man, and with every star glittering in the immensity of space.

Humboldt adopted none of the soul-shrinking creeds of his day; wasted none of his time in the stupidities, inanities and contradictions of theological metaphysics; he did not endeavor to harmonize the astronomy and geology of a barbarous people with the science of the nineteenth century. Never, for one moment, did he abandon the sublime standard of truth; he investigated, he studied, he thought, he separated the gold from the dross in the crucible of his grand brain. He was never found on his knees before the altar of superstition. He stood erect by the grand tranquil column of Reason. He was an admirer, a lover, an adorer of Nature, and at the age of ninety, bowed by the weight of nearly a century, covered with the insignia of honor, loved by a nation, respected by a world, with kings for his servants, he laid his weary head upon her bosom - upon the bosom of the universal Mother - and with her loving arms around him, sank into that slumber called Death.

History added another name to the starry scroll of the immortals.

The world is his monument; upon the eternal granite of her hills he inscribed his name, and there upon everlasting stone his genius wrote this, the sublimest of truths:

<p>"THE UNIVERSE IS GOVERNED BY LAW!"</p>
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THOMAS PAINE

WITH HIS NAME LEFT OUT, THE HISTORY OF LIBERTY
CANNOT BE WRITTEN

TO speak the praises of the brave and thoughtful dead, is to me a labor of gratitude and love.

Through all the centuries gone, the mind of man has been beleaguered by the mailed hosts of superstition. Slowly and painfully has advanced the army of deliverance. Hated by those they wished to rescue, despised by those they were dying to save, these grand soldiers, these immortal deliverers, have fought without thanks, labored without applause, suffered without pity, and they have died execrated and abhorred. For the good of mankind they accepted isolation, poverty, and calumny. They gave up all, sacrificed all, lost all but truth and self-respect.

One of the bravest soldiers in this army was Thomas Paine; and for one, I feel indebted to him for the liberty we are enjoying this day. Born among the poor, where children are burdens; in a country where real liberty was unknown; where the privileges of class were guarded with infinite jealousy, and the rights of the individual trampled beneath the feet of priests and nobles; where to advocate justice was treason; where intellectual freedom was Infidelity, it is wonderful that the idea of true liberty ever entered his brain.

Poverty was his mother — Necessity his master.

He had more brains than books; more sense than education; more courage than politeness; more strength than polish. He had no veneration for old mistakes - no admiration for ancient lies. He loved the truth for the truth's sake, and for man's sake. He saw oppression on every hand; injustice everywhere; hypocrisy at the altar, venality on the bench, and tyranny on the throne; and with a splendid courage he espoused the cause of the weak against the strong - of the enslaved many against the titled few. In England he was nothing. He belongs to the lower classes. There was no avenue open for him. The people hugged their chains, and the whole power of the government was ready to crush any man who endeavored to strike a blow for the right.

At the age of thirty-seven, Thomas Paine left England for America, with the high hope of being instrumental in the establishment of a free government. In his own country he could accomplish nothing. Those two vultures - Church and State - were ready to tear in pieces and devour the heart of any one who might deny their divine right to enslave the world.

Upon his arrival in this country, he found himself possessed of a letter of introduction, signed by another Infidel, the illustrious Franklin. This, and his native genius, constituted his entire capital; and he needed no more. He found the colonies clamoring for justice; whining about their grievances; upon their knees at the foot of the throne, imploring that mixture of idiocy and insanity, George the III, by the grace of God, for a restoration of their ancient privileges. They were not endeavoring to become free men, but were trying to soften the heart of their master. They were perfectly willing to make brick if Pharaoh would furnish the straw. The colonists wished for, hoped for, and prayed for reconciliation. They did not dream of independence.

Paine gave to the world his "COMMON SENSE." It was the first argument for separation, the first assault upon the British form of government, the first blow for a republic, and it aroused our fathers like a trumpet's blast.

He was the first to perceive the destiny of the New World.

No other pamphlet ever accomplished such wonderful results. It was filled with argument, reason, persuasion, and unanswerable logic. It opened a new world. It filled the present with hope and the future with honor. Everywhere the people responded, and in a few months the Continental Congress declared the colonies free and independent States.

A new nation was born.

It is simple justice to say that Paine did more to cause the Declaration of Independence than any other man. Neither should it be forgotten that his attacks upon Great Britain were also attacks upon monarchy; and while he convinced the people that the colonies ought to separate from the mother country, he also proved to them that a free government is the best that can be instituted among men.

In my judgment, Thomas Paine was the best political writer that ever lived. "What he wrote was pure nature, and his soul and his pen ever went together." Ceremony, pageantry, and all the paraphernalia of power, had no effect upon him. He examined into the why and wherefore of things. He was perfectly radical in his mode of thought. Nothing short of the bed-rock satisfied him. His

enthusiasm for what he believed to be right knew no bounds. During all the dark scenes of the Revolution, never for one moment did he despair. Year after year his brave words were ringing through the land, and by the bivouac fires the weary soldiers read the inspiring words of "Common Sense," filled with ideas sharper than their swords, and consecrated themselves anew to the cause of Freedom.

Paine was not content with having aroused the spirit of independence, but he gave every energy of his soul to keep that spirit alive. He was with the army. He shared its defeats, its dangers, and its glory. When the situation became desperate, when gloom settled upon all, he gave them the "CRISIS." It was a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, leading the way to freedom, honor, and glory. He shouted to them, "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier, and the sunshine patriot, will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman."

To those who wished to put the war off to some future day, with a lofty and touching spirit of self-sacrifice he said: "Every generous parent should say, 'If there must be war let it be in my day, that my child may have peace.' "To the cry that Americans were rebels, he replied: "He that rebels against reason is a real rebel; but he that in defense of reason rebels against tyranny, has a better title to 'Defender of the Faith' than George the Third."

Some said it was not to the interest of the colonies to be free. Paine answered this by saying, "To know whether it be the interest of the continent to be independent, we need ask only this simple, easy question: 'Is it the interest of a man to be a boy all his life?'" He found many who would listen to nothing, and to them he said, "That to argue with a man who has renounced his reason is like giving medicine to the dead." This sentiment ought to adorn the walls of every orthodox church.

There is a world of political wisdom in this: "England lost her liberty in a long chain of right reasoning from wrong principles"; and there is real discrimination in saying, "The Greeks and Romans were strongly possessed of the spirit of liberty, but not the principles, for at the time that they were determined not to be slaves themselves, they employed their power to enslave the rest of mankind."

In his letter to the British people, in which he tried to convince them that war was not to their interest, occurs the following passage brimful of common sense: "War never can be the interest of a trading nation any more than quarreling can be profitable to a man in business. But to make war with those who trade with us is like setting a bull-dog upon a customer at the shop-door."

The writings of Paine fairly glitter with simple, compact, logical statements, that carry conviction to the dullest and most prejudiced. He had the happiest possible way of putting the case; in asking questions in such a way that they answer themselves, and in stating his premises so clearly that the deduction could not be avoided.

Day and night he labored for America; month after month, year after year, he gave himself to the Great Cause, until there was "a government of the people and for the people," and until the banner of the stars floated over a continent redeemed, and consecrated to the happiness of mankind.

At the close of the Revolution, no one stood higher in America than Thomas Paine. The best, the wisest, the most patriotic, were his friends and admirers; and had he been thinking only of his own good he might have rested from his toils and spent the remainder of his life in comfort and in ease. He could have been what the world is pleased to call "respectable." He could have died surrounded by clergymen, warriors and statesmen. At his death there would have been an imposing funeral, miles of carriages, civic societies, salvos of artillery, a nation in mourning, and, above all, a splendid monument covered with lies.

He chose rather to benefit mankind.

At that time the seeds sown by the great Infidels were beginning to bear fruit in France. The people were beginning to think.

The Eighteenth Century was crowning its gray hairs with the wreath of Progress.

On every hand Science was bearing testimony against the Church. Voltaire had filled Europe with light; D'Holbach was giving to the elite of Paris the principles contained in his "System of Nature." The Encyclopedists had attacked superstition with information for the masses. The foundation of things began to be examined. A few had the courage to keep their shoes on and let the bush burn. Miracles began to get scarce. Everywhere the people began to inquire. America had set an example to the world. The word Liberty was in the mouths of men, and they began to wipe the dust from their knees.

The dawn of a new day had appeared.

Thomas Paine went to France. Into the new movement he threw all his energies. His fame had gone before him, and he was welcomed as a friend of the human race, and as a champion of free government.

He had never relinquished his intention of pointing out to his countrymen the defects, absurdities and abuses of the English government. For this purpose he composed and published his greatest political work, "THE RIGHTS OF MAN." This work should be read by every man and woman. It is concise, accurate, natural, convincing, and unanswerable. It shows great thought; an intimate knowledge of the various forms of government; deep insight into the very springs of human action, and a courage that compels respect and admiration. The most difficult political problems are solved in a few sentences. The venerable arguments in favor of wrong are refuted with a question answered with a word. For forcible illustration, apt comparison, accuracy and clearness of statement, and absolute thoroughness, it has never been excelled.

The fears of the administration were aroused, and Paine was prosecuted for libel and found guilty; and yet there is not a sentiment in the entire work that will not challenge the admiration of every civilized man. It is a magazine of political wisdom, an arsenal of ideas, and an honor, not only to Thomas Paine, but to human nature itself. It could have been written only by the man who had the generosity, the exalted patriotism, the goodness to say, "The world is my country, and to do good my religion."

There is in all the utterances of the world no grander, no sublimer sentiment. There is no creed that can be compared with it for a moment. It should be wrought in gold, adorned with jewels, and impressed upon every human heart: "The world is my country, and to do good my religion."

In 1792, Paine was elected by the department of Calais as their representative in the National Assembly. So great was his popularity in France that he was selected about the same time by the people of no less than four departments.

Upon taking his place in the Assembly he was appointed as one of a committee to draft a constitution for France. Had the French people taken the advice of Thomas Paine there would have been no "reign of terror." The streets of Paris would not have been filled with blood. The Revolution would have been the grandest success of the world. The truth is that Paine was too conservative to suit the leaders of the French Revolution. They, to a great extent, were carried away by hatred, and a desire to destroy. They had suffered so long, they had borne so much, that it was impossible for them to be moderate in the hour of victory.

Besides all this, the French people had been so robbed by the government, so degraded by the church, that they were not fit material with which to construct a republic. Many of the leaders longed to establish a beneficent and just government, but the people asked for revenge.

Paine was filled with a real love for mankind. His philanthropy was boundless. He wished to destroy monarchy not the monarch. He voted for the destruction of tyranny, and against the death of the king. He wished to establish a government on a new basis; one that would forget the past; one that would give privileges to none, and protection to all.

In the Assembly, where nearly all were demanding the execution of the king where to differ from the majority was to be suspected, and, where to be suspected was almost certain death. Thomas Paine had the courage, the goodness and the justice to vote against death. To vote against the execution of the king was a vote against his own life. This was the sublimity of devotion to principle. For this he was arrested, imprisoned, and doomed to death.

Search the records of the world and you will find but few sublimer acts than that of Thomas Paine voting against the king's death. He, the hater of despotism, the abhorrer of monarchy, the champion of the rights of man, the republican, accepting death to save the life of a deposed tyrant of a throneless king. This was the last grand act of his political life the sublime conclusion of his political career.

All his life he had been the disinterested friend of man. He had labored not for money, not for fame, but for the general good. He had aspired to no office; had asked no recognition of his services, but had ever been content to labor as a common soldier in the army of Progress. Confining his efforts to no country, looking upon the world as his field of action, filled with a genuine love for the right, he found himself imprisoned by the very people he had striven to save.

Had his enemies succeeded in bringing him to the block, he would have escaped the calumnies and the hatred of the Christian world. In this country, at least, he would have ranked with the proudest names. On the anniversary of the Declaration his name would have been upon the lips of all the orators, and his memory in the hearts of all the people.

Thomas Paine had not finished his career.

He had spent his life thus far in destroying the power of kings, and now he turned his attention to the priests. He knew that every abuse had been embalmed in Scripture — that every outrage was in partnership with some holy text. He knew that the throne skulked behind the altar, and both behind a pretended revelation from God. By this time he had found that it was of little use to free the

body and leave the mind in chains. He had explored the foundations of despotism, and had found them infinitely rotten. He had dug under the throne, and it occurred to him that he would take a look behind the altar.

The result of his investigations was given to the world in the "AGE OF REASON." From the moment of its publication he became infamous. He was calumniated beyond measure. To slander him was to secure the thanks of the church. All his services were instantly forgotten, disparaged or denied. He was shunned as though he had been a pestilence. Most of his old friends forsook him. He was regarded as a moral plague, and at the bare mention of his name the bloody hands of the church were raised in horror. He was denounced as the most despicable of men.

Not content with following him to his grave, they pursued him after death with redoubled fury, and recounted with infinite gusto and satisfaction the supposed horrors of his death-bed; gloried in the fact that he was forlorn and friendless, and gloated like fiends over what they supposed to be the agonizing remorse of his lonely death.

It is wonderful that all his services were thus forgotten. It is amazing that one kind word did not fall from some pulpit; that some one did not accord to him, at least honesty. Strange, that in the general denunciation some one did not remember his labor for liberty, his devotion to principle, his zeal for the rights of his fellow-men. He had, by brave and splendid effort, associated his name with the cause of Progress. He had made it impossible to write the history of political freedom with his name left out. He was one of the creators of light; one of the heralds of the dawn. He hated tyranny in the name of kings, and in the name of God, with every drop of his noble blood. He believed in liberty and justice, and in the sacred doctrine of human equality. Under these divine banners he fought the battle of his life. In both worlds he offered his blood for the good of man. In the wilderness of America, in the French Assembly, in the somber cell waiting for death, he was the same unflinching, unwavering friend of his race; the same undaunted champion of universal freedom. And for this he has been hated; for this the church has violated even his grave.

This is enough to make one believe that nothing is more natural than for men to devour their benefactors. The people in all ages have crucified and glorified. Whoever lifts his voice against abuses, whoever arraigns the past at the bar of the present, whoever asks the king to show his commission, or questions the authority of the priest, will be denounced as the enemy of man and God. In all ages reason has been regarded as the enemy of religion. Nothing has been considered so pleasing to the Deity as a total denial of the authority of your own mind. Self-reliance has been thought a deadly sin; and the idea of living and

dying without the aid and consolation of superstition has always horrified the church. By some unaccountable infatuation, belief has been and still is considered of immense importance. All religions have been based upon the idea that God will forever reward the true believer, and eternally damn the man who doubts or denies. Belief is regarded as the one essential thing. To practice justice, to love mercy, is not enough. You must believe in some incomprehensible creed. You must say, "Once one is three, and three times one is one." The man who practiced every virtue, but failed to believe, was execrated. Nothing so outrages the feelings of the church as a moral unbeliever - nothing so horrible as a charitable Atheist.

When Paine was born, the world was religious, the pulpit was the real throne, and the churches were making every effort to crush out of the brain the idea that it had the right to think.

The splendid saying of Lord Bacon, that "the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, are the sovereign good of human nature," has been, and ever will be, rejected by religionists. Intellectual liberty, as a matter of necessity, forever destroys the idea that belief is either praise or blame-worthy, and is wholly inconsistent with every creed in Christendom. Paine recognized this truth. He also saw that as long as the Bible was considered inspired, this infamous doctrine of the virtue of belief would be believed and preached. He examined the Scriptures for himself, and found them filled with cruelty, absurdity and immorality.

He again made up his mind to sacrifice himself for the good of his fellow-men.

He commenced with the assertion, "That any system of religion that has anything in it that shocks the mind of a child cannot be a true system." What a beautiful, what a tender sentiment! No wonder the church began to hate him. He believed in one God, and no more. After this life he hoped for happiness. He believed that true religion consisted in doing justice, loving mercy, in endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy, and in offering to God the fruit of the heart. He denied the inspiration of the Scriptures. This was his crime.

He contended that it is a contradiction in terms to call anything a revelation that comes to us second-hand, either verbally or in writing. He asserted that revelation is necessarily limited to the first communication, and that after that it is only an account of something which another person says was a revelation to him. We have only his word for it, as it was never made to us. This argument never has been and probably never will be answered. He denied the divine origin of Christ, and showed conclusively that the pretended prophecies of the Old Testament had no reference to him whatever; and yet he believed that Christ

was a virtuous and amiable man; that the morality he taught and practiced was of the most benevolent and elevated character, and that it had not been exceeded by any. Upon this point he entertained the same sentiments now held by the Unitarians, and in fact by all the most enlightened Christians.

In his time the church believed and taught that every word in the Bible was absolutely true. Since his day it has been proven false in its cosmogony, false in its astronomy, false in its chronology, false in its history, and so far as the Old Testament is concerned, false in almost everything. There are but few, if any, scientific men who apprehend that the Bible is literally true. Who on earth at this day would pretend to settle any scientific question by a text from the Bible? The old belief is confined to the ignorant and zealous. The church itself will before long be driven to occupy the position of Thomas Paine. The best minds of the orthodox world, to-day, are endeavoring to prove the existence of a personal Deity. All other questions occupy a minor place. You are no longer asked to swallow the Bible whole, whale, Jonah and all; you are simply required to believe in God, and pay your pew-rent. There is not now an enlightened minister in the world who will seriously contend that Samson's strength was in his hair, or that the necromancers of Egypt could turn water into blood, and pieces of wood into serpents. These follies have passed away, and the only reason that the religious world can now have for disliking Paine is that they have been forced to adopt so many of his opinions.

Paine thought the barbarities of the Old Testament inconsistent with what he deemed the real character of God. He believed that murder, massacre and indiscriminate slaughter had never been commanded by the Deity. He regarded much of the Bible as childish, unimportant and foolish.

The scientific world entertains the same opinion. Paine attacked the Bible precisely in the same spirit in which he had attacked the pretensions of kings. He used the same weapons. All the pomp in the world could not make him cower. His reason knew no "Holy of Holies," except the abode of Truth. The sciences were then in their infancy. The attention of the really learned had not been directed to an impartial examination of our pretended revelation. It was accepted by most as a matter of course. The church was all-powerful, and no one, unless thoroughly imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice, thought for a moment of disputing the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. The infamous doctrines that salvation depends upon belief upon a mere intellectual conviction - was then believed and preached. To doubt was to secure the damnation of your soul. This absurd and devilish doctrine shocked the common sense of Thomas Paine, and he denounced it with the fervor of honest indignation. This doctrine, although infinitely ridiculous, has been nearly universal, and has been as hurtful as senseless. For the overthrow of this infamous tenet, Paine exerted all his strength.

He left few arguments to be used by those who should come after him, and he used none that have been refuted. The combined wisdom and genius of all mankind cannot possibly conceive of an argument against liberty of thought. Neither can they show why any one should be punished, either in this world or another, for acting honestly in accordance with reason; and yet a doctrine with every possible argument against it has been, and still is, believed and defended by the entire orthodox world. Can it be possible that we have been endowed with reason simply that our souls may be caught in its toils and snares, that we may be led by its false and delusive glare out of the narrow path that leads to joy into the broad way of ever lasting death? Is it possible that we have been given reason simply that we may through faith ignore its deductions, and avoid its conclusions? Ought the sailor to throw away his compass and depend entirely upon the fog? If reason is not to be depended upon in matters of religion, that is to say, in respect of our duties to the Deity, why should it be relied upon in matters respecting the rights of our fellows? Why should we throw away the laws given to Moses by God himself, and have the audacity to make some of our own? How dare we drown the thunders of Sinai by calling the ayes and noes in a petty legislature? If reason can determine what is merciful, what is just, the duties of man to man, what more do we want either in time or eternity?

Down, forever down, with any religion that requires upon its ignorant altar the sacrifice of the goddess Reason, that compels her to abdicate forever the shining throne of the soul, strips from her form the imperial purple, snatches from her hand the sceptre of thought and makes her the bond-woman of a senseless faith!

If a man should tell you that he had the most beautiful painting in the world, and after taking you where it was should insist upon having your eyes shut, you would likely suspect, either that he had no painting or that it was some pitiable daub. Should he tell you that he was a most excellent performer on the violin, and yet refuse to play unless your ears were stopped, you would think, to say the least of it, that he had an odd way of convincing you of his musical ability. But would his conduct be any more wonderful than that of a religionist who asks that before examining his creed you will have the kindness to throw away your reason? The first gentleman says, "Keep your eyes shut, my picture will bear everything but being seen;" "Keep your ears stopped, my music objects to nothing but being heard." The last says, "Away with your reason, my religion dreads nothing but being understood."

So far as I am concerned, I most cheerfully admit that most Christians are honest, and most ministers sincere. We do not attack them; we attack their creed. We accord to them the same rights that we ask for ourselves. We believe that their doctrines are hurtful. We believe that the frightful text, "He that believes

shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned," has covered the earth with blood. It has filled the heart with arrogance, cruelty and murder. It has caused the religious wars; bound hundreds of thousands to the stake; founded inquisitions; filled dungeons; invented instruments of torture; taught the mother to hate her child; imprisoned the mind; filled the world with ignorance; persecuted the lovers of wisdom; built the monasteries and convents; made happiness a crime, investigation a sin, and self-reliance a blasphemy. It has poisoned the springs of learning; misdirected the energies of the world; filled all countries with want; housed the people in hovels; fed them with famine; and but for the efforts of a few brave Infidels it would have taken the world back to the midnight of barbarism, and left the heavens without a star.

The maligners of Paine say that he had no right to attack this doctrine, because he was unacquainted with the dead languages; and for this reason, it was a piece of pure impudence in him to investigate the Scriptures.

Is it necessary to understand Hebrew in order to know that cruelty is not a virtue, that murder is inconsistent with infinite goodness, and that eternal punishment can be inflicted upon man only by an eternal fiend? Is it really essential to conjugate the Greek verbs before you can make up your mind as to the probability of dead people getting out of their graves? Must one be versed in Latin before he is entitled to express his opinion as to the genuineness of a pretended revelation from God? Common sense belongs exclusively to no tongue. Logic is not confined to, nor has it been buried with, the dead languages. Paine attacked the Bible as it is translated. If the translation is wrong, let its defenders correct it.

The Christianity of Paine's day is not the Christianity of our time. There has been a great improvement since then. One hundred and fifty years ago the foremost preachers of our time would have perished at the stake. A Universalist would have been torn in pieces in England, Scotland, and America. Unitarians would have found themselves in the stocks, pelted by the rabble with dead cats, after which their ears would have been cut off, their tongues bored, and their foreheads branded. Less than one hundred and fifty years ago the following law was in force in Maryland:

"Be it enacted by the Right Honorable, the Lord Proprietor, by and with the advice and consent of his Lordship's governor, and the upper and lower houses of the Assembly, and the authority of the same:

"That if any person shall hereafter, within this province, wittingly, maliciously, and advisedly, by writing or speaking, blaspheme or curse God, or deny our Saviour, Jesus Christ, to be the Son of God, or shall deny the Holy Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or the Godhead of any of the three

persons, or the unity of the Godhead, or shall utter any profane words concerning the Holy Trinity, or any of the persons thereof, and shall thereof be convict by verdict, shall, for the first offence, be bored through the tongue, and fined twenty pounds to be levied of his body. And for the second offence, the offender shall be stigmatized by burning in the forehead with the letter B, and fined forty pounds. And that for the third offence the offender shall suffer death without the benefit of clergy."

The strange thing about this law is, that it has never been repealed, and is still in force in the District of Columbia. Laws like this were in force in most of the colonies, and in all countries where the church had power.

In the Old Testament, the death penalty was attached to hundreds of offences. It has been the same in all Christian countries. To-day, in civilized governments, the death penalty is attached only to murder and treason; and in some it has been entirely abolished. What a commentary upon the divine systems of the world!

In the day of Thomas Paine, the church was ignorant, bloody and relentless. In Scotland the "Kirk" was at the summit of its power. It was a full sister of the Spanish Inquisition. It waged war upon human nature. It was the enemy of happiness, the hater of joy, and the despiser of religious liberty. It taught parents to murder their children rather than to allow them to propagate error. If the mother held opinions of which the infamous "Kirk" disapproved, her children were taken from her arms, her babe from her very bosom, and she was not allowed to see them, or to write them a word. It would not allow shipwrecked sailors to be rescued from drowning on Sunday. It sought to annihilate pleasure, to pollute the heart by filling it with religious cruelty and gloom, and to change mankind into a vast horde of pious, heartless fiends. One of the most famous Scotch divines said:

"The Kirk holds that religious toleration is not far from blasphemy." And this same Scotch Kirk denounced, beyond measure, the man who had the moral grandeur to say, "The world is my country, and to do good my religion." And this same Kirk abhorred the man who said, "Any system of religion that shocks the mind of a child cannot be a true system."

At that time nothing so delighted the church as the beauties of endless torment, and listening to the weak wailings of damned infants struggling in the slimy coils and poison-folds of the worm that never dies.

About the beginning of the nineteenth century, a boy by the name of Thomas Aikenhead, was indicted and tried at Edinburgh for having denied the inspiration of the Scriptures, and for having, on several occasions, when cold, wished himself in hell that he might get warm. Notwithstanding the poor boy

recanted and begged for mercy, he was found guilty and hanged. His body was thrown in a hole at the foot of the scaffold and covered with stones.

Prosecutions and executions like this were common in every Christian country, and all of them were based upon the belief that an intellectual conviction is a crime.

No wonder the church hated and traduced the author of the "Age of Reason."

England was filled with Puritan gloom and Episcopal ceremony. All religious conceptions were of the grossest nature. The ideas of crazy fanatics and extravagant poets were taken as sober facts. Milton had clothed Christianity in the soiled and faded finery of the gods - had added to the story of Christ the fables of Mythology. He gave to the Protestant Church the most outrageously material ideas of the Deity. He turned all the angels into soldiers - made heaven a battlefield, put Christ in uniform, and described God as a militia general. His works were considered by the Protestants nearly as sacred as the Bible itself, and the imagination of the people was thoroughly polluted by the horrible imagery, the sublime absurdity of the blind Milton.

Heaven and hell were realities - the judgment day was expected - books of account would be opened. Every man would hear the charges against him read. God was supposed to sit on a golden throne, surrounded by the tallest angels, with harps in their hands and crowns on their heads. The goats would be thrust into eternal fire on the left, while the orthodox sheep, on the right, were to gambol on sunny slopes forever and forever.

The nation was profoundly ignorant, and consequently extremely religious, so far as belief was concerned.

In Europe, Liberty was lying chained in the Inquisition - her white bosom stained with blood. In the New World the Puritans had been hanging and burning in the name of God, and selling white Quaker children into slavery in the name of Christ, who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me."

Under such conditions progress was impossible. Some one had to lead the way. The church is, and always has been, incapable of a forward movement. Religion always looks back. The church has already reduced Spain to a guitar, Italy to a hand-organ, and Ireland to exile.

Some one not connected with the church had to attack the monster that was eating out the heart of the world. Some one had to sacrifice himself for the good of all. The people were in the most abject slavery; their manhood had been taken from them by pomp, by pageantry and power. Progress is born of doubt and inquiry.

The church never doubts - never inquires. To doubt is heresy - to inquire is to admit that you do not know - the church does neither.

More than a century ago Catholicism, wrapped in robes red with the innocent blood of millions, holding in her frantic clutch crowns and scepters, honors and gold, the keys of heaven and hell, trampling beneath her feet the liberties of nations, in the proud moment of almost universal dominion, felt within her heartless breast the deadly dagger of Voltaire. From that blow the church never can recover. Livid with hatred she launched her eternal anathema at the great destroyer, and ignorant Protestants have echoed the curse of Rome.

In our country the church was all-powerful, and although divided into many sects, would instantly unite to repel a common foe. Paine struck the first grand blow.

The "Age of Reason" did more to undermine the power of the Protestant Church than all other books then known. It furnished an immense amount of food for thought. It was written for the average mind, and is a straightforward, honest investigation of the Bible, and of the Christian system.

Paine did not falter, from the first page to the last. He gives you his candid thought, and can did thoughts are always valuable.

The "Age of Reason" has liberalized us all. It put arguments in the mouths of the people; it put the church on the defensive; it enabled somebody in every village to corner the parson; it made the world wiser, and the church better; it took power from the pulpit and divided it among the pews.

Just in proportion that the human race has advanced, the church has lost power. There is no exception to this rule.

No nation ever materially advanced that held strictly to the religion of its founders.

No nation ever gave itself wholly to the control of the church without losing its power, its honor, and existence.

Every church pretends to have found the exact truth. This is the end of progress. Why pursue that which you have? Why investigate when you know?

Every creed is a rock in running water: humanity sweeps by it. Every creed cries to the universe, "Halt!" A creed is the ignorant Past bullying the enlightened Present.

The ignorant are not satisfied with what can be demonstrated. Science is too slow for them, and so they invent creeds. They demand completeness. A sublime segment, a grand fragment, are of no value to them. They demand the complete circle - the entire structure.

In music they want a melody with a recurring accent at measured periods. In religion they insist upon immediate answers to the questions of creation and destiny. The alpha and omega of all things must be in the alphabet of their superstition. A religion that cannot answer every question, and guess every conundrum is, in their estimation, worse than worthless. They desire a kind of theological dictionary - a religious ready reckoner, together with guide-boards at all crossings and turns. They mistake impudence for authority, solemnity for wisdom, and bathos for inspiration. The beginning and the end are what they demand. The grand flight of the eagle is nothing to them. They want the nest in which he was hatched, and especially the dry limb upon which he roosts. Anything that can be learned is hardly worth knowing. The present is considered of no value in itself. Happiness must not be expected this side of the clouds, and can only be attained by self-denial and faith; not self-denial for the good of others, but for the salvation of your own sweet self.

Paine denied the authority of bibles and creeds; this was his crime, and for this the world shut the door in his face, and emptied its slops upon him from the windows.

I challenge the world to show that Thomas Paine ever wrote one line, one word in favor of tyranny in favor of immorality; one line, one word against what he believed to be for the highest and best interest of mankind; one line, one word against justice, charity, or liberty, and yet he has been pursued as though he had been a fiend from hell. His memory has been execrated as though he had murdered some Uriah for his wife; driven some Hagar into the desert to starve with his child upon her bosom; defiled his own daughters; ripped open with the sword the sweet bodies of loving and innocent women; advised one brother to assassinate another; kept a harem with seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, or had persecuted Christians even unto strange cities.

The church has pursued Paine to deter others. No effort has been in any age of the world spared to crush out opposition. The church used painting, music and architecture, simply to degrade mankind. But there are men that nothing can awe. There have been at all times brave spirits that dared even the gods. Some proud head has always been above the waves. In every age some Diogenes has sacrificed to all the gods. True genius never cowers, and there is always some Samson feeling for the pillars of authority.

Cathedrals and domes, and chimes and chants - temples frescoed and groined and carved, and gilded with gold - altars and tapers, and paintings of virgin and babe — censer and chalice — chasuble, paten and alb-organs, and anthems and incense rising to the winged and blest — maniple, amice and stole - crosses and crosiers, tiaras and crowns — mitres and missals and masses — rosaries, relics and robes - martyrs and saints, and windows stained as with the blood of Christ - never, never for one moment awed the brave, proud spirit of the Infidel. He knew that all the pomp and glitter had been purchased with Liberty — that priceless jewel of the soul. In looking at the cathedral he remembered the dungeon. The music of the organ was not loud enough to drown the clank of fetters. He could not forget that the taper had lighted the fagot. He knew that the cross adorned the hilt of the sword, and so where others worshiped, he wept and scorned.

The doubter, the investigator, the Infidel, have been the saviors of liberty. This truth is beginning to be realized, and the truly intellectual are honoring the brave thinkers of the past.

But the church is as unforgiving as ever, and still wonders why any Infidel should be wicked enough to endeavor to destroy her power.

I will tell the church why.

You have imprisoned the human mind; you have been the enemy of liberty; you have burned us at the stake - wasted us upon slow fires - torn our flesh with iron; you have covered us with chains - treated us as outcasts; you have filled the world with fear; you have taken our wives and children from our arms; you have confiscated our property; you have denied us the right to testify in courts of justice; you have branded us with infamy; you have torn out our tongues; you have refused us burial. In the name of your religion, you have robbed us of every right; and after having inflicted upon us every evil that can be inflicted in this world, you have fallen upon your knees, and with clasped hands implored your God to torment us forever.

Can you wonder that we hate your doctrines — that we despise your creeds - that we feel proud to know that we are beyond your power — that we are free in spite of you that we can express our honest thought, and that the whole world is grandly rising into the blessed light?

Can you wonder that we point with pride to the fact that Infidelity has ever been found battling for the rights of man, for the liberty of conscience, and for the happiness of all?

Can you wonder that we are proud to know that we have always been disciples of Reason, and soldiers of Freedom; that we have denounced tyranny and superstition, and have kept our hands unstained with human blood?

We deny that religion is the end or object of this life. When it is so considered it becomes destructive of happiness - the real end of life. It becomes a hydra-headed monster, reaching in terrible coils from the heavens, and thrusting its thousand fangs into the bleeding, quivering hearts of men. It devours their substance, builds palaces for God, (who dwells not in temples made with hands,) and allows his children to die in huts and hovels. It fills the earth with mourning, heaven with hatred, the present with fear, and all the future with despair.

Virtue is a subordination of the passions to the intellect. It is to act in accordance with your highest convictions. It does not consist in believing, but in doing. This is the sublime truth that the Infidels in all ages have uttered. They have handed the torch from one to the other through all the years that have fled. Upon the altar of Reason they have kept the sacred fire, and through the long midnight of faith they fed the divine flame.

Infidelity is liberty; all religion is slavery. In every creed man is the slave of God - woman is the slave of man and the sweet children are the slaves of all.

We do not want creeds; we want knowledge - we want happiness.

And yet we are told by the church that we have accomplished nothing; that we are simply destroyers; that we tear down without building again.

Is it nothing to free the mind? Is it nothing to civilize mankind? Is it nothing to fill the world with light, with discovery, with science? Is it nothing to dignify man and exalt the intellect? Is it nothing to grope your way into the dreary prisons, the damp and dropping dungeons, the dark and silent cells of superstition, where the souls of men are chained to floors of stone; to greet them like a ray of light, like the song of a bird, the murmur of a stream; to see the dull eyes open and grow slowly bright; to feel your self grasped by the shrunk and unused hands, and hear yourself thanked by a strange and hollow voice ?

Is it nothing to conduct these souls gradually into the blessed light of day - to let them see again the happy fields, the sweet, green earth, and hear the everlasting music of the waves? Is it nothing to make men wipe the dust from their swollen knees, the tears from their blanched and furrowed cheeks? Is it a small thing to reave the heavens of an insatiate monster and write upon the eternal dome, glittering with stars, the grand word - FREEDOM?

Is it a small thing to quench the flames of hell with the holy tears of pity - to unbind the martyr from the stake - break all the chains - put out the fires of civil war - stay the sword of the fanatic, and tear the bloody hands of the Church from the white throat of Science?

Is it a small thing to make men truly free — to destroy the dogmas of ignorance, prejudice and power — the poisoned fables of superstition, and drive from the beautiful face of the earth the fiend of Fear?

It does seem as though the most zealous Christian must at times entertain some doubt as to the divine origin of his religion. For eighteen hundred years the doctrine has been preached. For more than a thousand years the church had, to a great extent, the control of the civilized world, and what has been the result? Are the Christian nations patterns of charity and forbearance? On the contrary, their principal business is to destroy each other. More than five millions of Christians are trained, educated, and drilled to murder their fellow-Christians. Every nation is groaning under a vast debt incurred in carrying on war against other Christians, or defending itself from Christian assault. The world is covered with forts to protect Christians from Christians, and every sea is covered with iron monsters ready to blow Christian brains into eternal froth. Millions upon millions are annually expended in the effort to construct still more deadly and terrible engines of death. Industry is crippled, honest toil is robbed, and even beggary is taxed to defray the expenses of Christian warfare. There must be some other way to reform this world. We have tried creed, and dogma and fable, and they have failed; and they have failed in all the nations dead.

The people perish for the lack of knowledge. Nothing but education — scientific education — can benefit mankind. We must find out the laws of nature and conform to them.

We need free bodies and free minds, free labor and free thought, chainless hands and fetterless brains. Free labor will give us wealth. Free thought will give us truth.

We need men with moral courage to speak and write their real thoughts, and to stand by their convictions, even to the very death. We need have no fear of being too radical. The future will verify all grand and brave predictions. Paine was splendidly in advance of his time; but he was orthodox compared with the Infidels of to-day.

Science, the great Iconoclast, has been busy since 1809, and by the highway of Progress are the broken images of the Past.

On every hand the people advance. The Vicar of God has been pushed from the throne of the Caesars, and upon the roofs of the Eternal City falls once more the shadow of the Eagle.

All has been accomplished by the heroic few. The men of science have explored heaven and earth, and with infinite patience have furnished the facts. The brave thinkers have used them. The gloomy caverns of superstition have been transformed into temples of thought, and the demons of the past are the angels of to-day.

Science took a handful of sand, constructed a telescope, and with it explored the starry depths of heaven. Science wrested from the gods their thunderbolts; and now, the electric spark, freighted with thought and love, flashes under all the waves of the sea. Science took a tear from the cheek of unpaid labor, converted it into steam, and created a giant that turns with tireless arm, the countless wheels of toil.

Thomas Paine was one of the intellectual heroes one - of the men to whom we are indebted. His name is associated forever with the Great Republic. As long as free government exists he will be remembered, admired and honored.

He lived a long, laborious and useful life. The world is better for his having lived. For the sake of truth he accepted hatred and reproach for his portion. He ate the bitter bread of sorrow. His friends were untrue to him because he was true to himself, and true to them. He lost the respect of what is called society, but kept his own. His life is what the world calls failure and what history calls success.

If to love your fellow-men more than self is goodness, Thomas Paine was good.

If to be in advance of your time — to be a pioneer in the direction of right — is greatness, Thomas Paine was great.

If to avow your principles and discharge your duty in the presence of death is heroic, Thomas Paine was a hero.

At the age of seventy-three, death touched his tired heart. He died in the land his genius defended - under the flag he gave to the skies. Slander cannot touch him now - hatred cannot reach him more. He sleeps in the sanctuary of the tomb, beneath the quiet of the stars.

A few more years a few more brave men a few more rays of light, and mankind will venerate the memory of him who said:

“ANY SYSTEM OF RELIGION THAT SHOCKS THE MIND OF A CHILD CANNOT BE A TRUE SYSTEM;”

“THE WORLD IS MY COUNTRY, AND TO DO GOOD MY RELIGION.”

INDIVIDUALITY

"HIS SOUL WAS LIKE A STAR AND DWELT APART."

On every hand are the enemies of individuality and mental freedom. Custom meets us at the cradle and leaves us only at the tomb. Our first questions are answered by ignorance, and our last by superstition. We are pushed and dragged by countless hands along the beaten track, and our entire training can be summed up in the word suppression. Our desire to have a thing or to do a thing is considered as conclusive evidence that we ought not to have it, and ought not to do it. At every turn we run against cherubim and a flaming sword guarding some entrance to the Eden of our desire. We are allowed to investigate all subjects in which we feel no particular interest, and to express the opinions of the majority with the utmost freedom. We are taught that liberty of speech should never be carried to the extent of contradicting the dead witnesses of a popular superstition. Society offers continual rewards for self-betrayal, and they are nearly all earned and claimed, and some are paid.

We have all read accounts of Christian gentlemen remarking, when about to be hanged, how much better it would have been for them if they had only followed a mother's advice. But after all, how fortunate it is for the world that the maternal advice has not always been followed. How fortunate it is for us all that it is somewhat unnatural for a human being to obey. Universal obedience is universal stagnation; disobedience is one of the conditions of progress. Select any age of the world and tell me what would have been the effect of implicit obedience. Suppose the church had had absolute control of the human mind at any time, would not the words liberty and progress have been blotted from human speech? In defiance of advice, the world has advanced.

Suppose the astronomers had controlled the science of astronomy; suppose the doctors had controlled the science of medicine; suppose kings had been left to fix the forms of government; suppose our fathers had taken the advice of Paul, who said, "be subject to the powers that be, because they are ordained of God; suppose the church could control the world to-day, we would go back to chaos and old night. Philosophy would be branded as infamous; Science would again press its pale and thoughtful face against the prison bars and round the limbs of liberty would climb the bigot's flame.

It is a blessed thing that in every age some one has had individuality enough and courage enough to stand by his own convictions, some one who had the grandeur to say his say. I believe it was Magellan who said, "The church says the

earth is flat; but I have seen its shadow on the moon, and I have more confidence even in a shadow than in the church." On the prow of his ship were disobedience, defiance, scorn, and success.

The trouble with most people is, they bow to what is called authority; they have a certain reverence for the old because it is old. They think a man is better for being dead, especially if he has been dead a long time. They think the fathers of their nation were the greatest and best of all mankind. All these things they implicitly believe because it is popular and patriotic, and because they were told so when they were very small, and remember distinctly of hearing mother read it out of a book. It is hard to over-estimate the influence of early training in the direction of superstition. You first teach children that a certain book is true - that it was written by God himself - that to question its truth is a sin, that to deny it is a crime, and that should they die without believing that book they will be forever damned without benefit of clergy. The consequence is that long before they read that book, they believe it to be true. When they do read it their minds are wholly unfitted to investigate its claims. They accept it as a matter of course.

In this way the reason is overcome, the sweet instincts of humanity are blotted from the heart, and while reading its infamous pages even justice throws aside her scales, shrieking for revenge, and charity, with bloody hands, applauds a deed of murder. In this way we are taught that the revenge of man is the justice of God; that mercy is not the same everywhere. In this way the ideas of our race have been subverted. In this way we have made tyrants, bigots, and inquisitors. In this way the brain of man has become a kind of palimpsest upon which, and over the writings of nature, superstition has scrawled her countless lies. One great trouble is that most teachers are dishonest. They teach as certainties those things concerning which they entertain doubts. They do not say, "we think this is so," but "we know this is so." They do not appeal to the reason of the pupil, but they command his faith. They keep all doubts to themselves; they do not explain, they assert. All this is infamous. In this way you may make Christians, but you cannot make men; you cannot make women. You can make followers, but no leaders; disciples, but no Christs. You may promise power, honor, and happiness to all those who will blindly follow, but you cannot keep your promise.

A monarch said to a hermit,
 "Come with me and I will give you power."
 "I have all the power that I know how to use" replied the hermit.
 "Come," said the king, "I will give you wealth."
 "I have no wants that money can supply," said the hermit.
 "I will give you honor," said the monarch.
 "Ah, honor cannot be given, it must be earned," was the hermit's answer.
 "Come," said the king, making a last appeal, "and I will give you happiness."

"No," said the man of solitude, "there is no happiness without liberty, and he who follows cannot be free."

"You shall have liberty too," said the king.

"Then I will stay where I am," said the old man.

And all the king's courtiers thought the hermit a fool.

Now and then somebody examines, and in spite of all keeps his manhood, and has the courage to follow where his reason leads. Then the pious get together and repeat wise saws, and exchange knowing nods and most prophetic winks. The stupidly wise sit owl-like on the dead limbs of the tree of knowledge, and solemnly hoot. Wealth sneers, and fashion laughs, and respectability passes by on the other side, and scorn points with all her skinny fingers, and all the snakes of superstition writhe and hiss, and slander lends her tongue, and infamy her brand, and perjury her oath, and the law its power, and bigotry tortures, and the church kills.

The church hates a thinker precisely for the same reason a robber dislikes a sheriff, or a thief despises the prosecuting witness. Tyranny likes courtiers, flatterers, followers, fawners, and superstition wants believers, disciples, zealots, hypocrites, and subscribers. The church demands worship the very thing that man should give to no being, human or divine. To worship another is to degrade yourself. Worship is awe and dread and vague fear and blind hope. It is the spirit of worship that elevates the one and degrades the many; that builds palaces for robbers, erects monuments to crime, and forges manacles even for its own hands. The spirit of worship is the spirit of tyranny. The worshiper always regrets that he is not the worshiped. We should all remember that the intellect has no knees, and that whatever the attitude of the body may be, the brave soul is always found erect. Whoever worships, abdicates. Whoever believes at the command of power, tramples his own individuality beneath his feet, and voluntarily robs himself of all that renders man superior to the brute.

The despotism of faith is justified upon the ground that Christian countries are the grandest and most prosperous of the world. At one time the same thing could have been truly said in India, in Egypt, in Greece, in Rome, and in every other country that has, in the history of the world, swept to empire. This argument proves too much not only, but the assumption upon which it is based is utterly false. Numberless circumstances and countless conditions have produced the prosperity of the Christian world. The truth is, we have advanced in spite of religious zeal, ignorance, and opposition. The church has won no victories for the rights of man. Luther labored to reform the church; Voltaire, to reform men. Over every fortress of tyranny has waved, and still waves, the banner of the church. Wherever brave blood has been shed, the sword of the

church has been wet. On every chain has been the sign of the cross. The altar and throne have leaned against and supported each other.

All that is good in our civilization is the result of commerce, climate, soil, geographical position, industry, invention, discovery, art, and science. The church has been the enemy of progress, for the reason that it has endeavored to prevent man thinking for himself. To prevent thought is to prevent all advancement except in the direction of faith.

Who can imagine the infinite impudence of a church assuming to think for the human race? Who can imagine the infinite impudence of a church that pretends to be the mouthpiece of God and in his name threatens to inflict eternal punishment upon those who honestly reject its claims and scorn its pretensions? By what right does a man, or an organization of men, or a god, claim to hold a brain in bondage? When a fact can be demonstrated, force is unnecessary; when it cannot be demonstrated, an appeal to force is infamous. In the presence of the unknown all have an equal right to think.

Over the vast plain, called life, we are all travelers, and not one traveler is perfectly certain that he is going in the right direction. True it is that no other plain is so well supplied with guide-boards. At every turn and crossing you will find them, and upon each one is written the exact direction and distance. One great trouble is, however, that these boards are all different, and the result is that most travelers are confused in proportion to the number they read. Thousands of people are around each of these signs, and each one is doing his best to convince the traveler that his particular board is the only one upon which the least reliance can be placed, and that if his road is taken the reward for so doing will be infinite and eternal, while all the other roads are said to lead to hell, and all the makers of the other guide-boards are declared to be heretics, hypocrites and liars. "Well," says a traveler, "you may be right in what you say, but allow me at least to read some of the other directions and examine a little into their claims. I wish to rely a little upon my own judgment in a matter of so great importance." "No, sir," shouts the zealot, "that is the very thing you are not allowed to do. You must go my way without investigation, or you are as good as damned already." "Well," says the traveler, "if that is so, I believe I had better go your way." And so most of them go along, taking the word of those who know as little as themselves. Now and then comes one who, in spite of all threats, calmly examines the claims of all, and as calmly rejects them all. These travelers take roads of their own, and are denounced by all the others, as infidels and atheists.

Around all of these guide-boards, as far as the eye can reach, the ground is covered with mountains of human bones, crumbling and bleaching in the rain and sun. They are the bones of murdered men and women fathers, mothers and babes.

In my judgment, every human being should take a road of his own. Every mind should be true to itself — should think, investigate and conclude for itself. This is a duty alike incumbent upon pauper and prince. Every soul should repel dictation and tyranny, no matter from what source they come — from earth or heaven, from men or gods. Besides, every traveler upon this vast plain should give to every other traveler his best idea as to the road that should be taken. Each is entitled to the honest opinion of all. And there is but one way to get an honest opinion upon any subject whatever. The person giving the opinion must be free from fear. The merchant must not fear to lose his custom, neither the doctor neither his practice, nor the preacher his pulpit. There can be no advance without liberty. Suppression of honest inquiry is retrogression, and must end in intellectual night. The tendency of orthodox religion to-day is toward mental slavery and barbarism. Not one of the orthodox ministers dare preach what he thinks if he knows a majority of his congregation think otherwise. He knows that every member of his church stands guard over his brain with a creed, like a club, in his hand. He knows that he is not expected to search after the truth, but that he is employed to defend the creed. Every pulpit is a pillory, in which stands a hired culprit, defending the justice of his own imprisonment.

Is it desirable that all should be exactly alike in their religious convictions? Is any such thing possible? Do we not know that there are no two persons alike in the whole world? No two trees, no two leaves, no two any things that are alike? Infinite diversity is the law. Religion tries to force all minds into one mould. Knowing that all cannot believe, the church endeavors to make all say they believe. She longs for the unity of hypocrisy, and detests the splendid diversity of individuality and freedom.

Nearly all people stand in great horror of annihilation, and yet to give up your individuality is to annihilate yourself. Mental slavery is mental death, and every man who has given up his intellectual freedom is the living coffin of his dead soul. In this sense, every church is a cemetery and every creed an epitaph.

We should all remember that to be like other people is to be unlike ourselves, and that nothing can be more detestable in character than servile imitation. The great trouble with imitation is that we are apt to ape those who are in reality far below us. After all, the poorest bargain that a human being can make is to give his individuality for what is called respectability.

There is no saying more degrading than this: "It is better to be the tail of a lion than the head of a dog." It is a responsibility to think and act for yourself. Most people hate responsibility; therefore they join something and become the tail of some lion. They say, "My party can act for me - my church can do my thinking. It is enough for me to pay taxes and obey the lion to which I belong, without troubling myself about the right, the wrong, or the why or the wherefore of anything whatever." These people are respectable. They hate reformers, and dislike exceedingly to have their minds disturbed. They regard convictions as very disagreeable things to have. They love forms, and enjoy, beyond everything else, telling what a splendid tail their lion has, and what a troublesome dog their neighbor is. Besides this natural inclination to avoid personal responsibility, is and always has been the fact, that every religionist has warned men against the presumption and wickedness of thinking for themselves. The reason has been denounced by all Christendom as the only unsafe guide. The church has left nothing undone to prevent man following the logic of his brain. The plainest facts have been covered with the mantle of mystery. The grossest absurdities have been declared to be self-evident facts. The order of nature has been, as it were, reversed, that the hypocritical few might govern the honest many. The man who stood by the conclusion of his reason was denounced as a scorner and hater of God and his holy church. From the organization of the first church until this moment, to think your own thoughts has been inconsistent with membership. Every member has borne the marks of collar, and chain, and whip. No man ever seriously attempted to reform a church without being cast out and hunted down by the hounds of hypocrisy. The highest crime against a creed is to change it. Reformation is treason.

Thousands of young men are being educated at this moment by the various churches. What for? In order that they may be prepared to investigate the phenomena by which we are surrounded? No! The object, and the only object, is that they may be prepared to defend a creed; that they may learn the arguments of their respective churches, and repeat them in the dull ears of a thoughtless congregation. If one, after being thus trained at the expense of the Methodists, turns Presbyterian or Baptist, he is denounced as an ungrateful wretch. Honest investigation is utterly impossible within the pale of any church, for the reason, that if you think the church is right you will not investigate, and if you think it wrong, the church will investigate you. The consequence of this is that most of the theological literature is the result of suppression, of fear, tyranny and hypocrisy.

Every orthodox writer necessarily said to himself, "If I write that, my wife and children may want for bread. I will be covered with shame and branded with infamy; but if I write this, I will gain position, power, and honor. My church rewards defenders, and burns reformers."

Under these conditions all your Scotts, Henrys, and McKnights have written; and weighed in these scales, what are their commentaries worth? They are not the ideas and decisions of honest judges, but the sophisms of the paid attorneys of superstition. Who can tell what the world has lost by this infamous system of suppression? How many grand thinkers have died with the mailed hand of superstition upon their lips? How many splendid ideas have perished in the cradle of the brain, strangled in the poi son-coils of that python, the Church!

For thousands of years a thinker was hunted down like an escaped convict. To him who had braved the church, every door was shut, every knife was open. To shelter him from the wild storm, to give him a crust when dying, to put a cup of water to his cracked and bleeding lips; these were all crimes, not one of which the church ever did forgive; and with the justice taught of her God, his helpless children were exterminated as scorpions and vipers.

Who at the present day can imagine the courage, the devotion to principle, the intellectual and moral grandeur it once required to be an infidel, to brave the church, her racks, her fagots, her dungeons, her tongues of fire, - to defy and scorn her heaven and her hell - her devil and her God? They were the noblest sons of earth. They were the real saviors of our race, the destroyers of superstition and the creators of Science. They were the real Titans who bared their grand foreheads to all the thunderbolts of all the gods.

The church has been, and still is, the great robber. She has rifled not only the pockets but the brains of the world. She is the stone at the sepulchre of liberty; the upas tree, in whose shade the intellect of man has withered; the Gorgon beneath whose gaze the human heart has turned to stone. Under her influence even the Protestant mother expects to be happy in heaven, while her brave boy, who fell fighting for the rights of man, shall writhe in hell.

It is said that some of the Indian tribes place the heads of their children between pieces of bark until the form of the skull is permanently changed. To us this seems a most shocking custom; and yet, after all, is it as bad as to put the souls of our children in the strait-jacket of a creed? to so utterly deform their minds that they regard the God of the Bible as a being of infinite mercy, and really consider it a virtue to believe a thing just because it seems unreasonable? Every child in the Christian world has uttered its wondering protest against this outrage. All the machinery of the church is constantly employed in corrupting the reason of children. In every possible way they are robbed of their own thoughts and forced to accept the statements of others. Every Sunday school has for its object the crushing out of every germ of individuality. The poor children are taught that nothing can be more acceptable to God than unreasoning obedience and eyeless faith, and that to believe God did an impossible act, is far

better than to do a good one yourself. They are told that all religions have been simply the John-the-Baptists of ours; that all the gods of antiquity have withered and shrunk into the Jehovah of the Jews; that all the longings and aspirations of the race are realized in the motto of the Evangelical Alliance, "Liberty in non-essentials;" that all there is, or ever was, of religion can be found in the apostles' creed; that there is nothing left to be discovered; that all the thinkers are dead, and all the living should simply be believers; that we have only to repeat the epitaph found on the grave of wisdom; that grave-yards are the best possible universities, and that the children must be forever beaten with the bones of the fathers.

It has always seemed absurd to suppose that a god would choose for his companions, during all eternity, the dear souls whose highest and only ambition is to obey. He certainly would now and then be tempted to make the same remark made by an English gentleman to his poor guest. The gentleman had invited a man in humble circumstances to dine with him. The man was so overcome with the honor that to everything the gentleman said he replied "Yes." Tired at last with the monotony of acquiescence, the gentle man cried out, "For God's sake, my good man, say 'No,' just once, so there will be two of us."

Is it possible that an infinite God created this world simply to be the dwelling-place of slaves and serfs? Simply for the purpose of raising orthodox Christians? That he did a few miracles to astonish them; that all the evils of life are simply his punishments, and that he is finally going to turn heaven into a kind of religious museum filled with Baptist barnacles, petrified Presbyterians and Methodist mummies? I want no heaven for which I must give my reason; no happiness in exchange for my liberty, and no immortality that demands the surrender of my individuality. Better rot in the windowless tomb, to which there is no door but the red mouth of the pallid worm, than wear the jeweled collar even of a god.

Religion does not, and cannot, contemplate man as free. She accepts only the homage of the prostrate, and scorns the offerings of those who stand erect. She cannot tolerate the liberty of thought. The wide and sunny fields belong not to her domain. The star-lit heights of genius and individuality are above and beyond her appreciation and power. Her subjects cringe at her feet, covered with the dust of obedience.

They are not athletes standing posed by rich life and brave endeavor like antique statues, but shriveled deformities, studying with furtive glance the cruel face of power.

No religionist seems capable of comprehending this plain truth. There is this difference between thought and action: for our actions we are responsible to ourselves and to those injuriously affected; for thoughts, there can, in the nature of things, be no responsibility to gods or men, here or hereafter. And yet the Protestant has vied with the Catholic in denouncing freedom of thought; and while I was taught to hate Catholicism with every drop of my blood, it is only justice to say, that in all essential particulars it is precisely the same as every other religion. Luther denounced mental liberty with all the coarse and brutal vigor of his nature; Calvin despised, from the very bottom of his petrified heart, anything that even looked like religious toleration, and solemnly declared that to advocate it was to crucify Christ afresh. All the founders of all the orthodox churches have advocated the same infamous tenet. The truth is, that what is called religion is necessarily inconsistent with free thought.

A believer is a bird in a cage; a Freethinker is an eagle parting the clouds with tireless wing.

At present, owing to the inroads that have been made by liberals and infidels, most of the churches pretend to be in favor of religious liberty. Of these churches, we will ask this question: How can a man, who conscientiously believes in religious liberty, worship a God who does not? They say to us: "We will not imprison you on account of your belief, but our God will." "We will not burn you because you throw away the sacred Scriptures, but their author will." "We think it an infamous crime to persecute our brethren for opinion's sake, but the God, whom we ignorantly worship, will on that account, damn his own children forever."

Why is it that these Christians not only detest the infidels, but cordially despise each other? Why do they refuse to worship in the temples of each other? Why do they care so little for the damnation of men, and so much for the baptism of children? Why will they adorn their churches with the money of thieves and flatter vice for the sake of subscriptions? Why will they attempt to bribe Science to certify to the writings of God? Why do they torture the words of the great into an acknowledgment of the truth of Christianity? Why do they stand with hat in hand before presidents, kings, emperors, and scientists, begging, like Lazarus, for a few crumbs of religious comfort? Why are they so delighted to find an allusion to Providence in the message of Lincoln? Why are they so afraid that some one will find out that Paley wrote an essay in favor of the Epicurean philosophy, and that Sir Isaac Newton was once an infidel? Why are they so anxious to show that

Voltaire recanted; that Paine died palsied with fear; that the Emperor Julian cried out "Galilean, thou hast Conquered"; that Gibbon died a Catholic; that Agassiz had a little confidence in Moses; that the old Napoleon was once complimentary enough to say that he thought Christ greater than himself or Caesar; that Washington was caught on his knees at Valley Forge; that blunt old Ethan Allen told his child to believe the religion of her mother; that Franklin said, "Don't unchain the tiger," and that Volney got frightened in a storm at sea?

Is it because the foundation of their temple is crumbling, because the walls are cracked, the pillars leaning, the great dome swaying to its fall and because Science has written over the high altar its MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN the old words, destined to be the epitaph of all religions?

Every assertion of individual independence has been a step toward infidelity. Luther started toward Humboldt, Wesley, toward John Stuart Mill. To really reform the church is to destroy it. Every new religion has a little less superstition than the old, so that the religion of Science is but a question of time.

I will not say the church has been an unmitigated evil in all respects. Its history is infamous and glorious. It has delighted in the production of extremes. It has furnished murderers for its own martyrs. It has sometimes fed the body, but has always starved the soul. It has been a charitable highwayman - a profligate beggar - a generous pirate. It has produced some angels and a multitude of devils. It has built more prisons than asylums. It made a hundred orphans while it cared for one. In one hand it has carried the alms-dish and in the other a sword. It has founded schools and endowed universities for the purpose of destroying true learning. It filled the world with hypocrites and zealots, and upon the cross of its own Christ it crucified the individuality of man. It has sought to destroy the independence of the soul and put the world upon its knees. This is its crime. The commission of this crime was necessary to its existence. In order to compel obedience it declared that it had the truth, and all the truth; that God had made it the keeper of his secrets; his agent and his vicegerent. It declared that all other religions were false and infamous. It rendered all compromise impossible and all thought superfluous. Thought was its enemy, obedience was its friend. Investigation was fraught with danger; therefore investigation was suppressed. The holy of holies was behind the curtain. All this was upon the principle that forgers hate to have the signature examined by an expert, and that imposture detests curiosity.

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," has always been the favorite text of the church.

In short, Christianity has always opposed every forward movement of the human race. Across the highway of progress it has always been building breastworks of Bibles, tracts, commentaries, prayer-books, creeds, dogmas and platforms, and at every advance the Christians have gathered together behind these heaps of rubbish and shot the poisoned arrows of malice at the soldiers of freedom.

And even the liberal Christian of to-day has his holy of holies, and in the niche of the temple of his heart has his idol. He still clings to a part of the old superstition, and all the pleasant memories of the old belief linger in the horizon of his thoughts like a sunset. We associate the memory of those we love with the religion of our childhood. It seems almost a sacrilege to rudely destroy the idols that our fathers worshiped, and turn their sacred and beautiful truths into the fables of barbarism. Some throw away the Old Testament and cling to the New, while others give up everything except the idea that there is a personal God, and that in some wonderful way we are the objects of his care.

Even this, in my opinion, as Science, the great iconoclast, marches onward, will have to be abandoned with the rest. The great ghost will surely share the fate of the little ones. They fled at the first appearance of the dawn, and the other will vanish with the perfect day. Until then the independence of man is little more than a dream. Overshadowed by an immense personality, in the presence of the irresponsible and the infinite, the individuality of man is lost, and he falls prostrate in the very dust of fear. Beneath the frown of the absolute, man stands a wretched, trembling slave, beneath his smile he is at best only a fortunate serf. Governed by a being whose arbitrary will is law, chained to the chariot of power, his destiny rests in the pleasure of the unknown. Under these circumstances, what wretched object can he have in lengthening out his aimless life?

And yet, in most minds, there is a vague fear of the gods - a shrinking from the malice of the skies. Our fathers were slaves, and nearly all their children are mental serfs. The enfranchisement of the soul is a slow and painful process. Superstition, the mother of those hideous twins, Fear and Faith, from her throne of skulls, still rules the world, and will until the mind of woman ceases to be the property of priests.

When women reason, and babes sit in the lap of philosophy, the victory of reason over the shadowy host of darkness will be complete.

In the minds of many, long after the intellect has thrown aside as utterly fabulous the legends of the church, there still remains a lingering suspicion, born of the mental habits contracted in childhood, that after all there may be a grain of truth in these mountains of theological mist, and that possibly the superstitious side is the side of safety.

A gentleman, walking among the ruins of Athens, came upon a fallen statue of Jupiter; making an exceedingly low bow he said: "O Jupiter! I salute thee." He then added: "Should you ever sit upon the throne of heaven again, do not, I pray you, forget that I treated you politely when you were prostrate."

We have all been taught by the church that nothing is so well calculated to excite the ire of the Deity as to express a doubt as to his existence, and that to deny it is an unpardonable sin. Numerous well-attested instances are referred to of atheists being struck dead for denying the existence of God. According to these religious people, God is infinitely above us in every respect, infinitely merciful, and yet he cannot bear to hear a poor finite man honestly question his existence. Knowing, as he does, that his children are groping in darkness and struggling with doubt and fear; knowing that he could enlighten them if he would, he still holds the expression of a sincere doubt as to his existence, the most infamous of crimes. According to orthodox logic, God having furnished us with imperfect minds has a right to demand a perfect result.

Suppose Mr. Smith should overhear a couple of small bugs holding a discussion as to the existence of Mr. Smith, and suppose one should have the temerity to declare, upon the honor of a bug, that he had examined the whole question to the best of his ability, including the argument based upon design, and had come to the conclusion that no man by the name of Smith had ever lived. Think then of Mr. Smith flying into an ecstasy of rage, crushing the atheist bug beneath his iron heel, while he exclaimed, "I will teach you, blasphemous wretch, that Smith is a diabolical fact! "What then can we think of a God who would open the artillery of heaven upon one of his own children for simply expressing his honest thought? And what man who really thinks can help repeating the words of Ennius: "If there are gods they certainly pay no attention to the affairs of man."

Think of the millions of men and women who have been destroyed simply for loving and worshiping this God. Is it possible that this God, having infinite power, saw his loving and heroic children languishing in the darkness of dungeons; heard the clank of their chains when they lifted their hands to him in the agony of prayer; saw them stretched upon the bigot's rack, where death alone had pity; saw the serpents of flame crawl hissing round their shrinking forms - saw all this for sixteen hundred years, and sat as silent as a stone?

From such a God, why should man expect assistance? Why should he waste his days in fruitless prayer? Why should he fall upon his knees and implore a phantom - a phantom that is deaf, and dumb, and blind?

Although we live in what is called a free government, and politically we are free, there is but little religious liberty in America. Society demands, either that you belong to some church, or that you suppress your opinions. It is contended by many that ours is a Christian government, founded upon the Bible, and that all who look upon that book as false or foolish are destroying the foundation of our country. The truth is, our government is not founded upon the rights of gods, but upon the rights of men. Our Constitution was framed, not to declare and up hold the deity of Christ, but the sacredness of humanity. Ours is the first government made by the people and for the people. It is the only nation with which the gods have had nothing to do. And yet there are some judges dishonest and cowardly enough to solemnly decide that this is a Christian country, and that our free institutions are based upon the infamous laws of Jehovah. Such judges are the Jeffries of the church. They believe that decisions, made by hirelings at the bidding of kings, are binding upon man for ever. They regard old law as far superior to modern justice. They are what might be called orthodox judges. They spend their days in finding out, not what ought to be, but what has been. With their backs to the sunrise they worship the night. There is only one future event with which they concern themselves, and that is their re election. No honest court ever did, or ever will, decide that our Constitution is Christian. The Bible teaches that the powers that be, are ordained of God. The Bible teaches that God is the source of all authority, and that all kings have obtained their power from him. Every tyrant has claimed to be the agent of the Most High. The Inquisition was founded, not in the name of man, but in the name of God. All the governments of Europe recognize the greatness of God, and the littleness of the people. In all ages, hypocrites, called priests, have put crowns upon the heads of thieves, called kings.

The Declaration of Independence announces the sublime truth that all power comes from the people. This was a denial, and the first denial of a nation, of the infamous dogma that God confers the right upon one man to govern others. It was the first grand assertion of the dignity of the human race. It declared the governed to be the source of power, and in fact denied the authority of any and all gods. Through the ages of slavery through the weary centuries of the lash and chain, God was the acknowledged ruler of the world. To enthrone man, was to dethrone him

To Paine, Jefferson, and Franklin, are we indebted, more than to all others, for a human government, and for a Constitution in which no God is recognized superior to the legally expressed will of the people.

They knew that to put God in the Constitution was to put man out. They knew that the recognition of a Deity would be seized upon by fanatics and zealots as a pretext for destroying the liberty of thought. They knew the terrible history of the church too well to place in her keeping, or in the keeping of her God, the sacred rights of man. They intended that all should have the right to worship, or not to worship; that our laws should make no distinction on account of creed. They intended to found and frame a government for man, and for man alone. They wished to preserve the individuality and liberty of all; to prevent the few from governing the many, and the many from persecuting and destroying the few.

Notwithstanding all this, the spirit of persecution still lingers in our laws. In many of the States, only those who believe in the existence of some kind of God, are under the protection of the law.

The supreme court of Illinois decided, in the year of grace 1856 that an unbeliever in the existence of an intelligent First Cause could not be allowed to testify in any court. His wife and children might have been murdered before his very face, and yet in the absence of other witnesses, the murderer could not have even been indicted. The atheist was a legal outcast. To him, Justice was not only blind, but deaf. He was liable, like other men, to support the Government, and was forced to contribute his share towards paying the salaries of the very judges who decided that under no circumstances could his voice be heard in any court. This was the law of Illinois, and so remained until the adoption of the new Constitution. By such infamous means has the church endeavored to chain the human mind, and protect the majesty of her God. The fact is, we have no national religion, and no national God; but every citizen is allowed to have a religion and a God of his own, or to reject all religions and deny the existence of all gods. The church, however, never has, and never will understand and appreciate the genius of our Government.

Last year, in a convention of Protestant bigots, held in the city of New York for the purpose of creating public opinion in favor of a religious amendment to the Federal Constitution, a reverend doctor of divinity, speaking of atheists, said: "What are the rights of the atheist? I would tolerate him as I would tolerate a poor lunatic. I would tolerate him as I would tolerate a conspirator. He may live and go free, hold his lands and enjoy his home he may even vote; but for any higher or more advanced citizenship, he is, as I hold, utterly disqualified." These are the sentiments of the church to-day.

Give the church a place in the Constitution, let her touch once more the sword of power, and the priceless fruit of all the ages will turn to ashes on the lips of men.

In religious ideas and conceptions there has been for ages a slow and steady development. At the bottom of the ladder (speaking of modern times) is Catholicism, and at the top is Science. The intermediate rounds of this ladder are occupied by the various sects, whose name is legion.

But whatever may be the truth upon any subject has nothing to do with our right to investigate that subject, and express any opinion we may form. All that I ask is the same right I freely accord to all others.

A few years ago a Methodist clergyman took it upon himself to give me a piece of friendly advice. "Although you may disbelieve the Bible," said he, "you ought not to say so. That, you should keep to yourself."

"Do you believe the Bible," said I. He replied, "Most assuredly." To which I retorted, "Your answer conveys no information to me. You may be following your own advice. You told me to suppress my opinions. Of course a man who will advise others to dissimulate will not always be particular about telling the truth himself."

There can be nothing more utterly subversive of all that is really valuable than the suppression of honest thought. No man, worthy of the form he bears, will at the command of church or state solemnly repeat a creed his reason scorns.

It is the duty of each and every one to maintain his individuality. "This above all, to thine own self be true, and it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." It is a magnificent thing to be the sole proprietor of yourself. It is a terrible thing to wake up at night and say, "There is nobody in this bed." It is humiliating to know that your ideas are all borrowed; that you are indebted to your memory for your principles; that your religion is simply one of your habits, and that you would have convictions if they were only contagious. It is mortifying to feel that you belong to a mental mob and cry "crucify him," because the others do; that you reap what the great and brave have sown, and that you can benefit the world only by leaving it.

Surely every human being ought to attain to the dignity of the unit. Surely it is worth some thing to be one, and to feel that the census of the universe would be incomplete without counting you. Surely there is grandeur in knowing that in the realm of thought, at least, you are without a chain; that you have the right to explore all heights and all depths; that there are no walls nor fences, nor

prohibited places, nor sacred corners in all the vast expanse of thought; that your intellect owes no allegiance to any being, human or divine; that you hold all in fee and upon no condition and by no tenure whatever; that in the world of mind you are relieved from all personal dictation, and from the ignorant tyranny of majorities. Surely it is worth something to feel that there are no priests, no popes, no parties, no governments, no kings, and no gods, to whom your intellect can be compelled to pay a reluctant homage. Surely it is a joy to know that all the cruel ingenuity of bigotry can devise no prison, no dungeon, no cell in which for one instant to confine a thought; that ideas cannot be dislocated by racks, nor crushed in iron boots, nor burned with fire. Surely it is sublime to think that the brain is a castle, and that within its curious bastions and winding halls the soul, in spite of all worlds and all beings, is the supreme sovereign of itself.

HERETICS AND HERESIES

LIBERTY, A WORD WITHOUT WHICH ALL OTHER WORDS ARE VAIN.

WHOEVER has an opinion of his own, and honestly expresses it, will be guilty of heresy. Heresy is what the minority believe; it is the name given by the powerful to the doctrine of the weak. This word was born of the hatred, arrogance and cruelty of those who love their enemies, and who, when smitten on one cheek, turn the other. This word was born of intellectual slavery in the feudal ages of thought. It was an epithet used in the place of argument. From the commencement of the Christian era, every art has been exhausted and every conceivable punishment inflicted to force all people to hold the same religious opinions. This effort was born of the idea that a certain belief was necessary to the salvation of the soul. Christ taught, and the church still teaches, that unbelief is the blackest of crimes. God is supposed to hate with an infinite and implacable hatred, every heretic upon the earth, and the heretics who have died are supposed at this moment to be suffering the agonies of the damned. The church persecutes the living and her God burns the dead.

It is claimed that God wrote a book called the Bible, and it is generally admitted that this book is somewhat difficult to understand. As long as the church had all the copies of this book, and the people were not allowed to read it, there was comparatively little heresy in the world; but when it was printed and read, people began honestly to differ as to its meaning. A few were independent and brave enough to give the world their real thoughts, and for the extermination of these men the church used all her power. Protestants and Catholics vied with each other in the work of enslaving the human mind. For ages they were rivals in the infamous effort to rid the earth of honest people. They infested every country, every city, town, hamlet and family. They appealed to the worst passions of the human heart. They sowed the seeds of discord and hatred in every land. Brother denounced brother, wives informed against their husbands, mothers accused their children, dungeons were crowded with the innocent; the flesh of the good and true rotted in the clasp of chains; the flames

devoured the heroic, and in the name of the most merciful God, his children were exterminated with famine, sword, and fire. Over the wild waves of battle rose and fell the banner of Jesus Christ. For sixteen hundred years the robes of the church were red with innocent blood. The ingenuity of Christians was exhausted in devising punishment severe enough to be inflicted upon other Christians who honestly and sincerely differed with them upon any point whatever.

Give any orthodox church the power, and to-day they would punish heresy with whip, and chain, and fire. As long as a church deems a certain belief essential to salvation, just so long it will kill and burn if it has the power. Why should the church pity a man whom her God hates? Why should she show mercy to a kind and noble heretic whom her God will burn in eternal fire? Why should a Christian be better than his God? It is impossible for the imagination to conceive of a greater atrocity than has been perpetrated by the church. Every nerve in the human body capable of pain has been sought out and touched by the church.

Let it be remembered that all churches have persecuted heretics to the extent of their power. Toleration has increased only when and where the power of the church has diminished. From Augustine until now the spirit of the Christians has remained the same. There has been the same intolerance, the same undying hatred of all who think for themselves, and the same determination to crush out of the human brain all knowledge inconsistent with an ignorant creed.

Every church pretends that it has a revelation from God, and that this revelation must be given to the people through the church; that the church acts through its priests, and that ordinary mortals must be content with a revelation not from God but from the church. Had the people submitted to this preposterous claim, of course there could have been but one church, and that church never could have advanced. It might have retrograded, because it is not necessary to think or investigate in order to forget. Without heresy there could have been no progress.

The highest type of the orthodox Christian does not forget; neither does he learn. He neither advances nor recedes. He is a living fossil embedded in that rock called faith. He makes no effort to better his condition, because all his strength is exhausted in keeping other people from improving theirs. The supreme desire of his heart is to force all others to adopt his creed, and in order to accomplish this object he denounces free thinking as a crime, and this crime he calls heresy. When he had power, heresy was the most terrible and formidable of words. It meant confiscation, exile, imprisonment, torture, and death.

In those days the cross and rack were inseparable companions. Across the open Bible lay the sword and fagot. Not content with burning such heretics as were alive, they even tried the dead, in order that the church might rob their wives and children. The property of all heretics was confiscated, and on this account they charged the dead with being heretical indicted, as it were, their dust to the end that the church might clutch the bread of orphans. Learned divines discussed the propriety of tearing out the tongues of heretics before they were burned, and the general opinion was, that this ought to be done so that the heretics should not be able, by uttering blasphemies, to shock the Christians who were burning them. With a mixture of ferocity and Christianity, the priests insisted that heretics ought to be burned at a slow fire, giving as a reason that more time was given them for repentance.

No wonder that Jesus Christ said, "I came not to bring peace, but a sword."

Every priest regarded himself as the agent of God. He answered all questions by authority, and to treat him with disrespect was an insult offered to God. No one was asked to think, but all were commanded to obey.

In 1208 the Inquisition was established. Seven years afterward, the fourth council of the Lateran enjoined all kings and rulers to swear an oath that they would exterminate heretics from their dominions. The sword of the church was unsheathed, and the world was at the mercy of ignorant and infuriated priests, whose eyes feasted upon the agonies they inflicted. Acting, as they believed, or pretended to believe, under the command of God; stimulated by the hope of infinite reward in another world hating heretics with every drop of their bestial blood; savage beyond description; merciless beyond conception, these infamous priests, in a kind of frenzied joy, leaped upon the helpless victims of their rage. They crushed their bones in iron boots; tore their quivering flesh with iron hooks and pincers; cut off their lips and eyelids; pulled out their nails, and into the bleeding quick thrust needles; tore out their tongues; extinguished their eyes; stretched them upon racks; flayed them alive; crucified them with their heads downward; exposed them to wild beasts; burned them at the stake; mocked their cries and groans; ravished their wives; robbed their children, and then prayed God to finish the holy work in hell.

Millions upon millions were sacrificed upon the altars of bigotry. The Catholic burned the Lutheran, the Lutheran burned the Catholic, the Episcopalian tortured the Presbyterian, and the Presbyterian tortured the Episcopalian. Every denomination killed all it could of every other; and each Christian felt in duty bound to exterminate every other Christian who denied the smallest fraction of his creed.

In the reign of Henry VIII. - that pious and moral founder of the apostolic Episcopal Church, - there was passed by the parliament of England an act entitled "An act for abolishing of diversity of opinion." And in this act was set forth what a good Christian was obliged to believe:

First, that in the sacrament was the real body and blood of Jesus Christ.

Second, that the body and blood of Jesus Christ was in the bread, and the blood and body of Jesus Christ was in the wine.

Third, that priests should not marry.

Fourth, that vows of chastity were of perpetual obligation.

Fifth, that private masses ought to be continued; and,

Sixth, that auricular confession to a priest must be maintained.

This creed was made by law, in order that all men might know just what to believe by simply reading the statute. The church hated to see the people wearing out their brains in thinking upon these subjects. It was thought far better that a creed should be made by parliament, so that what ever might be lacking in evidence might be made up in force. The punishment for denying the first article was death by fire. For the denial of any other article, imprisonment, and for the second offence death.

Your attention is called to these six articles, established during the reign of Henry VIII., and by the Church of England, simply because not one of these articles is believed by that church to-day. If the law then made by the church could be enforced now, every Episcopalian would be burned at the stake.

Similar laws were passed in most Christian countries, as all orthodox churches firmly believed that mankind could be legislated into heaven. According to the creed of every church, slavery leads to heaven, liberty leads to hell. It was claimed that God had founded the church, and that to deny the authority of the church was to be a traitor to God, and consequently an ally of the devil. To torture and destroy one of the soldiers of Satan was a duty no good Christian cared to neglect. Nothing can be sweeter than to earn the gratitude of God by killing your own enemies. Such a mingling of profit and revenge, of heaven for yourself and damnation for those you dislike, is a temptation that your ordinary Christian never resists.

According to the theologians, God, the Father of us all, wrote a letter to his children. The children have always differed somewhat as to the meaning of this

letter. In consequence of these honest differences, these brothers began to cut out each other's hearts. In every land, where this letter from God has been read, the children to whom and for whom it was written have been filled with hatred and malice. They have imprisoned and murdered each other, and the wives and children of each other. In the name of God every possible crime has been committed; every conceivable outrage has been perpetrated. Brave men, tender and loving women, beautiful girls, and prattling babes have been exterminated in the name of Jesus Christ. For more than fifty generations the church has carried the black flag. Her vengeance has been measured only by her power. During all these years of infamy no heretic has ever been forgiven. With the heart of a fiend she has hated; with the clutch of avarice she has grasped; with the jaws of a dragon she has devoured; pitiless as famine, merciless as fire, with the conscience of a serpent: such is the history of the Church of God.

I do not say, and I do not believe, that Christians are as bad as their creeds. In spite of church and dogma, there have been millions and millions of men and women true to the loftiest and most generous promptings of the human heart. They have been true to their convictions, and, with a self-denial and fortitude excelled by none, have labored and suffered for the salvation of men. Imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice, believing that by personal effort they could rescue at least a few souls from the infinite shadow of hell, they have cheerfully endured every hardship and scorned every danger. And yet, notwithstanding all this, they believed that honest error was a crime. They knew that the Bible so declared, and they believed that all unbelievers would be eternally lost. They believed that religion was of God, and all heresy of the devil. They killed heretics in defense of their own souls and the souls of their children. They killed them because, according to their idea, they were the enemies of God, and because the Bible teaches that the blood of the unbeliever is a most acceptable sacrifice to heaven.

Nature never prompted a loving mother to throw her child into the Ganges. Nature never prompted men to exterminate each other for a difference of opinion concerning the baptism of infants. These crimes have been produced by religions filled with all that is illogical, cruel and hideous. These religions were produced for the most part by ignorance, tyranny and hypocrisy. Under the impression that the infinite ruler and creator of the universe had commanded the destruction of heretics and infidels, the church perpetrated all these crimes.

Men and women have been burned for thinking there is but one God; that there was none; that the Holy Ghost is younger than God; that God was somewhat older than his son; for insisting that good works will save a man without faith; that faith will do without good works; for declaring that a sweet babe will not be burned eternally, because its parents failed to have its head wet

by a priest; for speaking of God as though he had a nose; for denying that Christ was his own father; for contending that three persons, rightly added together, make more than one; for believing in purgatory; for denying the reality of hell; for pretending that priests can forgive sins; for preaching that God is an essence; for denying that witches rode through the air on sticks; for doubting the total depravity of the human heart; for laughing at irresistible grace, predestination and particular redemption; for denying that good bread could be made of the body of a dead man; for pretending that the pope was not managing this world for God, and in the place of God; for disputing the efficacy of a vicarious atonement; for thinking the Virgin Mary was born like other people; for thinking that a man's rib was hardly sufficient to make a good-sized woman; for denying that God used his finger for a pen; for asserting that prayers are not answered, that diseases are not sent to punish unbelief; for denying the authority of the Bible; for having a Bible in their possession; for attending mass, and for refusing to attend; for wearing a surplice; for carrying a cross, and for refusing; for being a Catholic, and for being a Protestant; for being an Episcopalian, a Presbyterian, a Baptist, and for being a Quaker. In short, every virtue has been a crime, and every crime a virtue. The church has burned honesty and rewarded hypocrisy. And all this, because it was commanded by a book - a book that men had been taught implicitly to believe, long before they knew one word that was in it. They had been taught that to doubt the truth of this book - to examine it, even - was a crime of such enormity that it could not be forgiven, either in this world or in the next.

The Bible was the real persecutor. The Bible burned heretics, built dungeons, founded the Inquisition, and trampled upon all the liberties of men.

How long, O how long will mankind worship a book? How long will they grovel in the dust before the ignorant legends of the barbaric past? How long, O how long will they pursue phantoms in a darkness deeper than death?

Unfortunately for the world, about the beginning of the sixteenth century, a man by the name of Gerard Chauvin was married to Jeanne Lefranc, and still more unfortunately for the world, the fruit of this marriage was a son, called John Chauvin, who afterwards became famous as John Calvin, the founder of the Presbyterian Church.

This man forged five fetters for the brain. These fetters he called points. That is to say, predestination, particular redemption, total depravity, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints. About the neck of each follower he put a collar bristling with these five iron points. The presence of all these points on the collar is still the test of orthodoxy in the church he founded. This man, when in the flush of youth, was elected to the office of preacher in Geneva. He at once, in

union with Farel, drew up a condensed statement of the Presbyterian doctrine, and all the citizens of Geneva, on pain of banishment, were compelled to take an oath that they believed this statement. Of this proceeding Calvin very innocently remarked that it produced great satisfaction. A man named Caroli had the audacity to dispute with Calvin. For this outrage he was banished.

To show you what great subjects occupied the attention of Calvin, it is only necessary to state that he furiously discussed the question as to whether the sacramental bread should be leavened or unleavened. He drew up laws regulating the cut of the citizens' clothes, and prescribing their diet, and all those whose garments were not in the Calvin fashion were refused the sacrament. At last, the people becoming tired of this petty theological tyranny, banished Calvin. In a few years, however, he was recalled and received with great enthusiasm. After this he was supreme, and the will of Calvin became the law of Geneva.

Under his benign administration, James Gruet was beheaded because he had written some profane verses. The slightest word against Calvin or his absurd doctrines was punished as a crime.

In 1553 a man was tried at Vienne by the Catholic Church for heresy. He was convicted and sentenced to death by burning. It was apparently his good fortune to escape. Pursued by the sleuth hounds of intolerance he fled to Geneva for protection. A dove flying from hawks, sought safety in the nest of a vulture. This fugitive from the cruelty of Rome asked shelter from John Calvin, who had written a book in favor of religious toleration. Servetus had forgotten that this book was written by Calvin when in the minority; that it was written in weakness to be forgotten in power; that it was produced by fear instead of principle. He did not know that Calvin had caused his arrest at Vienne, in France, and had sent a copy of his work, which was claimed to be blasphemous, to the archbishop. He did not then know that the Protestant Calvin was acting as one of the detectives of the Catholic Church, and had been instrumental in procuring his conviction for heresy. Ignorant of all this unspeakable infamy, he put himself in the power of this very Calvin. The maker of the Presbyterian creed caused the fugitive Servetus to be arrested for blasphemy. He was tried. Calvin was his accuser. He was convicted and condemned to death by fire. On the morning of the fatal day, Calvin saw him, and Servetus, the victim, asked forgiveness of Calvin, the murderer. Servetus was bound to the stake, and the fagots were lighted. The wind carried the flames somewhat away from his body, so that he slowly roasted for hours. Vainly he implored a speedy death. At last the flames climbed round his form; through smoke and fire his murderers saw a white heroic face. And there they watched until a man became a charred and shriveled mass.

Liberty was banished from Geneva, and nothing but Presbyterianism was left. Honor, justice, mercy, reason and charity were all exiled, but the five points of predestination, particular redemption, irresistible grace, total depravity, and the certain perseverance of the saints remained instead.

Calvin founded a little theocracy, modeled after the Old Testament, and succeeded in erecting the most detestable government that ever existed, except the one from which it was copied.

Against all this intolerance, one man, a minister, raised his voice. The name of this man should never be forgotten. It was Castalio. This brave man had the goodness and the courage to declare the innocence of honest error. He was the first of the so-called reformers to take this noble ground. I wish I had the genius to pay a fitting tribute to his memory. Perhaps it would be impossible to pay him a grander compliment than to say, Castalio was in all things the opposite of Calvin. To plead for the right of individual judgment was considered a crime, and Castalio was driven from Geneva by John Calvin. By him he was denounced as a child of the devil, as a dog of Satan, as a beast from hell, and as one who, by this horrid blasphemy of the innocence of honest error, crucified Christ afresh, and by him he was pursued until rescued by the hand of death.

Upon the name of Castalio, Calvin heaped every epithet, until his malice was nearly satisfied and his imagination entirely exhausted. It is impossible to conceive how human nature can become so frightfully perverted as to pursue a fellow-man with the malignity of a fiend, simply because he is good, just, and generous.

Calvin was of a pallid, bloodless complexion, thin, sickly, irritable, gloomy, impatient, egotistic, tyrannical, heartless, and infamous. He was a strange compound of revengeful morality, malicious forgiveness, ferocious charity, egotistic humility, and a kind of hellish justice. In other words, he was as near like the God of the Old Testament as his health permitted.

The best thing, however, about the Presbyterians of Geneva was, that they denied the power of the Pope, and the best thing about the Pope was, that he was not a Presbyterian.

The doctrines of Calvin spread rapidly, and were eagerly accepted by multitudes on the continent; but Scotland, in a few years, became the real fortress of Presbyterianism. The Scotch succeeded in establishing the same kind of theocracy that flourished in Geneva. The clergy took possession and control of everybody and everything. It is impossible to exaggerate the mental degradation, the abject superstition of the people of Scotland during the reign of Presbyterianism. Heretics were hunted and devoured as though they had been

wild beasts. The gloomy insanity of Presbyterianism took possession of a great majority of the people. They regarded their ministers as the Jews did Moses and Aaron. They believed that they were the especial agents of God, and that whatsoever they bound in Scotland would be bound in heaven. There was not one particle of intellectual freedom. No man was allowed to differ with the church, or to even contradict a priest. Had Presbyterianism maintained its ascendancy, Scotland would have been peopled by savages to-day.

The revengeful spirit of Calvin took possession of the Puritans, and caused them to redden the soil of the New World with the brave blood of honest men. Clinging to the five points of Calvin, they too established governments in accordance with the teachings of the Old Testament. They too attached the penalty of death to the expression of honest thought. They too believed their church supreme, and exerted all their power to curse this continent with a spiritual despotism as infamous as it was absurd. They believed with Luther that universal toleration is universal error, and universal error is universal hell. Toleration was denounced as a crime.

Fortunately for us, civilization has had a softening effect even upon the Presbyterian Church. To the ennobling influence of the arts and sciences the savage spirit of Calvinism has, in some slight degree, succumbed. True, the old creed remains substantially as it was written, but by a kind of tacit understanding it has come to be regarded as a relic of the past. The cry of "heresy" has been growing fainter and fainter, and, as a consequence, the ministers of that denomination have ventured, now and then, to express doubts as to the damnation of infants, and the doctrine of total depravity. The fact is, the old ideas became a little monotonous to the people. The fall of man, the scheme of redemption and irresistible grace, began to have a familiar sound. The preachers told the old stories while the congregations slept. Some of the ministers became tired of these stories themselves. The five points grew dull, and they felt that nothing short of irresistible grace could bear this endless repetition. The outside world was full of progress, and in every direction men advanced, while this church, anchored to a creed, idly rotted at the shore. Other denominations, imbued some little with the spirit of investigation, were springing up on every side, while the old Presbyterian ark rested on the Ararat of the past, filled with the theological monsters of another age.

Lured by the splendors of the outer world, tempted by the achievements of science, longing to feel the throb and beat of the mighty march of the human race, a few of the ministers of this conservative denomination were compelled, by irresistible sense, to say a few words in harmony with the splendid ideas of to-day.

These utterances have upon several occasions so nearly wakened some of the members that, rubbing their eyes, they have feebly inquired whether these grand ideas were not somewhat heretical. These ministers found that just in the proportion that their orthodoxy decreased, their congregations increased. Those who dealt in the pure unadulterated article found themselves demonstrating the five points to a less number of hearers than they had points. Stung to madness by this bitter truth, this galling contrast, this harassing fact, the really orthodox have raised the cry of heresy, and expect with this cry to seal the lips of honest men. One of the Presbyterian ministers, and one who has been enjoying the luxury of a little honest thought, and the real rapture of expressing it, has already been indicted, and is about to be tried by the Presbytery of Illinois. He is charged -

First. With having neglected to preach that most comforting and consoling truth, the eternal damnation of the soul.

Surely, that man must be a monster who could wish to blot this blessed doctrine out and rob earth's wretched children of this blissful hope!

Who can estimate the misery that has been caused by this most infamous doctrine of eternal punishment? Think of the lives it has blighted - of the tears it has caused - of the agony it has produced. Think of the millions who have been driven to insanity by this most terrible of dogmas. This doctrine renders God the basest and most cruel being in the universe. Compared with him, the most frightful deities of the most barbarous and degraded tribes are miracles of goodness and mercy. There is nothing more degrading than to worship such a god. Lower than this the soul can never sink. If the doctrine of eternal damnation is true, let me share the fate of the unconverted; let me have my portion in hell, rather than in heaven with a god infamous enough to inflict eternal misery upon any of the sons of men.

Second. With having spoken a few kind words of Robert Collyer and John Stuart Mill.

I have the honor of a slight acquaintance with Robert Collyer. I have read with pleasure some of his exquisite productions. He has a brain full of the dawn, the head of a philosopher, the imagination of a poet and the sincere heart of a child.

Is a minister to be silenced because he speaks fairly of a noble and candid adversary? Is it a crime to compliment a lover of justice, an advocate of liberty; one who devotes his life to the elevation of man, the discovery of truth, and the promulgation of what he believes to be right?

Can that tongue be palsied by a presbytery that praises a self-denying and heroic life? Is it a sin to speak a charitable word over the grave of John Stuart

Mill? Is it heretical to pay a just and graceful tribute to departed worth? Must the true Presbyterian violate the sanctity of the tomb, dig open the grave and ask his God to curse the silent dust? Is Presbyterianism so narrow that it conceives of no excellence, of no purity of intention, of no spiritual and moral grandeur out side of its barbaric creed? Does it still retain within its stony heart all the malice of its founder? Is it still warming its fleshless hands at the flames that consumed Servetus? Does it still glory in the damnation of infants, and does it still persist in emptying the cradle in order that perdition may be filled? Is it still starving the soul and famishing the heart? Is it still trembling and shivering, crouching and crawling before its ignorant Confession of Faith?

Had such men as Robert Collyer and John Stuart Mill been present at the burning of Servetus, they would have extinguished the flames with their tears. Had the presbytery of Chicago been there, they would have quietly turned their backs, solemnly divided their coat tails, and warmed themselves.

Third. With having spoken disparagingly of the doctrine of predestination.

If there is any dogma that ought to be protected by law, predestination is that doctrine. Surely it is a cheerful, joyous thing, to one who is laboring, struggling, and suffering in this weary world, to think that before he existed; before the earth was; before a star had glittered in the heavens; before a ray of light had left the quiver of the sun, his destiny had been irrevocably fixed, and that for an eternity before his birth he had been doomed to bear eternal pain.

Fourth. With failing to preach the efficacy of a "vicarious sacrifice."

Suppose a man had been convicted of murder, and was about to be hanged the governor acting as the executioner; and suppose that just as the doomed man was about to suffer death some one in the crowd should step forward and say, "I am willing to die in the place of that murderer. He has a family, and I have none." And suppose further, that the governor should reply, "Come forward, young man, your offer is accepted. A murder has been committed and somebody must be hung, and your death will satisfy the law just as well as the death of the murderer." What would you then think of the doctrine of "vicarious sacrifice"?

This doctrine is the consummation of two outrages: forgiving one crime and committing another.

Fifth. With having inculcated a phase of the doctrine commonly known as "evolution," or "development."

The church believes and teaches the exact opposite of this doctrine. According to the philosophy of theology, man has continued to degenerate for six thousand

years. To teach that there is that in nature which impels to higher forms and grander ends, is heresy, of course. The Deity will damn Spencer and his "Evolution," Darwin and his "Origin of Species," Bastian and his "Spontaneous Generation," Huxley and his "Protoplasm," Tyndall and his "Prayer Gauge," and will save those, and those only, who declare that the universe has been cursed, from the smallest atom to the grandest star; that every thing tends to evil and to that only, and that the only perfect thing in nature is the Presbyterian Confession of Faith.

Sixth. With having intimated that the reception of Socrates and Penelope at heaven's gate was, to say the least, a trifle more cordial than that of Catharine II.

Penelope, waiting patiently and trustfully for her lord's return, delaying her suitors, while sadly weaving and unweaving the shroud of Laertes, is the most perfect type of wife and woman produced by the civilization of Greece.

Socrates, whose life was above reproach and whose death was beyond all praise, stands to-day, in the estimation of every thoughtful man, at least the peer of Christ.

Catharine II assassinated her husband. Stepping upon his corpse, she mounted the throne. She was the murderess of Prince Iwan, grand nephew of Peter the Great, who was imprisoned for eighteen years, and who during all that time saw the sky but once. Taken all in all, Catharine was probably one of the most intellectual beasts that ever wore a crown.

Catharine, however, was the head of the Greek Church, Socrates was a heretic and Penelope lived and died without having once heard of "particular redemption" or of "irresistible grace."

Seventh. With repudiating the idea of a "call" to the ministry, and pretending that men were "called" to preach as they were to the other avocations of life.

If this doctrine is true, God, to say the least of it, is an exceedingly poor judge of human nature. It is more than a century since a man of true genius has been found in an orthodox pulpit.

Every minister is heretical just to the extent that intellect is above the average. The Lord seems to be satisfied with mediocrity; but the people are not.

An old deacon, wishing to get rid of an unpopular preacher, advised him to give up the ministry and turn his attention to something else. The preacher replied that he could not conscientiously desert the pulpit, as he had had a "call" to the ministry. To which the deacon replied, "That may be so, but it's very

unfortunate for you, that when God called you to preach, he forgot to call anybody to hear you."

There is nothing more stupidly egotistic than the claim of the clergy that they are, in some divine sense set apart to the service of the Lord; that they have been chosen, and sanctified; that there is an infinite difference between them and persons employed in secular affairs. They teach us that all other professions must take care of themselves; that God allows anybody to be a doctor, a lawyer, statesman, soldier, or artist; that the Motts and Coopers - the Mansfields and Marshalls - the Wilberforces and Sumners - the Angelos and Raphaels, - were never honored by a call." They chose their professions and won their laurels without the assistance of the Lord. All these men were left free to follow their own inclinations, while God was busily engaged selecting and "calling" priests, rectors, elders, ministers and exhorters.

Eighth. With having doubted that God was the author of the 109th Psalm.

The portion of that psalm which carries with it the clearest and most satisfactory evidences of inspiration, and which has afforded almost unspeakable consolation to the Presbyterian Church, is as follows:

"Set thou a wicked man over him; and let Satan stand
at his right hand.
When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and
let his prayer become sin".
Let his days be few; and let another take his office.
Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow.
Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg; let
them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.
Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the
stranger spoil his labor.
Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither
let there be any to favor his fatherless children.
Let his posterity be cut off: and in the generation following
Let their name be blotted out.

But do thou for me, O God the Lord, for Thy name's
sake; because Thy mercy is good, deliver Thou me.
I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth.

Think of a God wicked and malicious enough to inspire this prayer. Think of one infamous enough to answer it.

Had this inspired psalm been found in some temple erected for the worship of snakes, or in the possession of some cannibal king, written with blood upon the

dried skins of babes, there would have been a perfect harmony between its surroundings and its sentiments.

No wonder that the author of this inspired psalm coldly received Socrates and Penelope, and reserved his sweetest smiles for Catharine the Second.

Ninth. With having said that the battles in which the Israelites engaged, with the approval and command of Jehovah, surpassed in cruelty those of Julius Cæsar.

Was it Julius Cæsar who said, "And the Lord our God delivered him before us; and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people. And we took all his cities, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city, we left none to remain"?

Did Julius Caesar send the following report to the Roman senate? "And we took all his cities at that time, there was not a city which we took not from them, three-score cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; beside unwalled towns a great many. And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon, king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city."

Did Caesar take the city of Jericho "and utterly destroy all that was in the city, both men and women, young and old"? Did he smite "all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings, and leave none remaining that breathed, as the Lord God had commanded"?

Search the records of the whole world, find out the history of every barbarous tribe, and you can find no crime that touched a lower depth of infamy than those the Bible's God commanded and approved. For such a God I have no words to express my loathing and contempt, and all the words in all the languages of man would scarcely be sufficient. Away with such a God! Give me Jupiter rather, with Io and Europa, or even Siva with his skulls and snakes.

Tenth. With having repudiated the doctrine of "total depravity."

What a precious doctrine is that of the total depravity of the human heart! How sweet it is to believe that the lives of all the good and great were continual sins and perpetual crimes; that the love a mother bears her child is, in the sight of God, a sin; that the gratitude of the natural heart is simple meanness; that the tears of pity are impure; that for the unconverted to live and labor for others is an offence to heaven; that the noblest aspirations of the soul are low and groveling in the sight of God; that man should fall upon his knees and ask forgiveness,

simply for loving his wife and child, and that even the act of asking forgiveness is in fact a crime!

Surely it is a kind of bliss to feel that every woman and child in the wide world, with the exception of those who believe the five points, or some other equally cruel creed, and such children as have been baptized, ought at this very moment to be dashed down to the lowest glowing gulf of hell.

Take from the Christian the history of his own church leave that entirely out of the question and he has no argument left with which to substantiate the total depravity of man.

Eleventh. With having doubted the "perseverance of the saints."

I suppose the real meaning of this doctrine is that Presbyterians are just as sure of going to heaven as all other folks are of going to hell. The real idea being, that it all depends upon the will of God, and not upon the character of the person to be damned or saved; that God has the weakness to send Presbyterians to Paradise, and the justice to doom the rest of mankind to eternal Fire.

It is admitted that no unconverted brain can see the least particle of sense in this doctrine; that it is abhorrent to all who have not been the recipients of a "new heart;" that only the perfectly good can justify the perfectly infamous.

It is contended that the saints do not persevere of their own free will - that they are entitled to no credit for persevering; but that God forces them to persevere, while on the other hand, every crime is committed in accordance with the secret will of God, who does all things for his own glory.

Compared with this doctrine, there is no other idea that has ever been believed by man that can properly be called absurd.

Twelfth. With having spoken and written somewhat lightly of the idea of converting the heathen with doctrinal sermons.

Of all the failures of which we have any history or knowledge, the missionary effort is the most conspicuous. The whole question has been decided here, in our own country, and conclusively settled. We have nearly exterminated the Indians, but we have converted none. From the days of John Eliot to the execution of the last Modoc, not one Indian has been the subject of irresistible grace or particular redemption. The few red men who roam the western wilderness have no thought or care concerning the five points of Calvin. They are utterly oblivious to the great and vital truths contained in the Thirty-nine Articles, the Saybrook platform, and the resolutions of the Evangelical Alliance. No Indian has ever

scalped another on account of his religious belief. This of itself shows conclusively that the missionaries have had no effect.

Why should we convert the heathen of China and kill our own? Why should we send missionaries across the seas, and soldiers over the plains? Why should we send Bibles to the east and muskets to the west? If it is impossible to convert Indians who have no religion of their own; no prejudice for or against the "eternal procession of the Holy Ghost," how can we expect to convert a heathen who has a religion; who has plenty of gods and Bibles and prophets and Christs, and who has a religious literature far grander than our own? Can we hope with the story of Daniel in the lions' den to rival the stupendous miracles of India? Is there anything in our Bible as lofty and loving as the prayer of the Buddhist? Compare your "Confession of Faith" with the following: "Never will I seek nor receive private individual salvation never enter into final peace alone; but forever and everywhere will I live and strive for the universal redemption of every creature throughout all worlds. Until all are delivered, never will I leave the world of sin, sorrow, and struggle, but will remain where I am."

Think of sending an average Presbyterian to convert a man who daily offers this tender, this infinitely generous, this incomparable prayer. Think of reading the 109th Psalm to a heathen who has a Bible of his own in which is found this passage: "Blessed is that man and beloved of all the gods, who is afraid of no man, and of whom no man is afraid."

Why should you read even the New Testament to a Hindu, when his own Krishna has said, "If a man strike thee, and in striking drop his staff, pick it up and hand it to him again"? Why send a Presbyterian to a Sufi, who says, "Better one moment of silent contemplation and inward love, than seventy thousand years of outward worship"? "Whoso would carelessly tread one worm that crawls on earth, that heartless one is darkly alienated from God; but he that, living, embraces all things in his love, to live with him God bursts all bounds above, below."

Why should we endeavor to thrust our cruel and heartless theology upon one who prays this prayer: "O God, show pity toward the wicked; for on the good thou hast already bestowed thy mercy by having created them virtuous"?

Compare this prayer with the curses and cruelties of the Old Testament with the infamies commanded and approved by the being whom we are taught to worship as a God and with the following tender product of Presbyterianism: "It may seem absurd to human wisdom that God should harden, blind, and deliver up some men to a reprobate sense; that he should first deliver them over to evil, and then condemn them for that evil; but the believing spiritual man sees no

absurdity in all this, knowing that God would be never a whit less good even though he should destroy all men."

Of all the religions that have been produced by the egotism, the malice, the ignorance and ambition of man, Presbyterianism is the most hideous.

But what shall I say more, for the time would fail me to tell of Sabellianism, of a "Modal Trinity," and the "Eternal Procession of the Holy Ghost"?

Upon these charges, a minister is to be tried, here in Chicago; in this city of pluck and progress - this marvel of energy - this miracle of nerve. The cry of "heresy," here, sounds like a wail from the Dark Ages a shriek from the Inquisition, or a groan from the grave of Calvin.

Another effort is being made to enslave a man.

It is claimed that every member of the church has solemnly agreed never to outgrow the creed; that he has pledged himself to remain an intellectual dwarf. Upon this condition the church agrees to save his soul, and he hands over his brains to bind the bargain. Should a fact be found inconsistent with the creed, he binds himself to deny the fact and curse the finder. With scraps of dogmas and crumbs of doctrine, he agrees that his soul shall be satisfied forever. What an intellectual feast the Confession of Faith must be! It reminds one of the dinner described by Sydney Smith, where everything was cold except the water, and everything sour except the vinegar.

Every member of a church promises to remain orthodox, that is to say stationary. Growth is heresy. Orthodox ideas are the feathers that have been moulted by the eagle of progress. They are the dead leaves under the majestic palm, while heresy is the bud and blossom at the top.

Imagine a vine that grows at one end and decays at the other. The end that grows is heresy; the end that rots is orthodox. The dead are orthodox, and your cemetery is the most perfect type of a well regulated church. No thought, no progress, no heresy there. Slowly and silently, side by side, the satisfied members peacefully decay. There is only this difference - the dead do not persecute.

And what does a trial for heresy mean? It means that the church says to a heretic, "Believe as I do, or I will withdraw my support. I will not employ you. I will pursue you until your garments are rags; until your children cry for bread; until your cheeks are furrowed with tears. I will hunt you to the very portals of the tomb, and then my God will do the rest I will not imprison you. I will not burn you. The law prevents my doing that. I helped make the law, not however

to protect you, nor to deprive me of the right to exterminate you, but in order to keep other churches from exterminating me.”

A trial for heresy means that the spirit of persecution still lingers in the church; that it still denies the right of private judgment; that it still thinks more of creed than truth, and that it is still determined to prevent the intellectual growth of man. It means that churches are shambles in which are bought and sold the souls of men. It means that the church is still guilty of the barbarity of opposing thought with force. It means that if it had the power, the mental horizon would be bounded by a creed; that it would bring again the whips and chains and dungeon keys, the rack and fagot of the past.

But let me tell the church it lacks the power. There have been, and still are, too many men who own themselves - too much thought, too much knowledge for the church to grasp again the sword of power. The church must abdicate. For the Eglon of superstition Science has a message from Truth.

The heretics have not thought and suffered and died in vain. Every heretic has been, and is, a ray of light. Not in vain did Voltaire, that great man, point from the foot of the Alps the finger of scorn at every hypocrite in Europe. Not in vain were the splendid utterances of the infidels, while beyond all price are the discoveries of science.

The church has impeded, but it has not and it cannot stop the onward march of the human race. Heresy cannot be burned, nor imprisoned, nor starved. It laughs at presbyteries and synods, at ecumenical councils and the impotent thunders of Sinai. Heresy is the eternal dawn, the morning star, the glittering herald of the day. Heresy is the last and best thought. It is the perpetual New World, the unknown sea, toward which the brave all sail. It is the eternal horizon of progress.

Heresy extends the hospitalities of the brain to a new thought.
Heresy is a cradle; orthodoxy, a coffin.

Why should man be afraid to think, and why should he fear to express his thoughts?

Is it possible that an infinite Deity is unwilling that a man should investigate the phenomena by which he is surrounded? Is it possible that a god delights in threatening and terrifying men? What glory, what honor and renown a god must win on such a field! The ocean raving at a drop; a star envious of a candle; the sun jealous of a fire-fly.

Go on, presbyteries and synods, go on! Thrust the heretics out of the church that is to say, throw away your brains, put out your eyes. The infidels will thank you. They are willing to adopt your exiles. Every deserter from your camp is a recruit for the army of progress. Cling to the ignorant dogmas of the past; read the 109th Psalm; gloat over the slaughter of mothers and babes; thank God for total depravity; shower your honors upon hypocrites, and silence every minister who is touched with that heresy called genius.

Be true to your history. Turn out the astronomers, the geologists, the naturalists, the chemists, and all the honest scientists. With a whip of scorpions, drive them all out. We want them all. Keep the ignorant, the superstitious, the bigoted, and the writers of charges and specifications.

Keep them, and keep them all. Repeat your pious platitudes in the drowsy ears of the faithful, and read your Bible to heretics, as kings read some forgotten riot-act to stop and stay the waves of revolution. You are too weak to excite anger. We forgive your efforts as the sun forgives a cloud, as the air forgives the breath you waste.

How long, O how long, will man listen to the threats of God, and shut his eyes to the splendid possibilities of Nature? How long, O how long will man remain the cringing slave of a false and cruel creed?

By this time the whole world should know that the real Bible has not yet been written, but is being written, and that it will never be finished until the race begins its downward march, or ceases to exist.

The real Bible is not the work of inspired men, nor prophets, nor apostles, nor evangelists, nor of Christs. Every man who finds a fact, adds, as it were, a word to this great book. It is not attested by prophecy, by miracles or signs. It makes no appeal to faith, to ignorance, to credulity or fear. It has no punishment for unbelief, and no reward for hypocrisy. It appeals to man in the name of demonstration. It has nothing to conceal. It has no fear of being read, of being contradicted, of being investigated and understood. It does not pretend to be holy, or sacred; it simply claims to be true. It challenges the scrutiny of all, and implores every reader to verify every line for himself. It is incapable of being blasphemed. This book appeals to all the surroundings of man. Each thing that exists testifies of its perfection. The earth, with its heart of fire and crowns of snow; with its forests and plains, its rocks and seas; with its every wave and cloud; with its every leaf and bud and flower, confirms its every word, and the solemn stars, shining in the infinite abysses, are the eternal witnesses of its truth.

THE GHOSTS

TO

EBON C. INGERSOLL,

MY BROTHER,

FROM WHOSE LIPS I HEARD THE FIRST APPLAUSE,

AND WITH WHOSE NAME I WISH MY OWN

ASSOCIATED UNTIL BOTH ARE

FORGOTTEN,

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED.

PREFACE

THESE lectures have been so maimed and mutilated by orthodox malice; have been made to appear so halt, crutched and decrepit by those who mistake the pleasures of calumny for the duties of religion, that in simple justice to myself I concluded to publish them.

Most of the clergy are, or seem to be, utterly incapable of discussing anything in a fair and catholic spirit. They appeal, not to reason, but to prejudice; not to facts, but to passages of Scripture. They can conceive of no goodness, of no spiritual exaltation beyond the horizon of their creed. Whoever differs with them upon what they are pleased to call "fundamental truths," is, in their opinion, a base and infamous man. To re-enact the tragedies of the sixteenth century, they lack only the power. Bigotry in all ages has been the same. Christianity simply transferred the brutality of the Colosseum to the Inquisition. For the murderous combat of the gladiators, the saints substituted the *auto de fé*. What has been

called religion is, after all, but the organization of the wild beast in man. The perfumed blossom of arrogance is heaven. Hell is the consummation of revenge.

The chief business of the clergy has always been to destroy the joy of life, and multiply and magnify the terrors and tortures of death and perdition. They have polluted the heart and paralyzed the brain; and upon the ignorant altars of the Past and the Dead, they have endeavored to sacrifice the Present and the Living.

Nothing can exceed the mendacity of the religious press. I have had some little experience with political editors, and am forced to say, that until I read the religious papers, I did not know what malicious and slimy falsehoods could be constructed from ordinary words. The ingenuity, with which the real and apparent meaning can be tortured out of language, is simply amazing. The average religious editor is intolerant and insolent; he knows nothing of affairs; he has the envy of failure, the malice of impotence, and always accounts for the brave and generous actions of unbelievers, by low, base and unworthy motives.

By this time, even the clergy should know that the intellect of the nineteenth century needs no guardian. They should cease to regard themselves as shepherds defending flocks of weak, silly and fearful sheep from the claws and teeth of ravening wolves. By this time they should know that the religion of the ignorant and brutal Past no longer satisfies the heart and brain; that the miracles have become contemptible; that the "evidences" have ceased to convince; that the spirit of investigation cannot be stopped nor stayed; that the church is losing her power; that the young are holding in a kind of tender contempt the sacred follies of the old; that the pulpit and pews no longer represent the culture and morality of the world, and that the brand of intellectual inferiority is upon the orthodox brain.

Men should be liberated from the aristocracy of the air. Every chain of superstition should be broken. The rights of men and women should be equal and sacred — marriage should be a perfect partnership — children should be governed by kindness, — every family should be a republic — every fireside a democracy.

It seems almost impossible for religious people to really grasp the idea of intellectual freedom. They seem to think that man is responsible for his honest thoughts; that unbelief is a crime; that investigation is sinful; that credulity is a virtue, and that reason is a dangerous guide. They cannot divest themselves of the idea that in the realm of thought there must be government authority and obedience laws and penalties rewards and punishments, and that somewhere in the universe there is a penitentiary for the soul.

In the republic of mind, *one* is a majority. There, all are monarchs, and all are equals. The tyranny of a majority even is unknown. Each one is crowned, sceptered and throned. Upon every brow is the tiara, and around every form is the imperial purple. Only those are good citizens who express their honest thoughts, and those who persecute for opinion's sake, are the only traitors. There, nothing is considered infamous except an appeal to brute force, and nothing sacred but love, liberty, and joy. The church contemplates this republic with a sneer. From the teeth of Hatred she draws back the lips of scorn. She is filled with the spite and spleen born of intellectual weakness. Once she was egotistic; now she is envious. Once she wore upon her hollow breast false gems, supposing them to be real. They have been shown to be false, but she wears them still. She has the malice of the caught, the hatred of the exposed.

We are told to investigate the Bible for ourselves, and at the same time informed that if we come to the conclusion that it is not the inspired word of God, we will most assuredly be damned. Under such circumstances, if we believe this, investigation is impossible. Whoever is held responsible for his conclusions cannot weigh the evidence with impartial scales. Fear stands at the balance, and gives to falsehood the weight of its trembling hand.

I oppose the church because she is the enemy of liberty; because her dogmas are infamous and cruel; because she humiliates and degrades woman; because she teaches the doctrines of eternal torment and the natural depravity of man; because she insists upon the absurd, the impossible, and the senseless; because she resorts to falsehood and slander; because she is arrogant and revengeful; because she allows men to sin on a credit; because she discourages self-reliance, and laughs at good works; because she believes in vicarious virtue and vicarious vice; because she regards repentance of more importance than restitution, and because she sacrifices the world we have to one we know not of.

The free and generous, the tender and affectionate, will understand me. Those who have escaped from the grated cells of a creed will appreciate my motives. The sad and suffering wives, the trembling and loving children will thank me: This is enough.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

WASHINGTON, D. C.,
April 13, 1878.

THE GHOSTS

LET THEM COVER THEIR EYELESS SOCKETS WITH THEIR FLESHLESS
HANDS AND FADE FOREVER FROM THE IMAGINATION OF MEN.

THERE are three theories by which men account for all phenomena, for everything that happens: First, the Supernatural; Second, the Supernatural and Natural; Third, the Natural. Between these theories there has been, from the dawn of civilization, a continual conflict. In this great war, nearly all the soldiers have been in the ranks of the supernatural. The believers in the supernatural insist that matter is controlled and directed entirely by powers from without; while naturalists maintain that Nature acts from within; that Nature is not acted upon; that the universe is all there is; that Nature with infinite arms embraces everything that exists, and that all supposed powers beyond the limits of the material are simply ghosts. You say, "Oh, this is materialism!" "What is matter? I take in my hand some earth: in this dust put seeds. Let the arrows of light from the quiver of the sun smite upon it; let the rain fall upon it. The seeds will grow and a plant will bud and blossom. Do you understand this? Can you explain it better than you can the production of thought? Have you the slightest conception of what it really is? And yet you speak of matter as though acquainted with its origin, as though you had torn from the clenched hands of the rocks the secrets of material existence. Do you know what force is? Can you account for molecular action? Are you really familiar with chemistry, and can you account for the loves and hatreds of the atoms? Is there not something in matter that forever eludes? After all, can you get beyond, above or below appearances? Before you cry "materialism!" had you not better ascertain what matter really is? Can you think even of anything without a material basis? Is it possible to imagine the annihilation of a single atom? Is it possible for you to conceive of the creation of an atom? Can you have a thought that was not suggested to you by what you call matter?

Our fathers denounced materialism, and accounted for all phenomena by the caprice of gods and devils.

For thousands of years it was believed that ghosts, good and bad, benevolent and malignant, weak and powerful, in some mysterious way, produced all phenomena; that disease and health, happiness and misery, fortune and misfortune, peace and war, life and death, success and failure, were but arrows from the quivers of these ghosts; that shadowy phantoms rewarded and punished mankind; that they were pleased and displeased by the actions of men; that they sent and withheld the snow, the light, and the rain ; that they blessed the earth with harvests or cursed it with famine; that they fed or starved the children of men ; that they crowned and uncrowned kings; that they too sides in war; that they controlled the winds; that they gave prosperous voyages, allowing the brave mariner to meet his wife and child inside the harbor bar, or sent the storms, strewing the sad shores with wrecks of ships and the bodies of men.

Formerly, these ghosts were v believed to be almost innumerable. Earth, air, and water were filled with these phantom hosts. In modern times they have greatly decreased in number, because the second theory, a mingling of the supernatural and natural, has generally been adopted. The remaining ghosts, however, are supposed to perform the same offices as the hosts of yore.

It has always been believed that these ghosts could in some way be appeased; that they could be flattered by sacrifices, by prayer, by fasting, by the building of temples and cathedrals, by the blood of men and beasts, by forms and ceremonies, by chants, by kneelings and prostrations, by flagellations and maimings, by renouncing the joys of home, by living alone in the wide desert, by the practice of celibacy, by inventing instruments of torture, by destroying men, women and children, by covering the earth with dungeons, by burning unbelievers, by putting chains upon the thoughts and manacles upon the limbs of men, by believing things without evidence and against evidence, by disbelieving and denying demonstration, by despising facts, by hating reason, by denouncing liberty, by maligning heretics, by slandering the dead, by subscribing to senseless and cruel creeds, by discouraging investigation, by worshiping a book, by the cultivation of credulity, by observing certain times and days, by counting beads, by gazing at crosses, by hiring others to repeat verses and prayers, by burning candles and ringing bells, by enslaving each other and putting out the eyes of the soul. All this has been done to appease and flatter these monsters of the air.

In the history of our poor world, no horror has been omitted; no infamy has been left undone by the believers in ghosts, by the worshipers of these fleshless phantoms. And yet these shadows were born of cowardice and malignity. They were painted by the pencil of fear upon the canvas of ignorance by that artist called superstition.

From these ghosts, our fathers received information. They were the schoolmasters of our ancestors. They were the scientists and philosophers, the geologists, legislators, astronomers, physicians, metaphysicians and historians of the past. For ages these ghosts were supposed to be the only source of real knowledge. They inspired men to write books, and the books were considered sacred. If facts were found to be inconsistent with these books, so much the worse for the facts, and especially for their discoverers. It was then, and still is, believed that these books are the basis of the idea of immortality; that to give up these volumes, or rather the idea that they are inspired, is to renounce the idea of immortality. This I deny.

The idea of immortality, that like a sea has ebbed and flowed in the human heart, with its countless waves of hope and fear, beating against the shores and rocks of time and fate, was not born of any book, nor of any creed, nor of any religion. It was born of human affection, and it will continue to ebb and flow beneath the mists and clouds of doubt and darkness as long as love kisses the lips of death. It is the rainbow Hope shining upon the tears of grief.

From the books written by the ghosts we have at last ascertained that they knew nothing about the world in which we live. Did they know anything about the next? Upon every point where contradiction is possible, they have been contradicted.

By these ghosts, by these citizens of the air, the affairs of government were administered; all authority to govern came from them. The emperors, kings and potentates all had commissions from these phantoms. Man was not considered as the source of any power whatever. To rebel against the king was to rebel against the ghosts, and nothing less than the blood of the offender could appease the invisible phantom or the visible tyrant. Kneeling was the proper position to be assumed by the multitude. The prostrate were the good. Those who stood erect were infidels and traitors. In the name and by the authority of the ghosts, man was enslaved, crushed, and plundered. The many toiled wearily in the storm and sun that the few favorites of the ghosts might live in idleness. The many lived in huts, and caves, and dens that the few might dwell in palaces. The many covered themselves with rags, that the few might robe themselves in purple and in gold. The many crept, and cringed, and crawled, that the few might tread upon their flesh with iron feet.

From the ghosts men received, not only authority, but information of every kind. They told us the form of this earth. They informed us that eclipses were caused by the sins of man; that the universe was made in six days; that astronomy, and geology were devices of wicked men, instigated by wicked ghosts; that gazing at the sky with a telescope was a dangerous thing; that

digging into the earth was sinful curiosity; that trying to be wise above what they had written was born of a rebellious and irreverent spirit.

They told us there was no virtue like belief, and no crime like doubt; that investigation was pure impudence, and the punishment therefore, eternal torment. They not only told us all about this world, but about two others; and if their statements about the other worlds are as true as about this, no one can estimate the value of their information.

For countless ages the world was governed by ghosts, and they spared no pains to change the eagle of the human intellect into a bat of darkness. To accomplish this infamous purpose; to drive the love of truth from the human heart; to prevent the advancement of mankind; to shut out from the world every ray of intellectual light; to pollute every mind with superstition, the power of kings, the cunning and cruelty of priests, and the wealth of nations were exhausted.

During these years of persecution, ignorance, superstition and slavery, nearly all the people, the kings, lawyers, doctors, the learned and the unlearned, believed in that frightful production of ignorance, fear, and faith, called witchcraft. They believed that man was the sport and prey of devils. They really thought that the very air was thick with these enemies of man. With few exceptions, this hideous and infamous belief was universal. Under these conditions, progress was almost impossible.

Fear paralyzes the brain. Progress is born of courage. Fear believes - courage doubts. Fear falls upon the earth and prays - courage stands erect and thinks. Fear retreats - courage advances. Fear is barbarism courage is civilization. Fear believes in witchcraft, in devils and in ghosts. Fear is religion - courage is science.

The facts, upon which this terrible belief rested, were proved over and over again in every court of Europe. Thousands confessed themselves guilty admitted that they had sold themselves to the devil. They gave the particulars of the sale; told what they said and what the devil replied. They confessed this, when they knew that confession was death; knew that their property would be confiscated, and their children left to beg their bread. This is one of the miracles of history one of the strangest contradictions of the human mind. Without doubt, they really believed themselves guilty. In the first place, they believed in witchcraft as a fact, and when charged with it, they probably became insane. In their insanity they confessed their guilt. They found themselves abhorred and deserted charged with a crime that they could not disprove. Like a man in quicksand, every effort only sunk them deeper. Caught in this frightful web, at the mercy of the spiders of superstition, hope fled, and nothing remained but the insanity of confession. The whole world appeared to be insane.

In the time of James the First, a man was executed for causing a storm at sea with the intention of drowning one of the royal family. How could he disprove it? How could he show that he did not cause the storm? All storms were at that time generally supposed to be caused by the devil - the prince of the power of the air - and by those whom he assisted.

I implore you to remember that the believers in such impossible things were the authors of our creeds and confessions of faith.

A woman was tried and convicted before Sir Matthew Hale, one of the great judges and lawyers of England, for having caused children to vomit crooked pins. She was also charged with having nursed devils. The learned judge charged the intelligent jury that there was no doubt as to the existence of witches; that it was established by all history, and expressly taught by the Bible.

The woman was hanged and her body burned.

Sir Thomas More declared that to give up witchcraft was to throw away the sacred Scriptures. In my judgment, he was right.

John Wesley was a firm believer in ghosts and witches, and insisted upon it, years after all laws upon the subject had been repealed in England. I beg of you to remember that John Wesley was the founder of the Methodist Church.

In New England, a woman was charged with being a witch, and with having changed herself into a fox. While in that condition she was attacked and bitten by some dogs. A committee of three men, by order of the court, examined this woman. They removed her clothing and searched for "witch spots." That is to say, spots into which needles could be thrust without giving her pain. They reported to the court that such spots were found. She denied, however, that she ever had changed herself into a fox. Upon the report of the committee she was found guilty and actually executed. This was done by our Puritan fathers, by the gentlemen who braved the dangers of the deep for the sake of worshiping God and persecuting their fellow-men.

In those days people believed in what was known as lycanthropy that is, that persons, with the assistance of the devil, could assume the form of wolves. An instance is given where a man was attacked by a wolf. He defended himself, and succeeded in cutting off one of the animal's paws. The wolf ran away. The man picked up the paw, put it in his pocket and carried it home. There he found his wife with one of her hands gone. He took the paw from his pocket. It had

changed to a human hand. He charged his wife with being a witch. She was tried. She confessed her guilt, and was burned.

People were burned for causing frosts in summer for destroying crops with hail for causing storms for making cows go dry, and even for souring beer. There was no impossibility for which some one was not tried and convicted. The life of no one was secure. To be charged, was to be convicted. Every man was at the mercy of every other. This infamous belief was so firmly seated in the minds of the people, that to express a doubt as to its truth was to be suspected. Whoever denied the existence of witches and devils was denounced as an infidel.

They believed that animals were often taken possession of by devils, and that the killing of the animal would destroy the devil. They absolutely tried, convicted, and executed dumb beasts.

At Basle, in 1470, a rooster was tried upon the charge of having laid an egg. Rooster eggs were used only in making witch ointment, this every body knew. The rooster was convicted and with all due solemnity was burned in the public square. So a hog and six pigs were tried for having killed and partially eaten a child. The hog was convicted, but the pigs, on account probably of their extreme youth, were acquitted. As late as 1740, a cow was tried and convicted of being possessed by a devil.

They used to exorcise rats, locusts, snakes and vermin. They used to go through the alleys, streets, and fields, and warn them to leave within a certain number of days. In case they disobeyed they were threatened with pains and penalties.

But let us be careful how we laugh at these things. Let us not pride ourselves too much on the progress of our age. We must not forget that some of our people are yet in the same intelligent business. Only a little while ago, the governor of Minnesota appointed a day of fasting and prayer, to see if some power could not be induced to kill the grasshoppers, or send them into some other state.

About the close of the fifteenth century, so great was the excitement with regard to the existence of witchcraft that Pope Innocent VIII Issued a bull directing the inquisitors to be vigilant in searching out and punishing all guilty of this crime. Forms for the trial were regularly laid down in a book or a pamphlet called the "MALLEUS MALEFICORUM" (Hammer of Witches), which was issued by the Roman See. Popes Alexander, Leo, and Adrian, issued like bulls. For two hundred and fifty years the church was busy in punishing the impossible crime of witchcraft; in burning, hanging and torturing men, women, and children. Protestants were as active as Catholics, and in Geneva five hundred witches were burned at the stake in a period of three months. About

one thousand were executed in one year in the diocese of Como. At least one hundred thousand victims suffered in Germany alone: the last execution (in Wurtzburg) taking place as late as 1749. Witches were burned in Switzerland as late as 1780.

In England the same frightful scenes were enacted. Statutes were passed from Henry VI to James I., defining the crime and its punishment. The last act passed by the British parliament was when Lord Bacon was a member of the House of Commons; and this act was not repealed until 1736.

Sir William Blackstone, in his Commentaries on the Laws of England, says: "To deny the possibility, nay, actual existence of witchcraft and sorcery, is at once flatly to contradict the word of God in various passages both of the Old and New Testament ; and the thing itself is a truth to which every nation in the world hath in its turn borne testimony, either by examples seemingly well attested, or by prohibitory laws, which at least suppose the possibility of a commerce with evil spirits."

In Brown's Dictionary of the Bible, published at Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1807, it is said that: "A witch is a woman that has dealings with Satan. That such persons are among men is abundantly plain from Scripture, and that they ought to be put to death."

This work was re-published in Albany, New York, in 1816. No wonder the clergy of that city are ignorant and bigoted even unto this day.

In 1716, Mrs. Hicks and her daughter, nine years of age, were hanged for selling their souls to the devil, and raising a storm by pulling off their stockings and making a lather of soap.

In England it has been estimated that at least thirty thousand were hanged and burned. The last victim executed in Scotland, perished in 1722. "She was an innocent old woman, who had so little idea of her situation as to rejoice at the sight of the fire which was destined to consume her. She had a daughter, lame both of hands and of feet — a circumstance attributed to the witch having been used to transform her daughter into a pony and getting her shod by the devil."

In 1692, nineteen persons were executed and one pressed to death in Salem, Massachusetts, for the crime of witchcraft.

It was thought in those days that men and women made compacts with the devil, orally and in writing. That they abjured God and Jesus Christ, and

dedicated themselves wholly to the devil. The contracts were confirmed at a general meeting of witches and ghosts, over which the devil himself presided; and the persons generally signed the articles of agreement with their own blood. These contracts were, in some instances, for a few years; in others, for life. General assemblies of the witches were held at least once a year, at which they appeared entirely naked, besmeared with an ointment made from the bodies of unbaptized infants. "To these meetings they rode from great distances on broomsticks, pokers, goats, hogs, and dogs. Here they did homage to the prince of hell, and offered him sacrifices of young children, and practiced all sorts of license until the break of day."

"As late as 1815, Belgium was disgraced by a witch trial; and guilt was established by the water ordeal." "In 1836, the populace of Hela, near Dantzic, twice plunged into the sea a woman reputed to be a sorceress; and as the miserable creature persisted in rising to the surface, she was pronounced guilty, and beaten to death."

"It was believed that the bodies of devils are not like those of men and animals, cast in an unchangeable mould. It was thought they were like clouds, refined and subtle matter, capable of assuming any form and penetrating into any orifice. The horrible tortures they endured in their place of punishment rendered them extremely sensitive to suffering, and they continually sought a temperate and somewhat moist warmth in order to allay their pangs. It was for this reason they so frequently entered into men and women."

The devil could transport men, at his will, through the air. He could beget children; and Martin Luther himself had come in contact with one of these children. He recommended the mother to throw the child into the river, in order to free their house from the presence of a devil.

It was believed that the devil could transform people into any shape he pleased.

Whoever denied these things was denounced as an infidel. All the believers in witchcraft confidently appealed to the Bible. Their mouths were filled with passages demonstrating the existence of witches and their power over human beings. By the Bible they proved that innumerable evil spirits were ranging over the world endeavoring to ruin mankind; that these spirits possessed a power and wisdom far transcending the limits of human faculties; that they delighted in every misfortune that could befall the world; that their malice was super human. That they caused tempests was proved by the action of the devil toward Job; by the passage in the book of Revelation describing the four angels who held the four winds, and to whom it was given to afflict the earth. They believed the devil

could carry persons hundreds of miles, in a few seconds, through the air. They believed this, because they knew that Christ had been carried by the devil in the same manner and placed on a pinnacle of the temple. "The prophet Habakkuk had been transported by a spirit from Judea to Babylon; and Philip, the evangelist, had been the object of a similar miracle; and in the same way Saint Paul had been carried in the body into the third heaven."

"In those pious days, they believed that Incubi and *Succubi* were forever wandering among man kind, alluring, by more than human charms, the unwary to their destruction, and laying plots, which were too often successful, against the virtue of the saints. Sometimes the witches kindled in the monastic priest a more terrestrial fire. People told, with bated breath, how, under the spell of a vindictive woman, four successive abbots in a German monastery had been wasted away by an unholy flame."

An instance is given in which the devil not only assumed the appearance of a holy man, in order to pay his addresses to a lady, but when discovered, crept the bed, suffered himself to be dragged out, and was impudent enough to declare that he was the veritable bishop. So perfectly had he assumed the form and features of the prelate that those who knew the bishop best were deceived.

One can hardly imagine the frightful state of the human mind during these long centuries of darkness and superstition. To them, these things were awful and frightful realities. Hovering above them in the air, in their houses, in the bosoms of friends, in their very bodies, in all the darkness of night, everywhere, around, above and below, were innumerable hosts of unclean and malignant devils.

From the malice of those leering and vindictive vampires of the air, the church pretended to defend mankind. Pursued by these phantoms, the frightened multitudes fell upon their faces and implored the aid of robed hypocrisy and sceptered theft.

Take from the orthodox church of to-day the threat and fear of hell, and it becomes an extinct volcano.

Take from the church the miraculous, the super natural, the incomprehensible, the unreasonable, the impossible, the unknowable, and the absurd, and nothing but a vacuum remains.

Notwithstanding all the infamous things justly laid to the charge of the church, we are told that the civilization of to-day is the child of what we are pleased to call the superstition of the past.

Religion has not civilized man — man has civilized religion. God improves as man advances.

Let me call your attention to what we have received from the followers of the ghosts. Let me give you an outline of the sciences as taught by these philosophers of the clouds.

All diseases were produced, either as a punishment by the good ghosts, or out of pure malignity by the bad ones. There were, properly speaking, no diseases. The sick were possessed by ghosts. The science of medicine consisted in knowing how to persuade these ghosts to vacate the premises. For thousands of years the diseased were treated with incantations, with hideous noises, with drums and gongs. Everything was done to make the visit of the ghost as unpleasant as possible, and they generally succeeded in making things so disagreeable that if the ghost did not leave, the patient did. These ghosts were supposed to be of different rank, power and dignity. Now and then a man pretended to have won the favor of some powerful ghost, and that gave him power over the little ones. Such a man became an eminent physician.

It was found that certain kinds of smoke, such as that produced by burning the liver of a fish, the dried skin of a serpent, the eyes of a toad, or the tongue of an adder, were exceedingly offensive to the nostrils of an ordinary ghost. With this smoke, the sick room would be filled until the ghost vanished or the patient died.

It was also believed that certain words, the names of the most powerful ghosts, when properly pronounced, were very effective weapons. It was for a long time thought that Latin words were the best, Latin being a dead language, and known by the clergy. Others thought that two sticks laid across each other and held before the wicked ghost would cause it instantly to flee in dread away.

For thousands of years, the practice of medicine consisted in driving these evil spirits out of the bodies of men.

In some instances, bargains and compromises were made with the ghosts. One case is given where a multitude of devils traded a man for a herd of swine. In this transaction the devils were the losers, as the swine immediately drowned themselves in the sea. This idea of disease appears to have been almost universal, and is by no means yet extinct.

The contortions of the epileptic, the strange twitchings of those afflicted with chorea, the shakings of palsy, dreams, trances, and the number less frightful phenomena produced by diseases of the nerves, were all seized upon as so many proofs that the bodies of men were filled with unclean and malignant ghosts.

Whoever endeavored to account for these things by natural causes, whoever attempted to cure diseases by natural means, was denounced by the church as an infidel. To explain anything was a crime. It was to the interest of the priest that all phenomena should be accounted for by the will and power of gods and devils. The moment it is admitted that all phenomena are within the domain of the natural, the necessity for a priest has disappeared. Religion breathes the air of the supernatural. Take from the mind of man the idea of the supernatural, and religion ceases to exist. For this reason, the church has always despised the man who explained the wonderful. Upon this principle, nothing was left undone to stay the science of medicine. As long as plagues and pestilences could be stopped by prayer, the priest was useful. The moment the physician found a cure, the priest became an extravagance. The moment it began to be apparent that prayer could do nothing for the body, the priest shifted his ground and began praying for the soul.

Long after the devil idea was substantially abandoned in the practice of medicine, and when it was admitted that God had nothing to do with ordinary coughs and colds, it was still believed that all the frightful diseases were sent by him as punishments for the wickedness of the people. It was thought to be a kind of blasphemy to even try, by any natural means, to stay the ravages of pestilence. Formerly, during the prevalence of plague and epidemics, the arrogance of the priest was boundless. He told the people that they had slighted the clergy, that they had refused to pay tithes, that they had doubted some of the doctrines of the church, and that God was now taking his revenge. The people for the most part, believed this infamous tissue of priestcraft. They hastened to fall upon their knees; they poured out their wealth upon the altars of hypocrisy; they abased and debased themselves; from their minds they banished all doubts, and made haste to crawl in the very dust of humility.

The church never wanted disease to be under the control of man. Timothy Dwight, president of Yale College, preached a sermon against vaccination. His idea was, that if God had decreed from all eternity that a certain man should die with the small-pox, it was a frightful sin to avoid and annul that decree by the trick of vaccination. Small-pox being regarded as one of the heaviest guns in the arsenal of heaven, to spike it was the height of presumption. Plagues and pestilences were instrumentalities in the hands of God with which to gain the love and worship of mankind. To find a cure for disease was to take a weapon from the church. No one tries to cure the ague with prayer. Quinine has been found altogether more reliable. Just as soon as a specific is found for a disease, that disease will be left out of the list of prayer. The number of diseases with which God from time to time afflicts mankind, is continually decreasing. In a few years all of them will be under the control of man, the gods will be left unarmed, and the threats of their priests will excite only a smile.

The science of medicine has had but one - enemy religion. Man was afraid to save his body for fear he might lose his soul.

Is it any wonder that the people in those days believed in and taught the infamous doctrine of eternal punishment a doctrine that makes God a heartless monster and man a slimy hypocrite and slave?

The ghosts were historians, and their histories were the grossest absurdities. "Tales told by idiots, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." In those days the histories were written by the monks, who, as a rule, were almost as superstitious as they were dishonest. They wrote as though they had been witnesses of every occurrence they related. They wrote the history of every country of importance. They told all the past and predicted all the future with an impudence that amounted to sublimity. "They traced the order of St. Michael, in France, to the archangel himself, and alleged that he was the founder of a chivalric order in heaven itself. They said that Tartars originally came from hell, and that they were called Tartars because Tartarus was one of the names of perdition. They declared that Scotland was so named after Scota, a daughter of Pharaoh, who landed in Ireland, invaded Scotland, and took it by force of arms. This statement was made in a letter addressed to the Pope in the fourteenth century, and was alluded to as a well-known fact. The letter was written by some of the highest dignitaries, and by the direction of the King himself."

These gentlemen accounted for the red on the breasts of robins, from the fact that these birds carried water to unbaptized infants in hell.

Matthew, of Paris, an eminent historian of the fourteenth century, gave the world the following piece of information: "It is well known that Mohammed was once a cardinal, and became a heretic because he failed in his effort to be elected pope;" and that having drunk to excess, he fell by the roadside, and in this condition was killed by swine. "And for that reason, his followers abhor pork even unto this day."

Another eminent historian informs us that Nero was in the habit of vomiting frogs. When I read this, I said to myself: Some of the croakers of the present day against Progress would be the better for such a vomit.

The history of Charlemagne was written by Turpin, of Rheims. He was a bishop. He assures us that the walls of a city fell down in answer to prayer. That there were giants in those days who could take fifty ordinary men under their

arms and walk away with them. "With the greatest of these, a direct descendant of Goliath, one Orlando had a theological discussion, and that in the heat of the debate, when the giant was overwhelmed with the argument, Orlando rushed forward and inflicted a fatal stab."

The history of Britain, written by the arch deacons of Monmouth and Oxford, was wonderfully popular. According to them, Brutus conquered England and built the city of London. During his time, it rained pure blood for three days. At another time, a monster came from the sea, and, after having devoured great multitudes of people, swallowed the king and disappeared. They tell us that King Arthur was not born like other mortals, but was the result of a magical contrivance; that he had great luck in killing giants; that he killed one in France that had the cheerful habit of eating some thirty men a day. That this giant had clothes woven of the beards of the kings he had devoured. To cap the climax, one of the authors of this book was promoted for having written the only reliable history of his country.

In all the histories of those days there is hardly a single truth. Facts were considered unworthy of preservation. Anything that really happened was not of sufficient interest or importance to be recorded. The great religious historian, Eusebius, ingenuously remarks that in his history he carefully omitted whatever tended to discredit the church, and that he piously magnified all that conduced to her glory.

The same glorious principle was scrupulously adhered to by all the historians of that time.

They wrote, and the people believed, that the tracks of Pharaoh's chariots were still visible on the sands of the Red Sea, and that they had been miraculously preserved from the winds and waves as perpetual witnesses of the great miracle there performed.

It is safe to say that every truth in the histories of those times is the result of accident or mistake.

They accounted for everything as the work of good and evil spirits. With cause and effect they had nothing to do. Facts were in no way related to each other. God, governed by infinite caprice, filled the world with miracles and disconnected events. From the quiver of his hatred came the arrows of famine, pestilence, and death.

The moment that the idea is abandoned that all is natural; that all phenomena are the necessary links in the endless chain of being, the conception of history

becomes impossible. With the ghosts, the present is not the child of the past, nor the mother of the future. In the domain of religion all is chance, accident, and caprice.

Do not forget, I pray you, that our creeds were written by the cotemporaries of these historians.

The same idea was applied to law. It was believed by our intelligent ancestors that all law derived its sacredness and its binding force from the fact that it had been communicated to man by the ghosts. Of course it was not pretended that the ghosts told everybody the law ; but they told it to a few, and the few told it to the people, and the people, as a rule, paid them exceedingly well for their trouble. It was thousands of ages before the people commenced making laws for themselves, and strange as it may appear, most of these laws were vastly superior to the ghost article. Through the web and woof of human legislation began to run and shine and glitter the golden thread of justice.

During these years of darkness it was believed that rather than see an act of injustice done; rather than see the innocent suffer; rather than see the guilty triumph, some ghost would interfere. This belief, as a rule, gave great satisfaction to the victorious party, and as the other man was dead, no complaint was heard from him.

This doctrine was the sanctification of brute force and chance. They had trials by battle, by fire, by water, and by lot. Persons were made to grasp hot iron, and if it burned them their guilt was established. Others, with tied hands and feet, were cast into the sea, and if they sank, the verdict of guilty was unanimous, if they did not sink; - they were in league with devils.

So in England, persons charged with crime could appeal to the corsned. The corsned was a piece of the sacramental bread. If the defendant could swallow this piece he went acquit. Godwin, Earl of Kent, in the time of Edward the Confessor, appealed to the corsned. He failed to swallow it and was choked to death.

The ghosts and their followers always took delight in torture, in cruel and unusual punishments. For the infraction of most of their laws, death was the penalty death produced by stoning and by fire. Sometimes, when man committed only murder, he was allowed to flee to some city of refuge. Murder was a crime against man. But for saying certain words, or denying certain doctrines, or for picking up sticks on certain days, or for worshiping the wrong

ghost, or for failing to pray to the right one, or for laughing at a priest, or for saying that wine was not blood, or that bread was not flesh, or for failing to regard ram's horns as artillery, or for insisting that a dry bone was scarcely sufficient to take the place of water works, or that a raven, as a rule, made a poor landlord: death, produced by all the ways that the ingenuity of hatred could devise, was the penalty.

Law is a growth - it is a science. Right and wrong exist in the nature of things. Things are not right because they are commanded, nor wrong because they are prohibited. There are real crimes enough without creating artificial ones. All progress in legislation has for centuries consisted in repealing the laws of the ghosts.

The idea of right and wrong is born of man's capacity to enjoy and suffer. If man could not suffer, if he could not inflict injury upon his fellow, if he could neither feel nor inflict pain, the idea of right and wrong never would have entered his brain. But for this, the word conscience never would have passed the lips of man.

There is one good - happiness. There is but one sin selfishness. All law should be for the preservation of the one and the destruction of the other.

Under the regime of the ghosts, laws were not supposed to exist in the nature of things. They were supposed to be simply the irresponsible command of a ghost. These commands were not supposed to rest upon reason; they were the product of arbitrary will.

The penalties for the violation of these laws were as cruel as the laws were senseless and absurd. Working on the Sabbath and murder were both punished with death. The tendency of such laws is to blot from the human heart the sense of justice.

To show you how perfectly every department of knowledge, or ignorance rather, was saturated with superstition, I will for a moment refer to the science of language.

It was thought by our fathers, that Hebrew was the original language; that it was taught to Adam in the Garden of Eden by the Almighty, and that consequently all languages came from, and could be traced to, the Hebrew. Every fact inconsistent with that idea was discarded. According to the ghosts, the trouble at the tower of Babel accounted for the fact that all people did not speak Hebrew. The Babel business settled all questions in the science of language.

After a time, so many facts were found to be inconsistent with the Hebrew idea that it began to fall into disrepute, and other languages began to compete for the honor of being the original.

Andre Kempe, in 1569, published a work on the language of Paradise, in which he maintained that God spoke to Adam in Swedish; that Adam answered in Danish; and that the serpent - which appears to me quite probable spoke to Eve in French. Erro, in a work published at Madrid, took the ground that Basque was the language spoken in the Garden of Eden; but in 1580 Goropius published his celebrated work at Antwerp, in which he put the whole matter at rest by showing, beyond all doubt, that the language spoken in Paradise was neither more nor less than plain Holland Dutch.

The real founder of the science of language was Liebnitz, a cotemporary of Sir Isaac Newton. He discarded the idea that all languages could be traced to one language. He maintained that language was a natural growth. Experience teaches us that this must be so. Words are continually dying and continually being born. Words are naturally and necessarily produced. Words are the garments of thought, the robes of ideas. Some are as rude as the skins of wild beasts, and others glisten and glitter like silk and gold. They have been born of hatred and revenge; of love and self-sacrifice; of hope and fear, of agony and joy. These words are born of the terror and beauty of nature. The stars have fashioned them. In them mingle the darkness and the dawn. From everything they have taken something. Words are the crystallizations of human history, of all that man has enjoyed and suffered his victories and defeats all that he has lost and won. Words are the shadows of all that has been the mirrors of all that is.

The ghosts also enlightened our fathers in astronomy and geology. According to them the earth was made out of nothing, and a little more nothing having been taken than was used in the construction of this world, the stars were made out of what was left over. Cosmas, in the sixth century, taught that the stars were impelled by angels, who either carried them on their shoulders, rolled them in front of them, or drew them after. He also taught that each angel that pushed a star took great pains to observe what the other angels were doing, so that the relative distances between the stars might always remain the same. He also gave his idea as to the form of the world.

He stated that the world was a vast parallelogram; that on the outside was a strip of land, like the frame of a common slate; that then there was a strip of water, and in the middle a great piece of land; that Adam and Eve lived on the outer strip; that their descendants, with the exception of the Noah family, were drowned by a flood on this outer strip; that the ark finally rested on the middle piece of land where we now are. He accounted for night and day by saying that

on the outside strip of land there was a high mountain, around which the sun and moon revolved, and that when the sun was on the other side of the mountain, it was night; and when on this side, it was day.

He also declared that the earth was flat. This he proved by many passages from the Bible. Among other reasons for believing the earth to be flat, he brought forward the following: We are told in the New Testament that Christ shall come again in glory and power, and the entire world shall see him. Now, if the world is round, how are the people on the other side going to see Christ when he comes? That settled the question, and the church not only endorsed the book, but declared that whoever believed less or more than stated by Cosmas, was a heretic.

In those blessed days, Ignorance was a king and Science an outcast. They knew the moment this earth ceased to be the centre of the universe, and became a mere speck in the starry heaven of existence, that their religion would become a childish fable of the past.

In the name and by the authority of the ghosts, men enslaved their fellow - men; they trampled upon the rights of women and children. In the name and by the authority of ghosts, they bought and sold and destroyed each other; they filled heaven with tyrants and earth with slaves, the present with despair and the future with horror. In the name and by the authority of the ghosts, they imprisoned the human mind, polluted the conscience, hardened the heart, subverted justice, crowned robbery, sainted hypocrisy, and extinguished for a thousand years the torch of reason.

I have endeavored, in some faint degree, to show you what has happened, and what always will happen when men are governed by superstition and fear; when they desert the sublime standard of reason; when they take the words of others and do not investigate for themselves.

Even the great men of those days were nearly as weak in this matter as the most ignorant. Kepler, one of the greatest men of the world, an astronomer second to none, although he plucked from the stars the secrets of the universe, was an astrologer, and really believed that he could predict the career of a man by finding what star was in the ascendant at his birth. This great man breathed, so to speak, the atmosphere of his time. He believed in the music of the spheres, and assigned alto, bass, tenor, and treble to certain stars.

Tycho Brahe, another astronomer, kept an idiot, whose disconnected and meaningless words he carefully set down, and then put them together in such manner as to make prophecies, and then waited patiently to see them fulfilled.

Luther believed that he had actually seen the devil, and had discussed points of theology with him. The human mind was in chains. Every idea almost was a monster. Thought was deformed. Facts were looked upon as worthless. Only the wonderful was worth preserving. Things that actually happened were not considered worth recording;— real occurrences were too common. Everybody expected the miraculous.

The ghosts were supposed to be busy; devils were thought to be the most industrious things in the universe and with these imps, every occurrence of an unusual character was in some way connected. There was no order, no serenity, no certainty in anything. Everything depended upon ghosts and phantoms. Man was, for the most part, at the mercy of malevolent spirits. He protected himself as best he could with holy water and tapers and wafers and cathedrals. He made noises and rung bells to frighten the ghosts, and he made music to charm them. He used smoke to choke them, and incense to please them. He wore beads and crosses. He said prayers, and hired others to say them. He fasted when he was hungry, and feasted when he was not. He believed everything that seemed unreasonable, just to appease the ghosts. He humbled himself. He crawled in the dust. He shut the doors and windows, and excluded every ray of light from the temple of the soul. He debauched and polluted his own mind, and toiled night and day to repair the walls of his own prison. From the garden of his heart he plucked and trampled upon the holy flowers of pity.

The priests reveled in horrible descriptions of hell. Concerning the wrath of God, they grew eloquent. They denounced man as totally depraved. They made reason blasphemy, and pity a crime. Nothing so delighted them as painting the torments and sufferings of the lost. Over the worm that never dies they grew poetic; and the second death filled them with a kind of holy delight. According to them, the smoke and cries ascending from hell were the perfume and music of heaven.

At the risk of being tiresome, I have said what I have to show you the productions of the human mind, when enslaved; the effects of wide-spread ignorance - the results of fear. I want to convince you that every form of slavery is a viper that, sooner or later, will strike its poison fangs into the bosoms of men.

The first great step towards progress, is, for man to cease to be the slave of man; the second, to cease to be the slave of the monsters of his own creation of the ghosts - and phantoms of the air. For ages the human race was imprisoned.

Through the bars and grates came a few struggling rays of light. Against these grates and bars Science pressed its pale and thoughtful face, wooed by the holy dawn of human advancement.

Men found that the real was the useful; that what a man knows is better than what a ghost says; that an event is more valuable than a prophecy. They found that diseases were not produced by spirits, and could not be cured by frightening them away. They found that death was as natural as life. They began to study the anatomy and chemistry of the human body, and found that all was natural and within the domain of law.

The conjurer and sorcerer were discarded, and the physician and surgeon employed. They found that the earth was not flat; that the stars were not mere specks. They found that being born under a particular planet had nothing to do with the fortunes of men.

The astrologer was discharged and the astronomer took his place.

They found that the earth had swept through the constellations for millions of ages. They found that good and evil were produced by natural causes, and not by ghosts; that man could not be good enough or bad enough to stop or cause a rain; that diseases were produced as naturally as grass, and were not sent as punishments upon man for failing to believe a certain creed. They found that man, through intelligence, could take advantage of the forces of nature - that he could make the waves, the winds, the flames, and the lightnings of heaven do his bidding and minister to his wants. They found that the ghosts knew nothing of benefit to man; that they were utterly ignorant of geology - of astronomy - of geography; that they knew nothing of history; that they were poor doctors and worse surgeons; - that they knew nothing of law and less of justice; that they were without brains, and utterly destitute of hearts; that they knew nothing of the rights of men; that they were despisers of women, the haters of progress, the enemies of science, and the destroyers of liberty.

The condition of the world during the Dark Ages shows exactly the result of enslaving the bodies and souls of men. In those days there was no freedom. Labor was despised, and a laborer was considered but little above a beast. Ignorance, like a vast cowl, covered the brain of the world, and superstition ran riot with the imagination of man. The air was filled with angels, with demons and monsters. Credulity sat upon the throne of the soul, and Reason was an exiled king. A man to be distinguished must be a soldier or a monk. War and theology, that is to say, murder and hypocrisy, were the principal employments of man. Industry was a slave, theft was commerce; murder was war, hypocrisy was religion.

Every Christian country maintained that it was no robbery to take the property of Mohammedans by force, and no murder to kill the owners. Lord Bacon was the first man of note who maintained that a Christian country was bound to keep its plighted faith with an infidel nation. Reading and writing were

considered dangerous arts. Every layman who could read and write was suspected of being a heretic. All thought was discouraged. They forged chains of superstition for the minds, and manacles of iron for the bodies of men. The earth was ruled by the cowl and sword, - by the mitre and scepter, - by the altar and throne, - by Fear and Force, by Ignorance and Faith, - by ghouls and ghosts.

In the fifteenth century the following law was in force in England: "That whosoever reads the Scriptures in the mother tongue, shall forfeit land, cattle, life, and goods from their heirs forever, and so be condemned for heretics to God, enemies to the crown, and most arrant traitors to the land.

During the first year this law was in force thirty nine were hanged for its violation and their bodies burned.

In the sixteenth century men were burned because they failed to kneel to a procession of monks.

The slightest word uttered against the superstition of the time was punished with death.

Even the reformers, so-called, of those days, had no idea of intellectual liberty no idea even of toleration. Luther, Knox, Calvin, believed in religious liberty only when they were in the minority. The moment they were clothed with power they began to exterminate with fire and sword.

Castalio was the first minister who advocated the liberty of the soul. He was regarded by the reformers as a criminal, and treated as though he had committed the crime of crimes.

Bodinus, a lawyer of France, about the same time, wrote a few words in favor of the freedom of conscience, but public opinion was overwhelmingly against him. The people were ready, anxious, and willing, with whip, and chain, and fire, to drive from the mind of man the heresy that he had a right to think.

Montaigne, a man blest with so much common sense that he was the most uncommon man of his time, was the first to raise a voice against torture in France. But what was the voice of one man against the terrible cry of ignorant, infatuated, superstitious and malevolent millions? It was the cry of a drowning man in the wild roar of the cruel sea.

In spite of the efforts of the brave few the infamous war against the freedom of the soul was waged until at least one hundred millions of human beings - fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters with hopes, loves, and aspirations like ourselves, were sacrificed upon the cruel altar of an ignorant faith. They perished

in every way by which death can be produced. Every nerve of pain was sought out and touched by the believers in ghosts.

For my part I glory in the fact, that here in the New World, - in the United States, - liberty of conscience was first guaranteed to man, and that the Constitution of the United States was the first great decree entered in the high court of human equity forever divorcing church and state, - the first injunction granted against the interference of the ghosts. This was one of the grandest steps ever taken by the human race in the direction of Progress.

You will ask what has caused this wonderful change in three hundred years. And I answer - the inventions and discoveries of the few; the brave thoughts, the heroic utterances of the few; - the acquisition of a few facts.

Besides, you must remember that every wrong in some way tends to abolish itself. It is hard to make a lie stand always. A lie will not fit a fact. It will only fit another lie made for the purpose. The life of a lie is simply a question of time. Nothing but truth is immortal. The nobles and kings quarreled; — the priests began to dispute; the ideas of government began to change.

In 1441 printing was discovered. At that time the past was a vast cemetery with hardly an epitaph. The ideas of men had mostly perished in the brain that produced them. The lips of the human race had been sealed. Printing gave pinions to thought. It preserved ideas. It made it possible for man to bequeath to the future the riches of his brain, the wealth of his soul. At first, it was used to flood the world with the mistakes of the ancients, but since that time it has been flooding the world with light.

When people read they begin to reason, and when they reason they progress. This was another grand step in the direction of Progress.

The discovery of powder, that put the peasant almost upon a par with the prince; - that put an end to the so-called age of chivalry;— that released a vast number of men from the armies; that gave pluck and nerve a chance with brute strength.

The discovery of America, whose shores were trod by the restless feet of adventure; — that brought people holding every shade of superstition together; that gave the world an opportunity to compare notes, and to laugh at the follies of each other. Out of this strange mingling of all creeds, and superstitions, and facts, and theories, and countless opinions, came the Great Republic.

Every fact has pushed a superstition from the brain and a ghost from the clouds. Every mechanic art is an educator. Every loom, every reaper and mower, every steamboat, every locomotive, every engine, every press, every telegraph, is a missionary of Science and an apostle of Progress. Every mill, every furnace, every building with its wheels and levers, in which something is made for the convenience, for the use, and for the comfort and elevation of man, is a church, and every schoolhouse is a temple.

Education is the most radical thing in the world.

To teach the alphabet is to inaugurate a revolution.

To build a schoolhouse is to construct a fort.

Every library is an arsenal filled with the weapons and ammunition of Progress, and every fact is a monitor with sides of iron and a turret of steel. I thank the inventors, the discoverers, the thinkers, I thank Columbus and Magellan. I thank Galileo, and Copernicus, and Kepler, and Descartes, and Newton, and Laplace. I thank Locke, and Hume, and Bacon, and Shakespeare, and Kant, and Fichte, and Leibnitz, and Goethe. I thank Fulton, and Watts, and Volta, and Galvani, and Franklin, and Morse, who made lightning the messenger of man. I thank Humboldt, the Shakespeare of science. I thank Crompton and Arkwright, from whose brains leaped the looms and spindles that clothe the world. I thank Luther for protesting against the abuses of the church, and I denounce him because he was the enemy of liberty. I thank Calvin for writing a book in favor of religious freedom, and I abhor him because he burned Servetus. I thank Knox for resisting Episcopal persecution, and I hate him because he persecuted in his turn. I thank the Puritans for saying "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God," and yet I am compelled to say that they were tyrants themselves. I thank Thomas Paine because he was a believer in liberty, and because he did as much to make my country free as any other human being. I thank Voltaire, that great man who, for half a century, was the intellectual emperor of Europe, and who, from his throne at the foot of the Alps, pointed the finger of scorn at every hypocrite in Christendom. I thank Darwin, Haeckel and Buchner, Spencer, Tyndall and Huxley, Draper, Lecky and Buckle.

I thank the inventors, the discoverers, the thinkers, the scientists, the explorers; I thank the honest millions who have toiled.

I thank the brave men with brave thoughts. They are the Atlases upon whose broad and mighty shoulders rest the grand fabric of civilization. They are the men, who have broken, and are still breaking, the chains of Superstition. They are the Titans who carried Olympus by assault, and who will soon stand victors upon Sinai's crags.

We are beginning to learn that to exchange a mistake for the truth - a superstition for a fact - to ascertain the real - is to progress.

Happiness is the only possible good, and all that tends to the happiness of man is right, and is of value. All that tends to develop the bodies and minds of men; all that gives us better houses, better clothes, better food, better pictures, grander music, better heads, better hearts; all that renders us more intellectual and more loving, nearer just; that makes us better husbands and wives, better children, better citizens all these things combined produce what I call Progress.

Man advances only as he overcomes the obstructions of Nature, and this can be done only by labor and by thought. Labor is the foundation of all. Without labor, and without great labor, progress is impossible. The progress of the world depends upon the men who walk in the fresh fur rows and through the rustling corn; upon those who sow and reap; upon those whose faces are radiant with the glare of furnace fires; upon the delvers in the mines, and the workers in shops; upon those who give to the winter air the ringing music of the axe; upon those who battle with the boisterous billows of the sea; upon the inventors and discoverers; upon the brave thinkers.

From the surplus produced by labor, schools and universities are built and fostered. From this surplus the painter is paid for the productions of the pencil; the sculptor for chiseling shapeless rock into forms divinely beautiful, and the poet for singing the hopes, the loves, the memories, and the aspirations of the world. This surplus has given us the books in which we converse with the dead and living kings of the human race. It has given us all there is of beauty, of elegance, and of refined happiness.

I am aware that there is a vast difference of opinion as to what progress really is; that many denounce the ideas of to-day as destructive of all happiness - of all good. I know that there are many worshipers of the past. They venerate the ancient because it is ancient. They see no beauty in anything from which they do not blow the dust of ages with the breath of praise. They say, no masters like the old; no religion, no governments like the ancient; no orators, no poets, no statesmen like those who have been dust for two thousand years. Others love the modern simply because it is modern.

We should have gratitude enough to acknowledge the obligations we are under to the great and heroic of antiquity, and independence enough not to believe what they said simply because they said it.

With the idea that labor is the basis of progress goes the truth that labor must be free. The laborer must be a free man.

The free man, working for wife and child, gets his head and hands in partnership.

To do the greatest amount of work in the shortest space of time, is the problem of free labor.

Slavery does the least work in the longest space of time.

Free labor will give us wealth. Free thought will give us truth.

Slowly but surely man is freeing his imagination of these sexless phantoms, of these cruel ghosts. Slowly but surely he is rising above the superstitions of the past. He is learning to rely upon himself. He is beginning to find that labor is the only prayer that ought to be answered, and that hoping, toiling, aspiring, suffering men and women are of more importance than all the ghosts that ever wandered through the fenceless fields of space.

The believers in ghosts claim still, that they are the only wise and virtuous people upon the earth; claim still, that there is a difference between them and unbelievers so vast, that they will be infinitely rewarded, and the others infinitely punished.

I ask you to-night, do the theories and doctrines of the theologians satisfy the heart or brain of the nineteenth century?

Have the churches the confidence of mankind?

Does the merchant give credit to a man because he belongs to a church?

Does the banker loan money to a man because he is a Methodist or Baptist?

Will a certificate of good standing in any church be taken as collateral security for one dollar?

Will you take the word of a church member, or his note, or his oath, simply because he is a church member?

Are the clergy, as a class, better, kinder and more generous to their families — to their fellow-men — than doctors, lawyers, merchants and farmers?

Does a belief in ghosts and unreasonable things necessarily make people honest?

When a man loses confidence in Moses, must the people lose confidence in him?

Does not the credit system in morals breed extravagance in sin?

Why send missionaries to other lands while every penitentiary in ours is filled with criminals?

Is it philosophical to say that they who do right carry a cross?

Is it a source of joy to think that perdition is the destination of nearly all of the children of men?

Is it worth while to quarrel about original sin — when there is so much copy?

Does it pay to dispute about baptism, and the Trinity, and predestination, and apostolic succession and the infallibility of churches, of popes and of books? Does all this do any good?

Are the theologians welcomers of new truths? Are they noted for their candor? Do they treat an opponent with common fairness? Are they investigators? Do they pull forward, or do they hold back?

Is science indebted to the church for a solitary fact?

What church is an asylum for a persecuted truth?

What great reform has been inaugurated by the church?

Did the church abolish slavery?

Has the church raised its voice against war?

I used to think that there was in religion no real restraining force. Upon this point my mind has changed. Religion will prevent man from committing artificial crimes and offences.

A man committed murder. The evidence was so conclusive that he confessed his guilt.

He was asked why he killed his fellow-man.

He replied: "For money."

"Did you get any?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"Fifteen cents."

"What did you do with this money?"

"Spent it."

"What for?"

"Liquor."

"What else did you find upon the dead man?"

"He had his dinner in a bucket some meat and bread."

"What did you do with that?"

"I ate the bread."

"What did you do with the meat?"

"I threw it away."

"Why?"

"It was Friday."

Just to the extent that man has freed himself from the dominion of ghosts he has advanced. Just to the extent that he has freed himself from the tyrants of his own creation he has progressed. Just to the extent that he has investigated for himself he has lost confidence in superstition.

With knowledge obedience becomes intelligent acquiescence it is no longer degrading. Acquiescence in the understood in the known is the act of a sovereign, not of a slave. It ennobles, it does not degrade.

Man has found that he must give liberty to others in order to have it himself. He has found that a master is also a slave; that a tyrant is himself a serf. He has found that governments should be founded and administered by man and for man; that the rights of all are equal ; that the powers that be are not ordained by God; that woman is at least the equal of man ; that men existed before books; that religion is one of the phases of thought through which the world is passing; that all creeds were made by man; that every thing is natural; that a miracle is an impossibility; that we know nothing of origin and destiny; that concerning the unknown we are all equally ignorant; that the pew has the right to contradict what the pulpit asserts; that man is responsible only to himself and those he injures, and that all have a right to think.

True religion must be free. Without perfect liberty of the mind there can be no true religion. Without liberty the brain is a dungeon — the mind a convict. The slave may bow and cringe and crawl, but he cannot adore — he cannot love.

True religion is the perfume of a free and grateful heart. True religion is a subordination of the passions to the perceptions of the intellect.

True religion is not a theory — it is a practice. It is not a creed — it is a life.

A theory that is afraid of investigation undeserves a place in the human mind.

I do not pretend to tell what all the truth is. I do not pretend to have fathomed the abyss, or to have floated on outstretched wings level with the dim heights of thought. I simply plead for freedom. I denounce the cruelties and horrors of slavery. I ask for light and air for the souls of men. I say, —take off those chains—break those manacles - free those limbs —release that brain! I plead for the right to think — to reason —to investigate. I ask that the future may be enriched with the honest thoughts of men. I implore every human being to be a soldier in the army of progress.

I will not invade the rights of others. You have no right to erect your toll-gate upon the highways of thought. You have no right to leap from the hedges of superstition and strike down the pioneers of the human race. You have no right to sacrifice the liberties of man upon the altars of ghosts. Believe what you may; preach what you desire; have all the forms and ceremonies you please; exercise your liberty in your own way but extend to all others the same right.

I will not attack your doctrines nor your creeds if they accord liberty to me. If they hold thought to be dangerous - if they aver that doubt is a crime, then I attack them one and all, because they enslave the minds of men. I attack the monsters, the phantoms of imagination that have ruled the world. I attack slavery. I ask for room - room for the human mind.

Why should we sacrifice a real world that we have, for one we know not of? Why should we enslave ourselves? Why should we forge fetters for our own hands? Why should we be the slaves of phantoms. The darkness of barbarism was the womb of these shadows. In the light of science they cannot cloud the sky forever. They have reddened the hands of man with innocent blood. They made the cradle a curse, and the grave a place of torment.

They blinded the eyes and stopped the ears of the human race. They subverted all ideas of justice by promising infinite rewards for finite virtues, and threatening infinite punishment for finite offences.

They filled the future with heavens and with hells, with the shining peaks of selfish joy and the lurid abysses of flame. For ages they kept the world in ignorance and awe, in want and misery, in fear and chains.

I plead for light, for air, for opportunity. I plead for individual independence. I plead for the rights of labor and of thought. I plead for a chainless future. Let the ghosts go - justice remains. Let them disappear - men and women and children are left. Let the monsters fade away - the world is here with its hills and seas and plains, with its seasons of smiles and frowns, its spring of leaf and bud, its summer of shade and flower and murmuring stream; its autumn with the laden boughs, when the withered banners of the corn are still, and gathered fields are growing strangely wan; while death, poetic death, with hands that color what they touch, weaves in the Autumn wood her tapestries of gold and brown.

The world remains with its winters and homes and firesides, where grow and bloom the virtues of our race. All these are left; and music, with its sad and thrilling voice, and all there is of art and song and hope and love and aspiration high. All these remain. Let the ghosts go we will worship them no more.

Man is greater than these phantoms. Humanity is grander than all the creeds, than all the books. Humanity is the great sea, and these creeds, and books, and religions, are but the waves of a day. Humanity is the sky, and these religions and dogmas and theories are but the mists and clouds changing continually, destined finally to melt away.

That which is founded upon slavery, and fear, and ignorance, cannot endure. In the religion of the future there will be men and women and children, all the aspirations of the soul, and all the tender humanities of the heart.

Let the ghosts go. We will worship them no more. Let them cover their eyeless sockets with their fleshless hands and fade forever from the imaginations of men.

THE LIBERTY OF MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD

LIBERTY SUSTAINS THE SAME RELATION TO MIND THAT SPACE DOES TO MATTER.

THERE is no slavery but ignorance. Liberty is the child of intelligence. The history of man is simply the history of slavery, of injustice and brutality, together with the means by which he has, through the dead and desolate years, slowly and painfully advanced. He has been the sport and prey of priest and king, the food of superstition and cruel might. Crowned force has governed ignorance through fear. Hypocrisy and tyranny - two vultures - have fed upon the liberties of man. From all these there has been, and is, but one means of escape intellectual development. Upon the back of industry has been the whip. Upon the brain have been the fetters of superstition. Nothing has been left undone by the enemies of freedom. Every art and artifice, every cruelty and outrage has been practiced and perpetrated to destroy the rights of man. In this great struggle every crime has been rewarded and every virtue has been punished. Reading, writing, thinking and investigating have all been crimes.

Every science has been an outcast.

All the altars and all the thrones united to arrest the forward march of the human race. The king said that mankind must not work for them selves. The priest said that mankind must not think for themselves. One forged chains for the hands, the other for the soul. Under this infamous *regime* the eagle of the human intellect was for ages a slimy serpent of hypocrisy.

The human race was imprisoned. Through some of the prison bars came a few struggling rays of light. Against these bars Science pressed its pale and thoughtful face, wooed by the holy dawn of human advancement. Bar after bar was broken away. A few grand men escaped and devoted their lives to the liberation of their fellows.

Only a few years ago there was a great awakening of the human mind. Men began to inquire by what right a crowned robber made them work for him? The man who asked this question was called a traitor. Others asked by what right does a robed hypocrite rule my thought? Such men were called infidels. The priest said, and the king said, where is this spirit of investigation to stop? They said then and they say now, that it is dangerous for man to be free. I deny it. Out

on the intellectual sea there is room enough for every sail. In the intellectual air there is space enough for every wing.

The man who does not do his own thinking is a slave, and is a traitor to himself and to his fellowmen.

Every man should stand under the blue and stars, under the infinite flag of nature, the peer of every other man.

Standing in the presence of the Unknown, all have the same right to think, and all are equally interested in the great questions of origin and destiny. All I claim, all I plead for, is liberty of thought and expression. That is all. I do not pretend to tell what is absolutely true, but what I think is true. I do not pretend to tell all the truth.

I do not claim that I have floated level with the heights of thought, or that I have descended to the very depths of things. I simply claim that what ideas I have, I have a right to express; and that any man who denies that right to me is an intellectual thief and robber. That is all.

Take those chains from the human soul. Break those fetters. If I have no right to think, why have I a brain? If I have no such right, have three or four men, or any number, who may get together, and sign a creed, and build a house, and put a steeple upon it, and a bell in it have they the right to think? The good men, the good women are tired of the whip and lash in the realm of thought. They remember the chain and fagot with a shudder. They are free, and they give liberty to others. Whoever claims any right that he is unwilling to accord to his fellow-men is dishonest and infamous.

In the good old times, our fathers had the idea that they could make people believe to suit them. Our ancestors, in the ages that are gone, really believed that by force you could convince a man. You cannot change the conclusion of the brain by torture; nor by social ostracism. But I will tell you what you can do by these, and what you have done. You can make hypocrites by the million. You can make a man say that he has changed his mind; but he remains of the same opinion still.

Put fetters all over him; crush his feet in iron boots; stretch him to the last gasp upon the holy rack; burn him, if you please, but his ashes will be of the same opinion still.

Our fathers in the good old times - and the best thing I can say about them is, that they have passed away - had an idea that they could force men to think their way. That idea is still prevalent in many parts, even of this country. Even in our

day some extremely religious people say, "We will not trade with that man; we will not vote for him; we will not hire him if he is a lawyer; we will die before we will take his medicine if he is a doctor; we will not invite him to dinner; we will socially ostracize him; he must come to our church; he must believe our doctrines; he must worship our god or we will not in any way contribute to his support."

In the old times of which I have spoken, they desired to make all men think exactly alike. All the mechanical ingenuity of the world cannot make two clocks run exactly alike, and how are you going to make hundreds of millions of people, differing in brain and disposition, in education and aspiration, in conditions and surroundings, each clad in a living robe of passionate flesh - how are you going to make them think and feel alike? If there is an infinite god, one who made us, and wishes us to think alike, why did he give a spoonful of brains to one, and a magnificent intellectual development to another? Why is it that we have all degrees of intelligence, from orthodoxy to genius, if it was intended that all should think and feel alike?

I used to read in books how our fathers persecuted mankind. But I never appreciated it. I read it, but it did not burn itself into my soul. I did not really appreciate the infamies that have been committed in the name of religion, until I saw the iron arguments that Christians used. I saw the Thumbscrew - two little pieces of iron, armed on the inner surfaces with protuberances, to prevent their slipping; through each end a screw uniting the two pieces. And when some man denied the efficacy of baptism, or may be said, "I do not believe that a fish ever swallowed a man to keep him from drowning," then they put his thumb between these pieces of iron and in the name of love and universal forgiveness, began to screw these pieces together. When this was done most men said, "I will recant." Probably I should have done the same. Probably I would have said: "Stop; I will admit anything that you wish; I will admit that there is one god or a million, one hell or a billion; suit yourselves; but stop."

But there was now and then a man who would not swerve the breadth of a hair. There was now and then some sublime heart, willing to die for an intellectual conviction. Had it not been for such men, we would be savages to-night. Had it not been for a few brave, heroic souls in every age, we would have been cannibals, with pictures of wild beasts tattooed upon our flesh, dancing around some dried snake fetish.

Let us thank every good and noble man who stood so grandly, so proudly, in spite of opposition, of hatred and death, for what he believed to be the truth.

Heroism did not excite the respect of our fathers. The man who would not recant was not forgiven. They screwed the thumbscrews down to the last pang, and then threw their victim into some dungeon, where, in the throbbing silence and darkness, he might suffer the agonies of the fabled damned. This was done in the name of love in the name of mercy - in the name of the compassionate Christ.

I saw, too, what they called the Collar of Torture. Imagine a circle of iron, and on the inside a hundred points almost as sharp as needles. This argument was fastened about the throat of the sufferer. Then he could not walk, nor sit down, nor stir without the neck being punctured by these points. In a little while the throat would begin to swell, and suffocation would end the agonies of that man. This man, it may be, had committed the crime of saying, with tears upon his cheeks, "I do not believe that God, the father of us all, will damn to eternal perdition any of the children of men."

I saw another instrument, called the Scavenger's Daughter. Think of a pair of shears with handles, not only where they now are, but at the points as well, and just above the pivot that unites the blades, a circle of iron. In the upper handles the hands would be placed; in the lower, the feet; and through the iron ring, at the centre, the head of the victim would be forced. In this condition, he would be thrown prone upon the earth, and the strain upon the muscles produced such agony that insanity would in pity end his pain.

This was done by gentlemen who said: "Whosoever smites thee upon one cheek turn to him the other also."

I saw the Rack. This was a box like the bed of a wagon, with a windlass at each end, with levers, and ratchets to prevent slipping; over each wind lass went chains; some were fastened to the ankles of the sufferer; others to his wrists. And then priests, clergymen, divines, saints, began turning these windlasses, and kept turning, until the ankles, the knees, the hips, the shoulders, the elbows, the wrists of the victim were all dislocated, and the sufferer was wet with the sweat of agony. And they had standing by a physician to feel his pulse. What for? To save his life? Yes. In mercy? No; simply that they might rack him once again.

This was done, remember, in the name of civilization; in the name of law and order; in the name of mercy; in the name of religion; in the name of the most merciful Christ.

Sometimes, when I read and think about these frightful things, it seems to me that I have suffered all these horrors myself. It seems sometimes, as though I had stood upon the shore of exile and gazed with tearful eyes toward home and

native land; as though my nails had been torn from my hands, and into the bleeding quick needles had been thrust; as though my feet had been crushed in iron boots; as though I had been chained in the cell of the Inquisition and listened with dying ears for the coming footsteps of release; as though I had stood upon the scaffold and had seen the glittering axe fall upon me; as though I had been upon the rack and had seen, bending above me, the white faces of hypocrite priests; as though I had been taken from my fireside, from my wife and children, taken to the public square, chained; as though fagots had been piled about me; as though the flames had climbed around my limbs and scorched my eyes to blindness, and as though my ashes had been scattered to the four winds, by all the countless hands of hate. And when I so feel, I swear that while I live I will do what little I can to preserve and to augment the liberties of man, woman, and child.

It is a question of justice, of mercy, of honesty, of intellectual development. If there is a man in the world who is not willing to give to every human being every right he claims for himself, he is just so much nearer a barbarian than I am. It is a question of honesty. The man who is not willing to give to every other the same intellectual rights he claims for himself, is dishonest, selfish, and brutal.

It is a question of intellectual development. Whoever holds another man responsible for his honest thought, has a deformed and distorted brain. It is a question of intellectual development.

A little while ago I saw models of nearly every thing that man has made. I saw models of all the water craft, from the rude dug-out in which floated a naked savage one of our ancestors a naked savage, — with teeth two inches in length, with a spoonful of brains in the back of his head I saw models of all the water craft of the world, from that dug-out up to a man-of-war, that carries a hundred guns and miles of canvas from that dug-out to the steamship that turns its brave prow from the port of New York, with a compass like a con science, crossing three thousand miles of billows without missing a throb or beat of its mighty iron heart.

I saw at the same time the weapons that man has made, from a club, such as was grasped by that same savage, when he crawled from his den in the ground and hunted a snake for his dinner; from that club to the boomerang, to the sword, to the cross-bow, to the blunderbuss, to the flint-lock, to the cap-lock, to the needle-gun, up to a cannon cast by Krupp, capable of hurling a ball weighing two thousand pounds through eighteen inches of solid steel.

I saw, too, the armor from the shell of a turtle, that one of our brave ancestors lashed upon his breast when he went to fight for his country; the skin of a

porcupine, dried with the quills on, which this same savage pulled over his orthodox head, up to the shirts of mail, that were worn in the Middle Ages, that laughed at the edge of the sword and defied the point of the spear; up to a monitor clad in complete steel.

I saw at the same time, their musical instruments, from the tom-tom that is, a hoop with a couple of strings of raw hide drawn across it from that tom-tom, up to the instruments we have to-day, that make the common air blossom with melody.

I saw, too, their paintings, from a daub of yellow mud, to the great works which now adorn the galleries of the world. I saw also their sculpture, from the rude god with four legs, a half dozen arms, several noses, and two or three rows of ears, and one little, contemptible, brainless head, up to the figures of to-day - to the marbles that genius has clad in such a personality that it seems almost impudent to touch them without an introduction.

I saw their books - books written upon skins of wild beasts - upon shoulder blades of sheep - books written upon leaves, upon bark, up to the splendid volumes that enrich the libraries of our day. When I speak of libraries, I think of the remark of Plato: "A house that has a library in it has a soul."

I saw their implements of agriculture, from a crooked stick that was attached to the horn of an ox by some twisted straw, to the agricultural implements of this generation, that make it possible for a man to cultivate the soil without being an ignoramus.

While looking upon these things I was forced to say that man advanced only as he mingled his thought with his labor, — only as he got into partnership with the forces of nature, — only as he learned to take advantage of his surroundings — only as he freed himself from the bondage of fear, — only as he depended upon himself - only as he lost confidence in the gods.

I saw at the same time a row of human skulls, from the lowest skull that has been found, — the Neanderthal skull skulls from Central Africa, skulls from the Bushmen of Australia - skulls from the farthest isles of the Pacific sea — up to the best skulls of the last generation; — and I noticed that there was the same difference between those skulls that there was between the *products* of those skulls, and I said to myself, "After all, it is a simple question of intellectual development." There was the same difference between those skulls, the lowest and highest skulls, that there was between the dug out and the man-of-war and the steamship, between the club and the Krupp gun, between the yellow daub and the landscape, between the tom-tom and an opera by Verdi.

The first and lowest skull in this row was the den in which crawled the base and meaner instincts of mankind, and the last was a temple in which dwelt joy, liberty, and love.

It is all a question of brain, of intellectual development.

If we are nearer free than were our fathers, it is because we have better heads upon the average, and more brains in them.

Now, I ask you to be honest with me. It makes no difference to you what I believe, nor what I wish to prove. I simply ask you to be honest. Divest your minds, for a moment at least, of all religious prejudice. Act, for a few moments, as though you were men and women.

Suppose the king, if there was one, and the priest, if there was one, at the time this gentleman floated in the dug-out, and charmed his ears with the music of the tom-tom, had said: "That dug-out is the best boat that ever can be built by man ; the pattern of that came from on high, from the great god of storm and flood, and any man who says that he can improve it by putting a mast in it, with a sail upon it, is an infidel, and shall be burned at the stake;" what, in your judgment - honor bright - would have been the effect upon the circumnavigation of the globe?

Suppose the king, if there was one, and the priest, if there was one — and I presume there was a priest, because it was a very ignorant age suppose this king and priest had said: "That tom-tom is the most beautiful instrument of music of which any man can conceive; that is the kind of music they have in heaven; an angel sitting upon the edge of a fleecy cloud, golden in the setting sun, playing upon that tom-tom, became so enraptured, so entranced with her own music, that in a kind of ecstasy she dropped it - that is how we obtained it; and any man who says that it can be improved by putting a back and front to it, and four strings, and a bridge, and getting a bow of hair with rosin, is a blaspheming wretch, and shall die the death," — I ask you, what effect would that have had upon music? If that course had been pursued, would the human ears, in your judgment, ever have been enriched with the divine symphonies of Beethoven?

Suppose the king, if there was one, and the priest, had said: "That crooked stick is the best plow that can be invented: the pattern of that plow was given to a pious farmer in a holy dream, and that twisted straw is the *ne plus ultra* of all twisted things, and any man who says he can make an improvement upon that plow, is an atheist;" what, in your judgment, would have been the effect upon the science of agriculture?

But the people said, and the king and priest said: "We want better weapons with which to kill our fellow-Christians; we want better plows, better music, better paintings, and whoever will give us better weapons, and better music, better houses to live in, better clothes, we will robe him in wealth, and crown him with honor." Every incentive was held out to every human being to improve these things. That is the reason the club has been changed to a cannon, the dug-out to a steamship, the daub to a painting; that is the reason that the piece of rough and broken stone finally became a glorified statue.

You must not, however, forget that the gentleman in the dug-out, the gentleman who was enraptured with the music of the tom-tom, and cultivated his land with a crooked stick, had a religion of his own. That gentleman in the dug out was orthodox. He was never troubled with doubts. He lived and died settled in his mind. He believed in hell; and he thought he would be far happier in heaven, if he could just lean over and see certain people who expressed doubts as to the truth of his creed, gently but everlastingly broiled and burned.

It is a very sad and unhappy fact that this man has had a great many intellectual descendants. It is also an unhappy fact in nature, that the ignorant multiply much faster than the intellectual. This fellow in the dug-out believed in a personal devil. His devil had a cloven hoof, a long tail, armed with a fiery dart; and his devil breathed brimstone. This devil was at least the equal of God; not quite so stout but a little shrewder. And do you know there has not been a patentable improvement made upon that devil for six thousand years.

This gentleman in the dug-out believed that God was a tyrant; that he would eternally damn the man who lived in accordance with his highest and grandest ideal. He believed that the earth was flat. He believed in a literal, burning, seething hell of fire and sulphur. He had also his idea of politics; and his doctrine was, might makes right. And it will take thousands of years before the world will reverse this doctrine, and believingly say, "Right makes might."

All I ask is the same privilege to improve upon that gentleman's theology as upon his musical instrument; the same right to improve upon his politics as upon his dug-out. That is all. I ask for the human soul the same liberty in every direction. That is the only crime I have committed. I say, let us think. Let each one express his thought. Let us become investigators, not followers, not cringers and crawlers. If there is in heaven an infinite being, he never will be satisfied with the worship of cowards and hypocrites. Honest unbelief, honest infidelity, honest atheism, will be a perfume in heaven when pious hypocrisy, no matter how religious it may be outwardly, will be a stench.

This is my doctrine: Give every other human being every right you claim for yourself. Keep your mind open to the influences of nature. Receive new thoughts with hospitality. Let us advance.

The religionist of to-day wants the ship of his soul to lie at the wharf of orthodoxy and rot in the sun. He delights to hear the sails of old opinions flap against the masts of old creeds. He loves to see the joints and the sides open and gape in the sun, and it is a kind of bliss for him to repeat again and again: "Do not disturb my opinions. Do not unsettle my mind; I have it all made up, and I want no infidelity. Let me go backward rather than forward."

As far as I am concerned I wish to be out on the high seas. I wish to take my chances with wind, and wave, and star. And I had rather go down in the glory and grandeur of the storm, than to rot in any orthodox harbor whatever.

After all, we are improving from age to age. The most orthodox people in this country two hundred years ago would have been burned for the crime of heresy. The ministers who denounce me for expressing my thought would have been in the Inquisition themselves. Where once burned and blazed the bivouac fires of the army of progress, now glow the altars of the church. The religionists of our time are occupying about the same ground occupied by heretics and infidels of one hundred years ago. The church has advanced in spite, as it were, of itself. It has followed the army of progress protesting and denouncing, and had to keep within protesting and denouncing distance. If the church had not made great progress I could not express my thoughts.

Man, however, has advanced just exactly in the proportion with which he has mingled his thought with his labor. The sailor, without control of the wind and wave, knowing nothing or very little of the mysterious currents and pulses of the sea, is superstitious. So also is the agriculturist, whose prosperity depends upon something he cannot control. But the mechanic, when a wheel refuses to turn, never thinks of dropping on his knees and asking the assistance of some divine power. He knows there is a reason. He knows that some thing is too large or too small ; that there is something wrong with his machine ; and he goes to work and he makes it larger or smaller, here or there, until the wheel will turn. Now, just in proportion as man gets away from being, as it were, the slave of his surroundings, the serf of the elements, of the heat, the frost, the snow, and the lightning, just to the extent that he has gotten control of his own destiny, just to the extent that he has triumphed over the obstacles of nature, he has advanced physically and intellectually. As man develops, he places a greater value upon his own rights. Liberty becomes a grander and diviner thing. As he values his own rights, he begins to value the rights of others. And when all men give to all others all the rights they claim for them selves, this world will be civilized.

A few years ago the people were afraid to question the king, afraid to question the priest, afraid to investigate a creed, afraid to deny a book, afraid to denounce a dogma, afraid to reason, afraid to think. Before wealth they bowed to the very earth, and in the presence of titles they became abject. All this is slowly but surely changing. We no longer bow to men simply because they are rich. Our fathers worshiped the golden calf. The worst you can say of an American now is, he worships the gold of the calf. Even the calf is beginning to see this distinction.

It no longer satisfies the ambition of a great man to be king or emperor. The last Napoleon was not satisfied with being the emperor of the French. He was not satisfied with having a circlet of gold about his head. He wanted some evidence that he had something of value within his head. So he wrote the life of Julius Caesar, that he might become a member of the French Academy. The emperors, the kings, the popes, no longer tower above their fellows. Compare King William with the philosopher Haeckel. The king is one of the anointed by the most high, as they claim one upon whose head has been poured the divine petroleum of authority. Compare this king with Haeckel, who towers an intellectual colossus above the crowned mediocrity. Compare George Eliot with Queen Victoria. The Queen is clothed in garments given her by blind fortune and unreasoning chance, while George Eliot wears robes of glory woven in the loom of her own genius.

The world is beginning to pay homage to intellect, to genius, to heart.

We have advanced. We have reaped the benefit of every sublime and heroic self-sacrifice, of every divine and brave act; and we should endeavor to hand the torch to the next generation, having added a little to the intensity and glory of the flame.

When I think of how much this world has suffered; when I think of how long our fathers were slaves, of how they cringed and crawled at the foot of the throne, and in the dust of the altar, of how they abased themselves, of how abjectly they stood in the presence of superstition robed and crowned, I am amazed.

This world has not been fit for a man to live in fifty years. It was not until the year 1808 that Great Britain abolished the slave trade. Up to that time her judges, sitting upon the bench in the name of justice, her priests, occupying her pulpits, in the name of universal love, owned stock in the slave ships, and luxuriated upon the profits of piracy and murder. It was not until the same year that the United States of America abolished the slave trade between this and other countries, but carefully preserved it as between the States. It was not until the 28th day of August, 1833, that Great Britain abolished human slavery in her colonies; and it was not until the 1st day of January, 1863, that Abraham Lincoln,

sustained by the sub lime and heroic North, rendered our flag pure as the sky in which it floats.

Abraham Lincoln was, in my judgment, in many respects, the grandest man ever President of the United States. Upon his monument these words should be written: "Here sleeps the only man in the history of the world, who, having been clothed with almost absolute power, never abused it, except upon the side of mercy."

Think how long we clung to the institution of human slavery, how long lashes upon the naked back were a legal tender for labor performed. Think of it. The pulpit of this country deliberately and willingly, for a hundred years, turned the cross of Christ into a whipping post.

With every drop of my blood I hate and execrate every form of tyranny, every form of slavery. I hate dictation. I love liberty.

What do I mean by liberty? By physical liberty I mean the right to do anything which does not interfere with the happiness of another. By intellectual liberty I mean the right to think right and the right to think wrong. Thought is the means by which we endeavor to arrive at truth. If we know the truth already, we need not think. All that can be required is honesty of purpose. You ask my opinion about anything; I examine it honestly, and when my mind is made up, what should I tell you? Should I tell you my real thought? What should I do? There is a book put in my hands. I am told this is the Koran; it was written by inspiration. I read it, and when I get through, suppose that I think in my heart and in my brain, that it is utterly untrue, and you then ask me, what do you think? Now, admitting that I live in Turkey, and have no chance to get any office unless I am on the side of the Koran, what should I say? Should I make a clean breast and say, that upon my honor I do not believe it? What would you think then of my fellow citizens if they said: "That man is dangerous, he is dishonest."

Suppose I read the book called the Bible, and when I get through I make up my mind that it was written by men. A minister asks me, "Did you read the Bible?" I answer, that I did. "Do you think it divinely inspired?" "What should I reply? Should I say to myself, "If I deny the inspiration of the Scriptures, the people will never clothe me with power." What ought I to answer? Ought I not to say like a man: "I have read it; I do not believe it." Should I not give the real transcript of my mind? Or should I turn hypocrite and pretend what I do not feel, and hate myself forever after for being a cringing coward. For my part I would rather a man would tell me what he honestly thinks. I would rather he would preserve his manhood. I had a thousand times rather be a manly unbeliever than an unmanly believer. And if there is a judgment day, a time

when all will stand before some supreme being, I believe I will stand higher, and stand a better chance of getting my case decided in my favor, than any man sneaking through life pretending to believe what he does not.

I have made up my mind to say my say. I shall do it kindly, distinctly; but I am going to do it. I know there are thousands of men who substantially agree with me, but who are not in a condition to express their thoughts. They are poor; they are in business; and they know that should they tell their honest thought, persons will refuse to patronize them to trade with them; they wish to get bread for their little children; they wish to take care of their wives; they wish to have homes and the comforts of life. Every such person is a certificate of the meanness of the community in which he resides. And yet I do not blame these people for not expressing their thought. I say to them: "Keep your ideas to yourselves; feed and clothe the ones you love; I will do your talking for you. The church can not touch, can not crush, can not starve, cannot stop or stay me; I will express your thoughts."

As an excuse for tyranny, as a justification of slavery, the church has taught that man is totally depraved. Of the truth of that doctrine, the church has furnished the only evidence there is. The truth is, we are both good and bad. The worst are capable of some good deeds, and the best are capable of bad. The lowest can rise, and the highest may fall. That mankind can be divided into two great classes, sinners and saints, is an utter falsehood. In times of great disaster, called it may be, by the despairing voices of women, men, denounced by the church as totally depraved, rush to death as to a festival. By such men, deeds are done so filled with self-sacrifice and generous daring, that millions pay to them the tribute, not only of admiration, but of tears. Above all creeds, above all religions, after all, is that divine thing, Humanity; and now and then in shipwreck on the wide, wild sea, or 'mid the rocks and breakers of some cruel shore, or where the serpents of flame writhe and hiss, some glorious heart, some chivalric soul does a deed that glitters like a star, and gives the lie to all the dogmas of superstition. All these frightful doctrines have been used to degrade and to enslave mankind.

Away, forever away with the creeds and books and forms and laws and religions that take from the soul liberty and reason. Down with the idea that thought is dangerous! Perish the infamous doctrine that man can have property in man. Let us resent with indignation every effort to put a chain upon our minds. If there is no God, certainly we should not bow and cringe and crawl. If there is a God, there should be no slaves.

LIBERTY OF WOMAN

Women have been the slaves of slaves; and in my judgment it took millions of ages for woman to come from the condition of abject slavery up to the institution of marriage. Let me say right here, that I regard marriage as the holiest institution among men. Without the fireside there is no human advancement; without the family relation there is no life worth living. Every good government is made up of good families. The unit of good government is the family, and anything that tends to destroy the family is perfectly devilish and infamous. I believe in marriage, and I hold in utter contempt the opinions of those long-haired men and short-haired women who denounce the institution of marriage.

The grandest ambition that any man can possibly have, is to so live, and so improve himself in heart and brain, as to be worthy of the love of some splendid woman; and the grandest ambition, of any girl is to make herself worthy of the love and adoration of some magnificent man. That is my idea. There is no success in life without love and marriage. You had better be the emperor of one loving and tender heart, and she the empress of yours, than to be king of the world. The man who has really won the love of one good woman in this world, I do not care if he dies in the ditch a beggar, his life has been a success.

I say it took millions of years to come from the condition of abject slavery up to the condition of marriage. Ladies, the ornaments you wear upon your persons to-night are but the souvenirs of your mother's bondage. The chains around your necks, and the bracelets clasped upon your white arms by the thrilled hand of love, have been changed by the wand of civilization from iron to shining, glittering gold.

But nearly every religion has accounted for all the devilment in this world by the crime of woman. What a gallant thing that is! And if it is true, I had rather live with the woman I love in a world full of trouble, than to live in heaven with nobody but men.

I read in a book — and I will say now that I cannot give the exact language, as my memory does not retain the words, but I can give the substance — I read in a book that the Supreme Being concluded to make a world and one man; that he took some nothing and made a world and one man, and put this man in a garden. In a little while he noticed that the man got lonesome; that he wandered around as if he was waiting for a train. There was nothing to interest him; no news; no papers; no politics; no policy; and, as the devil had not yet made his appearance, there was no chance for reconciliation; not even for civil service reform. Well, he wandered about the garden in this condition, until finally the Supreme Being made up his mind to make him a companion.

Having used up the entire nothing he originally took in making the world and one man, he had to take a part of the man to start a woman with. So he caused a sleep to fall on this man now under stand me, I do not say this story is true. After the sleep fell upon this man, - the Supreme Being took a rib, or as the French would call it, a cutlet, out of this man, and from that he made a woman. And considering the amount of raw material used, I look upon it as the most successful job ever performed. Well, after he got the woman done, she was brought to the man; not to see how she liked him, but to see how he liked her. He liked her, and they started housekeeping; and they were told of certain things they might do and of one thing they could not do - and of course they did it. I would have done it in fifteen minutes, and I know it. There wouldn't have been an apple on that tree half an hour from date, and the limbs would have been full of clubs. And then they were turned out of the park and extra policemen were put on to keep them from getting back.

Devilment commenced. The mumps, and the measles, and the whooping-cough, and the scarlet fever started in their race for man. They began to have the toothache, roses began to have thorns, snakes began to have poisoned teeth, and people began to divide about religion and politics, and the world has been full of trouble from that day to this.

Nearly all of the religions of this world account for the existence of evil by such a story as that!

I read in another book what appeared to be an account of the same transaction. It was written about four thousand years before the other. All commentators agree that the one that was written last was the original, and that the one that was written first was copied from the one that was written last. But I would advise you all not to allow your creed to be disturbed by a little matter of four or five thousand years. In this other story, Brahma made up his mind to make the world and a man and woman. He made the world, and he made the man and then the woman, and put them on the island of Ceylon. According to the account it was the most beautiful island of which man can conceive. Such birds, such songs, such flowers and such verdure! And the branches of the trees were so arranged that when the wind swept through them every tree was a thousand Æolian harps.

Brahma, when he put them there, said: "Let them have a period of courtship, for it is my desire and will that true love should forever precede marriage." When I read that, it was so much more beautiful and lofty than the other, that I said to myself, "If either one of these stories ever turns out to be true, I hope it will be this one."

Then they had their courtship, with the nightingale singing, and the stars shining, and the flowers blooming, and they fell in love. Imagine that courtship! No prospective fathers or mothers-in-law; no prying and gossiping neighbors; nobody to say, "Young man, how do you expect to support her?" Nothing of that kind. They were married by the Supreme Brahma, and he said to them: "Remain here; you must never leave this island." Well, after a little while the man - and his name was Adami, and the woman's name was Heva said to Heva: "I believe I'll look about a little." He went to the northern extremity of the island where there was a little narrow neck of land connecting it with the mainland, and the devil, who is always playing pranks with us, produced a mirage, and when he looked over to the mainland, such hills and vales, such dells and dales, such mountains crowned with snow, such cataracts clad in bows of glory did he see there, that he went back and told Heva: "The country over there is a thousand times better than this; let us migrate." She, like every other woman that ever lived, said: "Let well enough alone; we have all we want; let us stay here." But he said "No, let us go;" so she followed him, and when they came to this narrow neck of land, he took her on his back like a gentleman, and carried her over. But the moment they got over they heard a crash, and looking back, discovered that this narrow neck of land had fallen into the sea. The mirage had disappeared, and there were naught but rocks and sand; and then the Supreme Brahma cursed them both to the lowest hell.

Then it was that the man spoke, — and I have liked him ever since for it - "Curse me, but curse not her, it was not her fault, it was mine."

That's the kind of man to start a world with.

The Supreme Brahma said: "I will save her, but not thee." And then she spoke out of her fullness of love, out of a heart in which there was love enough to make all her daughters rich in holy affection, and said: "If thou wilt not spare him, spare neither me; I do not wish to live without him; I love him." Then the Supreme Brahma said - and I have liked him ever since I read it - "I will spare you both and watch over you and your children forever."

Honor bright, is not that the better and grander story?

And from that same book I want to show you what ideas some of these miserable heathen had; the heathen we are trying to convert. We send missionaries over yonder to convert heathen there, and we send soldiers out on the plains to kill heathen here. If we can convert the heathen, why not convert those nearest home? Why not convert those we can get at? Why not convert those who have the immense advantage of the example of the average pioneer? But to show you the men we are trying to convert: In this book it says: "Man is

strength, woman is beauty; man is courage, woman is love. When the one man loves the one woman and the one woman loves the one man, the very angels leave heaven and come and sit in that house and sing for joy."

They are the men we are converting. Think of it! I tell you, when I read these things, I say that love is not of any country; nobility does not belong exclusively to any race, and through all the ages, there have been a few great and tender souls blossoming in love and pity.

In my judgment, the woman is the equal of the man. She has all the rights I have and one more, and that is the right to be protected. That is my doctrine. You are married; try and make the woman you love happy. Whoever marries simply for himself will make a mistake; but whoever loves a woman so well that he says "I will make her happy," makes no mistake. And so with the woman who says, "I will make him happy." There is only one way to be happy, and that is to make somebody else so, and you cannot be happy by going cross lots; you have got to go the regular turnpike road.

If there is any man I detest, it is the man who thinks he is the head of a family the man who thinks he is "boss!" The fellow in the dug-out used that word "boss;" that was one of his favorite expressions.

Imagine a young man and a young woman courting, walking out in the moonlight, and the nightingale singing a song of pain and love, as though the thorn touched her heart imagine them stopping there in the moonlight and starlight and song, and saying, "Now, here, let us settle who is boss!" I tell you it is an infamous word and an infamous feeling I abhor a man who is "boss," who is going to govern in his family, and when he speaks orders all the rest to be still as some mighty idea is about to be launched from his mouth. Do you know I dislike this man unspeakably?

I hate above all things a cross man. What right has he to murder the sunshine of a day? What right has he to assassinate the joy of life? When you go home you ought to go like a ray of light - so that it will, even in the night, burst out of the doors and windows and illuminate the darkness. Some men think their mighty brains have been in turmoil; they have been thinking about whom will be alderman from the fifth ward; they have been thinking about politics; great and mighty questions have been engaging their minds; they have bought calico at five cents or six, and want to sell it for seven. Think of the intellectual strain that must have been upon that man, and when he gets home everybody else in the house must look out for his comfort. A woman who has only taken care of five or six children, and one or two of them sick, has been nursing them and singing to them, and trying to make one yard of cloth do the work of two, she, of course, is

fresh and fine and ready to wait upon this gentleman the head of the family - the boss!

Do you know another thing? I despise a stingy man. I do not see how it is possible for a man to die worth fifty million of dollars, or ten million of dollars, in a city full of want, when he meets almost every day the withered hand of beggary and the white lips of famine. How a man can withstand all that, and hold in the clutch of his greed twenty or thirty million of dollars, is past my comprehension. I do not see how he can do it. I should not think he could do it any more than he could keep a pile of lumber on the beach, where hundreds and thousands of men were drowning in the sea.

Do you know that I have known men who would trust their wives with their hearts and their honor but not with their pocketbook; not with a dollar. When I see a man of that kind, I always think he knows which of these articles is the most valuable. Think of making your wife a beggar! Think of her having to ask you every day for a dollar, or for two dollars or fifty cents! "What did you do with that dollar I gave you last week?" Think of having a wife that is afraid of you! What kind of children do you expect to have with a beggar and a coward for their mother? Oh, I tell you if you have but a dollar in the world, and you have got to spend it, spend it like a king; spend it as though it were a dry leaf and you the owner of unbounded forests! That's the way to spend it! I had rather be a beggar and spend my last dollar like a king, than be a king and spend my money like a beggar! If it has got to go, let it go!

Get the best you can for your family try to look as well as you can yourself. When you used to go courting, how elegantly you looked! Ah, your eye was bright, your step was light, and you looked like a prince. Do you know that it is insufferable egotism in you to suppose a woman is going to love you always looking as slovenly as you can! Think of it! Any good woman on earth will be true to you forever when you do your level best.

Some people tell me, "Your doctrine about loving, and wives, and all that, is splendid for the rich, but it won't do for the poor." I tell you to-night there is more love in the homes of the poor than in the palaces of the rich. The meanest hut with love in it is a palace fit for the gods, and a palace without love is a den only fit for wild beasts. That is my doctrine! You cannot be so poor that you cannot help somebody. Good nature is the cheapest commodity in the world; and love is the only thing that will pay ten percent, to borrower and lender both. Do not tell me that you have got to be rich! We have a false standard of greatness in the United States. We think here that a man must be great, that he must be notorious; that he must be extremely wealthy, or that his name must be upon the

putrid lips of rumor. It is all a mistake. It is not necessary to be rich or to be great, or to be powerful, to be happy. The happy man is the successful man.

Happiness is the legal tender of the soul.

Joy is wealth.

A little while ago, I stood by the grave of the old Napoleon - a magnificent tomb of gilt and gold, fit almost for a dead deity and gazed upon the sarcophagus of rare and nameless marble, where rest at last the ashes of that restless man. I leaned over the balustrade and thought about the career of the greatest soldier of the modern world.

I saw him walking upon the banks of the Seine, contemplating suicide. I saw him at Toulon — I saw him putting down the mob in the streets of Paris - I saw him at the head of the army of Italy — I saw him crossing the bridge of Lodi with the tri-color in his hand — I saw him in Egypt in the shadows of the pyramids — I saw him conquer the Alps and mingle the eagles of France with the eagles of the crags. I saw him at Marengo at Ulm and Austerlitz. I saw him in Russia, where the infantry of the snow and the cavalry of the wild blast scattered his legions like winter's withered leaves. I saw him at Leipsic in defeat and disaster driven by a million bayonets back upon Paris clutched like a wild beast banished to Elba. I saw him escape and retake an empire by the force of his genius. I saw him upon the frightful field of Waterloo, where Chance and Fate combined to wreck the fortunes of their former king. And I saw him at St. Helena, with his hands crossed behind him, gazing out upon the sad and solemn sea.

I thought of the orphans and widows he had made - of the tears that had been shed for his glory, and of the only woman who ever loved him, pushed from his heart by the cold hand of ambition. And I said I would rather have been a French peasant and worn wooden shoes. I would rather have lived in a hut with a vine growing over the door, and the grapes growing purple in the kisses of the autumn sun. I would rather have been that poor peasant with my loving wife by my side, knitting as the day died out of the sky - with my children upon my knees and their arms about me - I would rather have been that man and gone down to the tongueless silence of the dreamless dust, than to have been that imperial impersonation of force and murder, known as "Napoleon the Great."

It is not necessary to be great to be happy; it is not necessary to be rich to be just and generous and to have a heart filled with divine affection. No matter whether you are rich or poor, treat your wife as though she were a splendid flower, and she will fill your life with perfume and with joy. And do you know, it is a splendid thing to think that the woman you really love will never grow old

to you. Through the wrinkles of time, through the mask of years, if you really love her, you will always see the face you loved and won. And a woman who really loves a man does not see that he grows old; he is not decrepit to her; he does not tremble; he is not old; she always sees the same gallant gentleman who won her hand and heart. I like to think of it in that way; I like to think that love is eternal. And to love in that way and then go down the hill of life together, and as you go down, hear, perhaps, the laughter of grandchildren, while the birds of joy and love sing once more in the leafless branches of the tree of age.

I believe in the fireside. I believe in the democracy of home. I believe in the republicanism of the family. I believe in liberty, equality and love.

THE LIBERTY OF CHILDREN

If women have been slaves, what shall I say of children; of the little children in alleys and sub-cellars; the little children who turn pale when they hear their fathers' footsteps; little children who run away when they only hear their names called by the lips of a mother; — little children the children of poverty, the children of crime, the children of brutality, wherever they are — flotsam and jetsam upon the wild, mad sea of life my heart goes out to them, one and all.

I tell you the children have the same rights that we have, and we ought to treat them as though they were human beings. They should be reared with love, with kindness, with tenderness, and not with brutality. That is my idea of children.

When your little child tells a lie, do not rush at him as though the world were about to go into bankruptcy. Be honest with him. A tyrant father will have liars for his children; do you know that? A lie is born of tyranny upon the one hand and weakness upon the other, and when you rush at a poor little boy with a club in your hand, of course he lies.

I thank thee, Mother Nature, that thou hast put ingenuity enough in the brain of a child, when attacked by a brutal parent, to throw up a little breastwork in the shape of a lie.

When one of your children tells a lie, be honest with him; tell him that you have told hundreds of them yourself. Tell him it is not the best way; that you have tried it. Tell him as the man did in Maine when his boy left home: "John, honesty is the best policy; I have tried both." Be honest with him. Suppose a man as much larger than you as you are larger than a child five years old, should

come at you with a liberty pole in his hand, and in a voice of thunder shout, "Who broke that plate?" There is not a solitary one of you who would not swear you never saw it, or that it was cracked when you got it. Why not be honest with these children? Just imagine a man who deals in stocks whipping his boy for putting false rumors afloat! Think of a lawyer beating his own flesh and blood for evading the truth when he makes half of his own living that way! Think of a minister punishing his child for not telling all he thinks! Just think of it!

When your child commits a wrong, take it in your arms; let it feel your heart beat against its heart; let the child know that you really and truly and sincerely love it. Yet some Christians, good Christians, when a child commits a fault, drive it from the door and say: "Never do you darken this house again." Think of that! And then these same people will get down on their knees and ask God to take care of the child 'they have driven from home. I will never ask God to take care of my children unless I am doing my level best in that same direction.

But I will tell you what I say to my children: "Go where you will; commit what crime you may; fall to what depth of degradation you may; you can never commit any crime that will shut my door, my arms, or my heart to you. As long as I live you shall have one sincere friend."

Do you know that I have seen some people who acted as though they thought that when the Savior said "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," he had a raw-hide under his mantle, and made that remark simply to get the children within striking distance?

I do not believe in the government of the lash. If any one of you ever expects to whip your children again, I want you to have a photograph taken of yourself when you are in the act, with your face red with vulgar anger, and the face of the little child, with eyes swimming in tears and the little chin dimpled with fear, like a piece of water struck by a sudden cold wind. Have the picture taken. If that little child should die, I cannot think of a sweeter way to spend an autumn afternoon than to go out to the cemetery, when the maples are clad in tender gold, and little scarlet runners are coming, like poems of regret, from the sad heart of the earth - and sit down upon the grave and look at that photograph, and think of the flesh now dust that you beat. I tell you it is wrong; it is no way to raise children! Make your home happy. Be honest with them. Divide fairly with them in everything.

Give them a little liberty and love, and you can not drive them out of your house. They will want to stay there. Make home pleasant. Let them play any game they wish. Do not be so foolish as to say: "You may roll balls on the ground, but you must not roll them on a green cloth. You may knock them with

a mallet, but you must not push them with a cue. You may play with little pieces of paper which have 'authors' written on them, but you must not have 'cards.' Think of it! "You may go to a minstrel show where people blacken themselves and imitate humanity below them, but you must not go to a theatre and see the characters created by immortal genius put upon the stage." Why? Well, I can't think of any reason in the world except "minstrel" is a word of two syllables, and "theatre" has three.

Let children have some daylight at home if you want to keep them there, and do not commence at the cradle and shout "Don't!" "Don't!" "Stop!" That is nearly all that is said to a child from the cradle until he is twenty-one years old, and when he comes of age other people begins saying "Don't!" And the church says "Don't!" and the party he belongs to says "Don't!"

I despise that way of going through this world. Let us have liberty - just a little. Call me infidel, call me atheist, call me what you will, I intend so to treat my children that they can come to my grave and truthfully say: "He who sleeps here never gave us a moment of pain. From his lips, now dust never came to us an unkind word."

People justify all kinds of tyranny toward children upon the ground that they are totally depraved. At the bottom of ages of cruelty lies this infamous doctrine of total depravity. Religion contemplates a child as a living crime - heir to an infinite curse - doomed to eternal fire.

In the olden time, they thought some days were too good for a child to enjoy himself. When I was a boy Sunday was considered altogether too holy to be happy in. Sunday used to commence then when the sun went down on Saturday night. We commenced at that time for the purpose of getting a good ready, and when the sun fell below the horizon on Saturday evening, there was a darkness fell upon the house ten thousand times deeper than that of night. Nobody said a pleasant word; nobody laughed; nobody smiled; the child that looked the sickest was regarded as the most pious. That night you could not even crack hickory nuts. If you were caught chewing gum it was only another evidence of the total depravity of the human heart. It was an exceedingly solemn night. Dyspepsia was in the very air you breathed. Everybody looked sad and mournful. I have noticed all my life that many people think they have religion when they are troubled with dyspepsia. If there could be found an absolute specific for that disease, it would be the hardest blow the church has ever received.

On Sunday morning the solemnity had simply increased. Then we went to church. The minister was in a pulpit about twenty feet high, with a little sounding-board above him, and he commenced at "firstly" and went on and on and on to about "twenty-thirdly." Then he made a few remarks by way of application; and then took a general view of the subject, and in about two hours reached the last chapter in Revelation.

In those days, no matter how cold the weather was, there was no fire in the church. It was thought to be a kind of sin to be comfortable while you were thanking God. The first church that ever had a stove in it in New England, divided on that account. So the first church, in which they sang by note, was torn in fragments.

After the sermon we had an intermission. Then came the catechism with the chief end of man. We went through with that. We sat in a row with our feet coming in about six inches of the floor. The minister asked us if we knew that we all deserved to go to hell, and we all answered "Yes." Then we were asked if we would be willing to go to hell if it was God's will, and every little liar shouted "Yes." Then the same sermon was preached once more, commencing at the other end and going back. After that, we started for home, sad and solemn overpowered with the wisdom displayed in the scheme of the atonement. When we got home, if we had been good boys, and the weather was warm, sometimes they would take us out to the graveyard to cheer us up a little. It did cheer me. When I looked at the sunken tombs and the leaning stones, and read the half-effaced inscriptions through the moss of silence and forgetfulness, it was a great comfort. The reflection came to my mind that the observance of the Sabbath could not last always. Sometimes they would sing that beautiful hymn in which occur these cheerful lines:

"Where congregations ne'er break up,
And Sabbaths never end."

These lines, I think, prejudiced me a little against even heaven. Then we had good books that we read on Sundays by way of keeping us happy and contented. There were Milners' "History of the Waldenses," Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted," Yahn's "Archaeology of the Jews," and Jenkyns' "On the Atonement." I used to read Jenkyns' "On the Atonement." I have often thought that an atonement would have to be exceedingly broad in its provisions to cover the case of a man who would write a book like that for a boy.

But at last the Sunday wore away, and the moment the sun went down we were free. Between three and four o'clock we would go out to see how the sun was coming on. Sometimes it seemed to me that it was stopping from pure meanness. But finally it went down. It had to. And when the last rim of light sank below the horizon, off would go our caps, and we would give three cheers for liberty once more.

Sabbaths used to be prisons. Every Sunday was a Bastile. Every Christian was a kind of turn key, and every child was a prisoner, — a convict.

In that dungeon, a smile was a crime.

It was thought wrong for a child to laugh upon this holy day. Think of that! A little child would go out into the garden, and there would be a tree laden with blossoms, and the little fellow would lean against it, and there would be a bird on one of the boughs, singing and swinging, and thinking about four little speckled eggs, warmed by the breast of its mate, singing and swinging, and the music in happy waves rippling out of its tiny throat, and the flowers blossoming, the air filled with perfume and the great white clouds floating in the sky, and the little boy would lean up against that tree and think about hell and the worm that never dies.

I have heard them preach, when I sat in the pew and my feet did not touch the floor, about the final home of the unconverted. In order to impress upon the children the length of time they would probably stay if they settled in that country, the preacher would frequently give us the following illustration: "Suppose that once in a billion years a bird should come from some far-distant planet, and carry off in its little bill a grain of sand, a time would finally come when the last atom composing this earth would be carried away; and when this last atom was taken, it would not even be sun up in hell." Think of such an infamous doctrine being taught to children!

The laugh of a child will make the holiest day more sacred still. Strike with hand of fire, O weird musician, thy harp strung with Apollo's golden hair; fill the vast cathedral aisles with symphonies sweet and dim, deft toucher of the organ keys; blow, bugler, blow, until thy silver notes do touch and kiss the moonlit waves, and charm the lovers wandering 'mid the vine-clad hills. But know, your sweetest strains are discords all, compared with childhood's happy laugh the laugh that fills the eyes with light - and every heart with joy. O rippling river of laughter, thou art the blessed boundary line between the beasts and men; and every wayward wave of thine doth drown some fretful fiend of care. O Laughter, rose-lipped daughter of Joy, there are dimples enough in thy cheeks to catch and hold and glorify all the tears of grief.

And yet the minds of children have been polluted by this infamous doctrine of eternal punishment. I denounce it to-day as a doctrine, the infamy of which no language is sufficient to express.

Where did that doctrine of eternal punishment for men and women and children come from? It came from the low and beastly skull of that wretch in the dug-out. Where did he get it? It was a souvenir from the animals. The doctrine of eternal punishment was born in the glittering eyes of snakes - snakes that hung in fearful coils watching for their prey. It was born of the howl and bark and growl of wild beasts. It was born of the grin of hyenas and of the depraved chatter of unclean baboons. I despise it with every drop of my blood. Tell me there is a God in the serene heavens that will damn his children for the expression of an honest belief! More men have died in their sins, judged by your orthodox creeds, than there are leaves on all the forests in the wide world ten thousand times over. Tell me these men are in hell; that these men are in torment; that these children are in eternal pain, and that they are to be punished forever and forever! I denounce this doctrine as the most infamous of lies.

When the great ship containing the hopes and aspirations of the world, when the great ship freighted with mankind goes down in the night of death, chaos and disaster, I am willing to go down with the ship. I will not be guilty of the ineffable meanness of paddling away in some orthodox canoe. I will go down with the ship, with those who love me, and with those whom I have loved. If there is a God who will damn his children forever, I would rather go to hell than to go to heaven and keep the society of such an infamous tyrant. I make my choice now. I despise that doctrine. It has covered the cheeks of this world with tears. It has polluted the hearts of children, and poisoned the imaginations of men. It has been a constant pain, a perpetual terror to every good man and woman and child. It has filled the good with horror and with fear; but it has had no effect upon the infamous and base. It has wrung the hearts of the tender; it has furrowed the cheeks of the good. This doctrine never should be preached again. What right have you, sir, Mr. Clergyman, you, minister of the gospel, to stand at the portals of the tomb, at the vestibule of eternity, and fill the future with horror and with fear? I do not believe this doctrine: neither do you. If you did, you could not sleep one moment. Any man who believes it, and has within his breast a decent, throbbing heart, will go insane. A man who believes that doctrine and does not go insane has the heart of a snake and the conscience of a hyena.

Jonathan Edwards, the dear old soul, who, if his doctrine is true, is now in heaven rubbing his holy hands with glee, as he hears the cries of the damned, preached this doctrine; and he said: "Can the believing husband in heaven be happy with his unbelieving wife in hell? Can the believing father in heaven be

happy with his unbelieving children in hell? Can the loving wife in heaven be happy with her unbelieving husband in hell?" And he replies: "I tell you, yea. Such will be their sense of justice, that it will increase rather than diminish their bliss." There is no wild beast in the jungles of Africa whose reputation would not be tarnished by the expression of such a doctrine.

These doctrines have been taught in the name of religion, in the name of universal forgiveness, in the name of infinite love and charity. Do not, I pray you, soil the minds of your children with this dogma. Let them read for themselves; let them think for themselves.

Do not treat your children like orthodox posts to be set in a row. Treat them like trees that need light and sun and air. Be fair and honest with them; give them a chance. Recollect that their rights are equal to yours. Do not have it in your mind that you must govern them; that they must obey. Throw away forever the idea of master and slave.

In old times they used to make the children go to bed when they were not sleepy, and get up when they were sleepy. I say let them go to bed when they are sleepy, and get up when they are not sleepy.

But you say, this doctrine will do for the rich but not for the poor. Well, if the poor have to waken their children early in the morning it is as easy to wake them with a kiss as with a blow. Give your children freedom; let them preserve their individuality. Let your children eat what they desire, and commence at the end of a dinner they like. That is their business and not yours. They know what they wish to eat. If they are given their liberty from the first, they know what they want better than any doctor in the world can prescribe. Do you know that all the improvement that has ever been made in the practice of medicine has been made by the recklessness of patients and not by the doctors? For thousands and thousands of years the doctors would not let a man suffering from fever have a drop of water. Water they looked upon as poison. But every now and then some man got reckless and said, "I had rather die than not to slake my thirst." Then he would drink two or three quarts of water and get well. And when the doctor was told of what the patient had done, he expressed great surprise that he was still alive, and complimented his constitution upon being able to bear such a frightful strain. The reckless men, however, kept on drinking the water, and persisted in getting well. And finally the doctors said: "In a fever, water is the very best thing you can take." So, I have more confidence in the voice of nature about such things than I have in the conclusions of the medical schools.

Let your children have freedom and they will fall into your ways; they will do substantially as you do; but if you try to make them, there is some magnificent, splendid thing in the human heart that refuses to be driven. And do you know that it is the luckiest thing that ever happened for this world, that people are that way. What would have become of the people five hundred years ago if they had followed strictly the advice of the doctors? They would have all been dead. What would the people have been, if at any age of the world they had followed implicitly the direction of the church? They would have all been idiots. It is a splendid thing that there is always some grand man who will not mind, and who will think for himself.

I believe in allowing the children to think for themselves. I believe in the democracy of the family. If in this world there is anything splendid, it is a home where all are equals.

You will remember that only a few years ago parents would tell their children to "let their victuals stop their mouths." They used to eat as though it were a religious ceremony a very solemn thing. Life should not be treated as a solemn matter. I like to see the children at table, and hear each one telling of the wonderful things he has seen and heard. I like to hear the clatter of knives and forks and spoons mingling with their happy voices. I had rather hear it than any opera that was ever put upon the boards. Let the children have liberty. Be honest and fair with them; be just; be tender and they will make you rich in love and joy.

Men are oaks, women are vines, and children are flowers.

The human race has been guilty of almost countless crimes; but I have some excuse for mankind. This world, after all, is not very well adapted to raising good people. In the first place, nearly all of it is water. It is much better adapted to fish culture than to the production of folks. Of that portion which is land not one-eighth has suitable soil and climate to produce great men and women. You cannot raise men and women of genius, without the proper soil and climate, any more than you can raise corn and wheat upon the ice fields of the Arctic sea. You must have the necessary conditions and surroundings. Man is a product; you must have the soil and food. The obstacles presented by nature must not be so great that man cannot, by reasonable industry and courage, overcome them. There is upon this world only a narrow belt of land, circling zigzag the globe, upon which you can produce men and women of talent. In the Southern Hemisphere the real climate that man needs falls mostly upon the sea, and the result is, that the southern half of our world has never produced a man or woman of great genius. In the far north there is no genius — it is too cold. In the far south there is no genius — it is too warm. There must be winter, and there must be summer. In a country where man needs no coverlet but a cloud, revolution is his normal condition. Winter is the mother of industry and

prudence. Above all, it is the mother of the family relation. Winter holds in its icy arms the husband and wife and the sweet children. If upon this earth we ever have a glimpse of heaven, it is when we pass a home in winter, at night, and through the windows, the curtains drawn aside, we see the family about the pleasant hearth; the old lady knitting; the cat playing with the yarn; the children wishing they had as many dolls or dollars or knives or somethings, as there are sparks going out to join the roaring blast; the father reading and smoking, and the clouds rising like incense from the altar of domestic joy. I never passed such a house without feeling that I had received a benediction.

Civilization, liberty, justice, charity, intellectual advancement, are all flowers that blossom in the drifted snow.

I do not know that I can better illustrate the great truth that only part of the world is adapted to the production of great men and women than by calling your attention to the difference between vegetation in valleys and upon mountains. In the valley you find the oak and elm tossing their branches defiantly to the storm, and as you advance up the mountain side the hemlock, the pine, the birch, the spruce, the fir, and finally you come to little dwarfed trees, that look like other trees seen through a telescope reversed - every limb twisted as though in pain - getting a scanty subsistence from the miserly crevices of the rocks. You go on and on, until at last the highest crag is freckled with a kind of moss, and vegetation ends. You might as well try to raise oaks and elms where the mosses grow, as to raise great men and great women where their surroundings are unfavorable. You must have the proper climate and soil.

A few years ago we were talking about the annexation of Santo Domingo to this country. I was in Washington at the time. I was opposed to it I was told that it was a most delicious climate; that the soil produced everything. But I said: "We do not want it; it is not the right kind of country in which to raise American citizens. Such a climate would debauch us. You might go there with five thousand Congregational preachers, five thousand ruling elders, five thousand professors in colleges, five thousand of the solid men of Boston and their wives; settle them all in Santo Domingo, and you will see the second generation riding upon a mule, bareback, no shoes, a grapevine bridle, hair sticking out at the top of their sombreros, with a rooster under each arm, going to a cock fight on Sunday." Such is the influence of climate.

Science, however, is gradually widening the area within which men of genius can be produced. We are conquering the north with houses, clothing, food and fuel. We are in many ways overcoming the heat of the south. If we attend to this world instead of another, we may in time cover the land with men and women of genius.

I have still another excuse. I believe that man came up from the lower animals. I do not say this as a fact. I simply say I believe it to be a fact. Upon that question I stand about eight to seven, which, for all practical purposes, is very near a certainty. When I first heard of that doctrine I did not like it. My heart was filled with sympathy for those people who have nothing to be proud of except ancestors. I thought, how terrible this will be upon the nobility of the Old World. Think of their being forced to trace their ancestry back to the duke Orang Outang, or to the princess Chimpanzee. After thinking it all over, I came to the conclusion that I liked that doctrine. I became convinced in spite of myself. I read about rudimentary bones and muscles. I was told that everybody had rudimentary muscles extending from the ear into the cheek. I asked "What are they?" I was told: "They are the remains of muscles; that they became rudimentary from lack of use; they went into bankruptcy. They are the muscles with which your ancestors used to flap their ears." I do not now so much wonder that we once had them as that we have outgrown them.

After all I had rather belong to a race that started from the skull-less vertebrates in the dim Laurentian seas, vertebrates wiggling without knowing why they wiggled, swimming without knowing where they were going, but that in some way began to develop, and began to get a little higher and a little higher in the scale of existence; that came up by degrees through millions of ages through all the animal world, through all that crawls and swims and floats and climbs and walks, and finally produced the gentleman in the dug-out ; and then from this man, getting a little grander, and each one below calling every one above him a heretic, calling every one who had made a little advance an infidel or an atheist - for in the history of this world the man who is ahead has always been called a heretic - I would rather come from a race that started from that skull-less vertebrate, and came up and up and up and finally produced Shakespeare, the man who found the human intellect dwelling in a hut, touched it with the wand of his genius and it became a palace domed and pinnacled; Shakespeare, who harvested all the fields of dramatic thought, and from whose day to this, there have been only gleaners of straw and chaff - I would rather belong to that race that commenced a skull-less vertebrate and produced Shakespeare, a race that has before it an infinite future, with the angel of progress leaning from the far horizon, beckoning men forward, upward and onward forever - I had rather belong to such a race, commencing there, producing this, and with that hope, than to have sprung from a perfect pair upon which the Lord has lost money every moment from that day to this.

CONCLUSION

I have given you my honest thought. Surely investigation is better than unthinking faith. Surely reason is a better guide than fear. This world should be controlled by the living, not by the dead. The grave is not a throne, and a corpse is not a king. Man should not try to live on ashes.

The theologians dead, knew no more than the theologians now living. More than this cannot be said. About this world little is known, about another world, nothing.

Our fathers were intellectual serfs, and their fathers were slaves. The makers of our creeds were ignorant and brutal. Every dogma that we have, has upon it the mark of whip, the rust of chain, and the ashes of fagot.

Our fathers reasoned with instruments of torture. They believed in the logic of fire and sword. They hated reason. They despised thought. They abhorred liberty.

Superstition is the child of slavery. Free thought will give us truth. When all have the right to think and to express their thoughts, every brain will give to all the best it has. The world will then be filled with intellectual wealth.

As long as men and women are afraid of the church, as long as a minister inspires fear, as long as people reverence a thing simply because they do not understand it, as long as it is respectable to lose your self-respect, as long as the church has power, as long as mankind worship a book, just so long will the world be filled with intellectual paupers and vagrants, covered with the soiled and faded rags of superstition.

As long as woman regards the Bible as the charter of her rights, she will be the slave of man. The Bible was not written by a woman. Within its lids there is nothing but humiliation and shame for her. She is regarded as the property of man. She is made to ask forgiveness for becoming a mother. She is as much below her husband, as her husband is below Christ. She is not allowed to speak. The gospel is too pure to be spoken by her polluted lips. Woman should learn in silence.

In the Bible will be found no description of a civilized home. The free mother surrounded by free and loving children, adored by a free man, her husband, was unknown to the inspired writers of the Bible. They did not believe in the democracy of home - in the republicanism of the fireside.

These inspired gentlemen knew nothing of the rights of children. They were the advocates of brute force — the disciples of the lash. They knew nothing of human rights. Their doctrines have brutalized the homes of millions, and filled the eyes of infancy with tears.

Let us free ourselves from the tyranny of a book, from the slavery of dead ignorance, from the aristocracy of the air.

There has never been upon the earth a generation of free men and women. It is not yet time to write a creed. Wait until the chains are broken - until dungeons are not regarded as temples. Wait until solemnity is not mistaken for wisdom until mental cowardice ceases to be known as reverence. Wait until the living are considered the equals of the dead until the cradle takes precedence of the coffin. Wait until what we know can be spoken without regard to what others may believe. Wait until teachers take the place of preachers until followers become investigators. Wait until the world is free before you write a creed.

In this creed there will be but one - word Liberty.

Oh Liberty, float not forever in the far horizon — remain not forever in the dream of the enthusiast, the philanthropist and poet, but come and make thy home among the children of men!

I know not what discoveries, what inventions, what thoughts may leap from the brain of the world. I know not what garments of glory may be woven by the years to come. I cannot dream of the victories to be won upon the fields of thought; but I do know, that coming from the infinite sea of the future, there will never touch this “bank and shoal of time” a richer gift, a rarer blessing than liberty for man, for woman, and for child.

ABOUT FARMING IN ILLINOIS

TO PLOW IS TO PRAY - TO PLANT IS TO PROPHECY, AND
THE HARVEST ANSWERS AND FULFILLS.

I am not an old and experienced farmer, nor a tiller of the soil, nor one of the hard-handed sons of labor. I imagine, however, that I know something about cultivating the soil, and getting happiness out of the ground.

I know enough to know that agriculture is the basis of all wealth, prosperity and luxury. I know that in a country where the tillers of the fields are free, everybody is free and ought to be prosperous. Happy is that country where those who cultivate the land own it. Patriotism is born in the woods and fields - by lakes and streams - by crags and plains.

The old way of farming was a great mistake. Everything was done the wrong way. It was all work and waste, weariness and want. They used to fence a hundred and sixty acres of land with a couple of dogs. Everything was left to the protection of the blessed trinity of chance, accident and mistake.

When I was a farmer they used to haul wheat two hundred miles in wagons and sell it for thirty five cents a bushel. They would bring home about three hundred feet of lumber, two bunches of shingles, a barrel of salt, and a cook-stove that never would draw and never did bake.

In those blessed days the people lived on corn and bacon. Cooking was an unknown art. Eating was a necessity, not a pleasure. It was hard work for the cook to keep on good terms even with hunger.

We had poor houses. The rain held the roofs in perfect contempt, and the snow drifted joyfully on the floors and beds. They had no barns. The horses were kept in rail pens surrounded with straw. Long before spring the sides would be eaten away and nothing but roofs would be left. Food is fuel. When the cattle were exposed to all the blasts of winter, it took all the corn and oats that could be stuffed into them to prevent actual starvation.

In those times most farmers thought the best place for the pig-pen was immediately in front of the house. There is nothing like sociability.

Women were supposed to know the art of making fires without fuel. The wood pile consisted, as a general thing, of one log upon which an axe or two had been worn out in vain. There was nothing to kindle a fire with. Pickets were pulled from the garden fence, clap-boards taken from the house, and every stray

plank was seized upon for kindling. Everything was done in the hardest way. Everything about the farm was disagreeable. Nothing was kept in order. Nothing was preserved. The wagons stood in the sun and rain, and the plows rusted in the fields. There was no leisure, no feeling that the work was done. It was all labor and weariness and vexation of spirit. The crops were destroyed by wandering herds, or they were put in too late, or too early, or they were blown down, or caught by the frost, or devoured by bugs, or stung by flies, or eaten by worms, or carried away by birds, or dug up by gophers, or washed away by floods, or dried up by the sun, or rotted in the stack, or heated in the crib, or they all run to vines, or tops, or straw, or smut, or cobs. And when in spite of all these accidents that lies in wait between the plow and the reaper, they did succeed in raising a good crop and a high price was offered, then the roads would be impassable. And when the roads got good, then the prices went down. Everything worked together for evil.

Nearly every farmer's boy took an oath that he never would cultivate the soil. The moment they arrived at the age of twenty-one they left the desolate and dreary farms and rushed to the towns and cities. They wanted to be book keepers, doctors, merchants, railroad men, insurance agents, lawyers, even preachers, anything to avoid the drudgery of the farm. Nearly every boy acquainted with the three R's - reading, writing, and arithmetic - imagined that he had altogether more education than ought to be wasted in raising potatoes and corn. They made haste to get into some other business. Those who stayed upon the farm envied those who went away.

A few years ago the times were prosperous, and the young men went to the cities to enjoy the fortunes that were waiting for them. They wanted to engage in something that promised quick returns. They built railways, established banks and insurance companies. They speculated in stocks in Wall Street, and gambled in grain at Chicago. They became rich. They lived in palaces. They rode in carriages. They pitied their poor brothers on the farms, and the poor brothers envied them.

But time has brought its revenge. The farmers have seen the railroad president a bankrupt, and the road in the hands of a receiver. They have seen the bank president abscond, and the insurance company a wrecked and ruined fraud. The only solvent people, as a class, the only independent people, are the tillers of the soil.

Farming must be made more attractive. The comforts of the town must be added to the beauty of the fields. The sociability of the city must be rendered possible in the country.

Farming has been made repulsive. The farmers have been unsociable and their homes have been lonely. They have been wasteful and careless. They have not been proud of their business.

In the first place, farming ought to be reasonably profitable. The farmers have not attended to their own interests. They have been robbed and plundered in a hundred ways.

No farmer can afford to raise corn and oats and hay to sell. He should sell horses, not oats; sheep, cattle and pork, not corn. He should make every profit possible out of what he produces. So long as the farmers of Illinois ship their corn and oats, so long they will be poor, — just so long will their farms be mortgaged to the insurance companies and banks of the East, — just so long will they do the work and others reap the benefit, — just so long will they be poor, and the money lenders grow rich, — just so long will cunning avarice grasp and hold the net profits of honest toil. When the farmers of the West ship beef and pork instead of grain, — when we manufacture here, — when we cease paying tribute to others, ours will be the most prosperous country in the world.

Another thing - It is just as cheap to raise a good as a poor breed of cattle. Scrubs will eat just as much as thoroughbreds. If you are not able to buy Durhams and Alderneys, you can raise the corn breed. By "corn breed" I mean the cattle that have, for several generations, had enough to eat, and have been treated with kindness. Every farmer who will treat his cattle kindly, and feed them all they want, will, in a few years, have blooded stock on his farm. All blooded stock has been produced in this way. You can raise good cattle just as you can raise good people. If you wish to raise a good boy you must give him plenty to eat, and treat him with kindness. In this way, and in this way only, can good cattle or good people be produced.

Another thing - You must beautify your homes.

When I was a farmer it was not fashionable to set out trees, nor to plant vines. When you visited the farm you were not welcomed by flowers, and greeted by trees loaded with fruit. Yellow dogs came bounding over the tumbled fence like wild beasts. There is no sense - there is no profit in such a life. It is not living. The farmers ought to beautify their homes. There should be trees and grass and flowers and running vines. Everything should be kept in order - gates should be on their hinges, and about all there should be the pleasant air of thrift. In every house there should be a bath-room. The bath is a civilizer, a refiner, a beautifier. When you come from the fields tired, covered with dust, nothing is so refreshing. Above all things, keep clean. It is not necessary to be a pig in order to raise one. In the cool of the evening, after a day in the field, put on clean clothes, take a seat

under the trees, 'mid the perfume of flowers, surrounded by your family, and you will know what it is to enjoy life like a gentleman.

In no part of the globe will fanning pay better than in Illinois. You are in the best portion of the earth. From the Atlantic to the Pacific, there is no such country as yours. The East is hard and stony; the soil is stingy. The far West is a desert parched and barren, dreary and desolate as perdition would be with the fires out. It is better to dig wheat and corn from the soil than gold. Only a few days ago, I was where they wrench the precious metals from the miserly clutch of the rocks. When I saw the mountains, treeless, shrubless, flowerless, without even a spire of grass, it seemed to me that gold had the same effect upon the country that holds it, as upon the man who lives and labors only for that. It affects the land as it does the man. It leaves the heart barren without a flower of kindness without a blossom of pity.

The farmer in Illinois has the best soil — the greatest return for the least labor — more leisure - more time for enjoyment than any other farmer in the world. His hard work ceases with autumn. He has the long winters in which to become acquainted with his family — with his neighbors — in which to read and keep abreast with the advanced thought of his day. He has the time and means for self-culture. He has more time than the mechanic, the merchant or the professional man. If the farmer is not well informed it is his own fault. Books are cheap, and every farmer can have enough to give him the outline of every science, and an idea of all that has been accomplished by man.

In many respects the farmer has the advantage of the mechanic. In our time we have plenty of mechanics but no tradesmen. In the sub-division of labor we have a thousand men working upon different parts of the same thing, each taught in one particular branch, and in only one. We have, say, in a shoe factory, hundreds of men, but not one shoemaker. It takes them all, assisted by a great number of machines, to make a shoe. Each does a particular part, and not one of them knows the entire trade. The result is that the moment the factory shuts down these men are out of employment. Out of employment means out of bread out - of bread means famine and horror. The mechanic of to-day has but little independence. His prosperity often depends upon the good will of one man. He is liable to be discharged for a look, for a word. He lays by but little for his declining years. He is, at the best, the slave of capital.

It is a thousand times better to be a whole farmer than part of a mechanic. It is better to till the ground and work for yourself than to be hired by corporations. Every man should endeavor to belong to himself.

About seven hundred years ago, Khayyam, a Persian, said: "Why should a man who possesses a piece of bread securing life for two days, and who has a cup of water - why should such a man be commanded by another, and why should such a man serve another?"

Young men should not be satisfied with a salary. Do not mortgage the possibilities of your future. Have the courage to take life as it comes, feast or famine. Think of hunting a gold mine for a dollar a day, and think of finding one for another man. How would you feel then?

We are lacking in true courage, when, for fear of the future, we take the crusts and scraps and niggardly salaries of the present. I had a thousand times rather have a farm and be independent, than to be President of the United States without independence, filled with doubt and trembling, feeling of the popular pulse, resorting to art and artifice, enquiring about the wind of opinion, and succeeding at last in losing my self-respect without gaining the respect of others.

Man needs more manliness, more real independence. We must take care of ourselves. This we can do by labor, and in this way we can preserve our independence. We should try and choose that business or profession the pursuit of which will give us the most happiness. Happiness is wealth. We can be happy without being rich - without holding office - without being famous. I am not sure that we can be happy with wealth, with office, or with fame.

There is a quiet about the life of a farmer, and the hope of a serene old age, that no other business or profession can promise. A professional man is doomed sometime to feel that his powers are waning. He is doomed to see younger and stronger men pass him in the race of life. He looks forward to an old age of intellectual mediocrity. He will be last where once he was the first. But the farmer goes, as it were, into partnership with nature - he lives with trees and flowers - he breathes the sweet air of the fields. There is no constant and frightful strain upon his mind. His nights are filled with sleep and rest. He watches his flocks and herds as they feed upon the green and sunny slopes. He hears the pleasant rain falling upon the waving corn, and the trees he planted in youth rustle above him as he plants others for the children yet to be.

Our country is filled with the idle and unemployed, and the great question asking for an answer is: What shall be done with these men? What shall these men do? To this there is but one answer: They must cultivate the soil. Farming must be rendered more attractive. Those who work the land must have an honest pride in their business. They must educate their children to cultivate the soil. They must make farming easier, so that their children will not hate it - so that they will not hate it themselves. The boys must not be taught that tilling the ground is a curse and almost a disgrace. They must not suppose that education is

thrown away upon them unless they become ministers, merchants, lawyers, doctors, or states men. It must be understood that education can be used to advantage on a farm. We must get rid of the idea that a little learning unfits one for work. There is no real conflict between Latin and labor. There are hundreds of graduates of Yale and Harvard and other colleges, who are agents of sewing machines, solicitors for insurance, clerks, copyists, in short, performing a hundred varieties of menial service. They seem willing to do any thing that is not regarded as work - anything that can be done in a town, in the house, in an office, but they avoid farming as they would leprosy. Nearly every young man educated in this way is simply ruined. Such an education ought to be called ignorance. It is a thousand times better to have common sense without education, than education without the sense. Boys and girls should be educated to help themselves. They should be taught that it is disgraceful to be idle, and dishonorable to be useless.

I say again, if you want more men and women on the farms, something must be done to make farm life pleasant. One great difficulty is that the farm is lonely. People write about the pleasures of solitude, but they are found only in books. He who lives long alone becomes insane. A hermit is a madman. Without friends and wife and child, there is nothing left worth living for. The unsocial are the enemies of joy. They are filled with egotism and envy, with vanity and hatred. People who live much alone become narrow and suspicious. They are apt to be the property of one idea. They begin to think there is no use in anything. They look upon the happiness of others as a kind of folly. They hate joyous folks, because, way down in their hearts, they envy them.

In our country, farm-life is too lonely. The farms are large, and neighbors are too far apart. In these days, when the roads are filled with "tramps," the wives and children need protection. When the farmer leaves home and goes to some distant field to work, a shadow of fear is upon his heart all day, and a like shadow rests upon all at home.

In the early settlement of our country the pioneer was forced to take his family, his axe, his dog and his gun, and go into the far wild forest, and build his cabin miles and miles from any neighbor. He saw the smoke from his hearth go up alone in all the wide and lonely sky.

But this necessity has passed away, and now, instead of living so far apart upon the lonely farms, you should live in villages. With the improved machinery which you have — with your generous soil — with your markets and means of transportation, you can now afford to live together.

It is not necessary in this age of the world for the farmer to rise in the middle of the night and begin his work. This getting up so early in the morning is a relic of barbarism. It has made hundreds and thousands of young men curse the business. There is no need of getting up at three or four o'clock in the winter morning. The farmer who persists in doing it and persists in dragging his wife and children from their beds ought to be visited by a missionary. It is time enough to rise after the sun has set the example. For what purpose do you get up? To feed the cattle? Why not feed them more the night before? It is a waste of life. In the old times they used to get up about three o'clock in the morning, and go to work long before the sun had risen with "healing upon his wings," and as a just punishment they all had the ague; and they ought to have it now. The man who cannot get a living upon Illinois soil without rising before daylight ought to starve. Eight hours a day is enough for any farmer to work except in harvest time. When you rise at four and work till dark what is life worth? Of what use are all the improvements in farming? Of what use is all the improved machinery unless it tends to give the farmer a little more leisure? What is harvesting now, compared with what it was in the old time? Think of the days of reaping, of cradling, of raking and binding and mowing. Think of threshing with the flail and winnowing with the wind. And now think of the reapers and mowers, the binders and threshing machines, the plows and cultivators, upon which the farmer rides protected from the sun. If, with all these advantages, you cannot get a living without rising in the middle of the night, go into some other business. You should not rob your families of sleep. Sleep is the best medicine in the world. It is the best doctor upon the earth. There is no such thing as health without plenty of sleep. Sleep until you are thoroughly rested and restored. When you work, work; and when you get through take a good, long, and refreshing rest.

You should live in villages, so that you can have the benefits of social life. You can have a reading-room - you can take the best papers and magazines - you can have plenty of books, and each one can have the benefit of them all. Some of the young men and women can cultivate music. You can have social gatherings - you can learn from each other - you can discuss all topics of interest, and in this way you can make farming a delightful business. You must keep up with the age. The way to make farming respectable is for farmers to become really intelligent. They must live intelligent and happy lives. They must know something of books and something of what is going on in the world. They must not be satisfied with knowing something of the affairs of a neighborhood and nothing about the rest of the earth. The business must be made attractive, and it never can be until the farmer has prosperity, intelligence and leisure.

Another thing - I am a believer in fashion. It is the duty of every woman to make herself as beautiful and attractive as she possibly can.

"Handsome is as handsome does," but she is much handsomer if well dressed. Every man should look his very best. I am a believer in good clothes. The time never ought to come in this country when you can tell a farmer's wife or daughter simply by the garments she wears. I say to every girl and woman, no matter what the material of your dress may be, no matter how cheap and coarse it is, cut it and make it in the fashion. I believe in jewelry. Some people look upon it as barbaric, but in my judgment, wearing jewelry is the first evidence the barbarian gives of a wish to be civilized. To adorn ourselves seems to be a part of our nature, and this desire seems to be everywhere and in everything. I have some times thought that the desire for beauty covers the earth with flowers. It is this desire that paints the wings of moths, tints the chamber of the shell, and gives the bird its plumage and its song. Oh daughters and wives, if you would be loved, adorn yourselves — if you would be adored, be beautiful!

There is another fault common with the farmers of our country they want too much land. You cannot, at present, when taxes are high, afford to own land that you do not cultivate. Sell it and let others make farms and homes. In this way what you keep will be enhanced in value. Farmers ought to own the land they cultivate, and cultivate what they own. Renters can hardly be called farmers. There can be no such thing in the highest sense as a home unless you own it. There must be an incentive to plant trees, to beautify the grounds, to preserve and improve. It elevates a man to own a home. It gives a certain independence, a force of character that is obtained in no other way. A man without a home feels like a passenger. There is in such a man a little of the vagrant. Homes make patriots. He who has sat by his own fireside with wife and children will defend it. When he hears the word country pronounced, he thinks of his home.

Few men have been patriotic enough to shoulder a musket in defence of a boarding house.

The prosperity and glory of our country depend upon the number of our people who are the owners of homes. Around the fireside cluster the private and the public virtues of our race. Raise your sons to be independent through labor - to pursue some business for themselves and upon their own account - to be self-reliant - to act upon their own responsibility, and to take the consequences like men. Teach them above all things to be good, true and tender husbands winners of love and builders of homes.

A great many farmers seem to think that they are the only laborers in the world. This is a very foolish thing. Farmers cannot get along without the mechanic. You are not independent of the man of genius. Your prosperity depends upon the inventor. The world advances by the assistance of all laborers; and all labor is under obligations to the inventions of genius. The inventor does as much for agriculture as he who tills the soil. All laboring men should be brothers. You are in partnership with the mechanics that make your reapers, your mowers and your plows; and you should take into your granges all the men who make their living by honest labor. The laboring people should unite and should protect themselves against all idlers. You can divide mankind into two classes: the laborers and the idlers, the supporters and the supported, the honest and the dishonest. Every man is dishonest who lives upon the unpaid labor of others, no matter if he occupies a throne. All laborers should be brothers. The laborers should have equal rights before the world and before the law. And I want every farmer to consider every man who labors either with hand or brain as his brother. Until genius and labor formed a partnership there was no such thing as prosperity among men. Every reaper and mower, every agricultural implement, has elevated the work of the farmer, and his vocation grows grander with every invention. In the olden time the agriculturist was ignorant; he knew nothing of machinery, he was the slave of superstition. He was always trying to appease some imaginary power by fasting and prayer. He supposed that some being actuated by malice, sent the untimely frost, or swept away with the wild wind his rude abode. To him the seasons were mysteries. The thunder told him of an enraged god - the barren fields of the vengeance of heaven. The tiller of the soil lived in perpetual and abject fear. He knew nothing of mechanics, nothing of order, nothing of law, nothing of cause and effect. He was a superstitious savage. He invented prayers instead of plows, creeds instead of reapers and mowers. He was unable to devote all his time to the gods, and so he hired others to assist him, and for their influence with the gentlemen supposed to control the weather, he gave one-tenth of all he could produce.

The farmer has been elevated through science and he should not forget the debt he owes to the mechanic, to the inventor, to the thinker. He should remember that all laborers belong to the same grand family - that they are the real kings and queens, the only true nobility.

Another idea entertained by most farmers is that they are in some mysterious way oppressed by every other kind of business — that they are devoured by monopolies, especially by railroads.

Of course, the railroads are indebted to the farmers for their prosperity, and the farmers are indebted to the railroads. Without them Illinois would be almost worthless.

A few years ago you endeavored to regulate the charges of railroad companies. The principal complaint you had was that they charged too much for the transportation of corn and other cereals to the East. You should remember that all freights are paid by the consumer; and that it made little difference to you what the railroad charged for transportation to the East, as that transportation had to be paid by the consumers of the grain. You were really interested in transportation from the East to the West and in local freights. The result is that while you have put down through freights you have not succeeded so well in local freights. The exact opposite should be the policy of Illinois. Put down local freights; put them down, if you can, to the lowest possible figure, and let through rates take care of themselves. If all the corn raised in Illinois could be transported to New York absolutely free, it would enhance but little the price that you would receive. What we want is the lowest possible local rate. Instead of this you have simply succeeded in helping the East at the expense of the West. The railroads are your friends. They are your partners. They can prosper only where the country through which they run prospers. All intelligent railroad men know this. They know that present robbery is future bankruptcy. They know that the interest of the farmer and of the railroad is the same. We must have railroads. What can we do without them?

When we had no railroads, we drew, as I said before, our grain two hundred miles to market.

In those days the farmers did not stop at hotels. They slept under their wagons - took with them their food - fried their own bacon, made their coffee, and ate their meals in the snow and rain. Those were the days when they received ten cents a bushel for corn when they sold four bushels of potatoes for a quarter thirty-three dozen eggs for a dollar, and a hundred pounds of pork for a dollar and a half.

What has made the difference?

The railroads came to your door and they brought with them the markets of the world. They brought New York and Liverpool and London into Illinois, and the State has been clothed with prosperity as with a mantle. It is the interest of the farmer to protect every great interest in the State. You should feel proud that Illinois has more railroads than any other State in this Union. Her main tracks and side tracks would furnish iron enough to belt the globe. In Illinois there are ten thousand miles of railways. In these iron high ways more than three hundred

million dollars have been invested - a sum equal to ten times the original cost of all the land in the State. To make war upon the railroads is a short-sighted and suicidal policy. They should be treated fairly and should be taxed by the same standard that farms are taxed, and in no other way. If we wish to prosper we must act together, and we must see to it that every form of labor is protected.

There has been a long period of depression in all business. The farmers have suffered least of all. Your land is just as rich and productive as ever. Prices have been reasonable. The towns and cities have suffered. Stocks and bonds have shrunk from par to worthless paper. Princes have become paupers, and bankers, merchants and millionaires have passed into the oblivion of bankruptcy. The period of depression is slowly passing away, and we are entering upon better times.

A great many people say that a scarcity of money is our only difficulty. In my opinion we have money enough, but we lack confidence in each other and in the future.

There has been so much dishonesty; there have been so many failures, that the people are afraid to trust anybody. There is plenty of money, but there seems to be a scarcity of business. If you were to go to the owner of a ferry, and, upon seeing his boat lying high and dry on the shore, should say, "There is a superabundance of ferry boat," he would probably reply, "No, but there is a scarcity of water." So with us there is not a scarcity of money, but there is a scarcity of business. And this scarcity springs from lack of confidence in one another. So many presidents of savings banks, even those belonging to the Young Men's Christian Association, run off with the funds; so many railroad and insurance companies are in the hands of receivers; there is so much bankruptcy on every hand, that all capital is held in the nervous clutch of fear. Slowly, but surely we are coming back to honest methods in business. Confidence will return, and then enterprise will unlock the safe and money will again circulate as of yore; the dollars will leave their hiding places and every one will be seeking investment.

For my part, I do not ask any interference on the part of the Government except to undo the wrong it has done. I do not ask that money be made out of nothing. I do not ask for the prosperity born of paper. But I do ask for the remonetization of silver. Silver was demonetized by fraud. It was an imposition upon every solvent man; a fraud upon every honest debtor in the United States. It assassinated labor. It was done in the interest of avarice and greed, and should be undone by honest men.

The farmers should vote only for such men as are able and willing to guard and advance the interests of labor. We should know better than to vote for men who will deliberately put a tariff of three dollars a thousand upon Canada lumber, when every farmer in Illinois is a purchaser of lumber. People who live upon the prairies ought to vote for cheap lumber. We should protect ourselves. We ought to have intelligence enough to know what we want and how to get it. The real laboring men of this country can succeed if they are united. By laboring men, I do not mean only the farmers. I mean all who contribute in some way to the general welfare. They should forget prejudices and party names, and remember only the best interests of the people. Let us see if we cannot, in Illinois, protect every department of industry. Let us see if all property cannot be protected alike and taxed alike, whether owned by individuals or corporations.

Where industry creates and justice protects, prosperity dwells.

Let me tell you something more about Illinois.

We have fifty-six thousand square miles of land — nearly thirty-six million acres. Upon these plains we can raise enough to feed and clothe twenty million people. Beneath these prairies were hidden millions of ages ago, by that old miser, the sun, thirty-six thousand square miles of coal. The aggregate thickness of these veins is at least fifteen feet. Think of a column of coal one mile square and one hundred miles high! All this came from the sun. What a sunbeam such a column would be! Think of the engines and machines this coal will run and turn and whirl! Think of all this force, willed and left to us by the dead morning of the world! Think of the firesides of the future around which will sit the fathers, mothers and children of the years to be! Think of the sweet and happy faces, the loving and tender eyes that will glow and gleam in the sacred light of all these flames!

We have the best country in the world, and Illinois is the best State in that country. Is there any reason that our farmers should not be prosperous and happy men? They have every advantage, and within their reach are all the comforts and conveniences of life.

Do not get the land fever and think you must buy all that joins you. Get out of debt as soon as you possibly can. A mortgage casts a shadow on the sunniest field. There is no business under the sun that can pay ten per cent.

Ainsworth R. Spofford gives the following facts about interest: "One dollar loaned for one hundred years at six per cent., with the interest collected annually and added to the principal, will amount to three hundred and forty dollars. At eight per cent, it amounts to two thousand two hundred and three dollars. At

three per cent, it amounts only to nineteen dollars and twenty-five cents. At ten per cent, it is thirteen thousand eight hundred and nine dollars, or about seven hundred times as much. At twelve per cent, it amounts to eighty-four thousand and seventy-five dollars, or more than four thousand times as much. At eighteen per cent, it amounts to fifteen million one hundred and forty five thousand and seven dollars. At twenty-four per cent, (which we sometimes hear talked of) it reaches the enormous sum of two billion five hundred and fifty-one million seven hundred and ninety nine thousand four hundred and four dollars."

One dollar at compound interest, at twenty-four per cent., for one hundred years, would produce a sum equal to our national debt.

Interest eats night and day, and the more it eats the hungrier it grows. The farmer in debt, lying awake at night, can, if he listens, hear it gnaw. If he owes nothing, he can hear his corn grow. Get out of debt as soon as you possibly can. You have supported idle avarice and lazy economy long enough.

Above all let every farmer treat his wife and children with infinite kindness. Give your sons and daughters every advantage within your power. In the air of kindness they will grow about you like flowers. They will fill your homes with sun shine and all your years with joy. Do not try to rule by force. A blow from a parent leaves a scar on the soul. I should feel ashamed to die surrounded by children I had whipped. Think of feeling upon your dying lips the kiss of a child you had struck.

See to it that your wife has every convenience. Make her life worth living. Never allow her to become a servant. Wives, weary and worn, mothers, wrinkled and bent before their time, fill homes with grief and shame. If you are not able to hire help for your wives, help them yourselves. See that they have the best utensils to work with. Women cannot create things by magic. Have plenty of wood and coal - good cellars and plenty in them. Have cisterns, so that you can have plenty of rain water for washing. Do not rely on a barrel and a board. When the rain comes the board will be lost or the hoops will be off the barrel.

Farmers should live like princes. Eat the best things you raise and sell the rest. Have good things to cook and good things to cook with. Of all people in our country, you should live the best. Throw your miserable little stoves out of the window. Get ranges, and have them so built that your wife need not burn her face off to get you a breakfast. Do not make her cook in a kitchen hot as the orthodox perdition. The beef, not the cook, should be roasted. It is just as easy to have things convenient and right as to have them any other way.

Cooking is one of the fine arts. Give your wives and daughters things to cook, and things to cook with, and they will soon become most excellent cooks. Good cooking is the basis of civilization. The man whose arteries and veins are filled with rich blood made of good and well cooked food, has pluck, courage, endurance and noble impulses. The inventor of a good soup did more for his race than the maker of any creed. The doctrines of total depravity and endless punishment were born of bad cooking and dyspepsia. Remember that your wife should have the things to cook with.

In the good old days there would be eleven children in the family and only one skillet. Every thing was broken or cracked or loaned or lost.

There ought to be a law making it a crime, punishable by imprisonment, to fry beefsteak. Broil it; it is just as easy, and when broiled it is delicious. Fried beefsteak is not fit for a wild beast. You can broil even on a stove. Shut the front damper - open the back one - then take off a griddle. There will then be a draft downwards through this opening. Put on your steak, using a wire broiler, and not a particle of smoke will touch it, for the reason that the smoke goes down. If you try to broil it with the front damper open, the smoke will rise. For broiling, coal, even soft coal, makes a better fire than wood.

There is no reason why farmers should not have fresh meat all the year round. There is certainly no sense in stuffing yourself full of salt meat every morning, and making a well or a cistern of your stomach for the rest of the day. Every farmer should have an ice house. Upon or near every farm is some stream from which plenty of ice can be obtained, and the long summer days made delightful. Dr. Draper, one of the world's greatest scientists, says that ice water is healthy, and that it has done away with many of the low forms of fever in the great cities. Ice has become one of the necessities of civilized life, and without it there is very little comfort.

Make your homes pleasant. Have your houses warm and comfortable for the winter. Do not build a story-and-a-half house. The half story is simply an oven in which, during the summer, you will bake every night, and feel in the morning as though only the rind of yourself was left.

Decorate your rooms, even if you do so with cheap engravings. The cheapest are far better than none. Have books - have papers, and read them. You have more leisure than the dwellers in cities. Beautify your grounds with plants and flowers and vines. Have good gardens. Remember that everything of beauty tends to the elevation of man. Every little morning-glory whose purple bosom is thrilled with the amorous kisses of the sun, tends to put a blossom in your heart. Do not judge of the value of everything by the market reports. Every flower about a house

certifies to the refinement of somebody. Every vine climbing and blossoming, tells of love and joy.

Make your houses comfortable. Do not huddle together in a little room around a red-hot stove, with every window fastened down. Do not live in this poisoned atmosphere, and then, when one of your children dies, put a piece in the papers commencing with, "Whereas, it has pleased divine Providence to remove from our midst.- " Have plenty of air, and plenty of warmth. Comfort is health. Do not imagine anything is unhealthy simply because it is pleasant. That is an old and foolish idea.

Let your children sleep. Do not drag them from their beds in the darkness of night. Do not compel them to associate all that is tiresome, irk some and dreadful with cultivating the soil. In this way you bring farming into hatred and disrepute. Treat your children with infinite kindness - treat them as equals. There is no happiness in a home not filled with love. Where the husband hates his wife - where the wife hates the husband; where children hate their parents and each other - there is a hell upon earth.

There is no reason why farmers should not be the kindest and most cultivated of men. There is nothing in plowing the fields to make men cross, cruel and crabbed. To look upon the sunny slopes covered with daisies does not tend to make men unjust. Whoever labors for the happiness of those he loves, elevates himself, no matter whether he works in the dark and dreary shops, or in the perfumed fields. To work for others is, in reality, the only way in which a man can work for himself. Selfishness is ignorance. Speculators cannot make unless somebody loses. In the realm of speculation, every success has at least one victim. The harvest reaped by the farmer benefits all and injures none. For him to succeed, it is not necessary that some one should fail. The same is true of all producers - of all laborers.

I can imagine no condition that carries with it such a promise of joy as that of the farmer in the early winter. He has his cellar filled — he has made every preparation for the days of snow and storm — he looks forward to three months of ease and rest; to three months of fireside-content; three months with wife and children; three months of long, delightful evenings; three months of home; three months of solid comfort.

When the life of the farmer is such as I have described, the cities and towns will not be filled with want - the streets will not be crowded with wrecked rogues, broken bankers, and bankrupt speculators. The fields will be tilled, and country villages, almost hidden by trees and vines and flowers, filled with

industrious and happy people, will nestle in every vale and gleam like gems on every plain.

The idea must be done away with that there is something intellectually degrading in cultivating the soil. Nothing can be nobler than to be useful. Idleness should not be respectable.

If farmers will cultivate well, and without waste; if they will so build that their houses will be warm in winter and cool in summer; if they will plant trees and beautify their homes; if they will occupy their leisure in reading, in thinking, in improving their minds and in devising ways and means to make their business profitable and pleasant; if they will live nearer together and cultivate sociability; if they will come together often; if they will have reading rooms and cultivate music; if they will have bath-rooms, ice-houses and good gardens; if their wives can have an easy time; if their sons and daughters can have an opportunity to keep in line with the thoughts and discoveries of the world; if the nights can be taken for sleep and the evenings for enjoyment, every body will be in love with the fields. Happiness should be the object of life, and if life on the farm can be made really happy, the children will grow up in love with the meadows, the streams, the woods and the old home. Around the farm will cling and cluster the happy memories of the delightful years.

Remember, I pray you, that you are in partnership with all labor that you should join hands with all the sons and daughters of toil, and that all who work belong to the same noble family.

For my part, I envy the man who has lived on the same broad acres from his boyhood, who cultivates the fields where in youth he played, and lives where his father lived and died.

I can imagine no sweeter way to end one's life.

WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?

PREFACE

IF WHAT is known as the Christian Religion is true, nothing can be more wonderful than the fact that *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke* say nothing about "salvation by faith;" that they do not even hint at the doctrine of the atonement, and are as silent as empty tombs as to the necessity of believing any thing to secure happiness in this world or another.

For a good many years it has been claimed that the writers of these gospels knew something about the teachings of Christ, and had, at least, a general knowledge of the conditions of salvation. It now seems to be substantiated that the early Christians did not place implicit confidence in the gospels, and did not hesitate to make such changes and additions as they thought proper. Such changes and additions are about the only passages in the New Testament that the Evangelical Churches now consider.

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The four gospels are the four corner-stones upon which rest the fabric of orthodox Christianity. Three of these stones have crumbled, and the fourth is not likely to outlast this generation. The gospel of *JOHN* cannot alone uphold the infinite absurdity of vicarious virtue and vice, and it cannot, without the aid of "interpolation," sustain the illogical and immoral dogma of salvation by faith. These frightful doctrines must be abandoned; the miraculous must be given up, the wonderful stories must be expunged, and from the creed of noble deeds the forgeries of superstition must be blotted out. From the temple of Morality and

Truth — from the great windows towards the sun — the parasitic and poisonous vines of faith and fable must be torn.

The church will be compelled at last to rest its case, not upon the wonders Christ is said to have performed, but upon the system of morality he taught. All the miracles, including the resurrection and ascension, are, when compared with portions of the "Sermon on the Mount," but dust and darkness.

The careful reader of the New Testament will find three Christs described: - One who wished to preserve Judaism - one who wished to reform it, and one who built a system of his own. The apostles and their disciples, utterly unable to comprehend a religion that did away with sacrifices, churches, priests, and creeds, constructed a Christianity for themselves, so that the orthodox churches of to-day rest - *first*, upon what Christ endeavored to destroy - *second*, upon what he never said, and, *third*, upon a misunderstanding of what he did say.

If a certain belief is necessary to insure the salvation of the soul, the church ought to explain, and without any unnecessary delay, why such an infinitely important fact was utterly ignored by Matthew, Mark and Luke. There are only two explanations possible. Either belief is unnecessary, or the writers of these three gospels did not understand the Christian system. The "sacredness" of the subject cannot longer hide the absurdity of the "scheme of salvation," nor the failure of Matthew, Mark and Luke to mention, what is now claimed to have been, the entire mission of Christ. The church must take from the New Testament the supernatural; the idea that an intellectual conviction can subject an honest man to eternal pain - the awful doctrine that the innocent can justly suffer for the guilty, and allow the remainder to be discussed, denied or believed without punishment and without reward. No one will object to the preaching of kindness, honesty and justice. To preach less is a crime, and to practice more is impossible.

There is one thing that ought to be again impressed upon the average theologian, and that is the utter futility of trying to answer arguments with personal abuse. It should be understood once for all that these questions are in no sense personal. If it should turn out that all the professed Christians in the world are sinless saints, the question of how Matthew, Mark, and Luke, came to say nothing about the atonement and the scheme of salvation by faith, would still be asked. And if it should then be shown that all the doubters, deists, and atheists, are vile and vicious wretches, the question still would wait for a reply.

The origin of all religions, creeds, and sacred books, is substantially the same, and the history of one, is, in the main, the history of all. Thus far these religions have been the mistaken explanations of our surroundings. The appearances of

nature have imposed upon the ignorance and fear of man. But back of all honest creeds was, and is, the desire to know, to understand, and to explain, and that desire will, as I most fervently hope and earnestly believe, be gratified at last by the discovery of the truth. Until then, let us bear with the theories, hopes, dreams, mistakes, and honest thoughts of all.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

WASHINGTON, D. C.,
October, 1880.

WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?

"THE NUREMBERG MAN WAS OPERATED BY A COMBINATION OF PIPES AND LEVERS, AND THOUGH HE COULD BREATHE AND DIGEST PERFECTLY, AND EVEN REASON AS WELL AS MOST THEOLOGIAN, WAS MADE OF NOTHING BUT WOOD AND LEATHER."

I.

THE whole world has been filled with fear. Ignorance has been the refuge of the soul. For thousands of years the intellectual ocean was ravaged by the buccaneers of reason. Pious souls clung to the shore and looked at the lighthouse. The seas were filled with monsters and the islands with sirens. The people were driven in the middle of a narrow road while priests went before, beating the hedges on either side to frighten the robbers from their lairs. The poor followers seeing no robbers, thanked their brave leaders with all their hearts.

Huddled in folds they listened with wide eyes while the shepherds told of ravening wolves. With great gladness they exchanged their fleeces for security. Shorn and shivering, they had the happiness of seeing their protectors comfortable and warm.

Through all the years, those who plowed divided with those who prayed. Wicked industry supported pious idleness, the hut gave to the cathedral, and frightened poverty gave even its rags to buy a robe for hypocrisy.

Fear is the dungeon of the mind, and superstition is a dagger with which hypocrisy assassinates the soul. Courage is liberty. I am in favor of absolute freedom of thought. In the realm of mind every one is monarch; every one is robed, sceptered, and crowned, and every one wears the purple of authority. I belong to the republic of intellectual liberty, and only those are good citizens of that republic who depend upon reason and upon persuasion, and only those are traitors who resort to brute force.

Now, I beg of you all to forget just for a few moments that you are Methodists or Baptists or Catholics or Presbyterians, and let us for an hour or two remember only that we are men and women. And allow me to say “man” and “woman” are the highest titles that can be bestowed upon humanity.

Let us, if possible, banish all fear from the mind. Do not imagine that there is some being in the infinite expanse who is not willing that every man and woman should think for himself and herself. Do not imagine that there is any being that would give to his children the holy torch of reason, and then damn them for following that sacred light. Let us have courage.

Priests have invented a crime called “blasphemy,” and behind that crime hypocrisy has crouched for thousands of years. There is but one blasphemy, and that is injustice. There is but one worship, and that is justice!

You need not fear the anger of a god that you cannot injure. Rather fear to injure your fellow-men. Do not be afraid of a crime you can not commit. Rather be afraid of the one that you may commit. The reason that you cannot injure God is that the Infinite is conditionless. You cannot increase or diminish the happiness of any being without changing that being's condition. If God is conditionless, you can neither injure nor benefit him.

There was a Jewish gentleman went into a restaurant to get his dinner, and the devil of temptation whispered in his ear: “Eat some bacon.” He knew if there was anything in the universe calculated to excite the wrath of an infinite being, who made every shining star, it was to see a gentleman eating bacon. He knew it, and he knew the infinite being was looking, that he was the eternal eavesdropper of the universe. But his appetite got the better of his conscience, as it often has with us all, and he ate that bacon. He knew it was wrong, and his conscience felt the blood of shame in its cheek. When he went into that restaurant the weather was delightful, the sky was as blue as June, and when he came out the sky was covered with angry clouds, the lightning leaping from one to the other, and the earth shaking beneath the voice of the thunder. He went back into that restaurant with a face as white as milk, and he said to one of the keepers:

“My God, did you ever hear such a fuss about a little piece of bacon?”

As long as we harbor such opinions of infinity; as long as we imagine the heavens to be filled with such tyranny, just so long the sons of men will be cringing, intellectual cowards. Let us think, and let us honestly express our thought.

Do not imagine for a moment that I think people who disagree with me are bad people. I admit, and I cheerfully admit, that a very large proportion of mankind, and a very large majority, a vast number are reasonably honest. I believe that most Christians believe what they teach; that most ministers are endeavoring to make this world better. I do not pretend to be better than they are. It is an intellectual question. It is a question, first, of intellectual liberty, and after that, a question to be settled at the bar of human reason. I do not pretend to be better than they are. Probably I am a good deal worse than many of them, but that is not the question. The question is: Bad as I am, have I the right to think? And I think I have for two reasons:

First, I cannot help it. And secondly, I like it.

The whole question is right at a point. If I have not a right to express my thoughts, who has? "Oh," they say, "we will allow you to think, we will not burn you."

"All right; why won't you burn me?"

"Because we think a decent man will allow others to think and to express his thought."

"Then the reason you do not persecute me for my thought is that you believe it would be infamous in you?"

"Yes."

"And yet you worship a God who will, as you declare, punish me forever?"

Surely an infinite God ought to be as just as man. Surely no God can have the right to punish his children for being honest. He should not reward hypocrisy with heaven, and punish candor with eternal pain.

The next question then is: Can I commit a sin against God by thinking? If God did not intend I should think, why did he give me a thinker? For one, I am convinced, not only that I have the right to think, but that it is my duty to express my honest thoughts. Whatever the gods may say we must be true to ourselves.

We have got what they call the Christian system of religion, and thousands of people wonder how I can be wicked enough to attack that system.

There are many good things about it, and I shall never attack anything that I believe to be good! I shall never fear to attack anything I honestly believe to be wrong! We have what they call the Christian religion, and I find, just in

proportion that nations have been religious, just in the proportion they have clung to the religion of their founders, they have gone back to barbarism. I find that Spain, Portugal, Italy, are the three worst nations in Europe. I find that the nation nearest infidel is the most prosperous — France.

And so I say there can be no danger in the exercise of absolute intellectual freedom. I find among ourselves the men who think are at least as good as those who do not.

We have, I say, a Christian system, and that system is founded upon what they are pleased to call the "New Testament." Who wrote the New Testament? I do not know. Who does know? Nobody. We have found many manuscripts containing portions of the New Testament. Some of these manuscripts leave out five or six books many of them. Others more; others less. No two of these manuscripts agree. Nobody knows who wrote these manuscripts. They are all written in Greek. The disciples of Christ, so far as we know, knew only Hebrew. Nobody ever saw, so far as we know, one of the original Hebrew manuscripts. Nobody ever saw anybody who had seen anybody who had heard of anybody that had ever seen any body that had ever seen one of the original Hebrew manuscripts. No doubt the clergy of your city have told you these facts thousands of times, and they will be obliged to me for having repeated them once more. These manuscripts are written in what are called capital Greek letters. They are called Uncial manuscripts, and the New Testament was not divided into chapters and verses, even, until the year of grace 1551. In the original the manuscripts and gospels are signed by nobody. The epistles are addressed to nobody; and they are signed by the same person. All the addresses, all the pretended ear-marks showing to whom they were written, and by whom they were written, are simply interpolations, and everybody who has studied the subject knows it.

It is further admitted that even these manuscripts have not been properly translated, and they have a syndicate now making a new translation; and I suppose that I can not tell whether I really believe the New Testament or not until I see that new translation.

You must remember, also, one other thing. Christ never wrote a solitary word of the New Testament — not one word. There is an account that he once stooped and wrote something in the sand, but that has not been preserved. He never told anybody to write a word. He never said: "Matthew, remember this. Mark, do not forget to put that down. Luke, be sure that in your gospel you have this. John, do not forget it." Not one word. And it has always seemed to me that a being coming from another world, with a message of infinite importance to mankind, should at least have verified that message by his own signature. Is it not

wonderful that not one word was written by Christ? Is it not strange that he gave no orders to have his words preserved - words upon which hung the salvation of a world?

Why was nothing written? I will tell you. In my judgment they expected the end of the world in a few days. That generation was not to pass away until the heavens should be rolled up as a scroll, and until the earth should melt with fervent heat. That was their belief. They believed that the world was to be destroyed, and that there was to be another coming, and that the saints were then to govern the earth. And they even went so far among the apostles, as we frequently do now before election, as to divide out the offices in advance. This Testament, as it now is, was not written for hundreds of years after the apostles were dust. Many of the pretended facts lived in the open mouth of credulity. They were in the wastebaskets of forgetfulness. They depended upon the inaccuracy of legend, and for centuries these doctrines and stories were blown about by the inconstant winds. And when reduced to writing, some gentleman would write by the side of the passage his idea of it, and the next copyist would put that in as a part of the text. And, when it was mostly written, and the church got into trouble, and wanted a passage to help it out, one was interpolated to order. So that now it is among the easiest things in the world to pick out at least one hundred interpolations in the Testament. And I will pick some of them out before I get through.

And let me say here, once for all, that for the man Christ I have infinite respect. Let me say, once for all, that the place where man has died for man is holy ground. And let me say, once for all, that to that great and serene man I gladly pay, the tribute of my admiration and my tears. He was a reformer in his day. He was an infidel in his time. He was regarded as a blasphemer, and his life was destroyed by hypocrites, who have, in all ages, done what they could to trample freedom and manhood out of the human mind. Had I lived at that time I would have been his friend, and should he come again he will not find a better friend than I will be.

That is for the man. For the theological creation I have a different feeling. If he was, in fact, God, he knew there was no such thing as death. He knew that what we called death was but the eternal opening of the golden gates of everlasting joy; and it took no heroism to face a death that was eternal life.

But when a man, when a poor boy sixteen years of age, goes upon the field of battle to keep his flag in heaven, not knowing but that death ends all; not knowing but that when the shadows creep over him, the darkness will be eternal, there is heroism. For the man who, in the darkness, said: "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" - for that man I have nothing but respect, admiration, and

love. Back of the theological shreds, rags, and patches, hiding the real Christ, I see a genuine man.

A while ago I made up my mind to find out what was necessary for me to do in order to be saved. If I have got a soul, I want it saved. I do not wish to lose anything that is of value. For thousands of years the world has been asking that question:

“What must we do to be saved?”

Saved from poverty? No. Saved from crime? No. Tyranny? No. But “What must we do to be saved from the eternal wrath of the God who made us all?”

If God made us, he will not destroy us. Infinite wisdom never made a poor investment. Upon all the works of an infinite God, a dividend must finally be declared. Why should God make failures? Why should he waste material? Why should he not correct his mistakes, instead of damning them? The pulpit has cast a shadow over even the cradle. The doctrine of endless punishment has covered the cheeks of this world with tears. I despise it, and I defy it.

I made up my mind, I say, to see what I had to do in order to save my soul according to the Testament, and thereupon I read it. I read the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and found that the church had been deceiving me. I found that the clergy did not understand their own book; that they had been building upon passages that had been interpolated; upon passages that were entirely untrue, and I will tell you why I think so.

II

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

ACCORDING to the church, the first gospel was written by Matthew. As a matter of fact he never wrote a word of it never saw it, - never heard of it and probably never will. But for the purposes of this lecture I admit that he wrote it. I will admit that he was with Christ for three years; that he was his constant companion; that he shared his sorrows and his triumphs; that he heard his words by the lonely lakes, the barren hills, in synagogue and street, and that he knew his heart and became acquainted with his thoughts and aims.

Now let us see what Matthew says we must do in order to be saved. And I take it that, if this is true, Matthew is as good authority as any minister in the world.

The first thing I find upon the subject of salvation is in the fifth chapter of Matthew, and is embraced in what is commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount. It is as follows:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Good!

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” Good! Whether they belonged to any church or not; whether they believed the Bible or not?

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” Good!

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Good!

In the same sermon he says:

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.” And then he makes use of this remarkable language, almost as applicable to-day as it was then: “For I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Good!

In the sixth chapter I find the following, and it comes directly after the prayer known as the Lord's Prayer:

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses.”

I accept the condition. There is an offer; I accept it. If you will forgive men that trespass against you, God will forgive your trespasses against him. I accept the terms, and I never will ask any God to treat me better than I treat my fellow-men. There is a square promise. There is a contract. If you will forgive others God will forgive you. And it does not say you must believe in the Old Testament, or be baptized, or join the church, or keep Sunday; that you must count beads, or pray, or become a nun, or a priest; that you must preach sermons or hear them, build churches or fill them. Not one word is said about eating or fasting, denying or believing. It simply says, if you forgive others God will forgive you; and it must of necessity be true. No god could afford to damn a forgiving man. Suppose God should damn to everlasting fire a man so great and good, that he, looking from the abyss of hell, would forgive God, - how would a god feel then?

Now let me make myself plain upon one subject, perfectly plain. For instance, I hate Presbyterianism, but I know hundreds of splendid Presbyterians. Understand me. I hate Methodism, and yet I know hundreds of splendid Methodists. I hate Catholicism, and like Catholics. I hate insanity but not the insane.

I do not war against men. I do not war against persons. I war against certain doctrines that I believe to be wrong. But I give to every other human being every right that I claim for myself.

The next thing that I find is in the seventh chapter and the second verse: "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Good! That suits me!

And in the twelfth chapter of Matthew: "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father that is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother. For the son of man shall come in the glory of his father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according -." To the church he belongs to? No. To the manner in which he was baptized? No. According to his creed? No. "Then he shall reward every man according to his works. "Good! I subscribe to that doctrine.

And in the eighteenth chapter: "And Jesus called a little child to him and stood him in the midst; and said, 'Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' "I do not wonder that in his day, surrounded by scribes and Pharisees, he turned lovingly to little children.

And yet, see what children the little children of God have been. What an interesting dimpled darling John Calvin was. Think of that prattling babe, Jonathan Edwards! Think of the infants that founded the Inquisition, that invented instruments of torture to tear human flesh. They were the ones who had become as little children. They were the children of faith.

So I find in the nineteenth chapter: "And behold, one came and said unto him: 'Good master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? 'And he said unto him,' Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.' He saith unto him, 'which?' "

Now, there is a fair issue. Here is a child of God asking God what is necessary for him to do in order to inherit eternal life. And God said to him: Keep the commandments. And the child said to the Almighty: "Which?" Now, if there

ever has been an opportunity given to the Almighty to furnish a man of an inquiring mind with the necessary information upon that subject, here was the opportunity.

"He said unto him, which? And Jesus said: Thou shalt do no murder; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; honor thy father and mother; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

He did not say to him: "You must believe in me - that I am the only begotten son of the living God." He did not say: "You must be born again." He did not say: "You must believe the Bible." He did not say: "You must remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." He simply said: "Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Honor thy father and thy mother; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self." And thereupon the young man, who I think was mistaken, said unto him: "All these things have I kept from my youth up."

What right has the church to add conditions of salvation? Why should we suppose that Christ failed to tell the young man all that was necessary for him to do? Is it possible that he left out some important thing simply to mislead? Will some minister tell us why he thinks that Christ kept back the "scheme"?

Now comes an interpolation.

In the old times when the church got a little scarce of money, they always put in a passage praising poverty. So they had this young man ask: "What lack I yet? And Jesus said unto him: If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have reassurance in heaven."

The church has always been willing to swap off treasures in heaven for cash down. And when the next verse was written the church must have been nearly bankrupt. "And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Did you ever know a wealthy disciple to unload on account of that verse?

And then comes another verse, which I believe is an interpolation: "And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

Christ never said it. Never. "Whosoever shall forsake father and mother."

Why, he said to this man that asked him, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" among other things, he said: "Honor thy father and thy mother." And we turn over the page and he says again: "If you will desert your father and mother you shall have everlasting life." It will not do. If you will desert your wife and your little children, or your lands - the idea of putting a house and lot on equality with wife and children! Think of that! I do not accept the terms. I will never desert the one I love for the promise of any god.

It is far more important to love your wife than to love God, and I will tell you why. You cannot help him, but you can help her. You can fill her life with the perfume of perpetual joy. It is far more important that you love your children than that you love Jesus Christ. And why? If he is God you cannot help him, but you can plant a little flower of happiness in every footstep of the child, from the cradle until you die in that child's arms. Let me tell you to-day it is far more important to build a home than to erect a church. The holiest temple beneath the stars is a home that love has built. And the holiest altar in the entire wide world is the fireside around which gather father and mother and the sweet babes.

There was a time when people believed the infamy commanded in this frightful passage. There was a time when they did desert fathers and mothers and wives and children. St. Augustine says to the devotee: Fly to the desert, and though your wife put her arms around your neck, tear her hands away; she is a temptation of the devil. Though your father and mother throw their bodies athwart your threshold, step over them; and though your children pursue, and with weeping eyes beseech you to return, listen not. It is the temptation of the evil one. Fly to the desert and save your soul. Think of such a soul being worth saving. While I live I propose to stand by the ones I love.

There is another condition of salvation. I find it in the twenty-fifth chapter: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came unto me." Good!

I tell you to-night that God will not punish with eternal thirst the man who has put the cup of cold water to the lips of his neighbor. God will not leave in the eternal nakedness of pain the man who has clothed his fellow-men.

For instance, here is a shipwreck, and here is some brave sailor, who stands aside and allows a woman whom he never saw before to take his place in the boat, and he stands there, grand and serene as the wide sea, and he goes down. Do you tell me that there is any God who will push the life boat from the shore of

eternal life, when that man wishes to step in? Do you tell me that God can be unpitying to the pitiful, that he can be unforgiving to the forgiving? I deny it; and from the aspersions of the pulpit I seek to rescue the reputation of the Deity.

Now, I have read you substantially everything in Matthew on the subject of salvation. That is all there is. Not one word about believing anything. It is the gospel of deed, the gospel of charity, the gospel of self-denial; and if only that gospel had been preached, persecution never would have shed one drop of blood. Not one.

According to the testimony Matthew was well acquainted with Christ. According to the testimony, he had been with him and his companion for years, and if it was necessary to believe anything in order to get to heaven, Matthew should have told us. But he forgot it, or he did not believe it, or he never heard of it. You can take your choice.

In Matthew, we find that heaven is promised, first, to the poor in spirit. Second, to the merciful. Third, to the pure in heart. Fourth, to the peacemakers. Fifth, to those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. Sixth, to those who keep and teach the commandments. Seventh, to those who forgive men that trespass against them. Eighth, that we will be judged as we judge others. Ninth, that they who receive prophets and righteous men shall receive a prophet's reward. Tenth, to those who do the will of God. Eleventh, that every man shall be rewarded according to his works. Twelfth, to those who become as little children. Thirteenth, to those who forgive the trespasses of others. Fourteenth, to the perfect: they who sell all that they have and give to the poor. Fifteenth, to them who forsake houses, and brethren, and sisters, and father, and mother, and wife, and children, and lands for the sake of Christ's name. Sixteenth, to those who feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter to the stranger, clothes to the naked, comfort to the sick, and who visit the prisoner.

Nothing else is said with regard to salvation in the gospel according to St. Matthew. Not one word about believing the Old Testament to have been inspired; not one word about being baptized or joining a church; not one word about believing in any miracle; not even a hint that it was necessary to believe that Christ was the son of God, or that he did any wonderful or miraculous things, or that he was born of a virgin, or that his coming had been foretold by the Jewish prophets. Not one word about believing in the Trinity, or in foreordination or predestination. Matthew had not understood from Christ that any such things were necessary to ensure the salvation of the soul.

According to the testimony, Matthew had been in the company of Christ, some say three years and some say one, but at least he had been with him long enough to find out some of his ideas upon this great subject. And yet Matthew never got the impression that it was necessary to believe something in order to get to heaven. He supposed that if a man forgave others God would forgive him; he believed that God would show mercy to the merciful; that he would not allow those who fed the hungry to starve; that he would not put in the flames of hell those who had given cold water to the thirsty; that he would not cast into the eternal dungeon of his wrath those who had visited the imprisoned; and that he would not damn men who forgave others. Matthew had it in his mind that God would treat us very much as we treated other people; and that in the next world he would treat with kindness those who had been loving and gentle in their lives. It may be the apostle was mistaken; but evidently that was his opinion.

III

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

LET us now see what Mark thought it necessary for a man to do to save his soul. In the fourth chapter, after Jesus had given to the multitude by the sea the parable of the sower, his disciples, when they were again alone, asked him the meaning of the parable. Jesus replied:

"Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:

"That seeing, they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them."

It is a little hard to understand why he should have preached to people that he did not intend should know his meaning. Neither is it quite clear why he objected to their being converted. This, I suppose, is one of the mysteries that we should simply believe without endeavoring to comprehend.

With the above exception, and one other that I will mention hereafter, Mark substantially agrees with Matthew, and says that God will be merciful to the merciful, that he will be kind to the kind, that he will pity the pitying, and love the loving. Mark upholds the religion of Matthew until we come to the fifteenth and sixteenth verses of the sixteenth chapter, and then I strike an interpolation put in by hypocrisy, put in by priests who longed to grasp with bloody hands the scepter of universal power. Let me read it to you. It is the most infamous passage in the Bible. Christ never said it. No sensible man ever said it.

"And He said unto them" (that is, unto his disciples)," go ye into the entire world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

That passage was written so that fear would give alms to hypocrisy, Now, I propose to prove to you that this is an interpolation. How will I do it? In the first place, not one word is said about belief, in Matthew. In the next place, not one word about belief, in Mark, until I come to that verse, and where is that said to have been spoken? According to Mark, it is a part of the last conversation of Jesus Christ, - just before, according to the account, he ascended bodily before their eyes. If there ever was any important thing happened in this world that was it. If there is any conversation that people would be apt to recollect, it would be the last conversation with a god before he rose visibly through the air and seated himself upon the throne of the infinite. We have in this Testament five accounts of the last conversation happening between Jesus Christ and his apostles. Matthew gives it, and yet Matthew does not state that in that conversation Christ said: "Whoso believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and whoso believeth not shall be damned." And if he did say those words they were the most important that ever fell from lips. Matthew did not hear it, or did not believe it, or forgot it.

Then I turn to Luke, and he gives an account of this same last conversation, and not one word does he say upon that subject. Luke does not pretend that Christ said that whoso believeth not shall be damned. Luke certainly did not hear it. May be he forgot it. Perhaps he did not think that it was worth recording. Now, it is the most important thing, if Christ said it, that he ever said.

Then I turn to John, and he gives an account of the last conversation, but not one solitary word on the subject of belief or unbelief. Not one solitary word on the subject of damnation. Not one. John might not have been listening. Then I turn to the first chapter of the Acts, and there I find an account of the last conversation; and in that conversation there is not one word upon this subject. This is a demonstration that the passage in Mark is an interpolation. What other reason have I got? There is not one particle of sense in it. Why? No man can control his belief. You hear evidence for and against, and the integrity of the soul stands at the scales and tells which side rises and which side falls. You can not believe as you wish. You must believe as you must. And he might as well have said:

"Go into the world and preach the gospel, and whosoever has red hair shall be saved, and whosoever hath not shall be damned."

I have another reason. I am much obliged to the gentleman who interpolated these passages. I am much obliged to him that he put in some more two more. Now hear:

“And these signs shall follow them that believe.” Good!

“In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them. They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.”

Bring on your believer! Let him cast out a devil. I do not ask for a large one. Just a little one for a cent. Let him take up serpents. “And if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them.” Let me mix up a dose for the believer, and if it does not hurt him I will join a church. “Oh! but,” they say, “those things only lasted through the Apostolic age.” Let us see. “Go into the entire world and preach the gospel, and whosoever believes and is baptized shall be saved, and these signs shall follow them that believe.”

How long? I think at least until they had gone into the entire world. Certainly those signs should follow until the entire world had been visited. And yet if that declaration was in the mouth of Christ, he then knew that one-half of the world was unknown, and that he would be dead fourteen hundred and fifty-nine years before his disciples would know that there was another continent. And yet he said, “Go into the entire world and preach the gospel,” and he knew then that it would be fourteen hundred and fifty-nine years before anybody could go. Well, if it was worth while to have signs follow believers in the Old World, surely it was worth while to have signs follow believers in the New. And the very reason that signs should follow would be to convince the unbeliever, and there are as many unbelievers now as ever, and the signs are as necessary to-day as they ever were. I would like a few myself.

This frightful declaration, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned,” has filled the world with agony and crime. Every letter of this passage has been sword and fagot; every word has been dungeon and chain. That passage made the sword of persecution drip with innocent blood through centuries of agony and crime. That passage made the horizon of a thousand years lurid with the fagot's flames. That passage contradicts the Sermon on the Mount; travesties the Lord's Prayer; turns the splendid religion of deed and duty into the superstition of creed and cruelty. I deny it. It is infamous! Christ never said it.

IV THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

It is sufficient to say that Luke agrees substantially with Matthew and Mark.

"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." Good!

"Judge not and ye shall not be judged: condemn not and ye shall not be condemned: forgive and ye shall be forgiven." Good!

"Give and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." Good! I like it.

"For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."

He agrees substantially with Mark; he agrees substantially with Matthew; and I come at last to the nineteenth chapter.

"And Zaccheus stood and said unto the Lord, 'Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four fold.' And Jesus said unto him, 'this day is salvation come to this house.' "

That is good doctrine. He did not ask Zaccheus what he believed. He did not ask him, "Do you believe in the Bible? Do you believe in the five points? Have you ever been baptized sprinkled? Oh! Immersed?" "Half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four fold." "And Christ said, this day is salvation come to this house." Good!

I read also in Luke that Christ when upon the cross forgave his murderers, and that is considered the shining gem in the crown of his mercy. He forgave his murderers. He forgave the men who drove the nails in his hands, in his feet, that plunged a spear in his side; the soldier that in the hour of death offered him in mockery the bitterness to drink. He forgave them all freely, and yet, although he would forgive them, he will in the nineteenth century, as we are told by the Orthodox Church, damn to eternal fire a noble man for the expression of his honest thoughts. That will not do. I find, too, in Luke, an account of two thieves that were crucified at the same time. The other gospels speak of them. One says they both railed upon him. Another says nothing about it. In Luke we are told that one railed upon him, but one of the thieves looked and pitied Christ, and Christ said to that thief:

"To-day shall thou be with me in Paradise."

Why did he say that? Because the thief pitied him. God can not afford to trample beneath the feet of his infinite wrath the smallest blossom of pity that ever shed its perfume in the human heart!

Who was this thief? To what church did he belong? I do not know. The fact that he was a thief throws no light on that question. Who was he? What did he believe? I do not know. Did he believe in the Old Testament? In the miracles? I do not know. Did he believe that Christ was God? I do not know. Why then was the promise made to him that he should meet Christ in Paradise? Simply because he pitied suffering innocence upon the cross.

God can not afford to damn any man who is capable of pitying anybody.

V THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

AND now we come to John, and that is where the trouble commences.

The other gospels teach that God will be merciful to the merciful, forgiving to the forgiving, kind to the kind, loving to the loving, just to the just, merciful to the good.

Now we come to John, and here is another doctrine. And allow me to say that John was not written until long after the others. John was mostly written by the church. "Jesus answered and said unto him: Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man is born again he can not see the kingdom of God."

Why did he not tell Matthew that? Why did he not tell Luke that? Why did he not tell Mark that? They never heard of it, or forgot it, or they did not believe it."

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God." Why?

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," and he might have added, that which is born of water is water.

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, 'ye must be born again.' And then the reason is given, and I admit I did not understand it myself until I read the reason, and when you hear the reason, you will understand it as well as I do; and here it is: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst

not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." So, I find in the book of John the idea of the Real Presence.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

"He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him."

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."

"And shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

"And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

"No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day."

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

"I am that bread of life.

"Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

"This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

"Then Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

"Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

"For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

"He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

"As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

"This is that bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live forever."

"And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father."

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die."

"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal."

So I find in the book of John, that in order to be saved we must not only believe in Jesus Christ, but we must eat the flesh and we must drink the blood of Jesus Christ. If that gospel is true, the Catholic Church is right. But it is not true. I can not believe it, and yet for all that, it may be true. But I do not believe it.

Neither do I believe there is any god in the universe who will damn a man simply for expressing his belief.

"Why," they say to me, "suppose all this should turn out to be true, and you should come to the Day of Judgment and find all these things to be true. What would you do then?" I would walk up like a man, and say, "I was mistaken."

"And suppose God was about to pass judgment upon you, what would you say? "I would say to him, "Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you." Why not?

I am told that I must render good for evil. I am told that if smitten on one cheek I must turn the other. I am told that I must overcome evil with good. I am told that I must love my enemies; and will it do for this God who tells me to love my enemies to damn his? No, it will not do. It will not do.

In the book of John all these doctrines of regeneration — that it is necessary to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; that salvation depends upon belief — in this book of John all these doctrines find their warrant; nowhere else.

Read Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and then read John, and you will agree with me that the three first gospels teach that if we are kind and forgiving to our fellows, God will be kind and forgiving to us. In John we are told that another man can be good for us, or bad for us, and that the only way to get to heaven is to believe something that we know is not so.

All these passages about believing in Christ, drinking his blood and eating his flesh, are after thoughts. They were written by the theologians, and in a few years they will be considered unworthy of the lips of Christ.

VI

THE CATHOLICS

NOW, upon these gospels that I have read the churches rest; and out of these things, mistakes and interpolations, they have made their creeds. And the first church to make a creed, so far as I know, was the Catholic. It was the first church that had any power. That is the church that has preserved all these miracles for us. That is the church that preserved the manuscripts for us. That is the church whose word we have to take. That church is the first witness that Protestantism brought to the bar of history to prove miracles that took place eighteen hundred years ago; and while the witness is there Protestantism takes pains to say: "You cannot believe one word that witness says, *now*."

That church is the only one that keeps up a constant communication with heaven through the instrumentality of a large number of decayed saints. That church has an agent of God on earth, has a person who stands in the place of deity; and that church is infallible. That church has persecuted to the exact extent of her power - and always will. In Spain that church stands erect, and is arrogant. In the United States that church crawls; but the object in both countries is the same - and that is the destruction of intellectual liberty. That church teaches us that we can make God happy by being miserable ourselves; that a nun is holier in the sight of God than a loving mother with her child in her thrilled and thrilling arms; that a priest is better than a father; that celibacy is better than that passion of love that has made everything of beauty in this world. That church tells the girl of sixteen or eighteen years of age, with eyes like dew and light; that girl with the red of health in the white of her beautiful cheeks - tells that girl, "Put on the veil, woven of death and night, kneel upon stones, and you will please God."

I tell you that, by law, no girl should be allowed to take the veil and renounce the joys and beauties of this life.

I am opposed to allowing these spider-like priests to weave webs to catch the loving maidens of the world. There ought to be a law appointing commissioners to visit such places twice a year and release every person who expresses a desire to be released. I do not believe in keeping the penitentiaries of God. No doubt they are honest about it. That is not the question. These ignorant superstitions fill millions of lives with weariness and pain, with agony and tears.

This church, after a few centuries of thought, made a creed, and that creed is the foundation of the orthodox religion. Let me read it to you:

"Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith; which faith except every one do keep entire and inviolate, without doubt, he shall everlastingly perish." Now the faith is this: "That we worship one God in trinity and trinity in unity."

Of course you understand how that is done, and there is no need of my explaining it. "Neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance." You see what a predicament that would leave the deity in if you divided the substance.

"For one is the person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost; but the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one - "you know what I mean by Godhead." In glory equal, and in majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, such is the Holy Ghost. The Father is uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, the Holy Ghost incomprehensible." And that is the reason we know so much about the thing. "The Father is eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Ghost eternal, and yet there are not three eternals, only one eternal, as also there are not three uncreated, nor three incomprehensibles, only one uncreated, one incomprehensible."

"In like manner, the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Ghost almighty. Yet there are not three almighties, only one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son God, the Holy Ghost God, and yet not three Gods; and so, likewise, the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Ghost is Lord, yet there are not three Lords, for as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord, so we are all forbidden by the Catholic religion to say there are three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of no one; not created or begotten. The Son is from the Father alone, not made, not created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is from the Father and the Son, not made nor begotten, but proceeding."

You know what proceeding is.

"So there is one Father, not three Fathers." Why should there be three fathers, and only one Son? "One Son, and not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts; and in this Trinity there is nothing before or afterward, nothing greater or less, but the whole three persons are coeternal with one another and coequal, so that in all things the unity is to be worshiped in Trinity, and the Trinity is to be worshiped in unity. Those who will be saved must thus think of the Trinity. Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now the right of this thing is this: That we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both God and man. He is God of the substance of his Father begotten before the world was."

That was a good while before his mother lived.

"And he is man of the substance of his mother, born in this world, perfect God and perfect man, and the rational soul in human flesh, subsisting equal to the Father according to his Godhead, but less than the Father according to his manhood, who being both God and man is not two but one, one not by conversion of God into flesh, but by the taking of the manhood into God."

You see that is a great deal easier than the other way would be.

“One altogether, not by a confusion of substance but by unity of person, for as the rational soul and the flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ, who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, and he sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, and He shall come to judge the living and the dead.”

In order to be saved it is necessary to believe this. What a blessing that we do not have to understand it. And in order to compel the human intellect to get upon its knees before that infinite absurdity, thousands and millions have suffered agonies; thousands and thousands have perished in dungeons and in fire; and if all the bones of all the victims of the Catholic Church could be gathered together, a monument higher than all the pyramids would rise, in the presence of which the eyes even of priests would be wet with tears.

That church covered Europe with cathedrals and dungeons, and robbed men of the jewel of the soul. That church had ignorance upon its knees. That church went in partnership with the tyrants of the throne, and between those two vultures, the altar and the throne, the heart of man was devoured.

Of course I have met, and cheerfully admit that there are thousands of good Catholics; but Catholicism is contrary to human liberty. Catholicism bases salvation upon belief. Catholicism teaches man to trample his reason under foot. And for that reason it is wrong.

Thousands of volumes could not contain the crimes of the Catholic Church. They could not contain even the names of her victims. With sword and fire, with rack and chain, with dungeon and whip she endeavored to convert the world. In weakness a beggar - in power a highwayman, alms dish or dagger - tramp or tyrant.

VII THE EPISCOPALIANS

THE next church I wish to speak of is the Episcopalian. That was founded by Henry VIII., now in heaven. He cast off Queen Catherine and Catholicism together, and he accepted Episcopalianism and Annie Boleyn at the same time. That church, if it had a few more ceremonies, would be Catholic. If it had a few less, nothing. We have an Episcopalian Church in this country, and it has all the imperfections of a poor relation. It is always boasting of its rich relative. In England the creed is made by law, the same as we pass statutes here. And when a gentleman dies in England, in order to determine whether he shall be saved or

not, it is necessary for the power of heaven to read the acts of Parliament. It becomes a question of law, and sometimes a man is damned on a very nice point. Lost on demurrer.

A few years ago, a gentleman by the name of Seabury, Samuel Seabury, was sent over to England to get some apostolic succession. We had not a drop in the house. It was necessary for the bishops of the English Church to put their hands upon his head. They refused. There was no act of Parliament justifying it. He had then to go to the Scotch bishops; and, had the Scotch bishops refused, we never would have had any apostolic succession in the New World, and God would have been driven out of half the earth, and the true church never could have been founded upon this continent. But the Scotch bishops put their hands on his head, and now we have an unbroken succession of heads and hands from St. Paul to the last bishop.

In this country the Episcopalians have done some good, and I want to thank that church. Having on an average less religion than the others - on an average you have done more good to mankind. You preserved some of the humanities. You did not hate music; you did not absolutely despise painting, and you did not altogether abhor architecture, and you finally admitted that it was no worse to keep time with your feet than with your hands. And some went so far as to say that people could play cards, and that God would overlook it, or would look the other way. For all these things accept my thanks.

When I was a boy, the other churches looked upon dancing as probably the mysterious sin against the Holy Ghost; and they used to teach that when four boys got in a hay-mow, playing seven-up, that the eternal God stood whetting the sword of his eternal wrath waiting to strike them down to the lowest hell. That church has done some good.

The Episcopal creed is substantially like the Catholic, containing a few additional absurdities. The Episcopalians teach that it is easier to get forgiveness for sin after you have been baptized. They seem to think that the moment you are baptized you become a member of the firm, and as such are entitled to wickedness at cost. This church is utterly unsuited to a free people. Its government is tyrannical, supercilious and absurd. Bishops talk as though they were responsible for the souls in their charge. They wear vests that button on one side. Nothing is so essential to the clergy of this denomination as a good voice. The Episcopalians have persecuted just to the extent of their power. Their treatment of the Irish has been a crime a crime lasting for three hundred years. That church persecuted the Puritans of England and the Presbyterians of Scotland. In England the altar is the mistress of the throne, and this mistress has always looked at honest wives with scorn.

VIII THE METHODISTS

ABOUT a hundred and fifty years ago, two men, John Wesley and George Whitfield, said, If everybody is going to hell, somebody ought to mention it. The Episcopal clergy said: Keep still; do not tear your gown. Wesley and Whitfield said: This frightful truth ought to be proclaimed from the housetop of every opportunity, from the highway of every occasion. They were good, honest men. They believed their doctrine. And they said: If there is a hell, and a Niagara of souls pouring over an eternal precipice of ignorance, somebody ought to say something. They were right; somebody ought, if such a thing is true. Wesley was a believer in the Bible. He believed in the actual presence of the Almighty. God used to do miracles for him; used to put off a rain several days to give his meeting a chance; used to cure his horse of lameness; used to cure Mr. Wesley's headaches.

And Mr. Wesley also believed in the actual existence of the devil. He believed that devils had possession of people. He talked to the devil when he was in folks, and the devil told him that he was going to leave; and that he was going into another person. That he would be there at a, certain time; and Wesley went to that other person, and there the devil was, prompt to the minute. He regarded every conversion as warfare between God and this devil for the possession of that human soul, and that in the warfare God had gained the victory. Honest, no doubt. Mr. Wesley did not believe in human liberty. Honest, no doubt. Was opposed to the liberty of the colonies. Honestly so. Mr. Wesley preached a sermon entitled: "The Cause and Cure of Earth quakes," in which he took the ground that earthquakes were caused by sin; and the only way to stop them was to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. No doubt an honest man.

Wesley and Whitfield fell out on the question of predestination. Wesley insisted that God invited everybody to the feast. Whitfield said he did not invite those he knew would not come. Wesley said he did. Whitfield said: Well, he did not put plates for them, anyway. Wesley said he did. So that, when they were in hell he could show them that there was a seat left for them. The church that they founded is still active. And probably no church in the world has done so much preaching for as little money as the Methodists. Whitfield believed in slavery, and advocated the slave-trade. And it was of Whitfield that Whittier made the two lines:

"He bade the slave ships speed from coast to coast,
Fanned by the wings of the Holy Ghost"

We have lately had a meeting of the Methodists, and I find by their statistics that they believe that they have converted 130,000 folks in a year. That, in order to do this, they have 26,000 preachers, 226,000 Sunday school scholars, and about \$100,000,000 invested in church property. I find, in looking over the history of the world, that there are 40,000,000 or 50,000,000 of people born a year, and if they are saved at the rate of 130,000 a year, about how long will it take that doctrine to save this world? Good, honest people; but they are mistaken.

In old times they were very simple. Churches used to be like barns. They used to have them divided - men on that side, and women on this. A little barbarous. We have advanced since then, and we now find as a fact, demonstrated by experience, that a man sitting by the woman he loves can thank God as heartily as though sitting between two men that he has never been introduced to.

There is another thing the Methodists should remember, and that is that the Episcopalians were the greatest enemies they ever had. And they should remember that the Freethinkers have always treated them kindly and well.

There is one thing about the Methodist Church in the North that I like. But I find that it is not Methodism that does that. I find that the Methodist Church in the South is as much opposed to liberty as the Methodist Church North is in favor of liberty. So it is not Methodism that is in favor of liberty or slavery. They differ a little in their creed from the rest. They do not believe that God does everything. They believe that he does his part, and that you must do the rest, and that getting to heaven is a partnership business. The Methodist Church is adapted to new countries - its ministers are generally uncultured, and with them zeal takes the place of knowledge. They convert people with noise. In the silence that follows most of the converts backslide.

In a little while a struggle will commence between the few who are growing and the orthodox many. The few will be driven out and the church will be governed by those who believe without understanding.

IX

THE PRESBYTERIANS

THE next church is the Presbyterian, and in my judgment the worst of all, as far as creed is concerned. This church was founded by John Calvin, a murderer!

John Calvin, having power in Geneva, inaugurated human torture. Voltaire abolished torture in France. The man who abolished torture, if the Christian

religion be true, God is now torturing in hell, and the man who inaugurated torture, is now a glorified angel in heaven. It will not do.

John Knox started this doctrine in Scotland, and there is this peculiarity about Presbyterianism it grows best where the soil is poorest. I read the other day an account of a meeting between John Knox and John Calvin. Imagine a dialogue between a pestilence and a famine! Imagine a conversation between a block and an ax! As I read their conversation it seemed to me as though John Knox and John Calvin were made for each other; that they fitted each other like the upper and lower jaws of a wild beast. They believed happiness was a crime; they looked upon laughter as blasphemy; and they did all they could to destroy every human feeling, and to fill the mind with the infinite gloom of predestination and eternal death. They taught the doctrine that God had a right to damn us because he made us. That is just the reason that he has not a right to damn us. There is some dust. Unconscious dust! What right has God to change that unconscious dust into a human being, when he knows that human being will sin; when he knows that human being will suffer eternal agony? Why not leave him in the unconscious dust? What right has an infinite God to add to the sum of human agony? Suppose I knew that I could change that piece of furniture into a living, sentient human being, and I knew that that being would suffer untold agony forever. If I did it, I would be a fiend. I would leave that being in the unconscious dust, and yet we are told that we must believe such a doctrine or we are to be eternally damned! It will not do.

In 1839 there was a division in this church, and they had a lawsuit to see which was the church of God. And they tried it by a judge and jury, and the jury decided that the new school was the church of God, and then they got a new trial, and the next jury decided that the old school was the church of God, and that settled it. That church teaches that infinite innocence was sacrificed for me! I do not want it! I do not wish to go to heaven unless I can settle by the books, and go there because I ought to go there. I have said, and I say again, I do not wish to be a charity angel I have no ambition to become a winged pauper of the skies.

The other day a young gentleman, a Presbyterian who had just been converted, came to me and he gave me a tract, and he told me he was perfectly happy. Said I, "Do you think a great many people are going to hell?" "Oh, yes." "And you are perfectly happy?" Well, he did not know as he was, quite. "Would not you be happier if they were all going to heaven?" "Oh, yes." "Well, then, you are not perfectly happy?" No, he did not think he was. "When you get to heaven, then you will be perfectly happy?" "Oh, yes." "Now, when we are only going to hell, you are not quite happy; but when we are in hell, and you in heaven, then you will be perfectly happy? You will not be as decent when you get to be an angel as you are now, will you?" "Well," he said, "that was not exactly it." Said I,

"Suppose your mother were in hell, would you be happy in heaven then?" "Well," he says, "I suppose God would know the best place for mother." And I thought to myself, then, if I was a woman, I would like to have five or six boys like that.

It will not do. Heaven is where those are we love, and those who love us. And I wish to go to no world unless I can be accompanied by those who love me here. Talk about the consolations of this infamous doctrine. The consolations of a doctrine that makes a father say, "I can be happy with my daughter in hell;" that makes a mother say, "I can be happy with my generous, brave boy in hell;" that makes a boy say, "I can enjoy the glory of heaven with the woman who bore me, the woman *who would have died for me*, in eternal agony." And they call that tidings of great joy.

No church has done more to fill the world with gloom than the Presbyterian. Its creed is frightful, hideous, and hellish. The Presbyterian god is the monster of monsters. He is an eternal executioner, jailer and turnkey. He will enjoy forever the shrieks of the lost, the wails of the damned. Hell is the festival of the Presbyterian god.

X.

THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE

I HAVE not time to speak of the Baptists, - that Jeremy Taylor said were as much to be rooted out as anything that is the greatest pest and nuisance on the earth. He hated the Baptists because they represented, in some little degree, the liberty of thought. Nor have I time to speak of the Quakers, the best of all, and abused by all. I cannot forget that John Fox, in the year of grace 1640, was put in the pillory and whipped from town to town, scarred, put in a dungeon, beaten, trampled upon, and what for? Simply because he preached the doctrine: "Thou shall not resist evil with evil." "Thou shall love thy enemies." Think of what the church must have been that day to scar the flesh of that loving man! Just think of it! I say I have not time to speak of all these sects the varieties of Presbyterians and Campbellites. There are hundreds and hundreds of these sects, all founded upon this creed that I read, differing simply in degree.

Ah! but they say to me: You are righting something that is dead. Nobody believes this now. The preachers do not believe what they preach in the pulpit. The people in the pews do not believe what they hear preached. And they say to me: You are righting something that is dead. This is all a form; we do not believe a solitary creed in the world. We sign them and swear that we believe them, but we do not. And none of us do. And all the ministers, they say in private, admit

that they do not believe it, not quite. I do not know whether this is so or not. I take it that they believe what they preach. I take it that when they meet and solemnly agree to a creed, they are honest and really believe in that creed. But let us see if I am waging a war against the ideas of the dead. Let us see if I am simply storming a cemetery.

The Evangelical Alliance, made up of all orthodox denominations of the world, met only a few years ago, and here is their creed: They believe in the divine inspiration, authority and sufficiency of the holy Scriptures; the right and duty of private judgment in the interpretation of the holy Scriptures, but if you interpret wrong you are damned. They believe in the unity of the godhead and the Trinity of the persons therein. They believe in the utter depravity of human nature. There can be no more infamous doctrine than that. They look upon a little child as a lump of depravity. I look upon it as a bud of humanity that will, in the air and light of love and joy, blossom into rich and glorious life.

Total depravity of human nature! Here is a woman whose husband has been lost at sea; the news comes that he has been drowned by the ever-hungry waves, and she waits. There is something in her heart that tells her he is alive. And she waits. And years afterward as she looks down toward the little gate she sees him; he has been given back by the sea, and she rushes to his arms, and covers his face with kisses and with tears. And if that infamous doctrine is true every tear is a crime, and every kiss a blasphemy. It will not do. According to that doctrine, if a man steals and repents, and takes back the property, the repentance and the taking back of the property are two other crimes. It is an infamy. What else do they believe? "The justification of a sinner by faith alone," without works just faith. Believing something that you do not understand. Of course God can not afford to reward a man for believing anything that is reasonable. God rewards only for believing something that is unreasonable. If you believe something that is improbable and unreasonable, you are a Christian; but if you believe something that you know is not so, then, — you are a saint.

They believe in the eternal blessedness of the righteous, and in the eternal punishment of the wicked.

Tidings of great joy! They are so good that they will not associate with Universalists. They will not associate with Unitarians; they will not associate with scientists; they will only associate with those who believe that God so loved the world that he made up his mind to damn the most of us.

The Evangelical Alliance reiterates the absurdities of the Dark Ages - repeats the five points of Calvin - replenishes the fires of hell - certifies to the mistakes and miracles of the Bible - maligns the human race, and kneels to a god who accepted the agony of the innocent as an atonement for the guilt.

XI WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE?

THEN they say to me: "What do you propose? You have torn this down, what do you propose to give us in place of it?" I have not torn the good down. I have only endeavored to trample out the ignorant, cruel fires of hell. I do not tear away the passage: "God will be merciful to the merciful." I do not destroy the promise; "If you will forgive others, God will forgive you." I would not for anything blot out the faintest star that shines in the horizon of human despair, nor in the sky of human hope; but I will do what I can to get that infinite shadow out of the heart of man.

"What do you propose in place of this?"

Well, in the first place, I propose good fellowship - good friends all around. No matter what we believe, shake hands and let it go. That is your opinion; this is mine: let us be friends. Science makes friends; religion, superstition, makes enemies. They say: Belief is important. I say: No, actions are important. Judge by deed, not by creed. Good fellowship - good friends sincere men and women mutual - forbearance, born of mutual respect. We have had too many of these solemn people. Whenever I see an exceedingly solemn man, I know he is an exceedingly stupid man. No man of any humor ever founded a religion - never. Humor sees both sides. While reason is the holy light, humor carries the lantern, and the man with a keen sense of humor is preserved from the solemn stupidities of superstition. I like a man who has got good feeling for every body; good fellowship. One man said to another:

"Will you take a glass of wine?"

"I do not drink."

"Will you smoke a cigar?"

"I do not smoke."

"Maybe you will chew something?"

"I do not chew."

"Let us eat some hay."

"I tell you I do not eat hay."

"Well, then, good-by, for you are no company for man or beast."

I believe in the gospel of Cheerfulness, the gospel of Good Nature; the gospel of Good Health. Let us pay some attention to our bodies. Take care of our bodies, and our souls will take care of themselves. Good health! And I believe the time will come when the public thought will be so great and grand that it will be looked upon as infamous to perpetuate disease. I believe the time will come

when man will not fill the future with consumption and insanity. I believe the time will come when we will study ourselves, and understand the laws of health and then we will say: We are under obligation to put the flags of health in the cheeks of our children. Even if I got to heaven, and had a harp, I would hate to look back upon my children and grandchildren, and see them diseased, deformed, crazed - all suffering the penalties of crimes I had committed.

I believe in the gospel of Good Living. You can not make any god happy by fasting. Let us have good food, and let us have it well cooked - and it is a thousand times better to know how to cook than it is to understand any theology in the world. I believe in the gospel of good clothes; I believe in the gospel of good houses; in the gospel of water and soap. I believe in the gospel of intelligence; in the gospel of education. The schoolhouse is my cathedral. The universe is my Bible. I believe in that gospel of justice, that we must reap what we sow.

I do not believe in forgiveness as it is preached by the church. We do not need the forgiveness of God, but of each other and of ourselves. If I rob Mr. Smith and God forgives me, how does that help Smith? If I, by slander, cover some poor girl with the leprosy of some imputed crime, and she withers away like a blighted flower and afterward I get the forgiveness of God, how does that help her? If there is another world, we have got to settle with the people we have wronged in this. No bankrupt court there. Every cent must be paid.

The Christians say that among the ancient Jews, if you committed a crime you had to kill a sheep. Now they say "charge it." "Put it on the slate." It will not do. For every crime you commit you must answer to yourself and to the one you injure. And if you have ever clothed another with woe, as with a garment of pain, you will never be quite as happy as though you had not done that thing. No forgiveness by the gods. Eternal, inexorable, everlasting justice, so far as Nature is concerned. You must reap the result of your acts. Even when forgiven by the one you have injured, it is not as though the injury had not been done. That is what I believe in. And if it goes hard with me, I will stand it, and I will cling to my logic, and I will bear it like a man.

And I believe, too, in the gospel of Liberty, in giving to others what we claim for ourselves. I believe there is room everywhere for thought, and the more liberty you give away, the more you will have. In liberty extravagance is economy. Let us be just. Let us be generous to each other.

I believe in the gospel of Intelligence. That is the only lever capable of raising mankind. Intelligence must be the savior of this world. Humanity is the grand religion, and no God can put a man in hell in another world, who has made a

little heaven in this. God cannot make a man miserable if that man has made somebody else happy. God cannot hate anybody who is capable of loving anybody. Humanity - that word embraces all there is.

So I believe in this great gospel of Humanity.

"Ah! but," they say, "it will not do. You must believe." I say, No. My gospel of health will bring life. My gospel of intelligence, my gospel of good living, my gospel of good-fellowship will cover the world with happy homes. My doctrine will put carpets upon your floors, pictures upon your walls. My doctrine will put books upon your shelves, ideas in your minds. My doctrine will rid the world of the abnormal monsters born of ignorance and superstition. My doctrine will give us health, wealth and happiness. That is what I want. That is what I believe in. Give us intelligence. In a little while a man will find that he can not steal without robbing himself. He will find that he cannot murder without assassinating his own joy. He will find that every crime is a mistake. He will find that only that man carries the cross who does wrong, and that upon the man who does right the cross turns to wings that will bear him upward forever. He will find that even intelligent self-love embraces within its mighty arms the entire human race.

"Oh," but they say to me, "you take away immortality." I do not. If we are immortal it is a fact in nature, and we are not indebted to priests for it, nor to bibles for it, and it cannot be destroyed by unbelief.

As long as we love we will hope to live, and when the one dies that we love we will say: "Oh, that we could meet again," and whether we do or not it will not be the work of theology. It will be a fact in nature. I would not for my life destroy one star of human hope, but I want it so that when a poor woman rocks the cradle and sings a lullaby to the dimpled darling, she will not be compelled to believe that ninety-nine chances in a hundred she is raising kindling wood for hell.

One world at a time is my doctrine.

It is said in this Testament, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof;" and I say: Sufficient unto each world is the evil thereof.

And suppose after all that death does end all. Next to eternal joy, next to being forever with those we love and those who have loved us, next to that, is to be wrapt in the dreamless drapery of eternal peace. Next to eternal life is eternal sleep. Upon the shadowy shore of death the sea of trouble casts no wave. Eyes that have been curtained by the everlasting dark, will never know again the burning touch of tears. Lips touched by eternal silence will never speak again the broken words of grief. Hearts of dust do not break. The dead do not weep.

Within the tomb no veiled and weeping sorrow sits, and in the rayless gloom is crouched no shuddering fear.

I had rather think of those I have loved, and lost, as having returned to earth, as having become a part of the elemental wealth of the world - I would rather think of them as unconscious dust, I would rather dream of them as gurgling in the streams, floating in the clouds, bursting in the foam of light upon the shores of worlds, I would rather think of them as the lost visions of a forgotten night, than to have even the faintest fear that their naked souls have been clutched by an orthodox god. I will leave my dead where nature leaves them. Whatever flower of hope springs up in my heart I will cherish, I will give it breath of sighs and rain of tears. But I can not believe that there is any being 'in this universe who has created a human soul for eternal pain. I would rather that every god would destroy himself; I would rather that we all should go to eternal chaos, to black and starless night, than that just one soul should suffer eternal agony.

I have made up my mind that if there is a God, he will be merciful to the merciful.

Upon that rock I stand. -

That he will not torture the forgiving. -

Upon that rock I stand. -

That every man should be true to himself, and that there is no world, no star, in which honesty is a crime. -

Upon that rock I stand. The honest man, the good woman, the happy child, have nothing to fear, either in this world or the world to come.

Upon that rock I stand.

End of Vol I.

DRESDEN EDITION

THE WORKS
OF
Robert G. Ingersoll

"THE CLERGY KNOW, THAT I KNOW,
THAT THEY DON'T KNOW"

IN TWELVE VOLUMES
VOLUME II

LECTURES

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CONTENTS OF VOLUME II

SOME MISTAKES OF MOSES.

(1871.)

Preface—I. He who endeavors to control the Mind by Force is a Tyrant, and he who submits is a Slave—All I Ask—When a Religion is Founded—Freedom for the Orthodox Clergy—Every Minister an Attorney—Submission to the Orthodox and the Dead—Bounden Duty of the Ministry—The Minister Factory at Andover—II. Free Schools—No Sectarian Sciences—Religion and the Schools—Scientific Hypocrites—III. The Politicians and the Churches—IV. Man and Woman the Highest Possible Titles—Belief Dependent on Surroundings—Worship of Ancestors—Blindness Necessary to Keeping the Narrow Path—The Bible the Chain that Binds—A Bible of the Middle Ages and the Awe it Inspired—V. The Pentateuch—Moses Not the Author—Belief out of which Grew Religious Ceremonies—Egypt the Source of the Information of Moses—VI. Monday—Nothing, in the Light of Raw Material—The Story of Creation Begun—The Same Story, substantially, Found in the Records of Babylon. Egypt, and India—Inspiration Unnecessary to the Truth—Usefulness of Miracles to Fit Lies to Facts—Division of Darkness and Light—VII. Tuesday—The Firmament and Some Biblical Notions about it—Laws of Evaporation Unknown to the Inspired Writer—VIII. Wednesday—The Waters Gathered into Seas—Fruit and Nothing to Eat it—Five Epochs in the Organic History of the Earth—Balance between the Total Amounts of Animal and Vegetable Life—Vegetation Prior to the Appearance of the Sun—IX. Thursday—Sun and Moon Manufactured—Magnitude of the Solar Orb—Dimensions of Some of the Planets—Moses' Guess at the Size of Sun and Moon—Joshua's Control of the Heavenly Bodies—A Hypothesis Urged by Ministers—The Theory of "Refraction"—Rev. Henry Morey—Astronomical Knowledge of Chinese Savants—The Motion of the Earth Reversed by Jehovah for the Reassurance of Ahaz—"Errors" Renounced by Button—X. "He made the Stars Also"—Distance of the Nearest Star—XI. Friday—Whales and Other Living Creatures Produced—XII. Saturday—Reproduction Inaugurated—XIII. "Let Us Make Man"—Human Beings Created in the Physical Image and Likeness of God—Inquiry as to the Process Adopted—Development of Living Forms According to Evolution—How Were Adam and Eve Created?—The Rib Story—Age of Man Upon the Earth—A Statue Apparently Made before the World—XIV. Sunday—Sacredness of the Sabbath Destroyed by the Theory of Vast "Periods"—Reflections on the Sabbath—XV. The Necessity for a Good Memory—The Two Accounts of the Creation in Genesis I and II—Order of Creation in the First Account—Order of Creation in the Second Account—Fastidiousness of Adam in the Choice of a Helpmeet—Dr. Adam Clark's Commentary—Dr. Scott's Guess—Dr. Matthew Henry's Admission—The Blonde and Brunette Problem—The Result of Unbelief and the Reward of Faith—"Give Him a Harp"—XVI. The Garden—Location of Eden—The Four Rivers—The Tree

of Knowledge—Andover Appealed To—XVII. The Fall—The Serpent—Dr. Adam Clark Gives a Zoological Explanation —Dr. Henry Dissents—Whence This Serpent?—XVIII. Dampness—A Race of Giants—Wickedness of Mankind—An Ark Constructed—A Universal Flood Indicated—Animals Probably Admitted to the Ark —How Did They Get There?—Problem of Food and Service- A Shoreless Sea Covered with Innumerable Dead—Drs. Clark and Henry on the Situation—The Ark Takes Ground—New Difficulties—Noah’s Sacrifice—The Rainbow as a Memorandum—Babylonian, Egyptian, and Indian Legends of a Flood—XIX. Bacchus and Babel —Interest Attaching to Noah—Where Did Our First Parents and the Serpent Acquire a Common Language?—Babel and the Confusion of Tongues—XX. Faith in Filth—Immodesty of Biblical Diction—XXI. The Hebrews—God’s Promises to Abraham—The Sojourning of Israel in Egypt—Marvelous Increase—Moses and Aaron—XXII. The Plagues—Competitive Miracle Working—Defeat of the Local Magicians—XXIII. The Flight Out of Egypt—Three Million People in a Desert—Destruction of Pharaoh and His Host—Manna—A Superfluity of Quails—Rev. Alexander Cruden’s Commentary—Hornets as Allies of the Israelites—Durability of the Clothing of the Jewish People—An Ointment Monopoly—Consecration of Priests— The Crime of Becoming a Mother—The Ten Commandments—Medical Ideas of Jehovah—Character of the God of the Pentateuch—XXIV. Confess and Avoid—XXV. “Inspired” Slavery—XXVI. “Inspired” Marriage—XXVII. “Inspired” War—XXVIII. “Inspired” Religious Liberty—XXIX. Conclusion.

SOME REASONS WHY.
(1881.)

I—Religion makes Enemies—Hatred in the Name of Universal Benevolence—No Respect for the Rights of Barbarians—Literal Fulfillment of a New Testament Prophecy—II. Duties to God—Can we Assist God?—An Infinite Personality an Infinite Impossibility—III. Inspiration—What it Really Is—Indication of Clams—Multitudinous Laughter of the Sea—Horace Greeley and the Mammoth Trees A Landscape Compared to a Table-cloth—The Supernatural is the Deformed—Inspiration in the Man as well as in the Book—Our Inspired Bible—IV. God’s Experiment with the Jews—Miracles of One Religion never astonish the Priests of Another—“I am a Liar Myself”—V. Civilized Countries—Crimes once regarded as Divine Institutions—What the Believer in the Inspiration of the Bible is Compelled to Say—Passages apparently written by the Devil—VI. A Comparison of Books—Advancing a Cannibal from Missionary to Mutton—Contrast between the Utterances of Jehovah and those of Reputable Heathen—Epictetus, Cicero, Zeno, Seneca—the Hindu, Antoninus, Marcus Aurelius—The Avesta—VII. Monotheism—Egyptians before Moses taught there was but One God and Married but One Wife—Persians and Hindoos had a Single Supreme Deity—Rights of Roman Women—Marvels of Art achieved without the

Assistance of Heaven—Probable Action of the Jewish Jehovah incarnated as Man—VIII. The New Testament—Doctrine of Eternal Pain brought to Light—Discrepancies—Human Weaknesses cannot be Predicated of Divine Wisdom—Why there are Four Gospels according to Irenaeus—The Atonement—Remission of Sins under the Mosaic Dispensation—Christians say, “Charge it”—God’s Forgiveness does not Repair an Injury—Suffering of Innocence for the Guilty—Salvation made Possible by Jehovah’s Failure to Civilize the Jews—Necessity of Belief not taught in the Synoptic Gospels—Non-resistance the Offspring of Weakness—IX. Christ’s Mission—All the Virtues had been Taught before his Advent—Perfect and Beautiful Thoughts of his Pagan Predecessors—St. Paul Contrasted with Heathen Writers—“The Quality of Mercy”—X. Eternal Pain—An Illustration of Eternal Punishment—Captain Kreuger of the Barque Tiger—XI. Civilizing Influence of the Bible—Its Effects on the Jews —If Christ was God. Did he not, in his Crucifixion, Reap what he had Sown?—Nothing can add to the Misery of a Nation whose King is Jehovah.

ORTHODOXY.
(1884.)

Orthodox Religion Dying Out—Religious Deaths and Births—The Religion of Reciprocity—Every Language has a Cemetery—Orthodox Institutions Survive through the Money invested in them—“Let us tell our Real Names”—The Blows that have Shattered the Shield and Shivered the Lance of Superstition—Mohammed’s Successful Defense of the Sepulcher of Christ—The Destruction of Art—The Discovery of America—Although he made it himself, the Holy Ghost was Ignorant of the Form of this Earth—Copernicus and Kepler—Special Providence—The Man and the Ship he did not Take—A Thanksgiving Proclamation Contradicted—Charles Darwin—Henry Ward Beecher—The Creeds—The Latest Creed—God as a Governor —The Love of God—The Fall of Man—We are Bound by Representatives without a Chance to Vote against Them—The Atonement —The Doctrine of Depravity a Libel on the Human Race—The Second Birth—A Unitarian Universalist—Inspiration of the Scriptures —God a Victim of his own Tyranny—In the New Testament Trouble Commences at Death—The Reign of Truth and Love—The Old Spaniard who Died without an Enemy—The Wars it Brought—Consolation should be Denied to Murderers—At the Rate at which Heathen are being Converted, how long will it take to Establish Christ’s Kingdom on Earth?—The Resurrection—The Judgment Day —Pious Evasions—“We shall not Die, but we shall all be Hanged”—“No Bible, no Civilization” Miracles of the New Testament—Nothing Written by Christ or his Contemporaries—Genealogy of Jesus—More Miracles—A Master of Death—Improbable that he would be Crucified—The Loaves and Fishes—How did it happen that the Miracles Convinced so Few?—The Resurrection—The Ascension—Was the Body Spiritual—Parting from the

Disciples—Casting out Devils—Necessity of Belief—God should be consistent in the Matter of forgiving Enemies—Eternal Punishment—Some Good Men who are Damned—Another Objection—Love the only Bow on Life's dark Cloud—"Now is the accepted Time"—Rather than this Doctrine of Eternal Punishment Should be True—I would rather that every Planet should in its Orbit wheel a barren Star—What I Believe—Immortality—It existed long before Moses—Consolation—The Promises are so Far Away, and the Dead are so Near—Death a Wall or a Door—A Fable—Orpheus and Eurydice.

MYTH AND MIRACLE.
(1885.)

I. Happiness the true End and Aim of Life—Spiritual People and their Literature—Shakespeare's Clowns superior to Inspired Writers—Beethoven's Sixth Symphony Preferred to the Five Books of Moses—Venus of Milo more Pleasing than the Presbyterian Creed—II. Religions Naturally Produced—Poets the Myth-makers—The Sleeping Beauty—Orpheus and Eurydice—Red Riding Hood—The Golden Age—Elysian Fields—The Flood Myth—Myths of the Seasons—III. The Sun-god—Jonah, Buddha, Krishna, Horus, Zoroaster—December as a Birthday of Gods—Christ a Sun-God—The Cross a Symbol of the Life to Come—When Nature rocked the Cradle of the Infant World—IV. Difference between a Myth and a Miracle—Raising the Dead, Past and Present—Miracles of Jehovah—Miracles of Christ—Everything Told except the Truth—The Mistake of the World—V. Beginning of Investigation—The Stars as Witnesses against Superstition—Martyrdom of Bruno—Geology—Steam and Electricity—Nature forever the Same—Persistence of Force—Cathedral, Mosque, and Joss House have the same Foundation—Science the Providence of Man—VI. To Soften the Heart of God—Martyrs—The God was Silent—Credulity a Vice—Develop the Imagination—"The Skylark" and "The Daisy"—VII. How are we to Civilize the World?—Put Theology out of Religion—Divorce of Church and State—Secular Education—-Godless Schools—VIII. The New Jerusalem—Knowledge of the Supernatural possessed by Savages—Beliefs of Primitive Peoples—Science is Modest—Theology Arrogant—Torquemada and Bruno on the Day of Judgment—IX. Poison of Superstition in the Mother's Milk—Ability of Mistakes to take Care of Themselves—Longevity of Religious Lies—Mother's religion pleaded by the Cannibal—The Religion of Freedom—O Liberty, thou art the God of my Idolatry.

PREFACE.

For many years I have regarded the Pentateuch simply as a record of a barbarous people, in which are found a great number of the ceremonies of savagery, many absurd and unjust laws, and thousands of ideas inconsistent with known and demonstrated facts. To me it seemed almost a crime to teach that this record was written by inspired men; that slavery, polygamy, wars of conquest and extermination were right, and that there was a time when men could win the approbation of infinite Intelligence, Justice, and Mercy, by violating maidens and by butchering babes. To me it seemed more reasonable that savage men had made these laws; and I endeavored in a lecture, entitled "Some Mistakes of Moses," to point out some of the errors, contradictions, and impossibilities contained in the Pentateuch. The lecture was never written and consequently never delivered twice the same. On several occasions it was reported and published without consent, and without revision. All these publications were grossly and glaringly incorrect. As published, they have been answered several hundred times, and many of the clergy are still engaged in the great work. To keep these reverend gentlemen from wasting their talents on the mistakes of reporters and printers, I concluded to publish the principal points in all my lectures on this subject. And here, it may be proper for me to say, that arguments cannot be answered by personal abuse; that there is no logic in slander, and that falsehood, in the long run, defeats itself. **People who love their enemies should, at least, tell the truth about their friends.** Should it turn out that I am the worst man in the whole world, the story of the flood will remain just as improbable as before, and the contradictions of the Pentateuch will still demand an explanation.

There was a time when a falsehood, fulminated from the pulpit, smote like a sword; but, the supply having greatly exceeded the demand, clerical misrepresentation has at last become almost an innocent amusement. Remembering that only a few years ago men, women, and even children, were imprisoned, tortured and burned, for having expressed in an exceedingly mild and gentle way, the ideas entertained by me, I congratulate myself that calumny is now the pulpit's last resort. The old instruments of torture are kept only to gratify curiosity; the chains are rusting away, and the demolition of time has allowed even the dungeons of the Inquisition to be visited by light. The church, impotent and malicious, regrets, not the abuse, but the loss of her power, and seeks to hold by falsehood what she gained by cruelty and force, by fire and fear. **Christianity cannot live in peace with any other form of faith.** If that religion be true, there is but one savior, one inspired book, and but one little narrow grass-grown path that leads to heaven. Such a religion is necessarily uncompromising, unreasoning, aggressive and insolent. Christianity has held all other creeds and forms in infinite contempt, divided the world into enemies and friends, and verified the awful declaration of its founder—a declaration that wet with blood the sword he came to bring, and made the horizon of a thousand years lurid with the fagots' flames.

Too great praise challenges attention, and often brings to light a thousand faults that otherwise the general eye would never see. Were we allowed to read the Bible as we do all other books, we would admire its beauties, treasure its worthy thoughts, and account for all its absurd, grotesque and cruel things, by saying that its authors lived in rude, barbaric times. But we are told that it was written by inspired men; that it contains the will of God; that it is perfect, pure, and true in all its parts; the source and standard of all moral and religious truth; that it is the star and anchor of all human hope; the only guide for man, the only torch in Nature's night. These claims are so at variance with every known

recorded fact, so palpably absurd, that every free, unbiased soul is forced to raise the standard of revolt.

We read the pagan sacred books with profit and delight. With myth and fable we are ever charmed, and find a pleasure in the endless repetition of the beautiful, poetic, and absurd. We find, in all these records of the past, philosophies and dreams, and efforts stained with tears, of great and tender souls who tried to pierce the mystery of life and death, to answer the eternal questions of the Whence and Whither, and vainly sought to make, with bits of shattered glass, a mirror that would, in very truth, reflect the face and form of Nature's perfect self.

These myths were born of hopes, and fears, and tears, and smiles, and they were touched and colored by all there is of joy and grief between the rosy dawn of birth, and death's sad night. They clothed even the stars with passion, and gave to gods the faults and frailties of the sons of men. In them, the winds and waves were music, and all the lakes, and streams, and springs,—the mountains, woods and perfumed dells were haunted by a thousand fairy forms. They thrilled the veins of Spring with tremulous desire; made tawny Summer's billowed breast the throne and home of love; filled Autumn's arms with sun-kissed grapes, and gathered sheaves; and pictured Winter as a weak old king who felt, like Lear upon his withered face, Cordelia's tears. These myths, though false, are beautiful, and have for many ages and in countless ways, enriched the heart and kindled thought. But if the world were taught that all these things are true and all inspired of God, and that eternal punishment will be the lot of him who dares deny or doubt, the sweetest myth of all the Fable World would lose its beauty, and become a scorned and hateful thing to every brave and thoughtful man.

Robert G. Ingersoll.

Washington, D. C., *Oct. 7th*, 1879.

I.

SOME MISTAKES OF MOSES.

"HE WHO ENDEAVORS TO CONTROL THE MIND BY FORCE IS A TYRANT, AND HE
WHO SUBMITS IS A SLAVE."

I Want to do what little I can to make my country truly free, to broaden the intellectual horizon of our people, to destroy the **prejudices born of ignorance and fear**, to do away with **the blind worship of the ignoble past**, with the idea that all the great and good are dead, that the living are totally depraved, that all pleasures are sins, that sighs and groans are alone pleasing to God, that thought is dangerous, that intellectual courage is a crime, that cowardice is a virtue, that a certain belief is necessary to secure salvation, that to carry a cross in this world will give us a palm in the next, and that we must allow some priest to be the pilot of our souls.

Until every soul is freely permitted to investigate every book, and creed, and dogma for itself, the world cannot be free. Mankind will be enslaved until there is mental grandeur enough to allow each man to have his thought and say. This earth will be a paradise when men can, upon all these questions differ, and yet grasp each other's hands as friends. It is amazing to me that a difference of opinion upon subjects that we know nothing with certainty about, should make us hate, persecute, and despise each other. Why a difference of opinion upon predestination, or the Trinity, should make people imprison and burn each other seems beyond the comprehension of man; and yet in all countries where Christians have existed, they have destroyed each other to the exact extent of their power. Why should a believer in God hate an atheist? Surely the atheist has not injured God, and surely he is human, capable of joy and pain, and entitled to all the rights of man. Would it not be far better to treat this atheist, at least, as well as he treats us?

Christians tell me that they love their enemies, and yet all I ask is—not that they love their enemies, not that they love their friends even, but that they treat those who differ from them, with simple fairness. We do not wish to be forgiven, but we wish Christians to so act that we will not have to forgive them. If all will admit that all have an equal right to think, then the question is forever solved; but as long as organized and powerful churches, pretending to hold the keys of heaven and hell, denounce every person as an outcast and criminal who thinks for himself and denies their authority, the world will be filled with hatred and suffering. To hate man and worship God seems to be the sum of all the creeds.

That which has happened in most countries has happened in ours. When a religion is founded, the educated, the powerful—that is to say, the priests and nobles, tell the ignorant and superstitious—that is to say, the people, that the religion of their country was given to their fathers by God himself; that it is the only true religion; that all others were conceived in falsehood and brought forth in fraud, and that all who believe in the true religion will be happy forever, while all others will burn in hell. For the purpose of governing the people, that is to say, for the purpose of being supported by the people, the priests and nobles declare this religion to be sacred, and that whoever adds to, or takes from it, will be burned here by man, and hereafter by God. The result of this is, that the priests and nobles will not allow the people to change; and when, after a time, the priests, having intellectually advanced, wish to take a step in the direction of progress, the people will not allow them to change. At first, the rabble is enslaved by the priests, and afterwards the rabble become the masters.

One of the first things I wish to do, is to free the orthodox clergy. I am a great friend of theirs, and in spite of all they may say against me, I am going to do them a great and lasting service. Upon their necks are visible the marks of the collar, and upon their backs those of the lash. They are not allowed to read and think for themselves. They are taught like parrots, and the best are those who repeat, with the fewest mistakes, the sentences they have been taught. They sit like owls upon some dead limb of the tree of knowledge, and hoot the same old hoots that have been hooted for eighteen hundred years. Their congregations are not grand enough, nor sufficiently civilized, to be willing that the poor preachers shall think for themselves. They are not employed for that purpose. Investigation is regarded as a dangerous experiment, and the ministers are warned that none of that kind of work will be tolerated. They are notified to stand by the old creed, and to avoid all original thought, as a mortal pestilence. Every minister is employed like an attorney—either for plaintiff or defendant,—and he is expected to be true to his client. If he changes his mind, he is regarded as a deserter, and denounced, hated, and slandered accordingly. Every orthodox clergyman agrees not to change. He contracts not to find new facts, and makes a bargain that he will deny them if he does. Such is the position of a Protestant minister in this nineteenth century. His condition excites my pity; and to better it, I am going to do what little I can.

Some of the clergy have the independence to break away, and the intellect to maintain themselves as free men, but the most are compelled to **submit to the dictation of the orthodox**, and the dead. They are not employed to give their thoughts, but simply **to repeat the ideas of others**. They are not expected to give even the doubts that may suggest themselves, but are required to walk in the narrow, verdureless path trodden by the ignorance of the past. The forests and fields on either side are nothing to their. They must not even look at the purple

hills, nor pause to hear the babble of the brooks. They must remain in the dusty road where the guide-boards are. They must confine themselves to the "fall of man," the expulsion from the garden, the "scheme of salvation," the "second birth," the atonement, the happiness of the redeemed, and the misery of the lost. They must be careful not to express any new ideas upon these great questions. It is much safer for them to quote from the works of the dead. The more vividly they describe the sufferings of the unregenerate, of those who attended theatres and balls, and drank wine in summer gardens on the Sabbath-day, and laughed at priests, the better ministers they are supposed to be. They must show that misery fits the good for heaven, while happiness prepares the bad for hell; that the wicked get all their good things in this life, and the good all their evil; that in this world God punishes the people he loves, and in the next, the ones he hates; that happiness makes us bad here, but not in heaven; that pain makes us good here, but not in hell. No matter how absurd these things may appear to the carnal mind, they must be preached and they must be believed. If they were reasonable, there would be no virtue in believing. Even the publicans and sinners believe reasonable things. **To believe without evidence, or in spite of it,** is accounted as righteousness to the sincere and humble Christian.

The ministers are in duty bound to denounce all intellectual pride, and show that we are never quite so dear to God as when we admit that we are poor, corrupt and idiotic worms; that we never should have been born; that we ought to be damned without the least delay; that we are so infamous that we like to enjoy ourselves; that we love our wives and children better than our God; that we are generous only because we are vile; that we are honest from the meanest motives, and that sometimes we have fallen so low that we have had doubts about the inspiration of the Jewish Scriptures. In short, they are expected to denounce all pleasant paths and rustling trees, to curse the grass and flowers, and glorify the dust and weeds. They are expected to malign the wicked people in the green and happy fields, who sit and laugh beside the gurgling springs or climb the hills and wander as they will. They are expected to point out the dangers of freedom, the safety of implicit obedience, and to show the wickedness of philosophy, the goodness of faith, the immorality of science and the purity of ignorance.

Now and then a few pious people discover some young man of a religious turn of mind and a consumptive habit of body, not quite sickly enough to die, nor healthy enough to be wicked. The idea occurs to them that he would make a good orthodox minister. They take up a contribution, and send the young man to some theological school where he can be taught to repeat a creed and despise reason. Should it turn out that the young man had some mind of his own, and, after graduating, should change his opinions and preach a different doctrine from that taught in the school, every man who contributed a dollar towards his

education would feel that he had been robbed, and would denounce him as a dishonest and ungrateful wretch.

The pulpit should not be a pillory. Congregations should allow the minister a little liberty. **They should, at least, permit him to tell the truth.**

They have, in Massachusetts, at a place called Andover, a kind of minister factory, where each professor takes an oath once in five years—that time being considered the life of an oath—that he has not, during the last five years, and will not, during the next five years, intellectually advance. There is probably no oath that they could easier keep. Probably, since the foundation stone of that institution was laid there has not been a single case of perjury. **The old creed is still taught.** They still insist that God is infinitely wise, powerful and good, and that all men are totally depraved. They insist that the best man God ever made, deserved to be damned the moment he was finished. Andover puts its brand upon every minister it turns out, the same as Sheffield and Birmingham brand their wares, and all who see the brand know exactly what the minister believes, the books he has read, the arguments he relies on, and just what he intellectually is. They know just what he can be depended on to preach, and that he will continue to shrink and shrivel, and grow solemnly stupid day by day until he reaches the Andover of the grave and becomes truly orthodox forever.

I have not singled out the Andover factory because it is worse than the others. They are all about the same. The professors, for the most part, are ministers who failed in the pulpit and were retired to the seminary on account of their deficiency in reason and their excess of faith. As a rule, they know nothing of this world, and far less of the next; but they have the power of stating the most absurd propositions **with faces solemn as stupidity touched by fear.**

Something should be done for the liberation of these men. They should be allowed to grow—to have sunlight and air. They should no longer be chained and tied to confessions of faith, to mouldy books and musty creeds. Thousands of ministers are anxious to give their honest thoughts. The hands of wives and babes now stop their mouths. They must have bread, and so the husbands and fathers are forced to preach a doctrine that they hold in scorn. For the sake of shelter, food and clothes, they are obliged to defend the childish miracles of the past, and denounce the sublime discoveries of to-day. They are compelled to attack all modern thought, to point out the dangers of science, the wickedness of investigation and the corrupting influence of logic. It is for them to show that virtue rests upon ignorance and faith, while vice impudently feeds and fattens upon fact and demonstration. It is a part of their business to malign and vilify the Voltaires, Humes, Paines, Humboldts, Tyndalls, Haeckels, Darwins, Spencers, and Drapers, and to bow with uncovered heads before the murderers, adulterers,

and persecutors of the world. They are, for the most part, engaged in poisoning the minds of the young, prejudicing children against science, teaching the astronomy and geology of the Bible, and inducing all to desert the sublime standard of reason.

These orthodox ministers do not add to the sum of knowledge. They produce nothing. They live upon alms. They hate laughter and joy. They officiate at weddings, sprinkle water upon babes, and utter meaningless words and barren promises above the dead. They laugh at the agony of unbelievers, mock at their tears, and of their sorrows make a jest. There are some noble exceptions. Now and then a pulpit holds a brave and honest man. Their congregations are willing that they should think – willing that their ministers should have a little freedom.

As we become civilized, more and more liberty will be accorded to these men, until finally ministers will give their best and highest thoughts. The congregations will finally get tired of hearing about the patriarchs and saints, the miracles and wonders, and will insist upon knowing something about the men and women of our day, and the accomplishments and discoveries of our time. They will finally insist upon knowing how to escape the evils of this world instead of the next. They will ask light upon the enigmas of this life. They will wish to know what we shall do with our criminals instead of what God will do with his – how we shall do away with beggary and want – with crime and misery – with prostitution, disease and famine, – with tyranny in all its cruel forms – with prisons and scaffolds, and how we shall reward the honest workers, and fill the world with happy homes! These are the problems for the pulpits and congregations of an enlightened future. If Science cannot finally answer these questions, it is a vain and worthless thing.

The clergy, however, will continue to answer them in the old way, until their congregations are good enough to set them free. They will still talk about believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, as though that were the only remedy for all human ills. They will still teach that retrogression is the only path that leads to light; that we must go back, that faith is the only sure guide, and that reason is a delusive glare, lighting only the road to eternal pain.

Until the clergy are free they cannot be intellectually honest. We can never tell what they really believe until they know that they can safely speak. They console themselves now by a secret resolution to be as liberal as they dare, with the hope that they can finally educate their congregations to the point of allowing them to think a little for themselves. They hardly know what they ought to do. The best part of their lives has been wasted in studying subjects of no possible value. Most of them are married, have families, and know but one way of making their living. Some of them say that if they do not preach these foolish dogmas, others

will, and that they may through fear, after all, restrain mankind. Besides, they hate publicly to admit that they are mistaken, that the whole thing is a delusion, that the “scheme of salvation” is absurd, and that the Bible is no better than some other books, and worse than most.

You can hardly expect a bishop to leave his palace, or the pope to vacate the Vatican. As long as people want popes, plenty of hypocrites will be found to take the place. And as long as labor fatigues, there will be found a good many men willing to preach once a week, if other folks will work and give them bread. In other words, while the demand lasts, the supply will never fail.

If the people were a little more ignorant, astrology would flourish—if a little more enlightened, religion would perish!

II.

FREE SCHOOLS.

It is also my desire to free the schools. When a professor in a college finds a fact, he should make it known, even if it is inconsistent with something Moses said. Public opinion must not compel the professor to hide a fact, and, "like the base Indian, throw the pearl away." With the single exception of Cornell, there is not a college in the United States where truth has ever been a welcome guest. The moment one of the teachers denies the inspiration of the Bible, he is discharged. If he discovers a fact inconsistent with that book, so much the worse for the fact, and especially for the discoverer of the fact. He must not corrupt the minds of his pupils with demonstrations. He must beware of every truth that cannot, in some way be made to harmonize with the superstitions of the Jews. Science has nothing in common with religion. Facts and miracles never did, and never will agree. They are not in the least related. They are deadly foes. What has religion to do with facts? Nothing. Can there be Methodist mathematics, Catholic astronomy, Presbyterian geology, Baptist biology, or Episcopal botany? Why, then, should a sectarian college exist? Only that which somebody knows should be taught in our schools. **We should not collect taxes to pay people for guessing.** The common school is the bread of life for the people, and it should not be touched by the withering hand of superstition.

Our country will never be filled with great institutions of learning until there is an absolute divorce between Church and School. As long as the mutilated records of a barbarous people are placed by priest and professor above the reason of mankind, we shall reap but little benefit from church or school.

Instead of dismissing professors for finding something out, let us rather discharge those who do not. Let each teacher understand that investigation is not dangerous for him; that his bread is safe, no matter how much truth he may discover, and that his salary will not be reduced, simply because he finds that the ancient Jews did not know the entire history of the world.

Besides, it is not fair to make the Catholic support a Protestant school, nor is it just to collect taxes from infidels and atheists to support schools in which any system of religion is taught.

The sciences are not sectarian. People do not persecute each other on account of disagreements in mathematics. Families are not divided about botany, and astronomy does not even tend to make a man hate his father and mother. It is what people do not know, that they persecute each other about. Science will bring, not a sword, but peace.

Just as long as religion has control of the schools, science will be an outcast. Let us free our institutions of learning. Let us dedicate them to the science of eternal truth. Let us tell every teacher to ascertain all the facts he can—to give us light, to follow Nature, no matter where she leads; to be infinitely true to himself and us; to feel that he is without a chain, except the obligation to be honest; that he is bound by no books, by no creed, neither by the sayings of the dead nor of the living; that he is asked to look with his own eyes, to reason for himself without fear, to investigate in every possible direction, and to bring us the fruit of all his work.

At present, a good many men engaged in scientific pursuits, and who have signally failed in gaining recognition among their fellows, are endeavoring to make reputations among the churches by delivering weak and vapid lectures upon the “harmony of Genesis and Geology.” Like all hypocrites, these men overstate the case to such a degree, and so turn and pervert facts and words that they succeed only in gaining the applause of other hypocrites like themselves. Among the great scientists they are regarded as generals regard sutlers who trade with both armies.

Surely the time must come when the wealth of the world will not be wasted in the propagation of ignorant creeds and miraculous mistakes. The time must come when churches and cathedrals will be dedicated to the use of man; when minister and priest will deem the discoveries of the living of more importance than the errors of the dead; when the truths of Nature will outrank the “sacred” falsehoods of the past, and when a single fact will outweigh all the miracles of Holy Writ.

Who can over estimate the progress of the world if all the money wasted in superstition could be used to enlighten, elevate and civilize mankind?

When every church becomes a school, every cathedral a university, every clergyman a teacher, and all their hearers brave and honest thinkers, then, and not until then, will the dream of poet, patriot, philanthropist and philosopher, become a real and blessed truth.

III

THE POLITICIANS.

I WOULD like also to liberate the politician. At present, the successful office-seeker is a good deal like the centre of the earth; he weighs nothing himself, but draws everything else to him. There are so many societies, so many churches, so many isms, that it is almost impossible for an independent man to succeed in a political career. Candidates are forced to pretend that they are Catholics with Protestant proclivities, or Christians with liberal tendencies, or temperance men who now and then take a glass of wine, or, that although not members of any church their wives are, and that they subscribe liberally to all. The result of all this is that we reward hypocrisy and elect men entirely destitute of real principle; and this will never change until the people become grand enough to allow each other to do their own thinking.

Our Government should be entirely and purely secular. The religious views of a candidate should be kept entirely out of sight. He should not be compelled to give his opinion as to the inspiration of the Bible, the propriety of infant baptism, or the immaculate conception. All these things are private and personal. He should be allowed to settle such things for himself, and should he decide contrary to the law and will of God, let him settle the matter with God. The people ought to be wise enough to select as their officers men who know something of political affairs, who comprehend the present greatness, and clearly perceive the future grandeur of our country. If we were in a storm at sea, with deck wave-washed and masts strained and bent with storm, and it was necessary to reef the top sail, we certainly would not ask the brave sailor who volunteered to go aloft, what his opinion was on the five points of Calvinism. Our Government has nothing to do with religion. It is neither Christian nor pagan; **it is secular**. But as long as the people persist in voting for or against men on account of their religious views, just so long will hypocrisy hold place and power. Just so long will the candidates crawl in the dust—hide their opinions, flatter those with whom they differ, pretend to agree with those whom they despise; and just so long will honest men be trampled under foot. Churches are becoming political organizations. Nearly every Catholic is a Democrat; nearly every Methodist in the North is a Republican.

It probably will not be long until the churches will divide as sharply upon political, as upon theological questions; and when that day comes, if there are not liberals enough to hold the balance of power, this Government will be destroyed. The liberty of man is not safe in the hands of any church. **Wherever the Bible and sword are in partnership, man is a slave.**

All laws for the purpose of making man worship God, are born of the same spirit that kindled the fires of the *auto da fé*, and lovingly built the dungeons of the Inquisition. All laws defining and punishing blasphemy – making it a crime to give your honest ideas about the Bible, or to laugh at the ignorance of the ancient Jews, or to enjoy yourself on the Sabbath, or to give your opinion of Jehovah, were passed by impudent bigots, and should be at once repealed by honest men. An infinite God ought to be able to protect himself, without going in partnership with State Legislatures. Certainly he ought not so to act that laws become necessary to keep him from being laughed at. No one thinks of protecting Shakespeare from ridicule, by the threat of fine and imprisonment. It strikes me that God might write a book that would not necessarily excite the laughter of his children. In fact, I think it would be safe to say that a real God could produce a work that would excite the admiration of mankind. Surely politicians could be better employed than in passing laws to protect the literary reputation of the Jewish God.

IV.

MAN AND WOMAN.

LET us forget that we are Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, Presbyterians, or Freethinkers, and remember only that we are men and women. After all, *man* and *woman* are the highest possible titles. All other names belittle us, and show that we have, to a certain extent, given up our individuality, and have consented to wear the collar of authority—that we are followers. Throwing away these names, let us examine these questions not as partisans, but as human beings with hopes and fears in common.

We know that our opinions depend, to a great degree, upon our surroundings—upon race, country, and education. We are all the result of numberless conditions, and inherit vices and virtues, truths and prejudices. If we had been born in England, surrounded by wealth and clothed with power, most of us would have been Episcopalians, and believed in church and state. We should have insisted that the people needed a religion, and that not having intellect enough to provide one for themselves, it was our duty to make one for them, and then compel them to support it. We should have believed it indecent to officiate in a pulpit without wearing a gown, and that prayers should be read from a book. Had we belonged to the lower classes, we might have been dissenters and protested against the mummeries of the High Church. Had we been born in Turkey, most of us would have been Mohammedans and believed in the inspiration of the Koran. We should have believed that Mohammed actually visited heaven and became acquainted with an angel by the name of Gabriel, who was so broad between the eyes that it required three hundred days for a very smart camel to travel the distance. If some man had denied this story we should probably have denounced him as a dangerous person, one who was endeavoring to undermine the foundations of society, and to destroy all distinction between virtue and vice. We should have said to him, “What do you propose to give us in place of that angel? We cannot afford to give up an angel of that size for nothing.” We would have insisted that the best and wisest men believed the Koran. We would have quoted from the works and letters of philosophers, generals and sultans, to show that the Koran was the best of books, and that Turkey was indebted to that book and to that alone for its greatness and prosperity. We would have asked that man whether he knew more than all the great minds of his country, whether he was so much wiser than his fathers. We would have pointed out to him the fact that thousands had been consoled in the hour of death by passages from the Koran; that they had died with glazed eyes brightened by visions of the heavenly harem, and gladly left this world of grief

and tears. We would have regarded Christians as the vilest of men, and on all occasions would have repeated "There is but one God, and Mohammed is his prophet!"

So, if we had been born in India, we should in all probability have believed in the religion of that country. We should have regarded the old records as true and sacred, and looked upon a wandering priest as better than the men from whom he begged, and by whose labor he lived. We should have believed in a god with three heads instead of three gods with one head, as we do now.

Now and then some one says that the religion of his father and mother is good enough for him, and wonders why anybody should desire a better. Surely we are not bound to follow our parents in religion any more than in politics, science or art. China has been petrified by the worship of ancestors. If our parents had been satisfied with the religion of theirs, we would be still less advanced than we are. If we are, in any way, bound by the belief of our fathers, the doctrine will hold good back to the first people who had a religion; and if this doctrine is true, we ought now to be believers in that first religion. In other words, we would all be barbarians. You cannot show real respect to your parents by perpetuating their errors. Good fathers and mothers wish their children to advance, to overcome obstacles which baffled them, and to correct the errors of their education. If you wish to reflect credit upon your parents, accomplish more than they did, solve problems that they could not understand, and build better than they knew. To sacrifice your manhood upon the grave of your father is an honor to neither. Why should a son who has examined a subject, throw away his reason and adopt the views of his mother? Is not such a course dishonorable to both?

We must remember that this "ancestor" argument is as old at least as the second generation of men, that it has served no purpose except to enslave mankind, and results mostly from the fact that acquiescence is easier than investigation. This argument pushed to its logical conclusion, would prevent the advance of all people whose parents were not Freethinkers.

It is hard for many people to give up the religion in which they were born; to admit that their fathers were utterly mistaken, and that the sacred records of their country are but collections of myths and fables.

But when we look for a moment at the world, we find that each nation has its "sacred records" —its religion, and its ideas of worship. Certainly all cannot be right; and as it would require a life time to investigate the claims of these various systems, it is hardly fair to damn a man forever, simply because he happens to believe the wrong one. All these religions were produced by barbarians. Civilized nations have contented themselves with changing the religions of their

barbaric ancestors, but they have made none. Nearly all these religions are **intensely selfish**. Each one was made by some contemptible little nation that regarded itself as of almost infinite importance, and looked upon the other nations as beneath the notice of their god. In all these countries **it was a crime** to deny the sacred records, to laugh at the priests, to speak disrespectfully of the gods, to fail to divide your substance with the lazy hypocrites who managed your affairs in the next world upon condition that you would support them in this. In the olden time these theological people who quartered themselves upon the honest and industrious, were called soothsayers, seers, charmers, prophets, enchanters, sorcerers, wizards, astrologers, and impostors, but **now, they are known as clergymen**.

We are no exception to the general rule, and consequently have our sacred books as well as the rest. Of course, it is claimed by many of our people that our books are the only true ones, the only ones that the real God ever wrote, or had anything whatever to do with. They insist that all other sacred books were written by hypocrites and impostors; that the Jews were the only people that God ever had any personal intercourse with, and that all other prophets and seers were inspired only by impudence and mendacity. True, it seems somewhat strange that God should have chosen a barbarous and unknown people who had little or nothing to do with the other nations of the earth, as his messengers to the rest of mankind.

It is not easy to account for an infinite God making people so low in the scale of intellect as to require a revelation. Neither is it easy to perceive why, if a revelation was necessary for all, it was made only to a few. Of course, I know that it is extremely wicked to suggest these thoughts, and that ignorance is the only armor that can effectually protect you from the wrath of God. I am aware that investigators with all their genius, never find the road to heaven; that those who look where they are going are sure to miss it, and **that only those who voluntarily put out their eyes and implicitly depend upon blindness can surely keep the narrow path**.

Whoever reads our sacred book is compelled to believe it or suffer forever the torments of the lost. We are told that we have the privilege of examining it for ourselves; but this privilege is only extended to us **on the condition that we believe it whether it appears reasonable or not**. We may disagree with others as much as we please upon the meaning of all passages in the Bible, but we must not deny the truth of a single word. We must believe that the book is inspired. If we obey its every precept without believing in its inspiration we will be damned just as certainly as though we disobeyed its every word. We have no right to weigh it in the scales of reason—to test it by the laws of nature, or the facts of

observation and experience. To do this, we are told, is to put ourselves above the word of God, and sit in judgment on the works of our creator.

For my part, I cannot admit that belief is a voluntary thing. It seems to me that evidence, even in spite of ourselves, will have its weight, and that whatever our wish may be, we are compelled to stand with fairness by the scales, and give the exact result. **It will not do to say that we reject the Bible because we are wicked.** Our wickedness must be ascertained not from our belief but from our acts.

I am told by the clergy that I ought not to attack the Bible; that I am leading thousands to perdition and rendering certain the damnation of my own soul. They have had the kindness to advise me that, if my object is to make converts, I am pursuing the wrong course. They tell me to use gentler expressions, and more cunning words. Do they really wish me to make more converts? If their advice is honest, they are traitors to their trust. If their advice is not honest, then they are unfair with me. Certainly they should wish me to pursue the course that will make the fewest converts, and yet they pretend to tell me how my influence could be increased. It may be, that upon this principle John Bright advises America to adopt free trade, so that our country can become a successful rival of Great Britain. Sometimes I think that even ministers are not entirely candid.

Notwithstanding the advice of the clergy, I have concluded to pursue my own course, to tell my honest thoughts, and to have my freedom in this world whatever my fate may be in the next.

The real oppressor, enslaver and corrupter of the people is the Bible. That book is the chain that binds, the dungeon that holds the clergy. That book spreads the pall of superstition over the colleges and schools. That book puts out the eyes of science, and makes honest investigation a crime. That book unmans the politician and degrades the people. That book fills the world with bigotry, hypocrisy and fear. It plays the same part in our country that has been played by "sacred records" in all the nations of the world.

A little while ago I saw one of the Bibles of the Middle Ages. It was about two feet in length, and one and a half in width. It had immense oaken covers, with hasps, and clasps, and hinges large enough almost for the doors of a penitentiary. It was covered with pictures of winged angels and aureoled saints. In my imagination I saw this book carried to the cathedral altar in solemn pomp—heard the chant of robed and kneeling priests, felt the strange tremor of the organ's peal; saw the colored light streaming through windows stained and touched by blood and flame—the swinging censer with its perfumed incense rising to the mighty roof, dim with height and rich with legend carved in stone, while on the walls was hung, written in light, and shade, and all the colors that

can tell of joy and tears, the pictured history of the martyred Christ. The people fell upon their knees. The book was opened, and the priest read the messages from God to man. To the multitude, the book itself was evidence enough that it was not the work of human hands. How could those little marks and lines and dots contain, like tombs, the thoughts of men, and how could they, touched by a ray of light from human eyes, give up their dead? How could these characters span the vast chasm dividing the present from the past, and make it possible for the living still to hear the voices of the dead?

V.

THE PENTATEUCH.

The first five books in our Bible are known as the Pentateuch. For a long time it was supposed that Moses was the author, and among the ignorant the supposition still prevails. As a matter of fact, it seems to be well settled that Moses had nothing to do with these books, and that they were not written until he had been dust and ashes for hundreds of years. But, as all the churches still insist that he was the author, that he wrote even an account of his own death and burial, let us speak of him as though these books were in fact written by him. As the Christians maintain that God was the real author, it makes but little difference whom he employed as his pen, or clerk.

Nearly **all authors of sacred books** have given an account of the creation of the universe, the origin of matter, and the destiny of the human race. Nearly all have pointed out the obligation that man is under to his creator for having placed him upon the earth, and allowed him to live and suffer, and have taught that nothing short of the most abject worship could possibly compensate God for his trouble and labor suffered and done for the good of man. They have nearly all insisted that we should thank God for all that is good in life; but they have not all informed us as to whom we should hold responsible for the evils we endure.

Moses differed from most of the makers of sacred books by his failure to say anything of a future life, by failing to promise heaven, and to threaten hell. Upon the subject of a future state, there is not one word in the Pentateuch. Probably at that early day God did not deem it important to make a revelation as to the eternal destiny of man. He seems to have thought that he could control the Jews, at least, by rewards and punishments in this world, and so he kept the frightful realities of eternal joy and torment a profound secret from the people of his choice. He thought it far more important to tell the Jews their origin than to enlighten them as to their destiny.

We must remember that every tribe and nation has some way in which, the more striking phenomena of nature are accounted for. These accounts are handed down by tradition, changed by numberless narrators as intelligence increases, or to account for newly discovered facts, or for the purpose of satisfying the appetite for the marvelous.

The way in which a **tribe or nation** accounts for day and night, the change of seasons, the fall of snow and rain, the flight of birds, the origin of the rainbow, the peculiarities of animals, the dreams of sleep, the visions of the insane, the existence of earthquakes, volcanoes, storms, lightning and the thousand things that attract the attention and excite the wonder, fear or admiration of mankind, may be called **the philosophy of that tribe or nation**. And as all phenomena are, by savage and barbaric man accounted for as the action of intelligent beings for the accomplishment of certain objects, and as these beings were supposed to have the power to assist or injure man, certain things were supposed necessary for man to do in order to gain the assistance, and avoid **the anger of these gods**. Out of this belief grew certain ceremonies, and these ceremonies united with the belief, formed religion; and consequently every religion has for its foundation a **misconception of the cause of phenomena**.

All worship is necessarily based upon the belief that some being exists who can, if he will, change the natural order of events. The savage prays to a stone that he calls a god, while the Christian prays to a god that he calls a spirit, and the prayers of both are equally useful. The savage and the Christian put behind the Universe an intelligent cause, and this cause whether represented by one god or many, has been, in all ages, the object of all worship. To carry a fetish, to utter a prayer, to count beads, to abstain from food, to sacrifice a lamb, a child or an enemy, are simply different ways by which the accomplishment of the same object is sought, and are all the offspring of the same error.

Many systems of religion must have existed many ages before the art of writing was discovered, and must have passed through many changes before the stories, miracles, histories, prophecies and mistakes became fixed and petrified in written words. After that, change was possible only by giving new meanings to old words, a process rendered necessary by the continual acquisition of facts somewhat inconsistent with a literal interpretation of the "sacred records." In this way an honest faith often prolongs its life by dishonest methods; and in this way the Christians of to-day are trying to harmonize the Mosaic account of creation with the theories and discoveries of modern science.

Admitting that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, or that he gave to the Jews a religion, the question arises as to where he obtained his information. We are told by the theologians that he received his knowledge from God, and that every word he wrote was and is the exact truth. It is admitted at the same time that he was an adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, and enjoyed the rank and privilege of a prince. Under such circumstances, he must have been well acquainted with the literature, philosophy and religion of the Egyptians, and must have known what they believed and taught as to the creation of the world.

Now, if the account of the origin of this earth as given by Moses is substantially like that given by the Egyptians, then we must conclude that he learned it from them. Should we imagine that he was divinely inspired because he gave to the Jews what the Egyptians had given him?

The Egyptian priests taught *first*, that a god created the original matter, leaving it in a state of chaos; *second*, that a god molded it into form; *third*, that the breath of a god moved upon the face of the deep; *fourth*, that a god created simply by saying "Let it be;" *fifth*, that a god created light before the sun existed.

Nothing can be clearer than that Moses received from the Egyptians the principal parts of his narrative, making such changes and additions as were necessary **to satisfy the peculiar superstitions of his own people.**

If some man at the present day should assert that he had received from God the theories of evolution, the survival of the fittest, and the law of heredity, and we should afterwards find that he was not only an Englishman, but had lived in the family of Charles Darwin, we certainly would account for his having these theories in a natural way. So, if Darwin himself should pretend that he was inspired, and had obtained his peculiar theories from God, we should probably reply that his grandfather suggested the same ideas, and that Lamarck published substantially the same theories the same year that Mr. Darwin was born.

Now, **if we have sufficient courage**, we will, by the same course of reasoning, account for the story of creation found in the Bible. We will say that it contains the belief of Moses, and that he received his information from the Egyptians, and not from God. If we take the account as the absolute truth and use it for the purpose of determining the value of modern thought, scientific advancement becomes impossible. And even if the account of the creation as given by Moses should turn out to be true, and should be so admitted by the entire scientific world, the claim that he was inspired would still be without the least particle of proof. We would be forced to admit that he knew more than we had supposed. It certainly is no proof that a man is inspired simply because he is right.

No one pretends that Shakespeare was inspired, and yet all the writers of the books of the Old Testament put together, could not have produced Hamlet.

Why should we, looking upon some rough and awkward thing, or god in stone, say that it must have been produced by some inspired sculptor, and with the same breath pronounce the *Venus de Milo* to be the work of man? Why should we, looking at some ancient daub of angel, saint or virgin, say its painter must have been assisted by a god?

Let us account for all we see by the facts we know. If there are things for which we cannot account, **let us wait** for light. To account for anything by supernatural agencies is, in fact to say that we do not know. **Theology** is not what we know about God, but **what we do not know about Nature**. In order to increase our respect for the Bible, it became necessary for the priests to exalt and extol that book, and at the same time **to decry and belittle the reasoning powers of man**. The whole power of the pulpit has been used for hundreds of years to destroy the confidence of man in himself—to induce him to distrust his own powers of thought, to believe that he was wholly unable to decide any question for himself, and that all human virtue consists in faith and obedience. The church has said, “Believe, and obey! If you reason, you will become an unbeliever, and unbelievers will be lost. If you disobey, you will do so through vain pride and curiosity, and will, like Adam and Eve, be thrust from Paradise forever!”

For my part, I care nothing for what the church says, except in so far as it accords with my reason; and the Bible is nothing to me, only in so far as it agrees with what I think or know.

All books should be examined in the same spirit, and truth should be welcomed and falsehood exposed, no matter in what volume they may be found.

Let us in this spirit examine the Pentateuch; and if anything appears unreasonable, contradictory or absurd, **let us have the honesty and courage to admit it**. Certainly no good can result either from deceiving ourselves or others. Many millions have implicitly believed this book, and have just as implicitly believed that polygamy was sanctioned by God. Millions have regarded this book as the foundation of all human progress, and at the same time looked upon slavery as a divine institution. Millions have declared this book to have been infinitely holy, and to prove that they were right, have imprisoned, robbed and burned their fellow-men. The inspiration of this book has been **established** by famine, sword and fire, by dungeon, chain and whip, by dagger and by rack, by force and fear and fraud, and generations have been **frightened by threats of hell, and bribed with promises of heaven**.

Let us examine a portion of this book, not in the darkness of our fear, but in the light of reason.

And first, let us examine the account given of the creation of this world, commenced, according to the Bible, on Monday morning about five thousand eight hundred and eighty-three years ago.

VI. MONDAY,

Moses commences his story by telling us that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

If this means anything, it means that God produced, caused to exist, called into being, the heaven and the earth. It will not do to say that he formed the heaven and the earth of previously existing matter. Moses conveys, and intended to convey the idea that the matter, of which the heaven and the earth are composed, was **created**.

It is impossible for me to conceive of something being created from nothing. Nothing, regarded in the light of a raw material, is a decided failure. I cannot conceive of matter apart from force. Neither is it possible to think of force disconnected with matter. You cannot imagine matter going back to absolute nothing. Neither can you imagine nothing being changed into something. You may be eternally damned if you do not say that you can conceive these things, but you cannot conceive them.

Such is the constitution of the human mind that it cannot even think of a commencement or an end of matter, or force.

If God created the universe, there was a time when he commenced to create. Back of that commencement there must have been an eternity. In that eternity what was this God doing? He certainly did not think. There was nothing to think about. He did not remember. Nothing had ever happened. What did he do? Can you imagine anything more absurd than an infinite intelligence in infinite nothing wasting an eternity?

I do not pretend to tell how all these things really are; but I do insist that a statement that cannot possibly be comprehended by any human being, and that appears utterly impossible, repugnant to every fact of experience, and contrary to everything that we really know, must be rejected by every honest man.

We can conceive of eternity, because we cannot conceive of a cessation of time. We can conceive of infinite space because we cannot conceive of so much matter that our imagination will not stand upon the farthest star, and see infinite space beyond. In other words, we cannot conceive of a cessation of time; therefore eternity is **a necessity of the mind**. Eternity sustains the same relation to time that space does to matter.

In the time of Moses, it was perfectly safe for him to write an account of the creation of the world. He had simply to put in form the crude notions of the people. At that time, no other Jew could have written a better account. Upon that subject he felt at liberty to give his imagination full play. There was no one who could authoritatively contradict any thing he might say. It was substantially the same story that had been imprinted in curious characters upon the clay records of Babylon, the gigantic monuments of Egypt, and the gloomy temples of India. In those days there was an almost infinite difference between the educated and ignorant. The people were controlled almost entirely by signs and wonders. By the lever of fear, priests moved the world. The sacred records were made and kept, and altered by them. The people could not read, and looked upon one who could, as almost a god. In our day it is hard to conceive of the influence of an educated class in a barbarous age. It was only necessary to produce the "sacred record," and ignorance fell upon its face. The people were taught that the record was inspired, and therefore true. They were not taught that it was true, and therefore inspired.

After all, the real question is not whether the Bible is inspired, but whether it is true. If it is true, it does not need to be inspired. If it is true, it makes no difference whether it was written by a man or a god. The multiplication table is just as useful, just as true as though God had arranged the figures himself. If the Bible is really true, the claim of inspiration need not be urged; and if it is not true, its inspiration can hardly be established. As a matter of fact, the truth does not need to be inspired. Nothing needs inspiration except a falsehood or a mistake. Where truth ends, where probability stops, inspiration begins. A fact never went into partnership with a miracle. Truth does not need the assistance of miracle. A fact will fit every other fact in the Universe, because it is the product of all other facts. A lie will fit nothing except another lie made for the express purpose of fitting it. After a while the man gets tired of lying, and then the last lie will not fit the next fact, and then there is an opportunity to use a miracle. Just at that point, it is necessary to have a little inspiration.

It seems to me that reason is the highest attribute of man, and that if there can be any communication from God to man, it must be addressed to his reason. It does not seem possible that in order to understand a message from God it is absolutely essential to throw our reason away. How could God make known his will to any being destitute of reason? How can any man accept as a revelation from God that which is unreasonable to him? God cannot make a revelation to another man for me. He must make it to me, and until he convinces my reason that it is true, I cannot receive it.

The statement that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, I cannot accept. It is contrary to my reason, and I cannot believe it. It appears reasonable to me that force has existed from eternity. Force cannot, as it appears to me, exist apart from matter. Force, in its nature, is forever active, and without matter it could not act; and so I think matter must have existed forever. To conceive of matter without force, or of force without matter, or of a time when neither existed, or of a being who existed for an eternity without either, and who out of nothing created both, is to me utterly impossible. I may be damned on this account, but I cannot help it. In my judgment, Moses was mistaken.

It will not do to say that Moses merely intended to tell what God did, in making the heavens and the earth out of matter then in existence. He distinctly states that in the *beginning* God created them. If this account is true, we must believe that God, existing in infinite space surrounded by eternal nothing, naught and void, created, produced, called into being, willed into existence this universe of countless stars.

The next thing we are told by this inspired gentleman is, that God created light, and proceeded to divide it from the darkness.

Certainly, the person who wrote this believed that darkness was a thing, an entity, a material that could get mixed and tangled up with light, and that these entities, light and darkness, had to be separated. In his imagination he probably saw God throwing pieces and chunks of darkness on one side, and rays and beams of light on the other. It is hard for a man who has been born but once to understand these things. For my part, I cannot understand how light can be separated from darkness. I had always supposed that darkness was simply the absence of light, and that under no circumstances could it be necessary to take the darkness away from the light. It is certain, however, that Moses believed darkness to be a form of matter, because I find that in another place he speaks of a darkness that could be felt. They used to have on exhibition at Rome a bottle of the darkness that overspread Egypt.

You cannot divide light from darkness any more than you can divide heat from cold. Cold is an absence of heat, and darkness is an absence of light. I suppose that we have no conception of absolute cold. We know only degrees of heat. Twenty degrees below zero is just twenty degrees warmer than forty degrees below zero. Neither cold nor darkness are entities, and these words express simply either the absolute or partial absence of heat or light. I cannot conceive how light can be divided from darkness, but I can conceive how a barbarian several thousand years ago, writing upon a subject about which he knew nothing, could make a mistake. The creator of light could not have written in this way. If such a being exists, he must have known the nature of that "mode

of motion" that paints the earth on every eye, and clothes in garments sevenhued this universe of worlds.

VII. TUESDAY.

We are next informed by Moses that "God said Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters;" and that "God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament."

What did the writer mean by the word firmament? Theologians now tell us that he meant an "expanse." This will not do. How could an expanse divide the waters from the waters, so that the waters above the expanse would not fall into and mingle with the waters below the expanse? The truth is that Moses regarded the firmament as a solid affair. It was where God lived, and where water was kept. It was for this reason that they used to pray for rain. They supposed that some angel could with a lever raise a gate and let out the quantity of moisture desired. It was with the water from this firmament that the world was drowned when the windows of heaven were opened. It was in this firmament that the sons of God lived—the sons who "saw the daughters of men that they were fair and took them wives of all which they chose." The issue of such marriages were giants, and "the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown."

Nothing is clearer than that Moses regarded the firmament as a vast material division that separated the waters of the world, and upon whose floor God lived, surrounded by his sons. In no other way could he account for rain. Where did the water come from? He knew nothing about the laws of evaporation. He did not know that the sun wooed with amorous kisses the waves of the sea, and that they, clad in glorified mist rising to meet their lover, were, by disappointment, changed to tears and fell as rain.

The idea that the firmament was the abode of the Deity must have been in the mind of Moses when he related the dream of Jacob. "And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set upon the earth and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it; and behold the Lord stood above it and said, I am the Lord God."

So, when the people were building the tower of Babel "the Lord came down to see the city, and the tower which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold the people is one, and they have all one language: and this they begin to do; and nothing will be restrained from them which they imagined to do. Go to,

let us go down and confound their language that they may not understand one another's speech."

The man who wrote that absurd account must have believed that God lived above the earth, in the firmament. The same idea was in the mind of the Psalmist when he said that God "bowed the heavens and came down."

Of course, God could easily remove any person bodily to heaven, as it was but a little way above the earth. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." The accounts in the Bible of the ascension of Elijah, Christ and St. Paul were born of the belief that the firmament was the dwelling place of God. It probably never occurred to these writers that if the firmament was seven or eight miles away, Enoch and the rest would have been frozen perfectly stiff long before the journey could have been completed. Possibly Elijah might have made the voyage, as he was carried to heaven in a chariot of fire "by a whirlwind."

The truth is that Moses was mistaken, and upon that mistake the Christians located their heaven and their hell. The telescope destroyed the firmament, did away with the heaven of the New Testament, rendered the ascension of our Lord and the assumption of his Mother infinitely absurd, crumbled to chaos the gates and palaces of the New Jerusalem, and in their places gave to man a wilderness of worlds.

VIII. WEDNESDAY

We are next informed by the historian of creation, that after God had finished making the firmament and had succeeded in dividing the waters by means of an "expanse," he proceeded "to gather the waters on the earth together in seas, so that the dry land might appear."

Certainly the writer of this did not have any conception of the real form of the earth. He could not have known anything of the attraction of gravitation. He must have regarded the earth as flat and supposed that it required considerable force and power to induce the water to leave the mountains and collect in the valleys. Just as soon as the water was forced to run down hill, the dry land appeared, and the grass began to grow, and the mantles of green were thrown over the shoulders of the hills, and the trees laughed into bud and blossom, and the branches were laden with fruit. And all this happened before a ray had left the quiver of the sun, before a glittering beam had thrilled the bosom of a flower,

and before the Dawn with trembling hands had drawn aside the curtains of the East and welcomed to her arms the eager god of Day.

It does not seem to me that grass and trees could grow and ripen into seed and fruit without the sun. According to the account, this all happened on the third day. Now, if, as the Christians say, Moses did not mean by the word day a period of twenty-four hours, but an immense and almost measureless space of time, and as God did not, according to this view make any animals until the fifth day, that is, not for millions of years after he made the grass and trees, for what purpose did he cause the trees to bear fruit?

Moses says that God said on the third day, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit whose seed was in itself after his kind; and God saw that it was good, and the evening and the morning were the third day."

There was nothing to eat this fruit; not an insect with painted wings sought the honey of the flowers; not a single living, breathing thing upon the earth. Plenty of grass, a great variety of herbs, an abundance of fruit, but not a mouth in the entire world. If Moses is right, this state of things lasted only two days; but if the modern theologians are correct, it continued for millions of ages.

"It is now well known that the organic history of the earth can be properly divided into five epochs— the Primordial, Primary, Secondary, Tertiary, and Quaternary. Each of these epochs is characterized by animal and vegetable life peculiar to itself. In the First will be found Algae and Skull-less Vertebrates, in the Second, Ferns and Fishes, in the Third, Pine Forests and Reptiles, in the Fourth, Foliaceous Forests and Mammals, and in the Fifth, Man."

How much more reasonable this is than the idea that the earth was covered with grass, and herbs, and trees loaded with fruit for millions of years before an animal existed.

There is, in Nature, an even balance forever kept between the total amounts of animal and vegetable life. "In her wonderful economy she must form and bountifully nourish her vegetable progeny— twin brother life to her, with that of animals. The perfect balance between plant existences and animal existences must always be maintained, while matter courses through the eternal circle, becoming each in turn. If an animal be resolved into its ultimate constituents in a period according to the surrounding circumstances, say, of four hours, of four months, of four years, or even of four thousand years,—for it is impossible to

deny that there may be instances of all these periods during which the process has continued — those elements which assume the gaseous form mingle at once with the atmosphere and are taken up from it without delay by the ever-open mouths of vegetable life. By a thousand pores in every leaf the carbonic acid which renders the atmosphere unfit for animal life is absorbed, the carbon being separated, and assimilated to form the vegetable fibre, which, as wood, makes and furnishes our houses and ships, is burned for our warmth, or is stored up under pressure for coal. All this carbon has played its part, and many parts in its time, as animal existences from monad up to man. Our mahogany of to-day has been many negroes in its turn, and before the African existed, was integral portions of many a generation of extinct species."

It seems reasonable to suppose that certain kinds of vegetation and certain kinds of animals should exist together, and that as the character of the vegetation changed, a corresponding change would take place in the animal world. It may be that I am led to these conclusions by "total depravity," or that I lack the necessary humility of spirit to satisfactorily harmonize Haeckel and Moses; or that I am carried away by pride, blinded by reason, given over to hardness of heart that I might be damned, but I never can believe that the earth was covered with leaves, and buds, and flowers, and fruits before the sun with glittering spear had driven back the hosts of Night.

IX.

THURSDAY

After the world was covered with vegetation, it occurred to Moses that it was about time to make a sun and moon; and so we are told that on the fourth day God said, "Let there be light in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth; and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also."

Can we believe that the inspired writer had any idea of the size of the sun? Draw a circle five inches in diameter, and by its side thrust a pin through the paper. The hole made by the pin will sustain about the same relation to the circle that the earth does to the sun. Did he know that the sun was eight hundred and sixty thousand miles in diameter; that it was enveloped in an ocean of fire thousands of miles in depth, hotter even than the Christian's hell, over which sweep tempests of flame moving at the rate of one hundred miles a second,

compared with which the wildest storm that ever wrecked the forests of this world was but a calm? Did he know that the sun every moment of time throws out as much heat as could be generated by the combustion of millions upon millions of tons of coal? Did he know that the volume of the earth is less than one-millionth of that of the sun? Did he know of the one hundred and four planets belonging to our solar system, all children of the sun? Did he know of Jupiter eighty-five thousand miles in diameter, hundreds of times as large as our earth, turning on his axis at the rate of twenty-five thousand miles an hour accompanied by four moons, making the tour of his orbit in fifty years, a distance of three thousand million miles? Did he know anything about Saturn, his rings and his eight moons? Did he have the faintest idea that all these planets were once a part of the sun; that the vast luminary was once thousands of millions of miles in diameter; that Neptune, Uranus, Saturn, Jupiter and Mars were all born before our earth, and that by no possibility could this world have existed three days, nor three periods, nor three "good whiles" before its source, the sun?

Moses supposed the sun to be about three or four feet in diameter and the moon about half that size. Compared with the earth they were but simple specks. This idea seems to have been shared by all the "inspired" men. We find in the book of Joshua that the sun stood still, and the moon stayed until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. "So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day."

We are told that the sacred writer wrote in common speech as we do when we talk about the rising and setting of the sun, and that all he intended to say was that the earth ceased to turn on its axis "for about a whole day."

My own opinion is that General Joshua knew no more about the motions of the earth than he did about mercy and justice. If he had known that the earth turned upon its axis at the rate of a thousand miles an hour, and swept in its course about the sun at the rate of sixty-eight thousand miles an hour, he would have doubled the hailstones, spoken of in the same chapter, that the Lord cast down from heaven, and allowed the sun and moon to rise and set in the usual way.

It is impossible to conceive of a more absurd story than this about the stopping of the sun and moon, and yet nothing so excites the malice of the orthodox preacher as to call its truth in question. Some endeavor to account for the phenomenon by natural causes, while others attempt to show that God could, by the refraction of light have made the sun visible although actually shining on the opposite side of the earth. The last hypothesis has been seriously urged by ministers within the last few months. The Rev. Henry M. Morey of South Bend, Indiana, says "that the phenomenon was simply optical. The rotary motion of the earth was not disturbed, but the light of the sun was prolonged by the same laws

of refraction and reflection by which the sun now appears to be above the horizon when it is really below. The medium through which the sun's rays passed may have been miraculously influenced so as to have caused the sun to linger above the horizon long after its usual time for disappearance."

This is the latest and ripest product of Christian scholarship upon this question no doubt, but still it is not entirely satisfactory to me. According to the sacred account the sun did not linger, merely, above the horizon, but stood still "in the midst of heaven for about a whole day," that is to say, for about twelve hours. If the air was miraculously changed, so that it would refract the rays of the sun while the earth turned over as usual for "about a whole day," then, at the end of that time the sun must have been visible in the east, that is, it must by that time have been the next morning. According to this, that most wonderful day must have been at least thirty-six hours in length. We have first, the twelve hours of natural light, then twelve hours of "refracted and reflected" light. By that time it would again be morning, and the sun would shine for twelve hours more in the natural way, making thirty-six hours in all.

If the Rev. Morey would depend a little less on "refraction" and a little more on "reflection," he would conclude that the whole story is **simply a barbaric myth and fable**.

It hardly seems reasonable that God, **if there is one**, would either stop the globe, change the constitution of the atmosphere or the nature of light simply to afford Joshua an opportunity to kill people on that day when he could just as easily have waited until the next morning. It certainly cannot be very gratifying to God for us to believe such childish things.

It has been demonstrated that force is eternal; that it is forever active, and eludes destruction by change of form. Motion is a form of force, and all arrested motion changes instantly to heat. The earth turns upon its axis at about one thousand miles an hour. Let it be stopped and a force beyond our imagination is changed to heat. It has been calculated that to stop the world would produce as much heat as the burning of a solid piece of coal three times the size of the earth. And yet we are asked to believe that this was done in order that one barbarian might defeat another. Such stories never would have been written, had not the belief been general that the heavenly bodies were as nothing compared with the earth.

The view of Moses was acquiesced in by the Jewish people and by the Christian world for thousands of years. It is supposed that Moses lived about fifteen hundred years before Christ, and although he was "inspired," and obtained his information directly from God, he did not know as much about our

solar system as the Chinese did a thousand years before he was born. "The Emperor Chwenhio adopted as an epoch, a conjunction of the planets Mercury, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, which has been shown by M. Bailly to have occurred no less than 2449 years before Christ." The ancient Chinese knew not only the motions of the planets, but they could calculate eclipses. "In the reign of the Emperor Chow-Kang, the chief astronomers, Ho and Hi were condemned to death for neglecting to announce a solar eclipse which took place 2169 B. C., a clear proof that the prediction of eclipses was a part of the duty of the imperial astronomers."

Is it not strange that a Chinaman should find out by his own exertions more about the material universe than Moses could when assisted by its Creator?

About eight hundred years after God gave Moses the principal facts about the creation of the "heaven and the earth" he performed another miracle far more wonderful than stopping the world. On this occasion he not only stopped the earth, but actually caused it to turn the other way. . A Jewish king was sick, and God, in order to convince him that he would ultimately recover, offered to make the shadow on the dial go forward, or backward ten degrees. The king thought it was too easy a thing to make the shadow go forward, and asked that it be turned back. Thereupon, "Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord, and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz." I hardly see how this miracle could be accounted for even by "refraction" and "reflection."

It seems, from the account, that this stupendous miracle was performed after the king had been cured. The account of the shadow going backward is given in the eleventh verse of the twentieth chapter of Second Kings, while the cure is given in the seventh verse of the same chapter. "And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered."

Stopping the world and causing it to turn back ten degrees after that, seems to have been, as the boil was already cured by the figs, a useless display of power.

The easiest way to account for all these wonders is to say that the "inspired" writers were mistaken. In this way a fearful burden is lifted from the credulity of man, and he is left free to believe the evidences of his own senses, and the demonstrations of science. In this way he can emancipate himself from the slavery of superstition, the control of the barbaric dead, and the despotism of the church.

Only about a hundred years ago, Buffon, the naturalist, was compelled by the faculty of theology at Paris to publicly renounce fourteen "errors" in his work on Natural History because they were at variance with the Mosaic account of creation. The Pentateuch is still the scientific standard of the church, and ignorant priests, armed with that, pronounce sentence upon the vast accomplishments of modern thought.

"HE MADE THE STARS ALSO."

MOSES came very near forgetting about the stars and only gave five words to all the hosts of heaven. Can it be possible that he knew anything about the stars beyond the mere fact that he saw them shining above him?

Did he know that the nearest star, the one we ought to be the best acquainted with, is twenty-one billion of miles away, and that it is a sun shining by its own light? Did he know of the next, that is thirty-seven billion miles distant? Is it possible that he was acquainted with Sirius, a sun two thousand six hundred and eighty-eight times larger than our own, surrounded by a system of heavenly bodies, several of which are already known, and distant from us eighty-two billion miles? Did he know that the Polar star that tells the mariner his course and guided slaves to liberty and joy, is distant from this little world two hundred and ninety-two billion miles, and that Capella wheels and shines one hundred and thirty-three billion miles beyond? Did he know that it would require about seventy-two years for light to reach us from this star? Did he know that light travels one hundred and eighty-five thousand miles a second? Did he know that some stars are so far away in the infinite abysses that five millions of years are required for their light to reach this globe?

If this is true, and if as the Bible tells us, the stars were made after the earth, then this world has been wheeling in its orbit for at least five million years.

It may be replied that it was not the intention of God to teach geology and astronomy. Then why did he say anything upon these subjects? and if he did say anything, why did he not give the facts?

According to the sacred records God created, on the first day, the heaven and the earth, "moved upon the face of the waters," and made the light. On the second day he made the firmament or the "expanse" and divided the waters. On the third day he gathered the waters into seas, let the dry land appear and caused the earth to bring forth grass, herbs and fruit trees, and on the fourth day he made the sun, moon and stars and set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth. This division of labor is very striking. The work of the other days is as nothing when compared with that of the fourth. Is it possible that it required the same time and labor to make the grass, herbs and fruit trees, that it did to fill with countless constellations the infinite expanse of space?

XI

FRIDAY.

We are then told that on the next day "God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creatures that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales and every living creature which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind, and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth."

Is it true that while the dry land was covered with grass, and herbs, and trees bearing fruit, the ocean was absolutely devoid of life, and so remained for millions of years?

If Moses meant twenty-four hours by the word day, then it would make but little difference on which of the six days animals were made; but if the word day was used to express millions of ages, during which life was slowly evolved from monad up to man, then the account becomes infinitely absurd, puerile and foolish. There is not a scientist of high standing who will say that in his judgment the earth was covered with fruit-bearing trees before the moners, the ancestors it may be of the human race, felt in Laurentian seas the first faint throb of life. Nor is there one who will declare that there was a single spire of grass before the sun had poured upon the world his flood of gold.

Why should men in the name of religion try to harmonize the contradictions that exist between Nature and a book? Why should philosophers be denounced for placing more reliance upon what they know than upon what they have been told? If there is a God, it is reasonably certain that he made the world, but it is by no means certain that he is the author of the Bible. Why then should we not place greater confidence in Nature than in a book? And even if this God made not only the world but the book besides, it does not follow that the book is the best part of creation, and the only part that we will be eternally punished for denying. It seems to me that it is quite as important to know something of the solar system, something of the physical history of this globe, as it is to know the adventures of Jonah or the diet of Ezekiel. For my part, I would infinitely prefer to know all the results of scientific investigation, than to be inspired as Moses was. Supposing the Bible to be true; why is it any worse or wicked for Freethinkers to deny it, than for priests to deny the doctrine of evolution, or the dynamic theory of heat? Why should we be damned for laughing at Samson and his foxes, while others, holding the Nebular Hypothesis in utter contempt, go straight to heaven? It seems to me that a belief in the great truths of science are fully as essential to salvation, as the creed of any church. We are taught that a man may be perfectly acceptable to God even if he denies the rotundity of the earth, the Copernican system, the three laws of Kepler, the indestructibility of matter and the attraction of gravitation. And we are also taught that a man may be right upon all these questions, and yet, for failing to believe in the "scheme of salvation," be eternally lost.

XII.

SATURDAY

On this, the last day of creation, God said: — “Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth after his kind; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that crepes upon the earth after his kind; and God saw that it was good.”

Now, is it true that the seas were filled with fish, the sky with fowls, and the earth covered with grass, and herbs, and fruit bearing trees, millions of ages before there was a creeping thing in existence? Must we admit that plants and animals were the result of the fiat of some incomprehensible intelligence independent of the operation of what are known as natural causes? Why is a miracle any more necessary to account for yesterday than for to-day or for to-morrow?

If there is an infinite Power, nothing can be more certain than that this Power works in accordance with what we call law, that is, by and through natural causes. If anything can be found without a pedigree of natural antecedents, it will then be time enough to talk about the fiat of creation. There must have been a time when plants and animals did not exist upon this globe. The question, and the only question is, whether they were naturally produced. If the account given by Moses is true, then the vegetable and animal existences are the result of certain special fiats of creation entirely independent of the operation of natural causes. This is so grossly improbable, so at variance with the experience and observation of mankind, that it cannot be adopted without abandoning forever the basis of scientific thought and action.

It may be urged that we do not understand the sacred record correctly. To this it may be replied that for thousands of years the account of the creation has, by the Jewish and Christian world, been regarded as literally true. If it was inspired, of course God must have known just how it would be understood, and consequently must have intended that it should be understood just as he knew it would be. One man writing to another, may mean one thing, and yet be understood as meaning something else. Now, if the writer knew that he would be misunderstood, and also knew that he could use other words that would convey his real meaning, but did not, we would say that he used words on purpose to mislead, and was not an honest man.

If a being of infinite wisdom wrote the Bible, or caused it to be written, he must have known exactly how his words would be interpreted by the entire world, and he must have intended to convey the very meaning that was conveyed. He must have known that by reading that book, man would form erroneous views as to the shape, antiquity, and size of this world; that he would be misled as to the time and order of creation; that he would have the most childish and contemptible views of the creator; that the "sacred word" would be used to support slavery and polygamy; that it would build dungeons for the good, and light fagots to consume the brave, and therefore he must have intended that these results should follow. He also must have known that thousands and millions of men and women never could believe his Bible, and that the number of unbelievers would increase in the exact ratio of civilization, and therefore, he must have intended that result.

Let us understand this. An honest finite being uses the best words, in his judgment, to convey his meaning. This is the best he can do, because he cannot certainly know the exact effect of his words on others. But an infinite being must know not only the real meaning of the words, but the exact meaning they will convey to every reader and hearer. He must know every meaning that they are capable of conveying to every mind. He must also know what explanations must be made to prevent misconception. If an infinite being cannot, in making a revelation to man, use such words that every person to whom a revelation is essential will understand distinctly what that revelation is, then a revelation from God through the instrumentality of language is impossible, or it is not essential that all should understand it correctly. It may be urged that millions have not the capacity to understand a revelation, although expressed in the plainest words. To this it seems a sufficient reply to ask, why a being of infinite power should create men so devoid of intelligence, that he cannot by any means make known to them his will? We are told that it is exceedingly plain, and that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. This statement is refuted by the religious history of the Christian world. Every sect is a certificate that God has not plainly revealed his will to man. To each reader the Bible conveys a different meaning. About the meaning of this book, called a revelation, there have been ages of war, and centuries of sword and flame. If written by an infinite God, he must have known that these results must follow; and thus knowing, he must be responsible for all.

Is it not infinitely more reasonable to say that this book is the work of man, that it is filled with mingled truth and error, with mistakes and facts, and reflects, too faithfully perhaps, the "very form and pressure of its time"?

If there are mistakes in the Bible, certainly they were made by man. If there is anything contrary to nature, it was written by man. If there is anything immoral, cruel, heartless or infamous, it certainly was never written by a being worthy of the adoration of mankind.

XIII. LET US MAKE MAN.

We are next informed by the author of the Pentateuch that God said "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," and that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him—male and female created he them."

If this account means anything, it means that man was created in the physical image and likeness of God. Moses while he speaks of man as having been made in the image of God, never speaks of God except as having the form of a man. He speaks of God as "walking in the garden in the cool of the day;" and that Adam and Eve "heard his voice." He is constantly telling what God said, and in a thousand passages he refers to him as not only having the human form, but as performing actions, such as man performs. The God of Moses was a God with hands, with feet, with the organs of speech. A God of passion, of hatred, of revenge, of affection, of repentance; a God who made mistakes:—in other words, an immense and powerful man.

It will not do to say that Moses meant to convey the idea that God made man in his mental or moral image. Some have insisted that man was made in the moral image of God because he was made pure. Purity cannot be manufactured. A moral character cannot be made for man by a god. Every man must make his own moral character. Consequently, if God is infinitely pure, Adam and Eve were not made in his image in that respect. Others say that Adam and Eve were made in the mental image of God. If it is meant by that, that they were created with reasoning powers like, but not to the extent of those possessed by a god, then this may be admitted. But certainly this idea was not in the mind of Moses. He regarded the human form as being in the image of God, and for that reason always spoke of God as having that form. No one can read the Pentateuch without coming to the conclusion that the author supposed that man was created in the physical likeness of Deity. God said "Go to, let us go down." "God smelled a sweet savor;" "God repented him that he had made man;" "and God said;" and "walked;" and "talked;" and "rested." All these expressions are inconsistent with any other idea than that the person using them regarded God as having the form of man.

As a matter of fact, it is impossible for a man to conceive of a personal God, other than as a being having the human form. No one can think of an infinite being having the form of a horse, or of a bird, or of any animal beneath man. It is one of the necessities of the mind to associate forms with intellectual capacities. The highest form of which we have any conception is man's, and consequently, his is the only form that we can find in imagination to give to a personal God, because all other forms are, in our minds, connected with lower intelligences.

It is impossible to think of a personal God as a spirit without form. We can use these words, but they do not convey to the mind any real and tangible meaning. Every one who thinks of a personal God at all, thinks of him as having the human form. Take from God the idea of form; speak of him simply as an all pervading spirit— which means an all pervading something about which we know nothing—and Pantheism is the result.

We are told that God made man; and the question naturally arises, how was this done? Was it by a process of "evolution," "development," the "transmission of acquired habits," the "survival of the fittest," or was the necessary amount of clay kneaded to the proper consistency, and then by the hands of God molded into form? Modern science tells that man has been evolved, through countless epochs, from the lower forms; that he is the result of almost an infinite number of actions, reactions, experiences, states, forms, wants and adaptations. Did Moses intend to convey such a meaning, or did he believe that God took a sufficient amount of dust, made it the proper shape, and breathed into it the breath of life? Can any believer in the Bible give any reasonable account of this process of creation? Is it possible to imagine what was really done? Is there any theologian who will contend that man was created directly from the earth? Will he say that man was made substantially as he now is, with all his muscles properly developed for walking and speaking, and performing every variety of human action? That all his bones were formed as they now are, and all the relations of nerve, ligament, brain and motion as they are to-day?

Looking back over the history of animal life from the lowest to the highest forms, we find that there has been a slow and gradual development; a certain but constant relation between want and production; between use and form. The Moner is said to be the simplest form of animal life that has yet been found. It has been described as "an organism without organs." It is a kind of structureless structure; a little mass of transparent jelly that can flatten itself out, and can expand and contract around its food. It can feed without a mouth, digest without a stomach, walk without feet, and reproduce itself by simple division. By taking this Moner as the commencement of animal life, or rather as the first animal, it is easy to follow the development of the organic structure through all the forms of life to man himself. In this way finally every muscle, bone and joint, every organ,

form and function may be accounted for. In this way, and in this way only, can the existence of rudimentary organs be explained. Blot from the human mind the ideas of evolution, heredity, adaptation, and "the survival of the fittest," with which it has been enriched by Lamarck, Goethe, Darwin, Haeckel and Spencer, and all the facts in the history of animal life become utterly disconnected and meaningless.

Shall we throw away all that has been discovered with regard to organic life, and in its place take the statements of one who lived in the rude morning of a barbaric day? Will anybody now contend that man was a direct and independent creation, and sustains and bears no relation to the animals below him? Belief upon this subject must be governed at last by evidence. Man cannot believe as he pleases. He can control his speech, and can say that he believes or disbelieves; but after all, his will cannot depress or raise the scales with which his reason finds the worth and weight of facts. If this is not so, investigation, evidence, judgment and reason are but empty words.

I ask again, how were Adam and Eve created? In one account they are created male and female, and apparently at the same time. In the next account, Adam is made first, and Eve a long time afterwards, and from a part of the man. Did God simply by his creative fiat cause a rib slowly to expand, grow and divide into nerve, ligament, cartilage and flesh? How was the woman created from a rib? How was man created simply from dust? For my part, I cannot believe this statement. I may suffer for this in the world to come; and may, millions of years hence, sincerely wish that I had never investigated the subject, but had been content to take the ideas of the dead. I do not believe that any deity works in that way. So far as my experience goes, there is an unbroken procession of cause and effect. Each thing is a necessary link in an infinite chain; and I cannot conceive of this chain being broken even for one instant. Back of the simplest moner there is a cause, and back of that another, and so on, it seems to me, forever. In my philosophy I postulate neither beginning nor ending.

If the Mosaic account is true, we know how long man has been upon this earth. If that account can be relied on, the first man was made about five thousand eight hundred and eighty-three years ago. Sixteen hundred and fifty-six years after the making of the first man, the inhabitants of the world, with the exception of eight people, were destroyed by a flood. This flood occurred only about four thousand two hundred and twenty-seven years ago. If this account is correct, at that time, only one kind of men existed. Noah and his family were certainly of the same blood. It therefore follows that all the differences we see between the various races of men have been caused in about four thousand years. If the account of the deluge is true, then since that event all the ancient kingdoms of the earth were founded, and their inhabitants passed through all the stages of

savage, nomadic, barbaric and semi-civilized life; through the epochs of Stone, Bronze and Iron; established commerce, cultivated the arts, built cities, filled them with palaces and temples, invented writing, produced a literature and slowly fell to shapeless ruin. We must believe that all this has happened within a period of four thousand years.

From representations found upon Egyptian granite made more than three thousand years ago, we know that the negro was as black, his lips as full, and his hair as closely curled then as now. If we know anything, we know that there was at that time substantially the same difference between the Egyptian and the Negro as now. If we know anything, we know that magnificent statues were made in Egypt four thousand years before our era—that is to say, about six thousand years ago. There was at the World's Exposition, in the Egyptian department, a statue of king Cephren, known to have been chiseled more than six thousand years ago. In other words, if the Mosaic account must be believed, this statue was made before the world. We also know, if we know anything, that men lived in Europe with the hairy mammoth, the cave bear, the rhinoceros, and the hyena. Among the bones of these animals have been found the stone hatchets and flint arrows of our ancestors. In the caves where they lived have been discovered the remains of these animals that had been conquered, killed and devoured as food, hundreds of thousands of years ago.

If these facts are true, Moses was mistaken. For my part, I have infinitely more confidence in the discoveries of to-day, than in the records of a barbarous people. It will not now do to say that man has existed upon this earth for only about six thousand years. One can hardly compute in his imagination the time necessary for man to emerge from the barbarous state, naked and helpless, surrounded by animals far more powerful than he, to progress and finally create the civilizations of India, Egypt and Athens. The distance from savagery to Shakespeare must be measured not by hundreds, but by millions of years.

XIV. SUNDAY.

“And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”

The great work had been accomplished, the world, the sun, and moon, and all the hosts of heaven were finished; the earth was clothed in green, the seas were filled with life, the cattle wandered by the brooks—insects with painted wings were in the happy air, Adam and Eve were making each other's acquaintance, and God was resting from his work. He was contemplating the accomplishments of a week.

Because he rested on that day he sanctified it, and for that reason and for that alone, it was by the Jews considered a holy day. If he only rested on that day, there ought to be some account of what he did the following Monday. Did he rest on that day? What did he do after he got rested? Has he done anything in the way of creation since Saturday evening of the first week?

It is now claimed by the “scientific” Christians that the “days” of creation were not ordinary days of twenty-four hours each, but immensely long periods of time. If they are right, then how long was the seventh day? Was that, too, a geologic period covering thousands of ages? That cannot be, because Adam and Eve were created the Saturday evening before, and according to the Bible that was about five thousand eight hundred and eighty-three years ago. I cannot state the time exactly, because there have been as many as one hundred and forty different opinions given by learned Biblical students as to the time between the creation of the world and the birth of Christ. We are quite certain, however, that, according to the Bible, it is not more than six thousand years since the creation of Adam. From this it would appear that the seventh day was not a geologic epoch, but was in fact a period of less than six thousand years, and probably of only twenty-four hours.

The theologians who “answer” these things may take their choice. If they take the ground that the “days” were periods of twenty-four hours, then geology will force them to throw away the whole account. If, on the other hand, they admit that the days were vast “periods,” then the sacredness of the Sabbath must be given up.

There is found in the Bible no intimation that there was the least difference in the days. They are all spoken of in the same way. It may be replied that our translation is incorrect. If this is so, then only those who understand Hebrew, have had a revelation from God, and all the rest have been deceived.

How is it possible to sanctify a space of time? Is rest holier than labor? If there is any difference between days, ought not that to be considered best in which the most useful labor has been performed?

Of all the superstitions of mankind, this insanity about the “sacred Sabbath” is the most absurd. The idea of feeling it a duty to be solemn and sad one seventh of the time! To think that we can please an infinite being by staying in some dark and somber room, instead of walking in the perfumed fields! Why should God hate to see a man happy? Why should it excite his wrath to see a family in the woods, by some babbling stream, talking, laughing and loving? Nature works on that “sacred” day. The earth turns, the rivers run, the trees grow, buds burst into flower, and birds fill the air with song. Why should we look sad, and think about death, and hear about hell? Why should that day be filled with gloom instead of joy?

A poor mechanic, working all the week in dust and noise, needs a day of rest and joy, a day to visit stream and wood—a day to live with wife and child; a day in which to laugh at care, and gather hope and strength for toils to come. And his weary wife needs a breath of sunny air, away from street and wall, amid the hills or by the margin of the sea, where she can sit and prattle with her babe, and fill with happy dreams the long, glad day.

The “Sabbath” was born of asceticism, hatred of human joy, fanaticism, ignorance, egotism of priests and the cowardice of the people. This day, for thousands of years, has been dedicated to superstition, to the dissemination of mistakes, and the establishment of falsehoods. Every Freethinker, as a matter of duty, should violate this day. He should assert his independence, and do all within his power to wrest the Sabbath from the gloomy church and give it back to liberty and joy. Freethinkers should make the Sabbath a day of mirth and music; a day to spend with wife and child—a day of games, and books, and dreams—a day to put fresh flowers above our sleeping dead—a day of memory and hope, of love and rest.

Why should we in this age of the world be dominated by the dead? Why should barbarian Jews who went down to death and dust three thousand years ago, control the living world? Why should we care for the superstition of men who began the Sabbath by paring their nails, “beginning at the fourth finger, then going to the second, then to the fifth, then to the third, and ending with the

thumb?" How pleasing to God this must have been. The Jews were very careful of these nail parings. They who threw them upon the ground were wicked, because Satan used them to work evil upon the earth. They believed that upon the Sabbath, souls were allowed to leave purgatory and cool their burning souls in water. Fires were neither allowed to be kindled nor extinguished, and upon that day it was a sin to bind up wounds. "The lame might use a staff, but the blind could not." So strict was the Sabbath kept, that at one time "if a Jew on a journey was overtaken by the 'sacred day' in a wood, or on the highway, no matter where, nor under what circumstances, he must sit down," and there remain until the day was gone. "If he fell down in the dirt, there he was compelled to stay until the day was done." For violating the Sabbath, the punishment was death, for nothing short of the offender's blood could satisfy the wrath of God. There are, in the Old Testament, two reasons given for abstaining from labor on the Sabbath:—the resting of God, and the redemption of the Jews from the bondage of Egypt.

Since the establishment of the Christian religion, the day has been changed, and Christians do not regard the day as holy upon which God actually rested, and which he sanctified. The Christian Sabbath, or the "Lord's day" was legally established by the murderer Constantine, because upon that day Christ was supposed to have risen from the dead.

It is not easy to see where Christians got the right to disregard the direct command of God, to labor on the day he sanctified, and keep as sacred, a day upon which he commanded men to labor. The Sabbath of God is Saturday, and if any day is to be kept holy, that is the one, and not the Sunday of the Christian.

Let us throw away these superstitions and take the higher, nobler ground, that every day should be rendered sacred by some loving act, by increasing the happiness of man, giving birth to noble thoughts, putting in the path of toil some flower of joy, helping the unfortunate, lifting the fallen, dispelling gloom, destroying prejudice, defending the helpless and filling homes with light and love.

XV.

THE NECESSITY FOR A GOOD MEMORY.

It must not be forgotten that there are two accounts of the creation in Genesis. The first account stops with the third verse of the second chapter. The chapters have been improperly divided. In the original Hebrew the Pentateuch was neither divided into chapters nor verses. There was not even any system of punctuation. It was written wholly with consonants, without vowels, and without any marks, dots, or lines to indicate them.

These accounts are materially different, and both cannot be true. Let us see wherein they differ.

The second account of the creation begins with the fourth verse of the second chapter, and is as follows:

“These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

“And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew; for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.

“But there went up a mist from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

“And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

“And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted and became into four heads.

“The name of the first is Pison; that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.

“And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.

“And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.

“And the name of the third river is Hiddekel; that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.

“And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.’

“And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him.

“And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

“And Adam gave names to all cattle and to the fowl of the air and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a helpmeet for him.

“And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

“And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman and brought her unto the man.

“And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.

“And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”

Order Of Creation In The First Account:

1. The heaven and the earth, and light were made.
2. The firmament was constructed and the waters divided.
3. The waters gathered into seas – and then came dry land, grass, herbs and fruit trees.
4. The sun and moon. He made the stars also.
5. Fishes, fowls, and great whales.
6. Beasts, cattle, every creeping thing, man and woman.

Order Of Creation In The Second Account :

1. The heavens and the earth.
2. A mist went up from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.
3. Created a man out of dust, by the name of Adam.
4. Planted a garden eastward in Eden, and put the man in it.
5. Created the beasts and fowls.
6. Created a woman out of one of the man's ribs.

In the second account, man was made *before* the beasts and fowls. If this is true, the first account is false. And if the theologians of our time are correct in their view that the Mosaic day means thousands of ages, then, according to the second account, Adam existed millions of years before Eve was formed. He must have lived one Mosaic day before there were any trees, and another Mosaic day before the beasts and fowls were created. Will some kind clergymen tell us upon what kind of food Adam subsisted during these immense periods?

In the second account a man is made, and the fact that he was without a helpmeet did not occur to the Lord God until a couple “of vast periods” afterwards. The Lord God suddenly coming to an appreciation of the situation said, “It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make a helpmeet for him.”

Now, after concluding to make “a helpmeet” for Adam, what did the Lord God do? Did he at once proceed to make a woman? No. What did he do? He made the beasts, and tried to induce Adam to take one of them for “a helpmeet.” If I am incorrect, read the following account, and tell me what it means:

“And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him.

“And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

“And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an helpmeet for him.”

Unless the Lord God was looking for an helpmeet for Adam, why did he cause the animals to pass before him? And why did he, after the menagerie had passed by, pathetically exclaim, “But for Adam there was not found a helpmeet for him”?

It seems that Adam saw nothing that struck his fancy. The fairest ape, the sprightliest chimpanzee, the loveliest baboon, the most bewitching orangutan, the most fascinating gorilla failed to touch with love’s sweet pain, poor Adam’s lonely heart. Let us rejoice that this was so. Had he fallen in love then, there never would have been a Freethinker in this world.

Dr. Adam Clarke, speaking of this remarkable proceeding says:—“God caused the animals to pass before Adam to show him that no creature yet formed could make him a suitable companion; that Adam was convinced that none of these animals could be a suitable companion for him, and that therefore he must continue in a state that was not good (celibacy) unless he became a further debtor to the bounty of his maker, for among all the animals which he had formed, there was not a helpmeet for Adam.”

Upon this same subject, Dr. Scott informs us “that it was not conducive to the happiness of the man to remain without the consoling society, and endearment of tender friendship, nor consistent with the end of his creation to be without marriage by which the earth might be replenished and worshipers and servants raised up to render him praise and glory. Adam seems to have been vastly better acquainted by intuition or revelation with the distinct properties of every creature than the most sagacious observer since the fall of man.

“Upon this review of the animals, not one was found in outward form his counterpart, nor one suited to engage his affections, participate in his enjoyments, or associate with him in the worship of God.”

Dr. Matthew Henry admits that “God brought all the animals together to see if there was a suitable match for Adam in any of the numerous families of the inferior creatures, but there was none. They were all looked over, but Adam could not be matched among them all. Therefore God created a new thing to be a helpmeet for him.”

Failing to satisfy Adam with any of the inferior animals, the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon him, and while in this sleep took out one of Adam’s ribs and “closed up the flesh instead thereof.” And out of this rib, the Lord God made a woman, and brought her to the man.

Was the Lord God compelled to take a part of the man because he had used up all the original “nothing” out of which the universe was made? Is it possible for any sane and intelligent man to believe this story? Must a man be born a second time before this account seems reasonable?

Imagine the Lord God with a bone in his hand with which to start a woman, trying to make up his mind whether to make a blonde or a brunette!

Just at this point it may be proper for me to warn all persons from laughing at or making light of, any stories found in the “Holy Bible.” When you come to die, every laugh will be a thorn in your pillow. At that solemn moment, as you look back upon the records of your life, no matter how many men you may have wrecked and ruined; no matter how many women you have deceived and deserted, all that can be forgiven; but if you remember then that you have laughed at even one story in God’s “sacred book” you will see through the gathering shadows of death the forked tongues of devils, and the leering eyes of fiends.

These stories must be believed, or the work of regeneration can never be commenced. No matter how well you act your part, live as honestly as you may, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, divide your last farthing with the poor, and you are simply traveling the broad road that leads inevitably to eternal death, unless at the same time you implicitly believe the Bible to be the inspired word of God.

Let me show you the result of unbelief. Let us suppose, for a moment, that we are at the Day of Judgment, listening to the trial of souls as they arrive. The Recording Secretary, or whoever does the cross-examining, says to a soul:

Where are you from?

I am from the Earth.

What kind of a man were you?

Well, I don't like to talk about myself. I suppose you can tell by looking at your books.

No, sir. You must tell what kind of a man you were.

Well, I was what you might call a first-rate fellow. I loved my wife and children. My home was my heaven. My fireside was a paradise to me. To sit there and see the lights and shadows fall upon the faces of those I loved, was to me a perfect joy.

How did you treat your family?

I never said an unkind word. I never caused my wife, nor one of my children, a moment's pain.

Did you pay your debts?

I did not owe a dollar when I died, and left enough to pay my funeral expenses, and to keep the fierce wolf of want from the door of those I loved.

Did you belong to any church?

No, sir. They were too narrow, pinched and bigoted for me, I never thought that I could be very happy if other folks were damned.

Did you believe in eternal punishment?

Well, no. I always thought that God could get his revenge in far less time.

Did you believe the rib story?

Do you mean the Adam and Eve business?

Yes! Did you believe that?

To tell you the God's truth, that was just a little more than I could swallow.

Away with him to hell!

Next!

Where are you from?

I am from the world too.

Did you belong to any church?

Yes, sir, and to the Young Men's Christian Association besides.

What was your business?

Cashier in a Savings Bank.

Did you ever run away with any money?

Where I came from, a witness could not be compelled to criminate himself.

The law is different here. Answer the question. Did you run away with any money?

Yes, sir.

How much?

One hundred thousand dollars.

Did you take anything else with you?

Yes, sir.

Well, what else?

I took my neighbor's wife — we sang together in the choir.

Did you have a wife and children of your own?

Yes, sir.

And you deserted them?

Yes, sir, but such was my confidence in God that I believed he would take care of them.

Have you heard of them since?

No, sir.

Did you believe in the rib story?

Bless your soul, of course I did. A thousand times I regretted that there were no harder stories in the Bible, so that I could have shown my wealth of faith.

Do you believe the rib story yet?

Yes, with all my heart.

Give him a harp!

Well, as I was saying, God made a woman from Adam's rib. Of course, I do not know exactly how this was done, but when he got the woman finished, he presented her to Adam. He liked her, and they commenced house-keeping in the celebrated Garden of Eden.

Must we, in order to be good, gentle and loving in our lives, believe that the creation of woman was a second thought? That Jehovah really endeavored to induce Adam to take one of the lower animals as a helpmeet for him? After all, is it not possible to live honest and courageous lives without believing these fables? It is said that from Mount Sinai God gave, amid thunderings and lightnings, ten commandments for the guidance of mankind; and yet among them is not found — "Thou shalt believe the Bible."

XVI. THE GARDEN.

In the first account we are told that God made man, male and female, and said to them "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it."

In the second account only the man is made, and he is put in a garden "to dress it and to keep it." He is not told to subdue the earth, but to dress and keep a garden.

In the first account man is given every herb bearing seed upon the face of the earth and the fruit of every tree for food, and in the second, he is given only the fruit of all the trees in the garden with the exception "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" which was a deadly poison.

There was issuing from this garden a river that was parted into four heads. The first of these, Pison, compassed the whole land of Havilah, the second, Gihon, that compassed the whole land of Ethiopia, the third, Heddekel, that flowed toward the east of Assyria, and the fourth, the Euphrates. Where are these four rivers now? The brave prow of discovery has visited every sea; the traveler has pressed with weary feet the soil of every clime; and yet there has been found no place from which four rivers sprang. The Euphrates still journeys to the gulf, but where are Pison, Gihon and the mighty Heddekel? Surely by going to the source of the Euphrates we ought to find either these three rivers or their ancient beds. Will some minister when he answers the "Mistakes of Moses" tell us where these rivers are or were? The maps of the world are incomplete without these mighty streams. We have discovered the sources of the Nile; the North Pole will soon be touched by an American; but these three rivers still rise in unknown hills, still flow through unknown lands, and empty still in unknown seas.

The account of these four rivers is what the Rev. David Swing would call "a geographical poem." The orthodox clergy cover the whole affair with the blanket of allegory, while the "scientific" Christian folks talk about cataclysms, upheavals, earthquakes, and vast displacements of the earth's crust.

The question, then arises, whether within the last six thousand years there have been such upheavals and displacements? Talk as you will about the vast "creative periods" that preceded the appearance of man; it is, according to the Bible, only about six thousand years since man was created. Moses gives us the generations of men from Adam until his day, and this account cannot be explained away by calling centuries, days.

According to the second account of creation, these four rivers were made after the creation of man, and consequently they must have been obliterated by convulsions of Nature within six thousand years.

Can we not account for these contradictions, absurdities, and falsehoods by simply saying that although the writer may have done his level best, he failed because he was limited in knowledge, led away by tradition, and depended too implicitly upon the correctness of his imagination? Is not such a course far more reasonable than to insist that all these things are true and must stand though every science shall fall to mental dust?

Can any reason be given for not allowing man to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge? What kind of tree was that? If it is all an allegory, what truth is sought to be conveyed? Why should God object to that fruit being eaten by man? Why did he put it in the midst of the garden? There was certainly plenty of room outside. If he wished to keep man and this tree apart, why did he put them together? And why, after he had eaten, was he thrust out? The only answer that we have a right to give, is the one given in the Bible. "And the Lord God said, Behold the man has become as one of us to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken."

Will some minister, some graduate of Andover, tell us what this means? Are we bound to believe it without knowing what the meaning is? If it is a revelation, what does it reveal? Did God object to education then, and does that account for the hostile attitude still assumed by theologians toward all scientific truth? Was there in the garden a tree of life, the eating of which would have rendered Adam and Eve immortal? Is it true that after the Lord God drove them from the garden that he placed upon its Eastern side "Cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life?" Are the Cherubim and the flaming sword guarding that tree still, or was it destroyed, or did its rotting trunk, as the Rev. Robert Collyer suggests, "nourish a bank of violets"?

What objection could God have had to the immortality of man? You see that after all, this sacred record, instead of assuring us of immortality, shows us only how we lost it. In this there is assuredly but little consolation.

According to this story we have lost one Eden, but nowhere in the Mosaic books are we told how we may gain another. I know that the Christians tell us there is another, in which all true believers will finally be gathered, and enjoy the unspeakable happiness of seeing the unbelievers in hell; but they do not tell us where it is.

Some commentators say that the Garden of Eden was in the third heaven—some in the fourth, others have located it in the moon, some in the air beyond the attraction of the earth, some on the earth, some under the earth, some inside the earth, some at the North Pole, others at the South, some in Tartary, some in China, some on the borders of the Ganges, some in the island of Ceylon, some in Armenia, some in Africa, some under the Equator, others in Mesopotamia, in Syria, Persia, Arabia, Babylon, Assyria, Palestine and Europe. Others have contended that it was invisible, that it was an allegory, and must be spiritually understood.

But whether you understand these things or not, you must believe them. You may be laughed at in this world for insisting that God put Adam into a deep sleep and made a woman out of one of his ribs, but you will be crowned and glorified in the next. You will also have the pleasure of hearing the gentlemen howl there, who laughed at you here. While you will not be permitted to take any revenge, you will be allowed to smilingly express your entire acquiescence in the will of God. But where is the new Eden? No one knows. The one was lost, and the other has not been found.

Is it true that man was once perfectly pure and innocent, and that he became degenerate by disobedience? No. The real truth is, and the history of man shows, that he has advanced. Events, like the pendulum of a clock have swung forward and back ward, but after all, man, like the hands, has gone steadily on. Man is growing grander. He is not degenerating. Nations and individuals fail and die, and make room for higher forms. The intellectual horizon of the world widens as the centuries pass. Ideals grow grander and purer; the difference between justice and mercy becomes less and less; liberty enlarges, and love intensifies as the years sweep on. The ages of force and fear, of cruelty and wrong, are behind us and the real Eden is beyond. It is said that a desire for knowledge lost us the Eden of the past; but whether that is true or not, it will certainly give us the Eden of the future.

XVII. THE FALL.

We are told that the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field, that he had a conversation with Eve, in which he gave his opinion about the effect of eating certain fruit; that he assured her it was good to eat, that it was pleasant to the eye, that it would make her wise; that she was induced to take some; that she persuaded her husband to try it; that God found it out, that he then cursed the snake; condemning it to crawl and eat the dust; that he multiplied the sorrows of Eve, cursed the ground for Adam's sake, started thistles and thorns, condemned man to eat the herb of the field in the sweat of his face, pronounced the curse of death, "Dust thou art and unto dust shall thou return," made coats of skins for Adam and Eve, and drove them out of Eden.

Who, and what was this serpent? Dr. Adam Clarke says:—

"The serpent must have walked erect, for this is necessarily implied in his punishment. That he was endued with the gift of speech, also with reason. That these things were given to this creature. The woman no doubt having often seen him walking erect, and talking and reasoning, therefore she testifies no sort of surprise when he accosts her in the language related in the text. It therefore appears to me that a creature of the ape or orangutan kind is here intended, and that Satan made use of this creature as the most proper instrument for the accomplishment of his murderous purposes against the life of the soul of man. Under this creature he lay hid, and by this creature he seduced our first parents. Such a creature answers to every part of the description in the text. It is evident from the structure of its limbs and its muscles that it might have been originally designed to walk erect, and that nothing else than the sovereign controlling power could induce it to put down hands—in every respect formed like those of man—and walk like those creatures whose claw-armed parts prove them to have been designed to walk on all fours. The stealthy cunning, and endless variety of the pranks and tricks of these creatures show them even now to be wiser and more intelligent than any other creature, man alone excepted. Being obliged to walk on all fours and gather their food from the ground, they are literally obliged to eat the dust; and though exceeding cunning, and careful in a variety of instances to separate that part which is wholesome and proper for food from that which is not so, in the article of cleanliness they are lost to all sense of propriety. Add to this their utter aversion to walk upright; it requires the utmost discipline to bring them to it, and scarcely anything offends or irritates them more than to be obliged to do it. Long observation of these animals enables me to state these facts. For earnest, attentive watching, and for chattering and babbling they (the

ape) have no fellows in the animal world. Indeed, the ability and propensity to chatter, is all they have left of their original gift of speech, of which they appear to have been deprived at the fall as a part of their punishment."

Here then is the "connecting link" between man and the lower creation. The serpent was simply an orang-outang that spoke Hebrew with the greatest ease, and had the outward appearance of a perfect gentleman, seductive in manner, plausible, polite, and most admirably calculated to deceive.

It never did seem reasonable to me that a long, cold and disgusting snake with an "apple" in his mouth, could deceive anybody; and I am glad, even at this late date to know that the something that persuaded Eve to taste the forbidden fruit was, at least, in the shape of a man.

Dr. Henry does not agree with the zoological explanation of Mr. Clark, but insists that

"it is certain that the devil that beguiled Eve is the old serpent, a malignant by creation, an angel of light, an immediate attendant upon God's throne, but by sin an apostate from his first state, and a rebel against God's crown and dignity. He who attacked our first parents was surely the prince of devils, the ring leader in rebellion. The devil chose to act his part in a serpent, because it is a specious creature, has a spotted, dappled skin, and then, went erect. Perhaps it was a flying serpent which seemed to come from on high, as a messenger from the upper world, one of the seraphim; because the serpent is a subtle creature. What Eve thought of this serpent speaking to her, we are not likely to tell, and, I believe, she herself did not know what to think of it. At first, perhaps, she supposed it might be a good angel, and yet afterwards might suspect something amiss. The person tempted was a woman, now alone, and at a distance from her husband, but near the forbidden tree. It was the devil's subtlety to assault the weaker vessel with his temptations, as we may suppose her inferior to Adam in knowledge, strength and presence of mind. Some think that Eve received the command not immediately from God, but at second hand from her husband, and might, therefore, be the more easily persuaded to discredit it. It was the policy of the devil to enter into discussion with her when she was alone. He took advantage by finding her near the forbidden tree. God permitted Satan to prevail over Eve, for wise and holy ends. Satan teaches men first to doubt, and then to deny. He makes skeptics first, and by degrees makes them atheists."

We are compelled to admit that nothing could be more attractive to a woman than a snake walking erect, with a "spotted, dappled skin," unless it were a serpent with wings. Is it not humiliating to know that our ancestors believed these things? Why should we object to the Darwinian doctrine of descent after this?

Our fathers thought it their duty to believe, thought it a sin to entertain the slightest doubt, and really supposed that their credulity was exceedingly, gratifying to God. To them, the story was entirely real. They could see the garden, hear the babble of waters, smell the perfume of flowers. They believed there was a tree where knowledge grew like plums or pears; and they could plainly see the serpent coiled amid its rustling leaves, coaxing Eve to violate the laws of God.

Where did the serpent come from? On which of the six days was he created? Who made him? Is it possible that God would make a successful rival? He must have known that Adam and Eve would fall. He knew what a snake with a "spotted, dappled skin" could do with an inexperienced woman. Why did he not defend his children? He knew that if the serpent got into the garden, Adam and Eve would sin, that he would have to drive them out, that afterwards the world would be destroyed, and that he himself would die upon the cross.

Again, I ask what and who was this serpent? He was not a man, for only one man had been made. He was not a woman. He was not a beast of the field, because "he was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." He was neither fish nor fowl, nor snake, because he had the power of speech, and did not crawl upon his belly until after he was cursed. Where did this serpent come from? Why was he not kept out of the garden? Why did not the Lord God take him by the tail and snap his head off? Why did he not put Adam and Eve on their guard about this serpent? They, of course, were not acquainted in the neighborhood, and knew nothing about the serpent's reputation for truth and veracity among his neighbors. Probably Adam saw him when he was looking for "an helpmeet" and gave him a name, but Eve had never met him before. She was not surprised to hear a serpent talk, as that was the first one she had ever met. Every thing being new to her, and her husband not being with her just at that moment, it need hardly excite our wonder that she tasted the fruit by way of experiment. Neither should we be surprised that when she saw it was good and pleasant to the eye, and a fruit to be desired to make one wise, she had the generosity to divide with her husband.

Theologians have filled thousands of volumes with abuse of this serpent, but it seems that he told the exact truth. We are told that this serpent was, in fact, Satan, the greatest enemy of mankind, and that he entered the serpent, appearing to our first parents in its body. If this is so, why should the serpent have been cursed? Why should God curse the serpent for what had really been done by the devil? Did Satan remain in the body of the serpent, and in some mysterious manner share his punishment? Is it true that when we kill a snake we also destroy an evil spirit, or is there but one devil, and did he perish at the death of the first serpent? Is it on account of that transaction in the Garden of Eden, that all the descendants of Adam and Eve known as Jews and Christians hate serpents?

Do you account for the snake-worship in Mexico, Africa and India in the same way?

What was the form of the serpent when he entered the garden, and in what way did he move from place to place? Did he walk or fly? Certainly he did not crawl, because that mode of locomotion was pronounced upon him as a curse. Upon what food did he subsist before his conversation with Eve? We know that after that he lived upon dust, but what did he eat before? It may be that this is all poetic; and the truest poetry is, according to Touchstone, "the most feigning."

In this same chapter we are informed that "unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them." Where did the Lord God get those skins? He must have taken them from the animals; he was a butcher. Then he had to prepare them; he was a tanner. Then he made them into coats; he was a tailor. How did it happen that they needed coats of skins, when they had been perfectly comfortable in a nude condition? Did the "fall" produce a change in the climate?

Is it really necessary to believe this account in order to be happy here, or hereafter? Does it tend to the elevation of the human race to speak of "God" as a butcher, tanner and tailor?

And here, let me say once for all, that when I speak of God, I mean the being described by Moses; the Jehovah of the Jews. There may be for aught I know, somewhere in the unknown shoreless vast, some being whose dreams are constellations and within whose thought the infinite exists. About this being, if such a one exists, I have nothing to say. He has written no books, inspired no barbarians, required no worship, and has prepared no hell in which to burn the honest seeker after truth.

When I speak of God, I mean that god who prevented man from putting forth his hand and taking also of the fruit of the tree of life that he might live forever; of that god who multiplied the agonies of woman, increased the weary toil of man, and in his anger drowned a world — of that god whose altars reeked with human blood, who butchered babes, violated maidens, enslaved men and filled the earth with cruelty and crime; of that god who made heaven for the few, hell for the many, and who will gloat forever and ever upon the writhing of the lost and damned.

XVIII

DAMPNESS.

“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them.

“That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

“And the Lord said, my spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

“There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

“And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

“And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.”

From this account it seems that driving Adam and Eve out of Eden did not have the effect to improve them or their children. On the contrary, the world grew worse and worse. They were under the immediate control and government of God, and he from time to time made known his will; but in spite of this, man continued to increase in crime.

Nothing in particular seems to have been done. Not a school was established. There was no written language. There was not a Bible in the world. The "scheme of salvation" was kept a profound secret. The five points of Calvinism had not been taught. Sunday schools had not been opened. In short, nothing had been done for the reformation of the world. God did not even keep his own sons at home, but allowed them to leave their abode in the firmament, and make love to the daughters of men. As a result of this, the world was filled with wickedness and giants to such an extent that God regretted "that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

Of course God knew when he made man, that he would afterwards regret it. He knew that the people would grow worse and worse until destruction would be the only remedy. He knew that he would have to kill all except Noah and his family, and it is hard to see why he did not make Noah and his family in the first place, and leave Adam and Eve in the original dust. He knew that they would be tempted, that he would have to drive them out of the garden to keep them from eating of the tree of life; that the whole thing would be a failure; that Satan would defeat his plan; that he could not reform the people; that his own sons would corrupt them, and that at last he would have to drown them all except Noah and his family. Why was the Garden of Eden planted? Why was the experiment made? Why were Adam and Eve exposed to the seductive arts of the serpent? Why did God wait until the cool of the day before looking after his children? Why was he not on hand in the morning? Why did he fill the world with his own children, knowing that he would have to destroy them? And why does this same God tell me how to raise my children when he had to drown his?

It is a little curious that when God wished to reform the ante-diluvian world he said nothing about hell; that he had no revivals, no camp-meetings, no tracts, no outpourings of the Holy Ghost, no baptisms, no noon prayer meetings, and never mentioned the great doctrine of salvation by faith. If the orthodox creeds of the world are true, all those people went to hell without ever having heard that such a place existed. If eternal torment is a fact, surely these miserable wretches ought to have been warned. They were threatened only with water when they were in fact doomed to eternal fire!

Is it not strange that God said nothing to Adam and Eve about a future life; that he should have kept these “infinite verities” to himself and allowed millions to live and die without the hope of heaven, or the vicar of hell?

It may be that hell was not made at that time. In the six days of creation nothing is said about the construction of a bottomless pit, and the serpent himself did not make his appearance until after the creation of man and woman. Perhaps he was made on the first Sunday, and from that fact came, it may be, the old couplet,

“And Satan still some mischief finds
For idle hands to do.”

The sacred historian failed also to tell us when the cherubim and the flaming sword were made, and said nothing about two of the persons composing the Trinity. It certainly would have been an easy thing to enlighten Adam and his immediate descendants. The world was then only about fifteen hundred and thirty-six years old, and only about three or four generations of men had lived. Adam had been dead only about six hundred and six years, and some of his grandchildren must, at that time, have been alive and well.

It is hard to see why God did not civilize these people. He certainly had the power to use, and the wisdom to devise the proper means. What right has a god to fill a world with fiends? Can there be goodness in this? Why should he make experiments that he knows must fail? Is there wisdom in this? And what right has a man to charge an infinite being with wickedness and folly?

According to Moses, God made up his mind not only to destroy the people, but the beasts and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air. What had the beasts, and the creeping things, and the birds done to excite the anger of God? Why did he repent having made them? Will some Christian give us an explanation of this matter? No good man will inflict unnecessary pain upon a beast; how then can we worship a god who cares nothing for the agonies of the dumb creatures that he made?

Why did he make animals that he knew he would destroy? Does God delight in causing pain? He had the power to make the beasts, and fowls, and creeping things in his own good time and way, and it is to be presumed that he made them according to his wish. Why should he destroy them? They had committed no sin. They had eaten no forbidden fruit, made no aprons, nor tried to reach the tree of life. Yet this god, in blind unreasoning wrath destroyed “all flesh wherein was the breath of life, and every living thing beneath the sky, and every substance wherein was life that he had made.”

Jehovah having made up his mind to drown the world, told Noah to make an Ark of gopher wood three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. A cubit is twenty-two inches; so that the ark was five hundred and fifty feet long, ninety-one feet and eight inches wide and fifty-five feet high. This ark was divided into three stories, and had on top, one window twenty-two inches square. Ventilation must have been one of Jehovah's hobbies. Think of a ship larger than the Great Eastern with only one window, and that but twenty-two inches square!

The ark also had one door set in the side thereof that shut from the outside. As soon as this ship was finished, and properly victualed, Noah received seven days notice to get the animals in the ark.

It is claimed by some of the scientific theologians that the flood was partial, that the waters covered only a small portion of the world, and that consequently only a few animals were in the ark. It is impossible to conceive of language that can more clearly convey the idea of a universal flood than that found in the inspired account. If the flood was only partial, why did God say he would "destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life from under heaven, and that every thing that is in the earth shall die"? Why did he say "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing and the fowls of the air"? Why did he say "And every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth"? Would a partial, local flood have fulfilled these threats?

Nothing can be clearer than that the writer of this account intended to convey, and did convey the idea that the flood was universal. Why should Christians try to deprive God of the glory of having wrought the most stupendous of miracles? Is it possible that the Infinite could not overwhelm with waves this atom called the earth? Do you doubt his power, his wisdom or his justice?

Believers in miracles should not endeavor to explain them. There is but one way to explain anything, and that is to account for it by natural agencies. The moment you explain a miracle, it disappears. You should depend not upon explanation, but assertion. You should not be driven from the field because the miracle is shown to be unreasonable. You should reply that all miracles are unreasonable. Neither should you be in the least disheartened if it is shown to be impossible. The possible is not miraculous. You should take the ground that if miracles were reasonable, and possible, there would be no reward paid for believing them. The Christian has the goodness to believe, while the sinner asks for evidence. It is enough for God to work miracles without being called upon to substantiate them for the benefit of unbelievers.

Only a few years ago, the Christians believed implicitly in the literal truth of every miracle recorded in the Bible. Whoever tried to explain them in some natural way, was looked upon as an infidel in disguise, but now he is regarded as a benefactor. The credulity of the church is decreasing, and the most marvelous miracles are now either “explained,” or allowed to take refuge behind the mistakes of the translators, or hide in the drapery of allegory.

In the sixth chapter, Noah is ordered to take “of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort into the ark—male and female.” In the seventh chapter the order is changed, and Noah is commanded, according to the Protestant Bible, as follows:

“Of every dean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female, and of beasts that are not clean, by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female.”

According to the Catholic Bible, Noah was commanded—

“Of all clean beasts take seven and seven, the male and the female. But of the beasts that are unclean two and two, the male and the female. Of the fowls also of the air seven and seven, the male and the female.”

For the purpose of belittling this miracle, many commentators have taken the ground that Noah was not ordered to take seven males and seven females of each kind of clean beasts, but seven in all. Many Christians contend that only seven clean beasts of each kind were taken into the ark—three and a half of each sex.

If the account in the seventh chapter means anything, it means *first*, that of each kind of clean beasts, fourteen were to be taken, seven males, and seven females; *second*, that of unclean beasts should be taken, two of each kind, one of each sex, and *third*, that he should take of every kind of fowls, seven of each sex.

It is equally clear that the command in the 19th and 20th verses of the 6th chapter is to take two of each sort, one male and one female. And this agrees exactly with the account in the 7th, 8th, 9th, 14th, 15th, and 16th verses of the 7th chapter.

The next question is, how many beasts, fowls and creeping things did Noah take into the ark?

There are now known and classified at least twelve thousand five hundred species of birds. There are still vast territories in China, South America, and Africa unknown to the ornithologist.

Of the birds, Noah took fourteen of each species, according to the 3rd verse of the 7th chapter, "Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female," making a total of 175,000 birds.

And right here allow me to ask a question. If the flood was simply a partial flood, why were birds taken into the ark? It seems to me that most birds, attending strictly to business, might avoid a partial flood.

There are at least sixteen hundred and fifty-eight kinds of beasts. Let us suppose that twenty-five of these are clean. Of the clean, fourteen of each kind — seven of each sex — were taken. These amounts to 360. Of the unclean — two of each kind, amounting to 3,266. There are some six hundred and fifty species of reptiles. Two of each kind amount to 1,300. And lastly, there are of insects including the creeping things, at least one million species, so that Noah and his folks had to get of these into the ark about 2,000,000.

Animalculæ have not been taken into consideration. There are probably many hundreds of thousands of species; many of them invisible; and yet Noah had to pick them out by pairs. Very few people have any just conception of the trouble Noah had.

We know that there are many animals on this continent not found in the Old World. These must have been carried from here to the ark, and then brought back afterwards. Were the peccary, armadillo, ant-eater, sloth, agouti, vampire-bat, marmoset, howling and prehensile-tailed monkey, the raccoon and muskrat carried by the angels from America to Asia? How did they get there? Did the polar bear leave his field of ice and journey toward the tropics? How did he know where the ark was? Did the kangaroo swim or jump from Australia to Asia? Did the giraffe, hippopotamus, antelope and orang-outang journey from Africa in search of the ark? **Can absurdities go farther than this?**

What had these animals to eat while on the journey? What did they eat while in the ark? What did they drink? When the rain came, of course the rivers ran to the seas, and these seas rose and finally covered the world. The waters of the seas, mingled with those of the flood, would make all salt. It has been calculated that it required, to drown the world, about eight times as much water as was in all the seas. To find how salt the waters of the flood must have been, take eight quarts of fresh water, and add one quart from the sea. Such water would create instead of allaying thirst. Noah had to take in his ark fresh water for all his

beasts, birds and living things. He had to take the proper food for all. How long was he in the ark? Three hundred and seventy-seven days! Think of the food necessary for the monsters of the ante-diluvian world!

Eight persons did all the work. They attended to the wants of 175,000 birds, 3,616 beasts, 1,300 reptiles, and 2,000,000 insects, saying nothing of countless animalculæ.

Well, after they all got in, Noah pulled down the window, God shut the door, and the rain commenced.

How long did it rain?

Forty days.

How deep did the water get?

About five miles and a half.

How much did it rain a day?

Enough to cover the whole world to a depth of about seven hundred and forty-two feet.

Some Christians say that the fountains of the great deep were broken up. Will they be kind enough to tell us what the fountains of the great deep are? Others say that God had vast stores of water in the center of the earth that he used on that occasion. How did these waters happen to run up hill?

Gentlemen, allow me to tell you once more that you must not try to explain these things. Your efforts in that direction do no good, because your explanations are harder to believe than the miracle itself. Take my advice, stick to assertion, and let explanation alone.

Then, as now, Dhawalagiri lifted its crown of snow twenty-nine thousand feet above the level of the sea, and on the cloudless cliffs of Chimborazo then, as now, sat the condor; and yet the waters rising seven hundred and twenty-six feet a day – thirty feet an hour, six inches a minute, – rose over the hills, over the volcanoes, filled the vast craters, extinguished all the fires, rose above every mountain peak until the vast world was but one shoreless sea covered, with the innumerable dead.

Was this the work of the most merciful God, the father of us all? If there is a God, can there be the slightest danger of incurring his displeasure by doubting even in a reverential way, the truth of such a cruel lie? If we think that God is kinder than he really is, will our poor souls be burned for that?

How many trees can live under miles of water for a year? What became of the soil washed, scattered, dissolved, and covered with the *debris* of a world? How were the tender plants and herbs preserved? How were the animals preserved after leaving the ark? There was no grass except such as had been submerged for a year. There were no animals to be devoured by the carnivorous beasts. What became of the birds that fed on worms and insects? What became of the birds that devoured other birds?

It must be remembered that the pressure of the water when at the highest point—say twenty-nine thousand feet, would have been about eight hundred tons on each square foot. Such a pressure certainly would have destroyed nearly every vestige of vegetable life, so that when the animals came out of the ark, there was not a mouthful of food in the wide world. How were they supported until the world was again clothed with grass? How were those animals taken care of that subsisted on others? Where did the bees get honey, and the ants seeds? There was not a creeping thing upon the whole earth; not a breathing creature beneath the whole heavens; not a living substance. Where did the tenants of the ark get food?

There is but one answer, if the story is true. The food necessary not only during the year of the flood, but sufficient for many months afterwards, must have been stored in the ark.

There is probably not an animal in the world that will not, in a year, eat and drink ten times its weight. Noah must have provided food and water for a year while in the ark, and food for at least six months after they got ashore. It must have required for a pair of elephants, about one hundred and fifty tons of food and water. A couple of mammoths would have required about twice that amount. Of course there were other monsters that lived on trees; and in a year would have devoured quite a forest.

How could eight persons have distributed this food, even if the ark had been large enough to hold it? How was the ark kept clean? We know how it was ventilated; but what was done with the filth? How were the animals watered? How were some portions of the ark heated for animals from the tropics, and others kept cool for the polar bears? How did the animals get back to their respective countries? Some had to creep back about six thousand miles, and they could only go a few feet a day. Some of the creeping things must have started for

the ark just as soon as they were made, and kept up a steady jog for sixteen hundred years. Think of a couple of the slowest snails leaving a point opposite the ark and starting for the plains of Shinar, a distance of twelve thousand miles. Going at the rate of a mile a month, it would take them a thousand years. How did they get there? Polar bears must have gone several thousand miles, and so sudden a change in climate must have been exceedingly trying upon their health. How did they know the way to go? Of course, all the polar bears did not go. Only two were required. Who selected these?

Two sloths had to make the journey from South America. These creatures cannot travel to exceed three rods a day. At this rate, they would make a mile in about a hundred days. They must have gone about six thousand five hundred miles, to reach the ark. Supposing them to have traveled by a reasonably direct route, in order to complete the journey before Noah hauled in the plank, they must have started several years before the world was created. We must also consider that these sloths had to board themselves on the way, and that most of their time had to be taken up getting food and water. It is exceedingly doubtful whether a sloth could travel six thousand miles and board himself in less than three thousand years.

Volumes might be written upon the infinite absurdity of this most incredible, wicked and foolish of all the fables contained in that repository of the impossible, called the Bible. To me it is a matter of amazement that it ever was for a moment believed by any intelligent human being.

Dr. Adam Clarke says that "the animals were brought to the ark by the power of God, and their enmities were so removed or suspended, that the lion could dwell peaceably with the lamb, and the wolf sleep happily by the side of the kid. There is no positive evidence that animal food was ever used before the flood. Noah had the first grant of this kind."

Dr. Scott remarks, "There seems to have been a very extraordinary miracle, perhaps by the ministration of angels, in bringing two of every species to Noah, and rendering them submissive, and peaceful with each other. Yet it seems not to have made any impression upon the hardened spectators. The suspension of the ferocity of the savage beasts during their continuance in the ark, is generally considered as an apt figure of the change that takes place in the disposition of sinners when they enter the true church of Christ."

He believed the deluge to have been universal. In his day science had not demonstrated the absurdity of this belief, and he was not compelled to resort to some theory not found in the Bible. He insisted that "by some vast convulsion, the very bowels of the earth were forced upwards, and rain poured down in

cataracts and water-spouts, with no intermission for forty days and nights, and until in every place a universal deluge was effected.

“The presence of God was the only comfort of Noah in his dreary confinement, and in witnessing the dire devastation of the earth and its inhabitants, and especially of the human species—of his companions, his neighbors, his relatives—all those to whom he had preached, for whom he had prayed and over whom he had wept, and even of many who had helped to build the ark.

“It seems that by a peculiar providential interposition, no animal of any sort died, although they had been shut up in the ark above a year; and it does not appear that there had been any increase of them during that time.

“The Ark was flat-bottomed—square at each end—roofed like a house so that it terminated at the top in the breadth of a cubit. It was divided into many little cabins for its intended inhabitants. Pitched within and without to keep it tight and sweet, and lighted from the upper part. But it must, at first sight, be evident that so large a vessel, thus constructed, with so few persons on board, was utterly unfitted to weather out the deluge, except it was under the immediate guidance and protection of the Almighty.”

Dr. Henry furnished the Christian world with the following:—

“As our bodies have in them the humors which, when God pleases, become the springs and seeds of mortal disease, so the earth had, in its bowels, those waters which, at God’s command, sprung up and flooded it.

“God made the world in six days, but he was forty days in destroying it, because he is slow to anger.

“The hostilities between the animals in the ark ceased, and ravenous creatures became mild and manageable, so that the wolf lay down with the lamb, and the lion ate straw like an ox.

“God shut the door of the ark to secure Noah and to keep him safe, and because it was necessary that the door should be shut very close lest the water should break in and sink the ark, and very fast lest others might break it down.

“The waters rose so high that not only the low flat countries were deluged, but to make sure work and that none might escape, the tops of the highest mountains were overflowed fifteen cubits. That is, seven and a half yards, so that salvation was not hoped for from hills or mountains.

“Perhaps some of the people got to the top of the ark, and hoped to shift for themselves there. But either they perished there for want of food, or the dashing rain washed them off the top. Others, it may be, hoped to prevail with Noah for admission into the ark, and plead old acquaintance.

“ ‘Have we not eaten and drank in thy presence? Hast thou not preached in our streets?’ ‘Yea,’ said Noah, ‘many a time, but to little purpose. I called but ye refused; and now it is not in my power to help you. God has shut the door and I cannot open it.’

“We may suppose that some of those who perished in the deluge had themselves assisted Noah, or were employed by him in building the ark.

“Hitherto, man had been confined to feed only upon the products of the earth. Fruits, herbs and roots, and all sorts of greens, and milk, which was the first grant; but the flood having perhaps washed away much of the fruits of the earth, and rendered them much less pleasant and nourishing, God enlarged the grant and allowed him to eat flesh, which perhaps man never thought of until now, that God directed him to it. Nor had he any more desire to it than the sheep has to suck blood like the wolf. But now, man is allowed to feed upon flesh as freely and safely as upon the green herb.”

Such was the debasing influence of a belief in the literal truth of the Bible upon these men, that their commentaries are filled with passages utterly devoid of common sense.

Dr. Clarke speaking of the mammoth says:

“This animal, an astonishing proof of God’s power, he seems to have produced merely to show what he could do. And after suffering a few of them to propagate, he extinguished the race by a merciful providence, that they might not destroy both man and beast.

“We are told that it would have been much easier for God to destroy all the people and make new ones, but he would not want to waste anything and no power or skill should be lavished where no necessity exists.

“The animals were brought to the ark by the power of God.”

Again gentlemen, let me warn you of the danger of trying to explain a miracle. Let it alone. Say that you do not understand it, and do not expect to until taught in the schools of the New Jerusalem. The more reasons you give, the more unreasonable the miracle will appear. Through what you say in defence, people are led to think, and as soon as they really think, the miracle is thrown away.

Among the most ignorant nations you will find the most wonders, among the most enlightened, the least. It is with individuals, the same as with nations. Ignorance believes, Intelligence examines and explains.

For about seven months the ark, with its cargo of men, animals and insects, tossed and wandered without rudder or sail upon a boundless sea. At last it grounded on the mountains of Ararat; and about three months afterward the tops of the mountains became visible. It must not be forgotten that the mountain where the ark is supposed to have first touched bottom, was about seventeen thousand feet high. How were the animals from the tropics kept warm? When the waters were abated it would be intensely cold at a point seventeen thousand feet above the level of the sea. May be there were stoves, furnaces, fire places and steam coils in the ark, but they are not mentioned in the inspired narrative. How were the animals kept from freezing? It will not do to say that Ararat was not very high after all.

If you will read the fourth and fifth verses of the eighth chapter you will see that although "the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat, it was not until the first day of the tenth month "that the tops of the mountains could be seen." From this it would seem that the ark must have rested upon about the highest peak in that country. Noah waited forty days more, and then for the first time opened the window and took a breath of fresh air. He then sent out a raven that did not return, then a dove that returned. He then waited seven days and sent forth a dove that returned not. From this he knew that the waters were abated. Is it possible that he could not see whether the waters had gone? Is it possible to conceive of a more perfectly childish way of ascertaining whether the earth was dry?

At last Noah "removed the covering of the ark, and looked and behold the face of the ground was dry," and thereupon God told him to disembark. In his gratitude Noah built an altar and took of every clean beast and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor and said in his heart that he would not any more curse the ground for man's sake. For saying this in his heart the Lord gives as a reason, not that man is, or will be good, but because "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." God destroyed man because "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and *because every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*" And he promised for the same reason not to destroy him again. Will some gentleman skilled in theology give us an explanation?

After God had smelled the sweet savor of sacrifice, he seems to have changed his idea as to the proper diet for man. When Adam and Eve were created they were allowed to eat herbs bearing seed, and the fruit of trees. When they were turned out of Eden, God said to them "Thou shall eat the herb of the field." In the first chapter of Genesis the "green herb" was given for food to the beasts, fowls and creeping things. Upon being expelled from the garden, Adam and Eve, as to their food, were put upon equality with the lower animals. According to this, the ante-diluvians were vegetarians. This may account for their wickedness and longevity.

After Noah sacrificed, and God smelled the sweet savor; he said—"Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you, even as the green herb have I given you all things." Afterward this same God changed his mind again, and divided the beasts and birds into clean and unclean, and made it a crime for man to eat the unclean. Probably food was so scarce when Noah was let out of the ark that Jehovah generously allowed him to eat anything and everything he could find.

According to the account, God then made a covenant with Noah to the effect that he would not again destroy the world with a flood, and as the attesting witness of this contract, a rainbow was set in the cloud. This bow was placed in the sky so that it might perpetually remind God of his promise and covenant. Without this visible witness and reminder, it would seem that Jehovah was liable to forget the contract, and drown the world again. Did the rainbow originate in this way? Did God put it in the cloud simply to keep his agreement in his memory?

For me it is impossible to believe the story of the deluge. It seems so cruel, so barbaric, so crude in detail, so absurd in all its parts, and so contrary to all we know of law, that even credulity itself is shocked.

Many nations have preserved accounts of a deluge in which all people, except a family or two, were destroyed. Babylon was certainly a city before Jerusalem was founded. Egypt was in the height of her power when there were only seventy Jews in the world, and India had a literature before the name of Jehovah had passed the lips of superstition. An account of a general deluge "was discovered by George Smith, translated from another account that was written about two thousand years before Christ." Of course it is impossible to tell how long the story had lived in the memory of tradition before it was reduced to writing by the Babylonians. According to this account, which is, without doubt, much older than the one given by Moses, Tamzi built a ship at the command of the god Hea, and put in it his family and the beasts of the field. He pitched the ship inside and outside with bitumen, and as soon as it was finished, there came

a flood of rain and “destroyed all life from the face of the whole earth. On the seventh day there was calm, and the ship stranded on the mountain Nizir.” Tamzi waited for seven days more, and then let out a dove. Afterwards, he let out a swallow, and that, as well as the dove returned. Then he let out a raven, and as that did not return, he concluded that the water had dried away, and thereupon left the ship. Then he made an offering to god, or the gods, and “Hea interceded with Bel,” so that the earth might never again be drowned.

This is the Babylonian story, told without the contradictions of the original. For in that, it seems, there are two accounts, as well as in the Bible. Is it not a strange coincidence that there should be contradictory accounts mingled in both the Babylonian and Jewish stories?

In the Bible there are two accounts. In one account, Noah was to take two of all beasts, birds, and creeping things into the ark, while in the other, he was commanded to take of clean beasts, and all birds by sevens of each kind. According to one account, the flood only lasted one hundred and fifty days—as related in the third verse of the eighth chapter; while the other account fixes the time at three hundred and seventy-seven days. Both of these accounts cannot be true. Yet in order to be saved, it is not sufficient to believe one of them — you must believe both.

Among the Egyptians there was a story to the effect that the great god Ra became utterly maddened with the people, and deliberately made up his mind that he would exterminate mankind. Thereupon he began to destroy, and continued in the terrible work until blood flowed in streams, when suddenly he ceased, and took an oath that he would not again destroy the human race. This myth was probably thousands of years old when Moses was born.

So, in India, there was a fable about the flood. A fish warned Manu that a flood was coming. Manu built a “box” and the fish towed it to a mountain and saved all hands.

The same kind of stories were told in Greece, and among our own Indian tribes. At one time the Christian pointed to the fact that many nations told of a flood, as evidence of the truth of the Mosaic account; but now, it having been shown that other accounts are much older, and equally reasonable, that argument has ceased to be of any great value.

It is probable that all these accounts had a common origin. They were likely born of something in nature visible to all nations. The idea of a universal flood, produced by a god to drown the world on account of the sins of the people, is infinitely absurd. The solution of all these stories has been supposed to be, the

existence of partial floods in most countries; and for a long time this solution was satisfactory. But the fact that these stories are greatly alike, that only one man is warned, that only one family is saved, that a boat is built, that birds are sent out to find if the water had abated, tend to show that they had a common origin. Admitting that there were severe floods in all countries; it certainly cannot follow that in each instance only one family would be saved, or that the same story would in each instance be told. It may be urged that the natural tendency of man to exaggerate calamities, might account for this agreement in all the accounts, and it must be admitted that there is some force in the suggestion. I believe, though, that the real origin of all these myths is the same, and that it was originally an effort to account for the sun, moon and stars. The sun and moon were the man and wife, or the god and goddess, and the stars were their children. From a celestial myth, it became a terrestrial one; the air, or ether-ocean became a flood, produced by rain, and the sun moon and stars became man, woman and children.

In the original story, the mountain was the place where in the far east the sky was supposed to touch the earth, and it was there that the ship containing the celestial passengers finally rested from its voyage. But whatever may be the origin of the stories of the flood, whether told first by Hindu, Babylonian or Hebrew, we may rest perfectly assured that they are all equally false.

XIX.

BACCHUS AND BABEL.

As soon as Noah had disembarked, he proceeded to plant a vineyard, and began to be a husbandman; and when the grapes were ripe he made wine and drank of it to excess; cursed his grandson, blessed Shem and Japheth, and after that lived for three hundred and fifty years. What he did during these three hundred and fifty years, we are not told. We never hear of him again. For three hundred and fifty years he lived among his sons, and daughters, and their descendants. He must have been a venerable man. He was the man to whom God had made known his intention of drowning the world. By his efforts, the human race had been saved. He must have been acquainted with Methuselah for six hundred years, and Methuselah was about two hundred and forty years old, when Adam died. Noah must himself have known the history of mankind, and must have been an object of almost infinite interest; and yet for three hundred and fifty years he is neither directly nor indirectly mentioned. When Noah died, Abraham must have been more than fifty years old, and Shem, the son of Noah, lived for several hundred years after the death of Abraham; and yet he is never mentioned. Noah when he died, was the oldest man in the whole world by about five hundred years; and everybody living at the time of his death knew that they were indebted to him, and yet no account is given of his burial. No monument was raised to mark the spot. This, however, is no more wonderful than the fact that no account is given of the death of Adam or of Eve, nor of the place of their burial. This may all be accounted for by the fact that the language of man was confounded at the building of the tower of Babel, whereby all tradition may have been lost, so that even the sons of Noah could not give an account of their voyage in the ark; and, consequently, some one had to be directly inspired to tell the story, after new languages had been formed.

It has always been a mystery to me how Adam, Eve, and the serpent were taught the same language. Where did they get it? We know now, that it requires a great number of years to form a language; that it is of exceedingly slow growth. We also know that by language, man conveys to his fellows the impressions made upon him by what he sees, hears, smells and touches. We know that the language of the savage consists of a few sounds, capable of expressing only a few ideas or states of the mind, such as love, desire, fear, hatred, aversion and contempt. Many centuries are required to produce a language capable of expressing complex ideas. It does not seem to me that ideas can be manufactured by a deity and put in the brain of man. These ideas must be the result of observation and experience.

Does anybody believe that God directly taught a language to Adam and Eve, or that he so made them that they, by intuition spoke Hebrew, or some language capable of conveying to each other their thoughts? How did the serpent learn the same language? Did God teach it to him, or did he happen to overhear God, when he was teaching Adam and Eve? We are told in the second chapter of Genesis that God caused all the animals to pass before Adam to see what he would call them. We cannot infer from this that God named the animals and informed Adam what to call them. Adam named them himself. Where did he get his words? We cannot imagine a man just made out of dust, without the experience of a moment, having the power to put his thoughts in language. In the first place, we cannot conceive of his having any thoughts until he has combined, through experience and observation, the impressions that nature had made upon him through the medium of his senses. We cannot imagine of his knowing anything, in the first instance, about different degrees of heat, nor about darkness, if he was made in the day-time, nor about light, if created at night, until the next morning. Before a man can have what we call thoughts, he must have had a little experience. Something must have happened to him before he can have a thought, and before he can express himself in language. Language is a growth, not a gift. We account now for the diversity of language by the fact that tribes and nations have had different experiences, different wants, different surroundings, and, one result of all these differences is, among other things, a difference in language. Nothing can be more absurd than to account for the different languages of the world by saying that the original language was confounded at the tower of Babel.

According to the Bible, up to the time of the building of that tower, the whole earth was of one language and of one speech, and would have so remained until the present time had not an effort been made to build a tower whose top should reach into heaven. Can any one imagine what objection God would have to the building of such a tower? And how could the confusion of tongues prevent its construction? How could language be confounded? It could be confounded only by the destruction of memory. Did God destroy the memory of mankind at that time, and if so, how? Did he paralyze that portion of the brain presiding over the organs of articulation, so that they could not speak the words, although they remembered them clearly, or did he so touch the brain that they could not hear? Will some theologian, versed in the machinery of the miraculous, tell us in what way God confounded the language of mankind?

Why would the confounding of the language make them separate? Why would they not stay together until they could understand each other? People will not separate, from weakness. When in trouble they come together and desire the assistance of each other. Why, in this instance, did they separate? What particular ones would naturally come together if nobody understood the language of any

other person? Would it not have been just as hard to agree when and where to go, without any language to express the agreement, as to go on with the building of the tower?

Is it possible that any one now believes that the whole world would be of one speech had the language not been confounded at Babel? Do we not know that every word was suggested in some way by the experience of men? Do we not know that words are continually dying, and continually being born; that every language has its cradle and its cemetery — its buds, its blossoms, its fruits and its withered leaves? Man has loved, enjoyed, hated, suffered and hoped, and all words have been born of these experiences.

Why did “the Lord come down to see the city and the tower”? Could he not see them from where he lived or from where he was? Where did he come down from? Did he come in the daytime, or in the night? We are taught now that God is everywhere; that he inhabits immensity; that he is in every atom, and in every star. If this is true, why did he “come down to see the city and the tower?” Will some theologian explain this?

After all, is it not much easier and altogether more reasonable to say that Moses was mistaken, that he knew little of the science of language, and that he guessed a great deal more than he investigated?

XX,

FAITH IN FILTH.

No light whatever is shed upon what passed in the world after the confounding of language at Babel, until the birth of Abraham. But, before speaking of the history of the Jewish people, it may be proper for me to say that many things are recounted in Genesis, and other books attributed to Moses, of which I do not wish to speak. There are many pages of these books unfit to read, many stories not calculated, in my judgment, to improve the morals of mankind. I do not wish even to call the attention of my readers to these things, except in a general way. It is to be hoped that the time will come when such chapters and passages as cannot be read without leaving the blush of shame upon the cheek of modesty, will be left out, and not published as a part of the Bible. If there is a God, it certainly is blasphemous to attribute to him the authorship of pages too obscene, beastly and vulgar to be read in the presence of men and women.

The believers in the Bible are loud in their denunciation of what they are pleased to call the immoral literature of the world; and yet few books have been published containing more moral filth than this inspired word of God. These stories are not redeemed by a single flash of wit or humor. They never rise above the dull details of stupid vice. For one, I cannot afford to soil my pages with extracts from them; and all such portions of the Scriptures I leave to be examined, written upon, and explained by the clergy. Clergymen may know some way by which they can extract honey from these flowers. Until these passages are expunged from the Old Testament, it is not a fit book to be read by either old or young. It contains pages that no minister in the United States would read to his congregation for any reward whatever. There are chapters that no gentleman would read in the presence of a lady. There are chapters that no father would read to his child. There are narratives utterly unfit to be told; and the time will come when mankind will wonder that such a book was ever called inspired.

I know that in many books besides the Bible, there are immodest lines. Some of the greatest writers have soiled their pages with indecent words. We account for this by saying that the authors were human; that they catered to the taste and spirit of their times. We make excuses, but at the same time regret that in their works they left an impure word. But what shall we say of God? Is it possible that

a being of infinite purity—the author of modesty, would smirch the pages of his book with stories lewd, licentious and obscene? If God is the author of the Bible, it is, of course, the standard by which all other books can, and should be measured. If the Bible is not obscene, what book is? Why should men be imprisoned simply for imitating God? The Christian world should never say another word against immoral books until it makes the inspired volume clean. These vile and filthy things were not written for the purpose of conveying and enforcing moral truth, but seem to have been written because the author loved an unclean thing. There is no moral depth below that occupied by the writer or publisher of obscene books, that stain with lust, the loving heart of youth. Such men should be imprisoned and their books destroyed. The literature of the world should be rendered decent, and no book should be published that cannot be read by, and in the hearing of the best and purest people. But as long as the Bible is considered as the work of God, it will be hard to make all men too good and pure to imitate it; and as long as it is imitated there will be vile and filthy books. The literature of our country will not be sweet and clean until the Bible ceases to be regarded as the production of a god.

We are continually told that the Bible is the very foundation of modesty and morality; while many of its pages are so immodest and immoral that a minister, for reading them in the pulpit, would be instantly denounced as an unclean wretch. Every woman would leave the church, and if the men stayed, it would be for the purpose of chastising the minister.

Is there any saving grace in hypocrisy? Will men become clean in speech by believing that God is unclean? Would it not be far better to admit that the Bible was written by barbarians in a barbarous, coarse and vulgar age? Would it not be safer to charge Moses with vulgarity, instead of God? Is it not altogether more probable that some ignorant Hebrew would write the vulgar words? The Christians tell me that God is the author of these vile and stupid things. I have examined the question to the best of my ability, and as to God my verdict is: — **Not guilty. Faith should not rest in filth.**

Every foolish and immodest thing should be expunged from the Bible. Let us keep the good. Let us preserve every great and splendid thought, every wise and prudent maxim, every just law, every elevated idea, and every word calculated to make man nobler and purer, and let us have the courage to throw the rest away. The souls of children should not be stained and soiled. The charming instincts of youth should not be corrupted and defiled. The girls and boys should not be taught that unclean words were uttered by “inspired” lips. Teach them that these words were born of savagery and lust. Teach them that the unclean is the unholy, and that only the pure is sacred.

XXI.

THE HEBREWS.

After language had been confounded and the people scattered, there appeared in the land of Canaan a tribe of Hebrews ruled by a chief or sheik called Abraham. They had a few cattle, lived in tents, practiced polygamy, wandered from place to place, and were the only folks in the whole world to whom God paid the slightest attention. At this time there were hundreds of cities in India filled with temples and palaces; millions of Egyptians worshiped Isis and Osiris, and had covered their land with marvelous monuments of industry, power and skill. But these civilizations were entirely neglected by the Deity, his whole attention being taken up with Abraham and his family.

It seems, from the account, that God and Abraham were intimately acquainted, and conversed frequently upon a great variety of subjects. By the twelfth chapter of Genesis it appears that he made the following promises to Abraham. "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great: and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curses thee."

After receiving this communication from the Almighty, Abraham went into the land of Canaan, and again God appeared to him and told him to take a heifer three years old, a goat of the same age, a sheep of equal antiquity, a turtle dove and a young pigeon. Whereupon Abraham killed the animals "and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another." And it came to pass that when the sun went down and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between the raw and bleeding meat. The killing of these animals was a preparation for receiving a visit from God. Should an American missionary in Central Africa find a Negro chief surrounded by a butchered heifer, a goat and a sheep, with which to receive a communication from the infinite God, my opinion is, that the missionary would regard the proceeding as the direct result of savagery. And if the chief insisted that he had seen a smoking furnace and a burning lamp going up and down between the pieces of meat, the missionary would certainly conclude that the chief was not altogether right in his mind.

If the Bible is true, this same God told Abraham to take and sacrifice his only son, or rather the only son of his wife, and a murder would have been committed had not God, just at the right moment, directed him to stay his hand and take a sheep instead.

God made a great number of promises to Abraham, but few of them were ever kept. He agreed to make him the father of a great nation, but he did not. He solemnly promised to give him a great country, including all the land between the river of Egypt and the Euphrates, but he did not.

In due time Abraham passed away, and his son Isaac took his place at the head of the tribe. Then came Jacob, who “watered stock” and enriched himself with the spoil of Laban. Joseph was sold into Egypt by his jealous brethren, where he became one of the chief men of the kingdom, and in a few years his father and brothers left their own country and settled in Egypt. At this time there were seventy Hebrews in the world, counting Joseph and his children. They remained in Egypt two hundred and fifteen years. It is claimed by some that they were in that country for four hundred and thirty years. This is a mistake. Josephus says they were in Egypt two hundred and fifteen years, and this statement is sustained by the best biblical scholars of all denominations. According to the 17th verse of the 3rd chapter of Galatians, it was four hundred and thirty years from the time the promise was made to Abraham to the giving of the law, and as the Hebrews did not go to Egypt for two hundred and fifteen years after the making of the promise to Abraham, they could in no event have been in Egypt more than two hundred and fifteen years. In our Bible the 40th verse of the 12th chapter of Exodus, is as follows:—

“Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.”

This passage does not say that the sojourning was all done in Egypt; neither does it say that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt four hundred and thirty years; but it does say that the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. The Vatican copy of the Septuagint renders the same passage as follows:—

“The sojourning of the children of Israel which they sojourned in Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, was four hundred and thirty years.”

The Alexandrian version says:—“The sojourning of the children of Israel which they and their fathers sojourned in Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, was four hundred and thirty years.”

And in the Samaritan Bible we have: — “The sojourning of the children of Israel and of their fathers which they sojourned in the land of Canaan, and in the land of Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.”

There were seventy souls when they went down into Egypt, and they remained two hundred and fifteen years, and at the end of that time they had increased to about three million. How do we know that there were three million at the end of two hundred and fifteen years? We know it because we are informed by Moses that “there were six hundred thousand men of war.” Now, to each man of war, there must have been at least five other people. In every State in this Union there will be to each voter, five other persons at least, and we all know that there are always more voters than men of war. If there were six hundred thousand men of war, there must have been a population of at least three million. Is it possible that seventy people could increase to that extent in two hundred and fifteen years? You may say that it was a miracle; but what need was there of working a miracle? Why should God miraculously increase the number of slaves? If he wished miraculously to increase the population, why did he not wait until the people were free?

In 1776, we had in the American Colonies about three millions of people. In one hundred years we doubled four times: that is to say, six, twelve, twenty-four, forty-eight million, — our present population.

We must not forget that during all these years there has been pouring into our country a vast stream of emigration, and that this, taken in connection with the fact that our country is productive beyond all others, gave us only four doubles in one hundred years. Admitting that the Hebrews increased as rapidly without emigration as we, in this country, have with it, we will give to them four doubles each century, commencing with seventy people, and they would have, at the end of two hundred years, a population of seventeen thousand nine hundred and twenty. Giving them another double for the odd fifteen years and there would be, provided no deaths had occurred, thirty-five thousand eight hundred and forty people. And yet we are told that instead of having this number, they had increased to such an extent that they had six hundred thousand men of war; that is to say, a population of more than three millions?

Every sensible man knows that this account is not, and cannot be true. We know that seventy people could not increase to three million in two hundred and fifteen years.

About this time the Hebrews took a census, and found that there were twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three first-born males. It is reasonable to suppose that there were about as many first-born females. This would make forty-four thousand five hundred and forty-six first-born children. Now, there must have been about as many mothers as there were first-born children. If there were only about forty-five thousand mothers and three millions of people, the mothers must have had on an average about sixty-six children apiece.

At this time, the Hebrews were slaves, and had been for two hundred and fifteen years. A little while before, an order had been made by the Egyptians that all the male children of the Hebrews should be killed. One, contrary to this order, was saved in an ark made of bulrushes daubed with slime. This child was found by the daughter of Pharaoh, and was adopted, it seems, as her own, and, may be, was. He grew to be a man, sided with the Hebrews, killed an Egyptian that was smiting a slave, hid the body in the sand, and fled from Egypt to the land of Midian, became acquainted with a priest who had seven daughters, took the side of the daughters against the ill-mannered shepherds of that country, and married Zipporah, one of the girls, and became a shepherd for her father. Afterward, while tending his flock, the Lord appeared to him in a burning bush, and commanded him to go to the king of Egypt and demand from him the liberation of the Hebrews. In order to convince him that the something burning in the bush was actually God, the rod in his hand was changed into a serpent, which, upon being caught by the tail, became again a rod. Moses was also told to put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out it was as leprous as snow. Quite a number of strange things were performed, and others promised. Moses then agreed to go back to Egypt provided his brother could go with him. Whereupon the Lord appeared to Aaron, and directed him to meet Moses in the wilderness. They met at the mount of God, went to Egypt, gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel, spake all the words which God had spoken unto Moses, and did all the signs in the sight of the people. The Israelites believed, bowed their heads and worshiped; and Moses and Aaron went in and told their message to Pharaoh the king.

XXII. THE PLAGUES.

Three millions of people were in slavery. They were treated with the utmost rigor, and so fearful were their masters that they might, in time, increase in numbers sufficient to avenge themselves, that they took from the arms of mothers all the male children and destroyed them. If the account given is true, the Egyptians were the most cruel, heartless and infamous people of which history gives any record. God finally made up his mind to free the Hebrews; and for the accomplishment of this purpose he sent, as his agents, Moses and Aaron, to the king of Egypt. In order that the king might know that these men had a divine mission, God gave Moses the power of changing a stick into a serpent, and water into blood. Moses and Aaron went before the king, stating that the Lord God of Israel ordered the king of Egypt to let the Hebrews go that they might hold a feast with God in the wilderness. Thereupon Pharaoh, the king, enquired who the Lord was, at the same time stating that he had never made his acquaintance, and knew nothing about him. To this they replied that the God of the Hebrews had met with them, and they asked to go a three days journey into the desert and sacrifice unto this God, fearing that if they did not he would fall upon them with pestilence or the sword. This interview seems to have hardened Pharaoh, for he ordered the tasks of the children of Israel to be increased; so that the only effect of the first appeal was to render still worse the condition of the Hebrews. Thereupon, Moses returned unto the Lord and said, "Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all."

Apparently stung by this reproach, God answered:—

"Now shall thou see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand shall he let them go; and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land."
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God then recounts the fact that he had appeared unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that he had established a covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, that he had heard the groaning of the children of Israel in Egyptian bondage; that their groaning had put him in mind of his covenant, and that he had made up his mind to redeem the children of Israel with a stretched-out arm and with great judgments. Moses then spoke to the children of Israel again, but they would listen to him no more. His first effort in their behalf had simply

doubled their trouble and they seemed to have lost confidence in his power. Thereupon Jehovah promised Moses that he would make him a god unto Pharaoh, and that Aaron should be his prophet, but at the same time informed him that his message would be of no avail; that he would harden the heart of Pharaoh so that he would not listen; that he would so harden his heart that he might have an excuse for destroying the Egyptians. Accordingly, Moses and Aaron again went before Pharaoh. Moses said to Aaron; —“Cast down your rod before Pharaoh,” which he did, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh not in the least surprised, called for his wise men and his sorcerers, and they threw down their rods and changed them into serpents. The serpent that had been changed from Aaron’s rod was, at this time crawling upon the floor, and it proceeded to swallow the serpents that had been produced by the magicians of Egypt. What became of these serpents that were swallowed, whether they turned back into sticks again, is not stated. Can we believe that the stick was changed into a real living serpent, or did it assume simply the appearance of a serpent? If it bore only the appearance of a serpent it was a deception, and could not rise above the dignity of legerdemain. Is it necessary to believe that God is a kind of prestigiator—a sleight-of-hand performer, a magician or sorcerer? Can it be possible that an infinite being would endeavor to secure the liberation of a race by performing a miracle that could be equally performed by the sorcerers and magicians of a barbarian king?

Not one word was said by Moses or Aaron as to the wickedness of depriving a human being of his liberty. Not a word was said in favor of liberty. Not the slightest intimation that a human being was justly entitled to the product of his own labor. Not a word about the cruelty of masters who would destroy even the babes of slave mothers. It seems to me wonderful that this God did not tell the king of Egypt that no nation could enslave another, without also enslaving itself; that it was impossible to put a chain around the limbs of a slave, without putting manacles upon the brain of the master. Why did he not tell him that a nation founded upon slavery could not stand? Instead of declaring these things, instead of appealing to justice, to mercy and to liberty, he resorted to feats of jugglery. Suppose we wished to make a treaty with a barbarous nation, and the President should employ a sleight-of-hand performer as envoy extraordinary, and instruct him, that when he came into the presence of the savage monarch, he should cast down an umbrella or a walking stick, which would change into a lizard or a turtle; what would we think? Would we not regard such a performance as beneath the dignity even of a President? And what would be our feelings if the savage king sent for his sorcerers and had them perform the same feat? If such things would appear puerile and foolish in the President of a great republic, what shall be said when they were resorted to by the creator of all worlds? How small, how contemptible such a God appears! Pharaoh, it seems, took about this

view of the matter, and he would not be persuaded that such tricks were performed by an infinite being.

Again, Moses and Aaron came before Pharaoh as he was going to the river's bank, and the same rod which had changed to a serpent, and, by this time changed back, was taken by Aaron, who, in the presence of Pharaoh, smote the water of the river, which was immediately turned to blood, as well as all the water in all the streams, ponds, and pools, as well as all water in vessels of wood and vessels of stone in the entire land of Egypt. As soon as all the waters in Egypt had been turned into blood, the magicians of that country did the same with their enchantments. We are not informed where they got the water to turn into blood, since all the water in Egypt had already been so changed. It seems from the account that the fish in the Nile died, and the river emitted a stench, and there was not a drop of water in the land of Egypt that had not been changed into blood. In consequence of this, the Egyptians digged "around about the river" for water to drink. Can we believe this story? Is it necessary to salvation to admit that all the rivers, pools, ponds and lakes of a country were changed into blood, in order that a king might be induced to allow the children of Israel the privilege of going a three days journey into the wilderness to make sacrifices to their God?

It seems from the account that Pharaoh was told that the God of the Hebrews would, if he refused to let the Israelites go, change all the waters of Egypt into blood, and that, upon his refusal, they were so changed. This had, however, no influence upon him, for the reason that his own magicians did the same. It does not appear that Moses and Aaron expressed the least surprise at the success of the Egyptian sorcerers. At that time it was believed that each nation had its own god. The only claim that Moses and Aaron made for their God was, that he was the greatest and most powerful of all the gods, and that with anything like an equal chance he could vanquish the deity of any other nation.

After the waters were changed to blood Moses and Aaron waited for seven days. At the end of that time God told Moses to again go to Pharaoh and demand the release of his people, and to inform him that, if he refused, God would strike all the borders of Egypt with frogs. That he would make frogs so plentiful that they would go into the houses of Pharaoh, into his bedchamber, upon his bed, into the houses of his servants, upon his people, into their ovens, and even into their kneading troughs. This threat had no effect whatever upon Pharaoh. And thereupon Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land. The magicians of Egypt did the same, and with their enchantments brought more frogs upon the land of Egypt.

These magicians do not seem to have been original in their ideas, but so far as imitation is concerned, were perfect masters of their art. The frogs seem to have made such an impression upon Pharaoh that he sent for Moses and asked him to entreat the Lord that he would take away the frogs. Moses agreed to remove them from the houses and the land, and allow them to remain only in the rivers. Accordingly the frogs died out of the houses, and out of the villages, and out of the fields, and the people gathered them together in heaps. As soon as the frogs had left the houses and fields, the heart of Pharaoh became again hardened, and he refused to let the people go.

Aaron then, according to the command of God, stretched out his hand, holding the rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man and in beast, and all the dust became lice throughout the land of Egypt. Pharaoh again sent for his magicians, and they sought to do the same with their enchantments, but they could not. Whereupon the sorcerers said unto Pharaoh: "This is the finger of God."

Notwithstanding this, however, Pharaoh refused to let the Hebrews go. God then caused a grievous swarm of flies to come into the house of Pharaoh and into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt, to such an extent that the whole land was corrupted by reason of the flies. But into that part of the country occupied by the children of Israel there came no flies. Thereupon Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and said to them: "Go, and sacrifice to your God in this land." They were not willing to sacrifice in Egypt, and asked permission to go on a journey of three days into the wilderness. To this Pharaoh acceded, and in consideration of this Moses agreed to use his influence with the Lord to induce him to send the flies out of the country. He accordingly told the Lord of the bargain he had made with Pharaoh, and the Lord agreed to the compromise, and removed the flies from Pharaoh and from his servants and from his people, and there remained not a single fly in the land of Egypt. As soon as the flies were gone, Pharaoh again changed his mind, and concluded not to permit the children of Israel to depart. The Lord then directed Moses to go to Pharaoh and tell him that if he did not allow the children of Israel to depart, he would destroy his cattle, his horses, his camels and his sheep; that these animals would be afflicted with a grievous disease, but that the animals belonging to the Hebrews should not be so afflicted. Moses did as he was bid. On the next day all the cattle of Egypt died; that is to say, all the horses, all the asses, all the camels, all the oxen and all the sheep; but of the animals owned by the Israelites, not one perished. This disaster had no effect upon Pharaoh, and he still refused to let the children of Israel go. The Lord then told Moses and Aaron to take some ashes out of a furnace, and told Moses to sprinkle them toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh; saying that the ashes should become small dust in all the land of Egypt,

and should be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast throughout all the land.

How these boils breaking out with blains, upon cattle that were already dead, should affect Pharaoh, is a little hard to understand. It must not be forgotten that all the cattle and all beasts had died with the murrain before the boils had broken out.

This was a most decisive victory for Moses and Aaron. The boils were upon the magicians to that extent that they could not stand before Moses. But it had no effect upon Pharaoh, who seems to have been a man of great firmness. The Lord then instructed Moses to get up early in the morning and tell Pharaoh that he would stretch out his hand and smite his people with a pestilence, and would, on the morrow, cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as had never been known in the land of Egypt. He also told Moses to give notice, so that they might get all the cattle that were in the fields under cover. It must be remembered that all these cattle had recently died of the murrain, and their dead bodies had been covered with boils and blains. This, however, had no effect, and Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven, and the Lord sent thunder, and hail and lightning, and fire that ran along the ground, and the hail fell upon all the land of Egypt, and all that were in the fields, both man and beast, were smitten, and the hail smote every herb of the field, and broke every tree of the country except that portion inhabited by the children of Israel; there, there was no hail.

During this hail storm Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and admitted that he had sinned, that the Lord was righteous, and that the Egyptians were wicked, and requested them to ask the Lord that there be no more thundering and hail, and that he would let the Hebrews go. Moses agreed that as soon as he got out of the city he would stretch forth his hands unto the Lord, and that the thundering should cease and the hail should stop. But, when the rain and the hail and the thundering ceased, Pharaoh concluded that he would not let the children of Israel go.

Again, God sent Moses and Aaron, instructing them to tell Pharaoh that if he refused to let the people go, the face of the earth would be covered with locusts, so that man would not be able to see the ground, and that these locusts would eat the residue of that which escaped from the hail; that they would eat every tree out of the field; that they would fill the houses of Pharaoh and the houses of all his servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians. Moses delivered the message, and went out from Pharaoh. Some of Pharaoh's servants entreated their master to let the children of Israel go. Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and asked them, who wished to go into the wilderness to sacrifice. They replied that they wished to go with the young and old; with their sons and daughters, with

flocks and herds. Pharaoh would not consent to this, but agreed that the men might go. Thereupon Pharaoh drove Moses and Aaron out of his sight. Then God told Moses to stretch forth his hand upon the land of Egypt for the locusts that they might come up and eat every herb, even all that the hail had left." And Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind all that day and all that night; and when it was morning the east wind brought the locusts; and they came up over all the land of Egypt and rested upon all the coasts covering the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left, and there remained not any green thing on the trees or in the herbs of the field throughout the land of Egypt." Pharaoh then called for Moses and Aaron in great haste, admitted that he had sinned against the Lord their God and against them, asked their forgiveness and requested them to intercede with God that he might take away the locusts. They went out from his presence and asked the Lord to drive the locusts away, "And the Lord made a strong west wind which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red Sea so that there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt."

As soon as the locusts were gone, Pharaoh changed his mind, and, in the language of the sacred text, "the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let the children of Israel go."

The Lord then told Moses to stretch out his hand toward heaven that there might be darkness over the land of Egypt, "even darkness which might be felt." "And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven, and there was a thick darkness over the land of Egypt for three days during which time they saw not each other, neither arose any of the people from their places for three days; but the children of Israel had light in their dwellings."

It strikes me that when the land of Egypt was covered with thick darkness—so thick that it could be felt, and when light was in the dwellings of the Israelites, there could have been no better time for the Hebrews to have left the country.

Pharaoh again called for Moses, and told him that his people could go and serve the Lord, provided they would leave their flocks and herds. Moses would not agree to this, for the reason that they needed the flocks and herds for sacrifices and burnt offerings, and he did not know how many of the animals God might require, and for that reason he could not leave a single hoof. Upon the question of the cattle, they divided, and Pharaoh again refused to let the people go. God then commanded Moses to tell the Hebrews to borrow, each of his neighbor, jewels of silver and gold. By a miraculous interposition the Hebrews found favor in the sight of the Egyptians so that they loaned the articles asked for. After this, Moses again went to Pharaoh and told him that all the first-born in

the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh upon the throne, unto the first-born of the maid-servant who was behind the mill, as well as the first-born of beasts, should die.

As all the beasts had been destroyed by disease and hail, it is troublesome to understand the meaning of the threat as to their first-born.

Preparations were accordingly made for carrying this frightful threat into execution. Blood was put on the door-posts of all houses inhabited by Hebrews, so that God, as he passed through that land, might not be mistaken and destroy the first-born of the Jews. "And it came to pass that at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on the throne, and the first-born of the captive who was in the dungeon. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead."

What had these children done? Why should the babes in the cradle be destroyed on account of the crime of Pharaoh? Why should the cattle be destroyed because man had enslaved his brother? In those days women and children and cattle were put upon an exact equality, and all considered as the property of the men; and when man in some way excited the wrath of God, he punished them by destroying all their cattle, their wives, and their little ones. Where can words be found bitter enough to describe a god who would kill wives and babes because husbands and fathers had failed to keep his law? Every good man, and every good woman, must hate and despise such a deity.

Upon the death of all the first-born Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and not only gave his consent that they might go with the Hebrews into the wilderness, but besought them to go at once.

Is it possible that an infinite God, creator of all worlds and sustainer of all life, said to Pharaoh, "If you do not let my people go, I will turn all the water of your country into blood," and that upon the refusal of Pharaoh to release the people, God did turn all the waters into blood? Do you believe this?

Do you believe that Pharaoh even after all the water was turned to blood, refused to let the Hebrews go, and that thereupon God told him he would cover his land with frogs? Do you believe this?

Do you believe that after the land was covered with frogs Pharaoh still refused to let the people go, and that God then said to him, "I will cover you and all your people with lice?" Do you believe God would make this threat?

Do you also believe that God told Pharaoh, "If you do not let these people go, I will fill all your houses and cover your country with flies?" Do you believe God makes such threats as this?

Of course God must have known that turning the waters into blood, covering the country with frogs, infesting all flesh with lice, and filling all houses with flies, would not accomplish his object, and that all these plagues would have no effect whatever upon the Egyptian king.

Do you believe that, failing to accomplish anything by the flies, God told Pharaoh that if he did not let the people go he would kill his cattle with murrain? Does such a threat sound God-like?

Do you believe that, failing to effect anything by killing the cattle, this same God then threatened to afflict all the people with boils, including the magicians who had been rivaling him in the matter of miracles; and failing to do anything by boils, that he resorted to hail? Does this sound reasonable? The hail experiment having accomplished nothing, do you believe that God murdered the first-born of animals and men? Is it possible to conceive of anything more utterly absurd, stupid, revolting, cruel and senseless, than the miracles said to have been wrought by the Almighty for the purpose of inducing Pharaoh to liberate the children of Israel?

Is it not altogether more reasonable to say that the Jewish people, being in slavery, accounted for the misfortunes and calamities, suffered by the Egyptians, by saying that they were the judgments of God?

When the Armada of Spain was wrecked and scattered by the storm, the English people believed that God had interposed in their behalf, and publicly gave thanks. When the battle of Lepanto was won, it was believed by the Catholic world that the victory was given in answer to prayer. So, our forefathers in their Revolutionary struggle saw, or thought they saw, the hand of God, and most firmly believed that they achieved their independence by the interposition of the Most High.

Now, it may be that while the Hebrews were enslaved by the Egyptians, there were plagues of locusts and flies. It may be that there were some diseases by which many of the cattle perished. It may be that a pestilence visited that country so that in nearly every house there was some one dead. If so, it was but natural for the enslaved and superstitious Jews to account for these calamities by saying that they were punishments sent by their God. Such ideas will be found in the history of every country.

For a long time the Jews held these opinions, and they were handed from father to son simply by tradition. By the time a written language had been produced, thousands of additions had been made, and numberless details invented; so that we have not only an account of the plagues suffered by the Egyptians, but the whole woven into a connected story, containing the threats made by Moses and Aaron, the miracles wrought by them, the promises of Pharaoh, and finally the release of the Hebrews, as a result of the marvelous things performed in their behalf by Jehovah.

In any event it is infinitely more probable that the author was misinformed, than that the God of this universe was guilty of these childish, heartless and infamous things. The solution of the whole matter is this: — Moses was mistaken.

XXIII. THE FLIGHT.

Millions of people, with their flocks and herds, with borrowed jewelry and raiment, with unleavened dough in kneading troughs bound in their clothes upon their shoulders, in one night commenced their journey for the land of promise. We are not told how they were informed of the precise time to start. With all the modern appliances, it would require months of time to inform three millions of people of any fact.

In this vast assemblage there were six hundred thousand men of war, and with them were the old, the young, the diseased and helpless. Where were those people going? They were going to the desert of Sinai, compared with which Sahara is a garden. Imagine an ocean of lava torn by storm and vexed by tempest, suddenly gazed at by a Gorgon and changed instantly to stone! Such was the desert of Sinai.

All of the civilized nations of the world could not feed and support three millions of people on the desert of Sinai for forty years. It would cost more than one hundred thousand millions of dollars, and would bankrupt Christendom. They had with them their flocks and herds, and the sheep were so numerous that the Israelites sacrificed, at one time, more than one hundred and fifty thousand first-born lambs. How were these flocks supported? What did they eat? Where were meadows and pastures for them? There was no grass, no forests — nothing! There is no account of its having rained baled hay, nor is it even claimed that they were miraculously fed. To support these flocks, millions of acres of pasture would have been required. God did not take the Israelites through the land of the Philistines, for fear that when they saw the people of that country they would return to Egypt, but he took them by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea, going before them by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night, in a pillar of fire.

When it was told Pharaoh that the people had fled, he made ready and took six hundred chosen chariots of Egypt, and pursued after the children of Israel, overtaking them by the sea. As all the animals had long before that time been destroyed, we are not informed where Pharaoh obtained the horses for his chariots. The moment the children of Israel saw the hosts of Pharaoh, although they had six hundred thousand men of war, they immediately cried unto the Lord for protection. It is wonderful to me that a land that had been ravaged by the plagues described in the Bible, still had the power to put in the field an army that would carry terror to the hearts of six hundred thousand men of war. Even with the help of God, it seems, they were not strong enough to meet the

Egyptians in the open field, but resorted to strategy. Moses again stretched forth his wonderful rod over the waters of the Red Sea, and they were divided, and the Hebrews passed through on dry land, the waters standing up like a wall on either side. The Egyptians pursued them; "and in the morning watch the Lord looked into the hosts of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire," and proceeded to take the wheels off their chariots. As soon as the wheels were off, God told Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea. Moses did so, and immediately "the waters returned and covered the chariots and horsemen and all the hosts of Pharaoh that came into the sea, and there remained not so much as one of them."

This account may be true, but still it hardly looks reasonable that God would take the wheels off the chariots. How did he do it? Did he pull out the linch-pins, or did he just take them off by main force?

What a picture this presents to the mind! God the creator of the universe, maker of every shining, glittering star, engaged in pulling off the wheels of wagons, that he might convince Pharaoh of his greatness and power!

Where were these people going? They were going to the promised land. How large a country was that? About twelve thousand square miles. About one-fifth the size of the State of Illinois. It was a frightful country, covered with rocks and desolation. How many people were in the promised land already? Moses tells us there were seven nations in that country mightier than the Jews. As there were at least three millions of Jews, there must have been at least twenty-one millions of people already in that country. These had to be driven out in order that room might be made for the chosen people of God. It seems, however, that God was not willing to take the children of Israel into the promised land immediately. They were not fit to inhabit the land of Canaan; so he made up his mind to allow them to wander upon the desert until all except two, who had left Egypt, should perish. Of all the slaves released from Egyptian bondage, only two were allowed to reach the promised land!

As soon as the Hebrews crossed the Red Sea, they found themselves without food, and with water unfit to drink by reason of its bitterness, and they began to murmur against Moses, who cried unto the Lord, and "the Lord showed him a tree." Moses cast this tree into the waters, and they became sweet. "And it came to pass in the morning the dew lay around about the camp; and when the dew that lay was gone, behold, upon the face of the wilderness lay a small round thing, small as the hoar-frost upon the ground. And Moses said unto them, this is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat." This manna was a very peculiar thing. It would melt in the sun, and yet they could cook it by seething and baking. One would as soon think of frying snow or of broiling icicles. But this manna had another remarkable quality. No matter how much or little any person

gathered, he would have an exact omer; if he gathered more, it would shrink to that amount, and if he gathered less, it would swell exactly to that amount. What a magnificent substance manna would be with which to make a currency—shrinking and swelling according to the great laws of supply and demand!

“Upon this manna the children of Israel lived for forty years, until they came to a habitable land. With this meat were they fed until they reached the borders of the land of Canaan.” We are told in the twenty-first chapter of Numbers, that the people at last became tired of the manna, complained of God, and asked Moses why he brought them out of the land of Egypt to die in the wilderness. And they said:—“There is no bread, nor have we any water. Our soul loathed this light food.”

We are told by some commentators that the Jews lived on manna for forty years; by others that they lived upon it for only a short time. As a matter of fact the accounts differ, and this difference is the opportunity for commentators. It also allows us to exercise faith in believing that both accounts are true. If the accounts agreed, and were reasonable, they would be believed by the wicked and unregenerated. But as they are different and unreasonable, they are believed only by the good. Whenever a statement in the Bible is unreasonable, and you believe it, you are considered quite a good Christian. If the statement is grossly absurd and infinitely impossible, and you still believe it, you are a saint.

The children of Israel were in the desert, and they were out of water. They had nothing to eat but manna, and this they had had so long that the soul of every person abhorred it. Under these circumstances they complained to Moses. Now, as God is infinite, he could just as well have furnished them with an abundance of the purest and coolest of water, and could, without the slightest trouble to himself, have given them three excellent meals a day, with a generous variety of meats and vegetables, it is very hard to see why he did not do so. It is still harder to conceive why he fell into a rage when the people mildly suggested that they would like a change of diet. Day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, nothing but manna. No doubt they did the best they could by cooking it in different ways, but in spite of themselves they began to loathe its sight and taste, and so they asked Moses to use his influence to secure a change in the bill of fare.

Now, I ask, whether it was unreasonable for the Jews to suggest that a little meat would be very gratefully received? It seems, however, that as soon as the request was made, this God of infinite mercy became infinitely enraged, and instead of granting it, went into partnership with serpents, for the purpose of punishing the hungry wretches to whom he had promised a land flowing with milk and honey.

Where did these serpents come from? How did God convey the information to the serpents, that he wished them to go to the desert of Sinai and bite some Jews? It may be urged that these serpents were created for the express purpose of punishing the children of Israel for having had the presumption, like Oliver Twist, to ask for more.

There is another account in the eleventh chapter of Numbers, of the people murmuring because of their food. They remembered the fish, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlic of Egypt, and they asked for meat. The people went to the tent of Moses and asked him for flesh. Moses cried unto the Lord and asked him why he did not take care of the multitude. God thereupon agreed that they should have meat, not for a day or two, but for a month, until the meat should come out of their nostrils and become loathsome to them. He then caused a wind to bring quails from beyond the sea, and cast them into the camp, on every side of the camp around about for the space of a days journey. And the people gathered them, and while the flesh was yet between their teeth the wrath of God being provoked against them, struck them with an exceeding great plague. Serpents, also, were sent among them, and thousands perished for the crime of having been hungry.

The Rev. Alexander Cruden commenting upon this account says:—

“God caused a wind to rise that drove the quails within and about the camp of the Israelites; and it is in this that the miracle consists, that they were brought so seasonably to this place, and in so great numbers as to suffice above a million of persons above a month. Some authors affirm, that in those eastern and southern countries, quails are innumerable, so that in one part of Italy within the compass of five miles, there were taken about an hundred thousand of them every day for a month together; and that sometimes they fly so thick over the sea, that being weary they fall into ships, sometimes in such numbers, that they sink them with their weight.”

No wonder Mr. Cruden believed the Mosaic account.

Must we believe that God made an arrangement with hornets for the purpose of securing their services in driving the Canaanites from the land of promise? Is this belief necessary unto salvation? Must we believe that God said to the Jews that he would send hornets before them to drive out the Canaanites, as related in the twenty-third chapter of Exodus, and the second chapter of Deuteronomy? How would the hornets know a Canaanite? In what way would God put it in the mind of a hornet to attack a Canaanite? Did God create hornets for that especial purpose, implanting an instinct to attack a Canaanite, but not a Hebrew? Can we conceive of the Almighty granting letters of marque and reprisal to hornets? Of

course it is admitted that nothing in the world would be better calculated to make a man leave his native land than a few hornets. Is it possible for us to believe that an infinite being would resort to such expedients in order to drive the Canaanites from their country? He could just as easily have spoken the Canaanites out of existence as to have spoken the hornets in. In this way a vast amount of trouble, pain and suffering would have been saved. Is it possible that there is, in this country, an intelligent clergyman who will insist that these stories are true; that we must believe them in order to be good people in this world, and glorified souls in the next?

We are also told that God instructed the Hebrews to kill the Canaanites slowly, giving as a reason that the beasts of the field might increase upon his chosen people. When we take into consideration the fact that the Holy Land contained only about eleven or twelve thousand square miles, and was at that time inhabited by at least twenty-one millions of people, it does not seem reasonable that the wild beasts could have been numerous enough to cause any great alarm. The same ratio of population would give to the State of Illinois at least one hundred and twenty millions of inhabitants. Can anybody believe that, under such circumstances, the danger from wild beasts could be very great? What would we think of a general, invading such a State, if he should order his soldiers to kill the people slowly, lest the wild beasts might increase upon them? Is it possible that a God capable of doing the miracles recounted in the Old Testament could not, in some way, have disposed of the wild beasts? After the Canaanites were driven out, could he not have employed the hornets to drive out the wild beasts? Think of a God that could drive twenty-one millions of people out of the promised land, could raise up innumerable stinging flies, and could cover the earth with fiery serpents, and yet seems to have been perfectly powerless against the wild beasts of the land of Canaan!

Speaking of these hornets, one of the good old commentators, whose views have long been considered of great value by the believers in the inspiration of the Bible, uses the following language: —“Hornets are a sort of strong flies, which the Lord used as instruments to plague the enemies of his people. They are of themselves very troublesome and mischievous, and those the Lord made use of were, it is thought, of an extraordinary bigness and perniciousness. It is said they live as the wasps, and that they have a king or captain, and pestilent stings as bees, and that, if twenty-seven of them sting man or beast, it is certain death to either. Nor is it strange that such creatures did drive out the Canaanites from their habitations; for many heathen writers give instances of some people driven from their seats by frogs, others by mice, others by bees and wasps. And it is said that a Christian city, being besieged by Sapore, king of Persia, was delivered by hornets; for the elephants and beasts being stung by them, waxed unruly, and so the whole army fled.”

Only a few years ago, all such stories were believed by the Christian world; and it is a historical fact, that Voltaire was the third man of any note in Europe, who took the ground that the mythologies of Greece and Rome were without foundation. Until his time, most Christians believed as thoroughly in the miracles ascribed to the Greek and Roman gods as in those of Christ and Jehovah. The Christian world cultivated credulity, not only as one of the virtues, but as the greatest of them all. But, when Luther and his followers left the Church of Rome, they were compelled to deny the power of the Catholic Church, at that time, to suspend the laws of nature, but took the ground that such power ceased with the apostolic age. They insisted that all things now happened in accordance with the laws of nature, with the exception of a few special interferences in favor of the Protestant Church in answer to prayer. They taught their children a double philosophy: by one, they were to show the impossibility of Catholic miracles, because opposed to the laws of nature; by the other, the probability of the miracles of the apostolic age, because they were in conformity with the statements of the Scriptures. They had two foundations: one, the law of nature, and the other, the word of God. The Protestants have endeavored to carry on this double process of reasoning, and the result has been a gradual increase of confidence in the law of nature, and a gradual decrease of confidence in the word of God.

We are told, in this inspired account, that the clothing of the Jewish people did not wax old, and that their shoes refused to wear out. Some commentators have insisted that angels attended to the wardrobes of the Hebrews, patched their garments, and mended their shoes. Certain it is, however, that the same clothes lasted them for forty years, during the entire journey from Egypt to the Holy Land. Little boys starting out with their first pantaloons, grew as they traveled, and their clothes grew with them.

Can it be necessary to believe a story like this? Will men make better husbands, fathers, neighbors, and citizens, simply by giving credence to these childish and impossible things? Certainly an infinite God could have transported the Jews to the Holy Land in a moment, and could, as easily, have removed the Canaanites to some other country. Surely there was no necessity for doing thousands and thousands of petty miracles, day after day for forty years, looking after the clothes of three millions of people, changing the nature of wool and linen and leather, so that they would not "wax old." Every step, every motion, would wear away some part of the clothing, some part of the shoes. Were these parts, so worn away, perpetually renewed, or was the nature of things so changed that they could not wear away? We know that whenever matter comes in contact with matter, certain atoms, by abrasion, are lost. Were these atoms gathered up every night by angels, and replaced on the soles of the shoes, on the elbows of coats, and on the knees of pantaloons, so that the next morning they would be

precisely in the condition they were on the morning before? There must be a mistake somewhere.

Can we believe that the real God, if there is one, ever ordered a man to be killed simply for making hair oil, or ointment? We are told in the thirtieth chapter of Exodus, that the Lord commanded Moses to take myrrh, cinnamon, sweet calamus, cassia, and olive oil, and make a holy ointment for the purpose of anointing the tabernacle, tables, candlesticks and other utensils, as well as Aaron and his sons; saying, at the same time, that whosoever compounded any like it, or whoever put any of it on a stranger, should be put to death. In the same chapter, the Lord furnishes Moses with a recipe for making a perfume, saying, that whoever should make any which smelled like it, should be cut off from his people. This, to me, sounds so unreasonable that I cannot believe it. Why should an infinite God care whether mankind made ointments and perfumes like his or not? Why should the Creator of all things threaten to kill a priest who approached his altar without having washed his hands and feet? These commandments and these penalties would disgrace the vainest tyrant that ever sat, by chance, upon a throne. There must be some mistake. I cannot believe that an infinite Intelligence appeared to Moses upon Mount Sinai having with him a variety of patterns for making a tabernacle, tongs, snuffers and dishes. Neither can I believe that God told Moses how to cut and trim a coat for a priest. Why should a God care about such things? Why should he insist on having buttons sewed in certain rows, and fringes of a certain color? Suppose an intelligent civilized man was to overhear, on Mount Sinai, the following instructions from God to Moses: —

“You must consecrate my priests as follows: — You must kill a bullock for a sin offering, and have Aaron and his sons lay their hands upon the head of the bullock. Then you must take the blood and put it upon the horns of the altar round about with your finger, and pour some blood at the bottom of the altar to make a reconciliation; and of the fat that is upon the inwards, the caul above the liver and two kidneys, and their fat, and burn them upon the altar. You must get a ram for a burnt offering, and Aaron and his sons must lay their hands upon the head of the ram. Then you must kill it and sprinkle the blood upon the altar, and cut the ram into pieces, and burn the head, and the pieces, and the fat, and wash the inwards and the lungs in water and then burn the whole ram upon the altar for a sweet savor unto me. Then you must get another ram, and have Aaron and his sons lay their hands upon the head of that, then kill it and take of its blood, and put it on the top of Aaron’s right ear, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot. And you must also put a little of the blood upon the top of the right ears of Aaron’s sons, and on the thumbs of their right hands and on the great toes of their right feet. And then you must take of the fat that is on the inwards, and the caul above the liver and the two kidneys, and

their fat, and the right shoulder, and out of a basket of unleavened bread you must take one unleavened cake and another of oil bread, and one wafer, and put them on the fat of the right shoulder. And you must take of the anointing oil, and of the blood, and sprinkle it on Aaron, and on his garments, and on his sons' garments, and sanctify them and all their clothes."—Do you believe that he would have even suspected that the creator of the universe was talking?

Can any one now tell why God commanded the Jews, when they were upon the desert of Sinai, to plant trees, telling them at the same time that they must not eat any of the fruit of such trees until after the fourth year? Trees could not have been planted in that desert, and if they had been, they could not have lived. Why did God tell Moses, while in the desert, to make curtains of fine linen? Where could he have obtained his flax? There was no land upon which it could have been produced. Why did he tell him to make things of gold, and silver, and precious stones, when they could not have been in possession of these things? There is but one answer, and that is, the Pentateuch was written hundreds of years after the Jews had settled in the Holy Land, and hundreds of years after Moses was dust and ashes.

When the Jews had a written language, and that must have been long after their flight from Egypt, they wrote out their history and their laws. Tradition had filled the infancy of the nation with miracles and special interpositions in their behalf by Jehovah. Patriotism would not allow these wonders to grow small, and priestcraft never denied a miracle. There were traditions to the effect that God had spoken face to face with Moses; that he had given him the tables of the law, and had, in a thousand ways, made known his will; and whenever the priests wished to make new laws, or amend old ones, they pretended to have found something more that God said to Moses at Sinai. In this way obedience was more easily secured. Only a very few of the people could read, and, as a consequence, additions, interpolations and erasures had no fear of detection. In this way we account for the fact that Moses is made to speak of things that did not exist in his day, and were unknown for hundreds of years after his death.

In the thirtieth chapter of Exodus, we are told that the people, when numbered, must give each one a half shekel after the shekel of the *sanctuary*. At that time no such money existed, and consequently the account could not, by any possibility, have been written until after there was a shekel of the sanctuary, and there was no such thing until long after the death of Moses. If we should read that Caesar paid his troops in pounds, shillings and pence, we would certainly know that the account was not written by Caesar, nor in his time, but we would know that it was written after the English had given these names to certain coins.

So, we find that when the Jews were upon the desert it was commanded that every mother should bring, as a sin offering, a couple of doves to the priests, and the priests were compelled to eat these doves in the most holy place. At the time this law appears to have been given, there were three million people, and only three priests, Aaron, Eleazer and Ithamar. Among three million people there would be, at least, three hundred births a day. Certainly we are not expected to believe that these three priests devoured six hundred pigeons every twenty four hours.

Why should a woman ask pardon of God for having been a mother? Why that should be considered a crime in Exodus, which is commanded as a duty in Genesis? Why should a mother be declared unclean? Why should giving birth to a daughter be regarded twice as criminal as giving birth to a son? Can we believe that such laws and ceremonies were made and instituted by a merciful and intelligent God? If there is anything in this poor world suggestive of, and standing for, all that is sweet, loving and pure, it is a mother holding in her thrilled and happy arms her prattling babe. Read the twelfth chapter of Leviticus, and you will see that when a woman became the mother of a boy she was so unclean that she was not allowed to touch a hallowed thing, nor to enter the sanctuary for forty days. If the babe was a girl, then the mother was unfit for eighty days, to enter the house of God, or to touch the sacred tongs and snuffers. These laws, born of barbarism, are unworthy of our day, and should be regarded simply as the mistakes of savages.

Just as low in the scale of intelligence are the directions given in the fifth chapter of Numbers, for the trial of a wife of whom the husband was jealous. This foolish chapter has been the foundation of all appeals to God for the ascertainment of facts, such as the coarsened, trial by battle, by water, and by fire, the last of which is our judicial oath. It is very easy to believe that in those days a guilty woman would be afraid to drink the water of jealousy and take the oath, and that, through fear, she might be made to confess. Admitting that the deception tended not only to prevent crime, but to discover it when committed, still, we cannot admit that an honest god would, for any purpose, resort to dishonest means. In all countries fear is employed as a means of getting at the truth, and in this there is nothing dishonest, provided falsehood is not resorted to for the purpose of producing the fear. Protestants laugh at Catholics, because of their belief in the efficacy of holy water, and yet they teach their children that a little holy water, in which had been thrown some dust from the floor of the sanctuary, would work a miracle in a woman's flesh. For hundreds of years our fathers believed that a perjurer could not swallow a piece of sacramental bread. Such stories belong to the childhood of our race, and are now believed only by mental infants and intellectual babes.

I cannot believe that Moses had in his hands a couple of tables of stone, upon which God had written the Ten Commandments, and that when he saw the golden calf, and the dancing, that he dashed the tables to the earth and broke them in pieces. Neither do I believe that Moses took a golden calf, burnt it, ground it to powder, and made the people drink it with water, as related in the thirty-second chapter of Exodus.

There is another account of the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses, in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of Exodus. In this account not one word is said about the people having made a golden calf, nor about the breaking of the tables of stone. In the thirty-fourth chapter of Exodus, there is an account of the renewal of the broken tables of the law, and the commandments are given, but they are not the same commandments mentioned in the twentieth chapter. There are two accounts of the same transaction. Both of these stories cannot be true, and yet both must be believed. Any one who will take the trouble to read the nineteenth and twentieth chapters, and the last verse of the thirty-first chapter, the thirty-second, thirty-third, and thirty-fourth chapters of Exodus, will be compelled to admit that both accounts cannot be true.

From the last account it appears that while Moses was upon Mount Sinai receiving the commandments from God, the people brought their jewelry to Aaron and he cast for them a golden calf. This happened before any commandment against idolatry had been given. A god ought, certainly, to publish his laws before inflicting penalties for their violation. To inflict punishment for breaking unknown and unpublished laws is, in the last degree, cruel and unjust. It may be replied that the Jews knew better than to worship idols, before the law was given. If this is so, why should the law have been given? In all civilized countries, laws are made and promulgated, not simply for the purpose of informing the people as to what is right and wrong, but to inform them of the penalties to be visited upon those who violate the laws. When the Ten Commandments were given, no penalties were attached. Not one word was written on the tables of stone as to the punishments that would be inflicted for breaking any or all of the inspired laws. The people should not have been punished for violating a commandment before it was given. And yet, in this case, Moses commanded the sons of Levi to take their swords and slay every man his brother, his companion, and his neighbor. The brutal order was obeyed, and three thousand men were butchered. The Levites consecrated themselves unto the Lord by murdering their sons, and their brothers, for having violated a commandment before it had been given.

It has been contended for many years that the Ten Commandments are the foundation of all ideas of justice and of law. Eminent jurists have bowed to popular prejudice, and deformed their works by statements to the effect that the

Mosaic laws are the fountains from which sprang all ideas of right and wrong. Nothing can be more stupidly false than such assertions. Thousands of years before Moses was born, the Egyptians had a code of laws. They had laws against blasphemy, murder, adultery, larceny, perjury, laws for the collection of debts, the enforcement of contracts, the ascertainment of damages, the redemption of property pawned, and upon nearly every subject of human interest. The Egyptian code was far better than the Mosaic.

Laws spring from the instinct of self-preservation. Industry objected to supporting idleness, and laws were made against theft. Laws were made against murder, because a very large majority of the people have always objected to being murdered. All fundamental laws were born simply of the instinct of self-defense. Long before the Jewish savages assembled at the foot of Sinai, laws had been made and enforced, not only in Egypt and India, but by every tribe that ever existed.

It is impossible for human beings to exist together, without certain rules of conduct, certain ideas of the proper and improper, of the right and wrong, growing out of the relation. Certain rules must be made, and must be enforced. This implies law, trial and punishment. Whoever produces anything by weary labor, does not need a revelation from heaven to teach him that he has a right to the thing produced. Not one of the learned gentlemen, who pretend that the Mosaic laws are filled with justice and intelligence, would live, for a moment, in any country where such laws were in force.

Nothing can be more wonderful than the medical ideas of Jehovah. He had the strangest notions about the cause and cure of disease. With him everything was miracle and wonder. In the fourteenth chapter of Leviticus, we find the law for cleansing a leper:—"Then shall the priest take for him that is to be cleansed, two birds, alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an *earthen* vessel, over *running* water. As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them, and the living bird, in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy, seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field."

We are told that God himself gave these directions to Moses. Does anybody believe this? Why should the bird be killed in an *earthen* vessel? Would the charm be broken if the vessel was of wood? Why over *running* water? What would be thought of a physician now, who would give a prescription like that?

Is it not strange that God, although he gave hundreds of directions for the purpose of discovering the presence of leprosy, and for cleansing the leper after he was healed, forgot to tell how that disease could be cured? Is it not wonderful that while God told his people what animals were fit for food, he failed to give a list of plants that man might eat? Why did he leave his children to find out the hurtful and the poisonous by experiment, knowing that experiment, in millions of cases, must be death?

When reading the history of the Jewish people, of their flight from slavery to death, of their exchange of tyrants, I must confess that my sympathies are all aroused in their behalf. They were cheated, deceived and abused. Their god was quick-tempered, unreasonable, cruel, revengeful and dishonest. He was always promising but never performed. He wasted time in ceremony and childish detail, and in the exaggeration of what he had done. It is impossible for me to conceive of a character more utterly detestable than that of the Hebrew god. He had solemnly promised the Jews that he would take them from Egypt to a land flowing with milk and honey. He had led them to believe that in a little while their troubles would be over, and that they would soon in the land of Canaan, surrounded by their wives and little ones, forget the stripes and tears of Egypt. After promising the poor wanderers again and again that he would lead them in safety to the promised land of joy and plenty, this God, forgetting every promise, said to the wretches in his power:—"Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness and your children shall wander until your carcasses be wasted." This curse was the conclusion of the whole matter. Into this dust of death and night faded all the promises of God. Into this rottenness of wandering despair fell all the dreams of liberty and home. Millions of corpses were left to rot in the desert, and each one certified to the dishonesty of Jehovah. I cannot believe these things. They are so cruel and heartless, that my blood is chilled and my sense of justice shocked. A book that is equally abhorrent to my head and heart, cannot be accepted as a revelation from God.

When we think of the poor Jews, destroyed, murdered, bitten by serpents, visited by plagues, decimated by famine, butchered by each other, swallowed by the earth, frightened, cursed, starved, deceived, robbed and outraged, how thankful we should be that we are not the chosen people of God. No wonder that they longed for the slavery of Egypt, and remembered with sorrow the unhappy day when they exchanged masters. Compared with Jehovah, Pharaoh was a benefactor, and the tyranny of Egypt was freedom to those who suffered the liberty of God.

While reading the Pentateuch, I am filled with indignation, pity and horror. Nothing can be sadder than the history of the starved and frightened wretches who wandered over the desolate crags and sands of wilderness and desert, the

prey of famine, sword, and plague. Ignorant and superstitious to the last degree, governed by falsehood, plundered by hypocrisy, they were the sport of priests, and the food of fear. God was their greatest enemy, and death their only friend.

It is impossible to conceive of a more thoroughly despicable, hateful, and arrogant being, than the Jewish god. He is without a redeeming feature. In the mythology of the world he has no parallel. He, only, is never touched by agony and tears. He delights only in blood and pain. Human affections are naught to him. He cares neither for love nor music, beauty nor joy. A false friend, an unjust judge, a braggart, hypocrite, and tyrant, sincere in hatred, jealous, vain, and revengeful, false in promise, honest in curse, suspicious, ignorant, and changeable, infamous and hideous: — such is the God of the Pentateuch.

XXIV. CONFESS AND AVOID.

The scientific Christians now admit that the Bible is not inspired in its astronomy, geology, botany, zoology, nor in any science. In other words, they admit that on these subjects, the Bible cannot be depended upon. If all the statements in the Scriptures were true, there would be no necessity for admitting that some of them are not inspired. A Christian will not admit that a passage in the Bible is uninspired, until he is satisfied that it is untrue. Orthodoxy itself has at last been compelled to say, that while a passage may be true and uninspired, it cannot be inspired if false.

If the people of Europe had known as much of astronomy and geology when the Bible was introduced among them, as they do now, there never could have been one believer in the doctrine of inspiration. If the writers of the various parts of the Bible had known as much about the sciences; as is now known by every intelligent man, the book never could have been written. It was produced by ignorance, and has been believed and defended by its author. It has lost power in the proportion that man has gained knowledge. A few years ago, this book was appealed to in the settlement of all scientific questions; but now, even the clergy confess that in such matters, it has ceased to speak with the voice of authority. For the establishment of facts, the word of man is now considered far better than the word of God. In the world of science, Jehovah was superseded by Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler. All that God told Moses, admitting the entire account to be true, is dust and ashes compared to the discoveries of Descartes, Laplace, and Humboldt. In matters of fact, the Bible has ceased to be regarded as a standard. Science has succeeded in breaking the chains of theology. A few years ago, Science endeavored to show that it was not inconsistent with the Bible. The tables have been turned, and now, Religion is endeavoring to prove that the Bible is not inconsistent with Science. The standard has been changed.

For many ages, the Christians contended that the Bible, viewed simply as a literary performance, was beyond all other books, and that man without the assistance of God could not produce its equal. This claim was made when but few books existed, and the Bible, being the only book generally known, had no rival. But this claim, like the other, has been abandoned by many, and soon will be, by all. Compared with Shakespeare's "book and volume of the brain," the "sacred" Bible shrinks and seems as feebly impotent and vain, as would a pipe of Pan, when some great organ, voiced with every tone, from the hoarse thunder

of the sea to the winged warble of a mated bird, floods and fills cathedral aisles with all the wealth of sound.

It is now maintained — and this appears to be the last fortification behind which the doctrine of inspiration skulks and crouches — that the Bible, although false and mistaken in its astronomy, geology, geography, history and philosophy, is inspired in its morality. It is now claimed that had it not been for this book, the world would have been inhabited only by savages, and that had it not been for the Holy Scriptures, man never would have even dreamed of the unity of God. A belief in one God is claimed to be a dogma of almost infinite importance, that without this belief civilization is impossible, and that this fact is the sun around which all the virtues revolve. For my part, I think it infinitely more important to believe in man. Theology is a superstition — Humanity a religion.

XXV.
"INSPIRED" SLAVERY.

The Bible was inspired upon the subject of human slavery. Is there, in the civilized world, to-day, a clergyman who believes in the divinity of slavery? Does the Bible teach man to enslave his brother? If it does, is it not blasphemous to say that it is inspired of God? If you find the institution of slavery upheld in a book said to have been written by God, what would you expect to find in a book inspired by the devil? Would you expect to find that book in favor of liberty? Modern Christians, ashamed of the God of the Old Testament, endeavor now to show that slavery was neither commanded nor opposed by Jehovah. Nothing can be plainer than the following passages from the twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus. "Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession, they shall be your bondmen forever. Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shall have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen, and bondmaids."

Can we believe in this, the Nineteenth Century that these infamous passages were inspired by God? that God approved not only of human slavery, but instructed his chosen people to buy the women, children and babes of the heathen round about them? If it was right for the Hebrews to buy, it was also right for the heathen to sell. This God, by commanding the Hebrews to buy, approved of the selling of sons and daughters. The Canaanite who, tempted by gold, lured by avarice, sold from the arms of his wife the dimpled babe, simply made it possible for the Hebrews to obey the orders of their God. If God is the author of the Bible, the reading of these passages ought to cover his cheeks with shame. I ask the Christian world to-day, was it right for the heathen to sell their children? Was it right for God not only to uphold, but to command the infamous traffic in human flesh? Could the most revengeful fiend, the most malicious vagrant in the gloom of hell, sink to a lower moral depth than this?

According to this God, his chosen people were not only commanded to buy of the heathen round about them, but were also permitted to buy each other for a term of years. The law governing the purchase of Jews is laid down in the twenty-first chapter of Exodus. "If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years shall he serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by

himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master has given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door-post: and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl: and he shall serve him forever."

Do you believe that God was the author of this infamous law? Do you believe that the loving father of us all, turned the dimpled arms of babes into manacles of iron? Do you believe that he baited the dungeon of servitude with wife and child? Is it possible to love a God who would make such laws? Is it possible not to hate and despise him?

The heathen are not spoken of as human beings. Their rights are never mentioned. They were the rightful food of the sword, and their bodies were made for stripes and chains.

In the same chapter of the same inspired book, we are told that, "if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he dies under his hand, he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is his money."

Must we believe that God called some of his children the money of others? Can we believe that God made lashes upon the naked back, a legal tender for labor performed? Must we regard the auction block as an altar? Were blood hounds apostles? Was the slave-pen a temple? Were the stealers and whippers of babes and women the justified children of God?

It is now contended that while the Old Testament is touched with the barbarism of its time, that the New Testament is morally perfect and that on its pages can be found no blot or stain. As a matter of fact, the New Testament is more decidedly in favor of human slavery than the old.

For my part, I never will, I never can, worship a God who upholds the institution of slavery. Such a God I hate and defy. I neither want his heaven, nor fear his hell.

XXVI. "INSPIRED" MARRIAGE.

Is there an orthodox clergyman in the world, who will now declare that he believes the institution of polygamy to be right? Is there one who will publicly declare that, in his judgment, that institution ever was right? Was there ever a time in the history of the world when it was right to treat woman simply as property? Do not attempt to answer these questions by saying, that the Bible is an exceedingly good book, that we are indebted for our civilization to the sacred volume, and that without it, man would lapse into savagery, and mental night. This is no answer. Was there a time when the institution of polygamy was the highest expression of human virtue? Is there a Christian woman, civilized, intelligent, and free, who believes in the institution of polygamy? Are we better, purer, and more intelligent than God was four thousand years ago? Why should we imprison Mormons, and worship God? Polygamy is just as pure in Utah, as it could have been in the promised land. Love and Virtue are the same the whole world round, and Justice is the same in every star. All the languages of the world are not sufficient to express the filth of polygamy. It makes of man, a beast, of woman, a trembling slave. It destroys the fireside, makes virtue an outcast, takes from human speech its sweetest words, and leaves the heart a den, where crawl and hiss the slimy serpents of most loathsome lust. Civilization rests upon the family. The good family is the unit of good government. The virtues grow about the holy hearth of home—they cluster, bloom, and shed their perfume round the fireside where the one man loves the one woman. Lover—husband—wife—mother—father—child—home!—without these sacred words, the world is but a lair, and men and women merely beasts.

Why should the innocent maiden and the loving mother worship the heartless Jewish God? Why should they, with pure and stainless lips, read the vile record of inspired lust?

The marriage of the one man to the one woman is the citadel and fortress of civilization. Without this, woman becomes the prey and slave of lust and power, and man goes back to savagery and crime. From the bottom of my heart I hate, abhor and execrate all theories of life, of which the pure and sacred home is not the corner-stone. Take from the world the family, the fireside, the children born of wedded love, and there is nothing left. The home where virtue dwells with love is like a lily with a heart of fire—the fairest flower in all the world.

XXVII.

"INSPIRED" WAR.

If the Bible be true, God commanded his chosen people to destroy men simply for the crime of defending their native land. They were not allowed to spare trembling and white-haired age, nor dimpled babes clasped in the mothers' arms. They were ordered to kill women, and to pierce, with the sword of war, the unborn child. "Our heavenly Father" commanded the Hebrews to kill the men and women, the fathers, sons and brothers, but to preserve the girls alive. Why were not the maidens also killed? Why were they spared? Read the thirty-first chapter of Numbers, and you will find that the maidens were given to the soldiers and the priests. Is there, in all the history of war, a more infamous thing than this? Is it possible that God permitted the violets of modesty, that grow and shed their perfume in the maiden's heart, to be trampled beneath the brutal feet of lust? If this was the order of God, what, under the same circumstances, would have been the command of a devil? When, in this age of the world, a woman, a wife, a mother, reads this record, she should, with scorn and loathing, throw the book away. A general, who now should make such an order, giving over to massacre and rapine a conquered people, would be held in execration by the whole civilized world. Yet, if the Bible be true, the supreme and infinite God was once a savage.

A little while ago, out upon the western plains, in a little path leading to a cabin, were found the bodies of two children and their mother. Her breast was filled with wounds received in the defense of her darlings. They had been murdered by the savages. Suppose when looking at their lifeless forms, some one had said, "This was done by the command of God!" In Canaan there were countless scenes like this. There was no pity in inspired war. God raised the black flag, and commanded his soldiers to kill even the smiling infant in its mother's arms. Who is the blasphemer; the man who denies the existence of God, or he who covers the robes of the Infinite with innocent blood?

We are told in the Pentateuch, that God, the father of us all, gave thousands of maidens, after having killed their fathers, their mothers, and their brothers, to satisfy the brutal lusts of savage men. If there be a God, I pray him to write in his book, opposite my name, that I denied this lie for him.

XXVIII.
"INSPIRED" RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

According to the Bible, God selected the Jewish people through whom to make known the great fact, that he was the only true and living God. For this purpose, he appeared on several occasions to Moses—came down to Sinai's top clothed in cloud and fire, and wrought a thousand miracles for the preservation and education of the Jewish people. In their presence he opened the waters of the sea. For them he caused bread to rain from heaven. To quench their thirst, water leaped from the dry and barren rock. Their enemies were miraculously destroyed; and for forty years, at least, this God took upon himself the government of the Jews. But, after all this, many of the people had less confidence in him than in gods of wood and stone. In moments of trouble, in periods of disaster, in the darkness of doubt, in the hunger and thirst of famine, instead of asking this God for aid, they turned and sought the help of senseless things. This God, with all his power and wisdom, could not even convince a few wandering and wretched savages that he was more potent than the idols of Egypt. This God was not willing that the Jews should think and investigate for themselves. For heresy, the penalty was death. Where this God reigned, intellectual liberty was unknown. He appealed only to brute force; he collected taxes by threatening plagues; he demanded worship on pain of sword and fire; acting as spy, inquisitor, judge and executioner.

In the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, we have the ideas of God as to mental freedom. "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers; *namely* of the gods of the people which are around about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth, Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him, neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shall thou spare him, neither shall thou conceal him. But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. And thou shall stone him with stones that he die."

This is the religious liberty of God; the toleration of Jehovah. If I had lived in Palestine at that time, and my wife, the mother of my children, had said to me, "I am tired of Jehovah, he is always asking for blood; he is never weary of killing; he is always telling of his might and strength; always telling what he has done

for the Jews, always asking for sacrifices; for doves and lambs—blood, nothing but blood. — Let us worship the sun. Jehovah is too revengeful, too malignant, too exacting. Let us worship the sun. The sun has clothed the world in beauty; it has covered the earth with flowers; by its divine light I first saw your face, and my beautiful babe.” — If I had obeyed the command of God, I would have killed her. My hand would have been first upon her, and after that the hands of all the people, and she would have been stoned with stones until she died. For my part, I would never kill my wife, even if commanded so to do by the real God of this universe. Think of taking up some ragged rock and hurling it against the white bosom filled with love for you; and when you saw oozing from the bruised lips of the death wound, the red current of her sweet life—think of looking up to heaven and receiving the congratulations of the infinite fiend whose commandment you had obeyed!

Can we believe that any such command was ever given by a merciful and intelligent God? Suppose, however, that God did give this law to the Jews, and did tell them that whenever a man preached a heresy, or proposed to worship any other God that they should kill him; and suppose that afterward this same God took upon himself flesh, and came to this very chosen people and taught a different religion, and that thereupon the Jews crucified him; I ask you, did he not reap exactly what he had sown? What right would this God have to complain of a crucifixion suffered in accordance with his own command?

Nothing can be more infamous than intellectual tyranny. To put chains upon the body is as nothing compared with putting shackles on the brain. No god is entitled to the worship or the respect of man who does not give, even to the meanest of his children, every right that he claims for himself.

If the Pentateuch be true, religious persecution is a duty. The dungeons of the Inquisition were temples, and the clank of every chain upon the limbs of heresy was music in the ear of God. If the Pentateuch was **inspired**, every heretic should be destroyed; and every man who advocates a fact inconsistent with the sacred book, should be consumed by sword and flame.

In the Old Testament no one is told to reason with a heretic, and not one word is said about relying upon argument, upon education, nor upon intellectual development—nothing except simple brute force. Is there to-day a Christian who will say that four thousand years ago, it was the duty of a husband to kill his wife if she differed with him upon the subject of religion? Is there one who will now say that, under such circumstances, the wife ought to have been killed? Why should God be so jealous of the wooden idols of the heathen? Could he not compete with Baal? Was he envious of the success of the Egyptian magicians? Was it not possible for him to make such a convincing display of his power as to

silence forever the voice of unbelief? Did this God have to resort to force to make converts? Was he so ignorant of the structure of the human mind as to believe all honest doubt a crime? If he wished to do away with the idolatry of the Canaanites, why did he not appear to them? Why did he not give them the tables of the law? Why did he only make known his will to a few wandering savages in the desert of Sinai? Will some theologian have the kindness to answer these questions? Will some minister, who now believes in religious liberty, and eloquently denounces the intolerance of Catholicism, explain these things; will he tell us why he worships an intolerant God? Is a god who will burn a soul forever in another world, better than a Christian who burns the body for a few hours in this? Is there no intellectual liberty in heaven? Do the angels all discuss questions on the same side? Are all the investigators in perdition? Will the penitent thief, winged and crowned, laugh at the honest folks in hell? Will the agony of the damned increase or decrease the happiness of God? Will there be, in the universe, an eternal *auto da fé*?

XXIX. CONCLUSION.

If the Pentateuch is not inspired in its astronomy, geology, geography, history or philosophy, if it is not inspired concerning slavery, polygamy, war, law, religious or political liberty, or the rights of men, women and children, what is it inspired in, or about? The unity of God?—that was believed long before Moses was born. Special providence?—that has been the doctrine of ignorance in all ages. The rights of property?—theft was always a crime. The sacrifice of animals?—that was a custom thousands of years before a Jew existed. The sacredness of life?—there have always been laws against murder. The wickedness of perjury?—truthfulness has always been a virtue. The beauty of chastity?—the Pentateuch does not teach it. Thou shall worship no other God?—that has been the burden of all religions.

Is it possible that the Pentateuch could not have been written by uninspired men? that the assistance of God was necessary to produce these books? Is it possible that Galileo ascertained the mechanical principles of “Virtual Velocity,” the laws of falling bodies and of all motion; that Copernicus ascertained the true position of the earth and accounted for all celestial phenomena; that Kepler discovered his three laws—discoveries of such importance that the 8th of May, 1618, may be called the birthday of modern science; that Newton gave to the world the Method of Fluxions, the Theory of Universal Gravitation, and the Decomposition of Light; that Euclid, Cavalieri, Descartes, and Leibnitz, almost completed the science of mathematics; that all the discoveries in optics, hydrostatics, pneumatics and chemistry, the experiments, discoveries, and inventions of Galvani, Volta, Franklin and Morse, of Trevethick, Watt and Fulton and of all the pioneers of progress—that all this was accomplished by uninspired men, while the writer of the Pentateuch was directed and inspired by an infinite God? Is it possible that the codes of China, India, Egypt, Greece and Rome were made by man, and that the laws recorded in the Pentateuch were alone given by God? Is it possible that Æschylus and Shakespeare, Burns, and Beranger, Goethe and Schiller, and all the poets of the world, and all their wondrous tragedies and songs, are but the work of men, while no intelligence except the infinite God could be the author of the Pentateuch? Is it possible that of all the books that crowd the libraries of the world, the books of science, fiction, history and song, that all save only one, have been produced by man? Is it possible that of all these, the Bible only is the work of God?

If the Pentateuch is inspired, the civilization of our day is a mistake and crime. There should be no political liberty. Heresy should be trodden out beneath the bigot’s brutal feet. Husbands should divorce their wives at will, and make the

mothers of their children houseless and weeping wanderers. Polygamy ought to be practiced; women should become slaves; we should buy the sons and daughters of the heathen and make them bondmen and bondwomen forever. We should sell our own flesh and blood, and have the right to kill our slaves. Men and women should be stoned to death for laboring on the seventh day. "Mediums," such as have familiar spirits, should be burned with fire. Every vestige of mental liberty should be destroyed, and reason's holy torch extinguished in the martyr's blood.

Is it not far better and wiser to say that the Pentateuch while containing some good laws, some truths, some wise and useful things is, after all, deformed and blackened by the savagery of its time? Is it not far better and wiser to take the good and throw the bad away?

Let us admit what we know to be true; that Moses was mistaken about a thousand things; that the story of creation is not true; that the Garden of Eden is a myth; that the serpent and the tree of knowledge, and the fall of man are but fragments of old mythologies lost and dead; that woman was not made out of a rib; that serpents never had the power of speech; that the sons of God did not marry the daughters of men; that the story of the flood and ark is not exactly true; that the tower of Babel is a mistake; that the confusion of tongues is a childish thing; that the origin of the rainbow is a foolish fancy; that Methuselah did not live nine hundred and sixty-nine years; that Enoch did not leave this world, taking with him his flesh and bones; that the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is somewhat improbable; that burning brimstone never fell like rain; that Lot's wife was not changed into chloride of sodium; that Jacob did not, in fact, put his hip out of joint wrestling with God; that the history of Tamar might just as well have been left out; that a belief in Pharaoh's dreams is not essential to salvation; that it makes but little difference whether the rod of Aaron was changed to a serpent or not; that of all the wonders said to have been performed in Egypt, the greatest is, that anybody ever believed the absurd account; that God did not torment the innocent cattle on account of the sins of their owners; that he did not kill the first born of the poor maid behind the mill because of Pharaoh's crimes; that flies and frogs were not ministers of God's wrath; that lice and locusts were not the executors of his will; that seventy people did not, in two hundred and fifteen years, increase to three million; that three priests could not eat six hundred pigeons in a day; that gazing at a brass serpent could not extract poison from the blood; that God did not go in partnership with hornets; that he did not murder people simply because they asked for something to eat; that he did not declare the making of hair oil and ointment an offence to be punished with death; that he did not miraculously preserve cloth and leather; that he was not afraid of wild beasts; that he did not punish heresy with sword and fire; that he was not jealous, revengeful, and unjust; that he knew all about the sun, moon,

and stars; that he did not threaten to kill people for eating the fat of an ox; that he never told Aaron to draw cuts to see which of two goats should be killed; that he never objected to clothes made of woolen mixed with linen; that if he objected to dwarfs, people with flat noses and too many fingers, he ought not to have created such folks; that he did not demand human sacrifices as set forth in the last chapter of Leviticus; that he did not object to the raising of horses; that he never commanded widows to spit in the faces of their brothers-in-law; that several contradictory accounts of the same transaction cannot all be true; that God did not talk to Abraham as one man talks to another; that angels were not in the habit of walking about the earth eating veal dressed with milk and butter, and making bargains about the destruction of cities; that God never turned himself into a flame of fire, and lived in a bush; that he never met Moses in a hotel and tried to kill him; that it was absurd to perform miracles to induce a king to act in a certain way and then harden his heart so that he would refuse; that God was not kept from killing the Jews by the fear that the Egyptians would laugh at him; that he did not secretly bury a man and then allow the corpse to write an account of the funeral; that he never believed the firmament to be solid; that he knew slavery was and always would be a frightful crime; that polygamy is but stench and filth; that the brave soldier will always spare an unarmed foe; that only cruel cowards slay the conquered and the helpless; that no language can describe the murderer of a smiling babe; that God did not want the blood of doves and lambs; that he did not love the smell of burning flesh; that he did not want his altars daubed with blood; that he did not pretend that the sins of a people could be transferred to a goat; that he did not believe in witches, wizards, spooks, and devils; that he did not test the virtue of woman with dirty water; that he did not suppose that rabbits chewed the cud; that he never thought there were any four-footed birds; that he did not boast for several hundred years that he had vanquished an Egyptian king ; that a dry stick did not bud, blossom, and bear almonds in one night; that manna did not shrink and swell, so that each man could gather only just one omer; that it was never wrong to "countenance the poor man in his cause;" that God never told a people not to live in peace with their neighbors; that he did not spend forty days with Moses on Mount Sinai giving him patterns for making clothes, tongs, basins, and snuffers; that maternity is not a sin; that physical deformity is not a crime; that an atonement cannot be made for the soul by shedding innocent blood; that killing a dove over running water will not make its blood a medicine; that a god who demands love knows nothing of the human heart; that one who frightens savages with loud noises is unworthy the love of civilized men; that one who destroys children on account of the sins of their fathers is a monster; that an infinite god never threatened to give people the itch; that he never sent wild beasts to devour babes; that he never ordered the violation of maidens; that he never regarded patriotism as a crime; that he never ordered the destruction of unborn children; that he never opened the earth and swallowed wives and babes because husbands and

fathers had displeased him; that he never demanded that men should kill their sons and brothers, for the purpose of sanctifying themselves; that we cannot please God by believing the improbable; that credulity is not a virtue; that investigation is not a crime; that every mind should be free; that all religious persecution is infamous in God, as well as man; that without liberty, virtue is impossible; that without freedom, even love cannot exist; that every man should be allowed to think and to express his thoughts; that woman is the equal of man; that children should be governed by love and reason; that the family relation is sacred; that war is a hideous crime; that all intolerance is born of ignorance and hate; that the freedom of today is the hope of to-morrow; that the enlightened present ought not to fall upon its knees and blindly worship the barbaric past; and that every free, brave and enlightened man should publicly declare that all the ignorant, infamous, heartless, hideous things recorded in the "inspired" Pentateuch are not the words of God, but simply "Some Mistakes of Moses."

SOME REASONS WHY.

I

RELIGION makes enemies instead of friends. That one word, "religion" covers all the horizon of memory with visions of war, of outrage, of persecution, of tyranny, and death. That one word brings to the mind every instrument with which man has tortured man. In that one word are all the fagots and flames and dungeons of the past, and in that word is the infinite and eternal hell of the future.

In the name of universal benevolence Christians have hated their fellow-men. Although they have been preaching universal love, the Christian nations are the warlike nations of the world. The most destructive weapons of war have been invented by Christians. The musket, the revolver, the rifled canon, the bombshell, the torpedo, the explosive bullet, have been invented by Christian brains. Above all other arts, the Christian world has placed the art of war.

A Christian nation has never had the slightest respect for the rights of barbarians; neither has any Christian sect any respect for the rights of other sects. Anciently, the sects discussed with fire and sword, and even now, something happens almost every day to show that the old spirit that was in the Inquisition still slumbers in the Christian breast.

Whoever imagines himself a favorite with God, holds other people in contempt.

Whenever a man believes that he has the exact truth from God, there is in that man no spirit of compromise. He has not the modesty born of the imperfections of human nature; he has the arrogance of theological certainty and the tyranny born of ignorant assurance. Believing himself to be the slave of God, he imitates his master, and of all tyrants, the worst is a slave in power.

When a man really believes that it is necessary to do a certain thing to be happy forever, or that a certain belief is necessary to ensure eternal joy, there is in that man no spirit of concession. He divides the whole world into saints and sinners, into believers and unbelievers, into God's sheep and Devil's goats, into people who will be glorified and people who will be damned.

A Christian nation can make no compromise with one not Christian; it will either compel that nation to accept its doctrine, or it will wage war. If Christ, in fact, said "I came not to bring peace but a sword," it is the only prophecy in the New Testament that has been literally fulfilled.

II.

DUTIES TO GOD

RELIGION is supposed to consist in a discharge of the duties we owe to God. In other words, we are taught that God is exceedingly anxious that we should believe a certain thing. For my part, I do not believe that there is any infinite being to whom we owe anything. The reason I say this is, we can not owe any duty to any being who requires nothing—to any being that we cannot possibly help, to any being whose happiness we cannot increase. If God is infinite, we cannot make him happier than he is. If God is infinite, we can neither give, nor can he receive, anything. Anything that we do or fail to do, cannot, in the slightest degree, affect an infinite God; consequently, no relations can exist between the finite and the Infinite, if by relations is meant mutual duties and obligations.

Some tell us that it is the desire of God that we should worship him. What for? Why does he desire worship? Others tell us that we should sacrifice something to him. What for? Is he in want? Can we assist him? Is he unhappy? Is he in trouble? Does he need human sympathy? We cannot assist the Infinite, but we can assist our fellow-men. We can feed the hungry and clothe the naked, and enlighten the ignorant, and we can help, in some degree at least, toward covering this world with the mantle of joy.

I do not believe there is any being in this universe who gives rain for praise, who gives sunshine for prayer, or who blesses a man simply because he kneels.

The Infinite cannot receive praise or worship.

The Infinite can neither hear nor answer prayer.

An Infinite personality is an infinite impossibility.

III.

INSPIRATION.

WE are told that we have in our possession the inspired will of God. What is meant by the word "inspired" is not exactly known; but whatever else it may mean, certainly it means that the "inspired" must be the true. If it is true, there is, in fact, no need of its being inspired—the truth will take care of itself.

The church is forced to say that the Bible differs from all other books; it is forced to say that it contains the actual will of God. Let us then see what inspiration really is. A man looks at the sea, and the sea says something to him. It makes an impression upon his mind. It awakens memory, and this impression depends upon the man's experience—upon his intellectual capacity. Another looks upon the same sea. He has a different brain; he has had a different experience. The sea may speak to him of joy, to the other of grief and tears. The sea cannot tell the same thing to any two human beings, because no two human beings have had the same experience.

A year ago, while the cars were going from Boston to Gloucester, we passed through Manchester. As the cars stopped, a lady sitting opposite, speaking to her husband, looking out of the window and catching, for the first time, a view of the sea, cried out, "Is it not beautiful!" and the husband replied, "I'll bet you could dig clams right here!"

Another, standing upon the shore, listening to what the great Greek tragedian called "the multitudinous laughter of the sea," may say: Every drop has visited all the shores of the earth; every one has been frozen in the vast and icy North; every one has fallen in snow, has been whirled by storms around mountain peaks; every one has been kissed to vapor by the sun; every one has worn the sevenhued garment of light; every one has fallen in pleasant rain, gurgled from springs and laughed in brooks while lovers wooed upon the banks and every one has rushed with mighty rivers back to the sea's embrace. Everything in nature tells a different story to all eyes that see and to all ears that hear.

Once in my life, and once only, I heard Horace Greeley deliver a lecture. I think its title was, "Across the Continent." At last he reached the mammoth trees of California, and I thought "Here is an opportunity for the old man to indulge his fancy. Here are trees that have outlived a thousand human governments. There are limbs above his head older than the pyramids. While man was emerging from barbarism to something like civilization, these trees were growing. Older than history, every one appeared to be a memory, a witness, and a prophecy. The same wind that filled the sails of the Argonauts had swayed these trees." But

these trees said nothing of this kind to Mr. Greeley. Upon these subjects not a word was told to him. Instead, he took his pencil, and after figuring awhile, remarked: "One of these trees, sawed into inch-boards, would make more than three hundred thousand feet of lumber."

I was once riding on the cars in Illinois. There had been a violent thunder-storm. The rain had ceased, the sun was going down. The great clouds had floated toward the west, and there they assumed most wonderful architectural shapes. There were temples and palaces domed and turreted, and they were touched with silver, with amethyst and gold. They looked like the homes of the Titans, or the palaces of the gods. A man was sitting near me. I touched him and said, "Did you ever see anything so beautiful?" He looked out. He saw nothing of the cloud, nothing of the sun, nothing of the color; he saw only the country and replied, "Yes, it is beautiful; I always did like rolling land." On another occasion I was riding in a stage. There had been a snow, and after the snow a sleet, and all the trees were bent, and all the boughs were arched. Every fence, every log cabin had been transfigured, touched with a glory almost beyond this world. The great fields were a pure and perfect white; the forests, drooping beneath their load of gems, made wonderful caves, from which one almost expected to see troops of fairies come. The whole world looked like a bride, jeweled from head to foot. A German on the back seat, hearing our talk, and our exclamations of wonder leaned forward, looked out of the stage window and said: "Yes, it looks like a clean table cloth!"

So, when we look upon a flower, a painting, a statue, a star, or a violet, the more we know, the more we have experienced, the more we have thought, the more we remember, the more the statue, the star, the painting, the violet has to tell. Nature says to me all that I am capable of understanding – gives all that I can receive.

As with star, or flower, or sea, so with a book. A man reads Shakespeare. What does he get from him? All that he has the mind to understand. He gets his little cup full. Let another read him who knows nothing of the drama, nothing of the impersonations of passion, and what does he get? Almost nothing. Shakespeare has a different story for each reader. He is a world in which each recognizes his acquaintances – he may know a few, he may know all.

The impression that nature makes upon the mind, the stories told by sea and star and flower, must be the natural food of thought. Leaving out for the moment the impression gained from ancestors, the hereditary fears and drifts and trends – the natural food of thought must be the impression made upon the brain by coming in contact through the medium of the five senses with what we call the outward world. The brain is natural. Its food is natural. The result, thought,

must be natural. The supernatural can be constructed with no material except the natural. Of the supernatural we can have no conception. Thought may be deformed, and the thought of one may be strange to, and denominated as unnatural by, another; but it cannot be supernatural. It may be weak, it may be insane, but it is not supernatural. Above the natural man cannot rise, even with the aid of fancy's wings. There can be deformed ideas, as there are deformed persons. There can be religions monstrous and misshapen, but they must be naturally produced. Some people have ideas about what they are pleased to call the supernatural; but what they call the supernatural is simply the deformed. The world is to each man according to each man. It takes the world as it really is and that man to make that man's world, and that man's world cannot exist without that man.

You may ask, and what of all this? I reply, as with everything in nature, so with the Bible. It has a different story for each reader. Is then the Bible a different book to every human being who reads it? It is. Can God then, through the Bible, make the same revelation to two persons? He cannot. Why? Because the man who reads it is the man who inspires. Inspiration is in the man, as well as in the book. God should have inspired readers as well as writers.

You may reply: "God knew that his book would be understood differently by each one, and that he really intended that it should be understood as it is understood by each." If this is so, then my understanding of the Bible is the real revelation to me. If this is so, I have no right to take the understanding of another. I must take the revelation made to me through my understanding, and by that revelation I must stand. Suppose then, that I do read this Bible honestly, fairly, and when I get through I am compelled to say, "The book is not true." If this is the honest result, then you are compelled to say, either that God has made no revelation to me, or that the revelation that it is not true, is the revelation made to me, and by which I am bound. If the book and my brain are both the work of the same Infinite God, whose fault is it that the book and the brain do not agree? Either God should have written a book to fit my brain, or should have made my brain to fit his book.

The inspiration of the Bible depends upon the ignorance of him who reads. There was a time when its geology, its astronomy, its natural history, were inspired. That time has passed. There was a time when its morality satisfied the men who ruled mankind. That time has passed. There was a time when the tyrant regarded its laws as good; when the master believed in its liberty; when strength gloried in its passages; but these laws never satisfied the oppressed, they were never quoted by the slave.

We have a sacred book, an inspired Bible, and I am told that this book was written by the same being who made every star, and who peopled infinite space with infinite worlds. I am also told that God created man, and that man is totally depraved. It has always seemed to me that an infinite being has no right to make imperfect things. I may be mistaken; but this is the only planet I have ever been on; I live in what might be called one of the rural districts of this universe, consequently I may be mistaken; I simply give the best and largest thought I have.

IV.

GOD'S EXPERIMENT WITH THE JEWS.

THE Bible tells us that men became so bad that God destroyed them all with the exception of eight persons; that afterwards he chose Abraham and some of his kindred, a wandering tribe, for the purpose of seeing whether or no they could be civilized. He had no time to waste with the entire world. The Egyptians at that time, a vast and splendid nation, having a system of laws and free schools, believing in the marriage of the one man to the one woman; believing, too, in the rights of woman—a nation that had courts of justice and understood the philosophy of damages—these people had received no revelation from God,—they were left to grope in Nature's night. He had no time to civilize India, wherein had grown a civilization that fills the world with wonder still—a people with a language as perfect as ours, a people who had produced philosophers, scientists, poets. He had no time to waste on them; but he took a few, the tribe of Abraham. He established a perfect despotism—with no schools, with no philosophy, with no art, with no music—nothing but the sacrifices of dumb beasts—nothing but the abject worship of a slave. Not a word upon geology, upon astronomy; nothing, even, upon the science of medicine. Thus God spent hours and hours with Moses upon the top of Sinai, giving directions for ascertaining the presence of leprosy and for preventing its spread, but it never occurred to Jehovah to tell Moses how it could be cured. He told them a few things about what they might eat—prohibiting among other things four-footed birds, and one thing upon the subject of cooking. From the thunders and lightnings of Sinai he proclaimed this vast and wonderful fact: "Thou shalt not see the kid in its mother's milk." He took these people, according to our sacred Scriptures, under his immediate care, and for the purpose of controlling them he wrought wonderful miracles in their sight. Is it not a little curious that no priest of one religion has ever been able to astonish a priest of another religion by telling a miracle? Our missionaries tell the Hindoos the miracles of the Bible, and the Hindoo priests, without the movement of a muscle, hear them and then recite theirs, and theirs do not astonish our missionaries in the least! Is it not a little curious that the priests of one religion never believe the priests of another? Is it not a little strange that the believers in sacred books regard all except their own as having been made by hypocrites and fools?

I heard the other day a story. A gentleman was telling some wonderful things and the listeners, with one exception, were saying, as he proceeded with his tale, "Is it possible?" "Did you ever hear anything so wonderful?" and when he had concluded, there was a kind of chorus of "Is it possible?" and "Can it be?" One man, however, sat perfectly quiet, utterly unmoved. Another listener said to him

"Did you hear that?" and he replied "Yes." "Well," said the other, "You did not manifest much astonishment." "Oh, no," was the answer, "I am a liar myself."

I am told by the sacred Scriptures that, as a matter of fact, God, even with the help of miracles, failed to civilize the Jews, and this shows of how little real benefit, after all, it is, to have a ruler much above the people, or to simply excite the wonder of mankind. Infinite wisdom, if the account be true, could not civilize a single tribe. Laws made by Jehovah himself were not obeyed, and every effort of Jehovah failed. It is claimed that God made known his law and inspired men to write and teach his will, and yet, it was found utterly impossible to reform mankind.

V.

CIVILIZED COUNTRIES.

In all civilized countries, it is now passionately asserted that slavery is a crime; that a war of conquest is murder; that polygamy enslaves woman, degrades man and destroys home; that nothing is more infamous than the slaughter of decrepit men, of helpless mothers, and of prattling babes; that captured maidens should not be given to their captors; that wives should not be stoned to death for differing with their husbands on the subject of religion. We know that there was a time, in the history of most nations, when all these crimes were regarded as divine institutions. Nations entertaining this view now are regarded as savage, and, with the exception of the South Sea Islanders, Feejees, a few tribes in Central Africa, and some citizens of Delaware, no human beings are found degraded enough to agree upon these subjects with Jehovah.

The only evidence we can have that a nation has ceased to be savage, is that it has abandoned these doctrines of savagery.

To every one except a theologian, it is easy to account for these mistakes and crimes by saying that civilization is a painful growth; that the moral perceptions are cultivated through ages of tyranny, of crime, and of heroism; that it requires centuries for man to put out the eyes of self and hold in lofty and in equal poise the golden scales of Justice. **Conscience is born of suffering. Mercy is the child of the imagination.** Man advances as he becomes acquainted with his surroundings, with the mutual obligations of life, and learns to take advantage of the forces of nature.

The believer in the inspiration of the Bible is compelled to say, that there was a time when slavery was right, when women could sell their babes, when polygamy was the highest form of virtue, when wars of extermination were waged with the sword of mercy, when religious toleration was a crime, and when death was the just penalty for having expressed an honest thought. He is compelled to insist that Jehovah is as bad now as he was then; that he is as good now as he was then. Once, all the crimes that I have mentioned were commanded by God; now they are prohibited. Once, God was in favor of them all; now the Devil is their defender. In other words, the Devil entertains the same opinion to-day that God held four thousand years ago. The Devil is as good now as Jehovah was then, and God was as bad then as the Devil is now. Other nations besides the Jews had similar laws and ideas—believed in and practiced the same crimes, and yet, it is not claimed that they received a revelation. They had no knowledge of the true God, and yet they practiced the same crimes, of their own

motion, that the Jews did by command of Jehovah. From this it would seem that man can do wrong without a special revelation.

The passages upholding slavery, polygamy, war and religious persecution are certainly not evidences of the inspiration of that book. Suppose nothing had been in the Old Testament upholding these crimes, would the modern Christian suspect that it was not inspired on that account? Suppose nothing had been in the Old Testament except laws in favor of these crimes, would it still be insisted that it was inspired? If the Devil had inspired a book, will some Christian tell us in what respect, on the subjects of slavery, polygamy, war and liberty, it would have differed from some parts of the Old Testament? Suppose we knew that after inspired men had finished the Bible the Devil had gotten possession of it and had written a few passages, what part would Christians now pick out as being probably his work? Which of the following passages would be selected as having been written by the Devil: "Love thy neighbor as thyself," or "Kill all the males among the little ones, and kill every woman, but all the women children keep alive for yourselves"?

Is there a believer in the Bible who does not now wish that God, amid the thunders and lightnings of Sinai, had said to Moses that man should not own his fellow-man; that women should not sell their babes; that all men should be allowed to think and investigate for themselves, and that the sword never should be unsheathed to shed innocent blood? Is there a believer who would not be delighted to find that every one of the infamous passages are interpolations, and that the skirts of God were never reddened by the blood of maiden, wife, or babe? Is there an honest man who does not regret that God commanded a husband to stone his wife for suggesting the worship of some other God? Surely we do not need an inspired book to teach us that slavery is right, that polygamy is virtue, and that intellectual liberty is a crime.

VI.

A COMPARISON OF BOOKS.

LET us compare the gems of Jehovah with Pagan paste. It may be that the best way to illustrate what I have said, is to compare the supposed teachings of Jehovah with those of persons who never wrote an inspired line. In all ages of which any record has been preserved, men have given their ideas of justice, charity, liberty, love and law. If the Bible is the work of God, it should contain the sublimest truths, it should excel the works of man, it should contain the loftiest definitions of justice, the best conceptions of human liberty, the clearest outlines of duty, and the tenderest and noblest thoughts. Upon every page should be found the luminous evidence of its divine origin. It should contain grander and more wonderful things than man has written.

It may be said that it is unfair to call attention to bad things in the Bible. To this it may be replied that a divine being ought not to put bad things in his book. If the Bible now upholds what we call crimes, it will not do to say that it is not verbally inspired. If the words are not inspired, what is? It may be said, that the thoughts are inspired. This would include only thoughts expressed without words. If ideas are inspired, they must be expressed by inspired words—that is to say, by an inspired arrangement of words. If a sculptor were inspired of God to make a statue, we would not say that the marble was inspired, but the statue—that is to say, the relation of part to part, the married harmony of form and function. The language, the words, take the place of the marble, and it is the arrangement of the words that Christians claim to be inspired. If there is an uninspired word, or a word in the wrong place, until that word is known a doubt is cast on every word the book contains.

If it was worth God's while to make a revelation at all, it was certainly worth his while to see that it was correctly made—that it was absolutely preserved. Why should God allow an inspired book to be interpolated? If it was worth while to inspire men to write it, it was worth while to inspire men to preserve it; and why should he allow another person to interpolate in it that which was not inspired? He certainly would not have allowed the man he inspired to write contrary to the inspiration. He should have preserved his revelation. Neither will it do to say that God adapted his revelation to the prejudices of man. It was necessary for him to adapt his revelation to the capacity of man, but certainly God would not confirm a barbarian in his prejudices. He would not fortify a heathen in his crimes.

If a revelation is of any importance, it is to eradicate prejudice. They tell us now that the Jews were so ignorant, so bad, that God was compelled to justify their crimes, in order to have any influence with them. They say that if he had declared slavery and polygamy to be crimes, the Jews would have refused to receive the Ten Commandments. They tell us that God did the best he could; that his real intention was to lead them along slowly, so that in a few hundred years they would be induced to admit that larceny and murder and polygamy and slavery were not virtues. I suppose if we now wished to break a cannibal of the bad habit of devouring missionaries, we would first induce him to cook them in a certain way, saying: "To eat cooked missionary is one step in advance of eating your missionary raw. After a few years, a little mutton could be cooked with missionary, and year after year the amount of mutton could be increased and the amount of missionary decreased, until in the fullness of time the dish could be entirely mutton, and after that the missionaries would be absolutely safe."

If there is anything of value, it is liberty—liberty of body, liberty of mind. The liberty of body is the reward of labor. Intellectual liberty is the air of the soul, the sunshine of the mind, and without it, the world is a prison, the universe a dungeon.

If the Bible is really inspired, Jehovah commanded the Jewish people to buy the children of the strangers that sojourned among them, and ordered that the children thus bought should be an inheritance for the children of the Jews, and that they should be bondmen and bondwomen forever. Yet Epictetus, a man to whom no revelation was ever made, a man whose soul followed only the light of nature, and who had never heard of the Jewish God, was great enough to say: "Will you not remember that your servants are by nature your brothers, the children of God? In saying that you have bought them, you look down on the earth, and into the pit, on the wretched law of men long since dead, but you see not the laws of the gods."

We find that Jehovah, speaking to his chosen people, assured them that their bondmen and their bondmaids must be "of the heathen that were round about them." "Of them," said Jehovah, "shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids." And yet Cicero, a pagan, Cicero, who had never been enlightened by reading the Old Testament, had the moral grandeur to declare: "They who say that we should love our fellow-citizens but not foreigners, destroy the universal brotherhood of mankind, with which benevolence and justice would perish forever."

If the Bible is inspired, Jehovah, God of all worlds, actually said: "And if a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be sorely punished; notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is his money." And yet Zeno, founder of the Stoics, centuries

before Christ was born, insisted that no man could be the owner of another, and that the title was bad, whether the slave had become so by conquest or by purchase.

Jehovah ordered a Jewish general to make war, and gave, among others, this command: "When the Lord thy God shall drive them before thee, thou shalt smite them and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them." And yet Epictetus, whom we have already quoted, gave this marvelous rule for the guidance of human conduct: "Live with thy inferiors as thou wouldst have thy superiors live with thee."

Is it possible, after all, that a being of infinite goodness and wisdom said: "I will heap mischief upon them; I will send mine arrows upon them; they shall be burned with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction. I will send the tooth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust. The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also, with the man of gray hairs:" while Seneca, an uninspired Roman, said: "The wise man will not pardon any crime that ought to be punished, but he will accomplish, in a nobler way, all that is sought in pardoning. He will spare some and watch over some, because of their youth, and others on account of their ignorance. His clemency will not fall short of justice, but will fulfill it perfectly."

Can we believe that God ever said to any one: "Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow; let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places; let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let the stranger spoil his labor; let there be none to extend mercy unto him, neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children." If he ever said these words, surely he had never heard this line, this strain of music from the Hindu: "Sweet is the lute to those who have not heard the prattle of their own children."

Jehovah, "from the clouds and darkness of Sinai," said to the Jews: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. . . . Though shall not bow down thyself to them nor serve them; for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." Contrast this with the words put by the Hindu in the mouth of Brahma: "I am the same to all mankind. They who honestly serve other gods involuntarily worship me. I am he who partakes of all worship, and I am the reward of all worshipers."

Compare these passages; the first a dungeon where crawl the things begot of jealous slime; the other, great as the domed firmament inlaid with suns.

Is it possible that the real God ever said

“And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I, the Lord, have deceived that prophet; and I will stretch out my hand upon him and will destroy him from the midst of my people.”

Compare that passage with one from a Pagan.

“It is better to keep silence for the remainder of your life than to speak falsely.”

Can we believe that a being of infinite mercy gave this command:

“Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate, throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor; consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord, even every man upon his son and upon his brother, that he may bestow a blessing upon you this day.”

Surely, that God was not animated by so great and magnanimous a spirit as was Antoninus, a Roman emperor, who declared that, “he had rather keep a single Roman citizen alive than slay a thousand enemies.”

Compare the laws given to the children of Israel, as it is claimed by the Creator of us all, with the following from Marcus Aurelius:

“I have formed the ideal of a state, in which there is the same law for all, and equal rights, and equal liberty of speech established; an empire where nothing is honored so much as the freedom of the citizen.”

In the Avesta I find this: “I belong to five: to those who think good, to those who speak good, to those who do good, to those who hear, and to those who are pure.”

“Which is the one prayer which in greatness, goodness, and beauty is worth all that is between heaven and earth and between this earth and the stars? And he replied: To renounce all evil thoughts and words and works.”

VII.

IT is claimed by the Christian world that one of the great reasons for giving an inspired book to the Jews was, that through them the world might learn that there is but one God. This piece of information has been supposed to be of infinite value. As a matter of fact, long before Moses was born, the Egyptians believed and taught that there was but one God—that is to say, that above all intelligences there was the one Supreme. They were guilty, too, of the same inconsistencies of modern Christians. They taught the doctrine of the Trinity—God the Father. God the Mother, and God the Son. God was frequently represented as father, mother and babe. They also taught that the soul had a divine origin; that after death it was to be judged according to the deeds done in the body; that those who had done well passed into perpetual joy, and those who had done evil into endless pain. In this they agreed with the most approved divine of the nineteenth century. Women were the equals of men, and Egypt was often governed by queens. In this, her government was vastly better than the one established by God. The laws were administered by courts much like ours. In Egypt there was a system of schools that gave the son of poverty a chance of advancement, and the highest offices were open to the successful scholar. The Egyptian married one wife. The wife was called “the lady of the house.” The women were not secluded. The people were not divided into castes. There was nothing to prevent the rise of able and intelligent Egyptians. But like the Jehovah of the Jews, they made slaves of the captives of war.

The ancient Persians believed in one God; and women helped to found the Parsee religion. Nothing can exceed some of the maxims of Zoroaster. The Hindoos taught that above all, and over all, was one eternal Supreme. They had a code of laws. They understood the philosophy of evidence and of damages. They knew better than to teach the doctrine of an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. They knew that when one man maimed another, it was not to the interest of society to have that man maimed, thus burdening the people with two cripples, but that it was better to make the man who maimed the other work to support him. In India, upon the death of a father, the daughters received twice as much from the estate as the sons.

The Romans built temples to Truth, Faith, Valor, Concord, Modesty, and Charity, in which they offered sacrifices to the highest conceptions of human excellence. Women had rights; they presided in the temple; they officiated in holy offices; they guarded the sacred fires upon which the safety of Rome depended; and when Christ came, the grandest figure in the known world was the Roman mother.

It will not do to say that some rude statue was made by an inspired sculptor, and that the Apollo of Belvedere, Venus de Milo, and the Gladiator were made by unaided men; that the daubs of the early ages were painted by divine assistance, while the Raphaels, the Angelos, and the Rembrandts did what they did without the help of heaven. It will not do to say, that the first hut was built by God, and the last palace by degraded man; that the hoarse songs of the savage tribes were made by the Deity, but that Hamlet and Lear were written by man; that the pipes of Pan were invented in heaven, and all other musical instruments on the earth.

If the Jehovah of the Jews had taken upon himself flesh, and dwelt as a man among the people he endeavored to govern, had he followed his own teachings, he would have been a slaveholder, a buyer of babes, and a beater of women. He would have waged wars of extermination. He would have killed grey-haired and trembling age, and would have sheathed his sword, in prattling, dimpled babes. He would have been a polygamist, and would have butchered his wife for differing with him on the subject of religion.

VIII.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

ONE great objection to the Old Testament is the cruelty said to have been commanded by God. All these cruelties ceased with death. The vengeance of Jehovah stopped at the tomb. He never threatened to punish the dead; and there is not one word, from the first mistake in Genesis to the last curse of Malachi, containing the slightest intimation that God will take his revenge in another world. It was reserved for the New Testament to make known the doctrine of eternal pain. The teacher of universal benevolence rent the veil between time and eternity, and fixed the horrified gaze of man upon the lurid gulf of hell. Within the breast of non-resistance coiled the worm that never dies. Compared with this, the doctrine of slavery, the wars of extermination, the curses, the punishments of the Old Testament were all merciful and just.

There is no time to speak of the conflicting statements in the various books composing the New Testament—no time to give the history of the manuscripts, the errors in translation, the interpolations made by the fathers and by their successors, the priests, and only time to speak of a few objections, including some absurdities and some contradictions.

Where several witnesses testify to the same transaction, no matter how honest they may be, they will disagree upon minor matters, and such testimony is generally considered as evidence that the witnesses have not conspired among themselves. The differences in statement are accounted for from the facts that all do not see alike, and that all have not equally good memories; but when we claim that the witnesses are inspired, we must admit that he who inspired them did know exactly what occurred, and consequently there should be no disagreement, even in the minutest detail. The accounts should not only be substantially, but they should be actually, the same. The differences and contradictions can be accounted for by the weaknesses of human nature, but these weaknesses cannot be predicated of divine wisdom.

And here let me ask: Why should there have been more than one correct account of what really happened? Why were four gospels necessary? It seems to me that one inspired gospel, containing all that happened, was enough. Copies of the one correct one could have been furnished to any extent. According to Doctor Davidson, Irenaeus argues that the gospels were four in number, because

there are four universal winds, four corners of the globe. Others have said, because there are four seasons; and these gentlemen might have added, because a donkey has four legs. For my part, I cannot even conceive of a reason for more than one gospel.

According to one of these gospels, and according to the prevalent Christian belief, the Christian religion rests upon the doctrine of the atonement. If this doctrine is without foundation, the fabric falls; and it is without foundation, for it is repugnant to justice and mercy. The church tells us that the first man committed a crime for which all others are responsible. This absurdity was the father and mother of another – that a man can be rewarded for the good action of another. We are told that God made a law, with the penalty of eternal death. All men, they tell us, have broken this law. The law had to be vindicated. This could be done by damning everybody, but through what is known as the atonement the salvation of a few was made possible. They insist that the law demands the extreme penalty, that justice calls for its victim, that mercy ceases to plead, and that God by allowing the innocent to suffer in the place of the guilty settled satisfactory with the law. To carry out this scheme God was born as a babe, grew in stature, increased in knowledge, and at the age of thirty-three years having lived a life filled with kindness, having practiced every virtue, he was sacrificed as atonement for man. It is claimed that he took our place, bore our sins, our guilt, and in this way satisfied the justice of God.

Under the Mosaic dispensation there was no remission of sin except through the shedding of blood. When a man sinned he must bring to the priest a lamb, a bullock, a goat, or a pair of turtle-doves. The priest would lay his hand upon the animal and the sin of the man would be transferred to the beast. Then the animal would be killed in place of the sinner, and the blood thus shed would be sprinkled upon the altar. In this way Jehovah was satisfied. The greater the crime, the greater the sacrifice. There was a ratio between the value of the animal and the enormity of the sin.

The minutest directions were given as to the killing of these animals. Every priest became a butcher, every synagogue a slaughter-house. Nothing could be more utterly shocking to a refined soul, nothing better calculated to harden the heart, than the continual shedding of innocent blood. This terrible system culminated in the sacrifice of Christ. His blood took the place of all other. It is not necessary to shed any more. The law at last is satisfied, satiated, surfeited.

The idea that God wants blood is at the bottom of the atonement, and rests upon the most fearful savagery; and yet the Mosaic dispensation was better adapted to prevent the commission of sin than the Christian system. Under that dispensation, if you committed a sin, you had to bring a sacrifice – dove, sheep,

or bullock, now, when a sin is committed, the Christian says, "Charge it," "Put it on the slate, If I don't pay it the Savior will." In this way, rascality is sold on a credit, and the credit system of religion breeds extravagance in sin. The Mosaic dispensation was based upon far better business principles. The debt had to be paid, and by the man who owed it. We are told that the sinner is in debt to God, and that the obligation is discharged by the Savior. The best that can be said of such a transaction is that the debt is transferred, not paid. As a matter of fact, the sinner is in debt to the person he has injured. If you injure a man, it is not enough to get the forgiveness of God – you must get the man's forgiveness, you must get your own. If a man puts his hand in the fire and God forgives him, his hand will smart just as badly. You must reap what you sow. No God can give you wheat when you sow tares, and no Devil can give you tares when you sow wheat. We must remember that in nature there are neither rewards nor punishments – there are consequences. The life and death of Christ do not constitute atonement. They are worth the example, the moral force, the heroism of benevolence, and in so far as the life of Christ produces emulation in the direction of goodness, it has been of value to mankind.

To make innocence suffer is the greatest sin, and it may be the only sin. How, then, is it possible to make the consequences of sin an atonement for sin, when the consequences of sin are to be borne by one who has not sinned, and the one who has sinned is to reap the reward of virtue? No honorable man should be willing that another should suffer for him. No good law can accept the sufferings of innocence as atonement for the guilty; and besides, if there was no atonement until the crucifixion of Christ, what became of the countless millions who died before that time? We must remember that the Jews did not kill animals for the Gentiles. Jehovah hated foreigners. There was no way provided for the forgiveness of a heathen. What has become of the millions who have died since, without having heard of the atonement? What becomes of those who hear and do not believe? Can there be a law that demands that the guilty be rewarded. And yet, to reward the guilty is far nearer justice than to punish the innocent. If the doctrine of the atonement is true, there would have been no heaven had no atonement been made.

If Judas had understood the Christian system, if he knew that Christ must be betrayed, and that God was depending on him to betray him, and that without the betrayal no human soul could be saved, what should Judas have done?

Jehovah took special charge of the Jewish people. He did this for the purpose of civilizing them. If he had succeeded in civilizing them, he would have made the damnation of the entire human race a certainty; because if the Jews had been a civilized people when Christ appeared – a people who had not been hardened by the laws of Jehovah – they would not have crucified Christ, and as a

consequence, the world would have been lost. If the Jews had believed in religious freedom, in the rights of thought and speech, if the Christian religion is true, not a human soul ever could have been saved. If, when Christ was on his way to Calvary, some brave soul had rescued him from the pious mob, he would not only have been damned for his pains, but would have rendered impossible the salvation of any human being.

The Christian world has been trying for nearly two thousand years to explain the atonement, and every effort has ended in an admission that it cannot be understood, and a declaration that it must be believed. Has the promise and hope of forgiveness ever prevented the commission of a sin? Can men be made better by being taught that sin gives happiness here; that to live a virtuous life is to bear a cross; that men can repent between the last sin and the last breath; and that repentance washes every stain of the soul away? Is it good to teach that the serpent of regret will not hiss in the ear of memory; that the saved will not even pity the victims of their crimes; and that sins forgiven cease to affect the unhappy wretches sinned against?

Another objection is, that a certain belief is necessary to save the soul. This doctrine, I admit, is taught in the gospel according to John, and in many of the epistles; I deny that it is taught in Matthew, Mark, or Luke. It is, however, asserted by the church that to believe is the only safe way. To this, I reply: Belief is not a voluntary thing. A man believes or disbelieves in spite of himself. They tell us that to believe is the safe way; but I say, the safe way is to be honest. Nothing can be safer than that. No man in the hour of death ever regretted having been honest. No man when the shadows of the last day were gathering about the pillow of death, ever regretted that he had given to his fellow-man his honest thought. No man, in the presence of eternity, ever wished that he had been a hypocrite. No man ever then regretted that he did not throw away his reason. It certainly cannot be necessary to throw away your reason to save your soul, because after that, your soul is not worth saving. The soul has a right to defend itself. My brain is my castle; and when I waive the right to defend it, I become an intellectual serf and slave.

I do not admit that a man by doing me an injury can place me under obligations to do him a service. To render benefits for injuries is to ignore all distinctions between actions. He who treats friends and enemies alike has neither love nor justice. The idea of non-resistance never occurred to a man with power to defend himself. The mother of this doctrine was weakness. To allow a crime to be committed, even against yourself, when you can prevent it, is next to committing the crime yourself. The church has preached the doctrine of non-resistance and under that banner has shed the blood of millions. In the folds of her sacred vestments have gleamed for centuries the daggers of assassination.

With her cunning hands she wove the purple for hypocrisy and placed the crown upon the brow of crime. For more than a thousand years larceny held the scales of justice, hypocrisy wore the mitre and tiara, while beggars scorned the royal sons of toil, and ignorant fear denounced the liberty of thought.

IX. CHRIST'S MISSION.

HE came, they tell us, to make a revelation, and what did he reveal? "Love thy neighbor as thyself"? That was in the Old Testament. "Love God with all thy heart"? That was in the Old Testament. "Return good for evil"? That was said by Buddha, seven hundred years before Christ was born. "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you"? That was the doctrine of Lao-tsze. Did he come to give a rule of action? Zoroaster had done this long before: "Whenever thou art in doubt as to whether an action is good or bad, abstain from it." Did he come to tell us of another world? The immortality of the soul had been taught by the Hindoos, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans hundreds of years before he was born. What argument did he make in favor of immortality? What facts did he furnish? What star of hope did he put above the darkness of this world? Did he come simply to tell us that we should not revenge ourselves upon our enemies? Long before, Socrates had said: "One who is injured ought not to return the injury, for on no account can it be right to do an injustice; and it is not right to return an injury, or to do evil to any man, however much we have suffered from him." And Cicero had said: "Let us not listen to those who think we ought to be angry with our enemies, and who believe this to be great and manly. Nothing is so praiseworthy, nothing so clearly shows a great and noble soul, as clemency and readiness to forgive." Is there anything in the literature of the world more nearly perfect than this thought?

Was it from Christ the world learned the first lesson of forbearance, when centuries and centuries before, Krishna had said, "If a man strike thee, and in striking drop his staff, pick it up and hand it to him again?" Is it possible that the son of God threatened to say to a vast majority of his children, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels," while the Buddhist was great and tender enough to say: "Never will I seek nor receive private individual salvation; never enter into final peace alone; but forever and everywhere will I live and strive for the universal redemption of every creature throughout all worlds. Never will I leave this world of sin and sorrow and struggle until all are delivered. Until then, I will remain and suffer where I am?"

Is there anything in the New Testament as beautiful as this, from a Sufi? — "Better one moment of silent contemplation and inward love than seventy thousand years of outward worship."

Is there anything comparable to this? — “Whoever carelessly treads on a worm that crawls on the earth, that heartless one is darkly alienate from God.”

Is there anything in the New Testament more beautiful than the story of the Sufi?

For seven years a Sufi practiced every virtue, and then he mounted the three steps that lead to the doors of Paradise. He knocked and a voice said: “Who is there?” The Sufi replied: “Thy servant, O God.” But the doors remained closed.

Yet seven other years the Sufi engaged in every good work. He comforted the sorrowing and divided his substance with the poor. Again he mounted the three steps, again knocked at the doors of Paradise, and again the voice asked: “Who is there?” and the Sufi replied: “Thy slave, O God.” — But the doors remained closed.

Yet seven other years the Sufi spent in works of charity, in visiting the imprisoned and the sick. Again he mounted the steps, again knocked at the celestial doors. Again he heard the question: “Who is there?” and he replied: “Thyself, O God.” — The gates wide open flew.

Is it possible that St. Paul was inspired of God, when he said: “Let the women learn in silence, with all subjection.” —

“Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man?”

And is it possible that Epictetus, without the slightest aid from heaven, gave to the world this gem of love:

“What is more delightful than to be so dear to your wife, as to be on that account dearer to yourself?”

Did St. Paul express the sentiments of God when he wrote —

“But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of every woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto the Lord?”

And was the author of this, a poor despised heathen? —

“In whatever house the husband is contented with the wife, and the wife with the husband, in that house will fortune dwell; but upon the house where women are not honored, let a curse be pronounced. Where the wife is honored, there the gods are truly worshiped.”

Is there anything in the New Testament as beautiful as this? —

“Shall I tell thee where nature is most blest and fair? It is where those we love abide. Though that space be small, it is ample above kingdoms; though it be a desert, through it run the rivers of Paradise.”

After reading the curses pronounced in the Old Testament upon Jew and heathen, the descriptions of slaughter, of treachery and of death, the destruction of women and babes; after you shall have read all the chapters of horror in the New Testament, the threatening of fire and flame, then read this, from the greatest of human beings:

“The quality of mercy is not strained:
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
’Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.”

X.

ETERNAL PAIN

UPON passages in the New Testament rests the doctrine of eternal pain. This doctrine subverts every idea of justice. A finite being can neither commit an infinite sin, nor a sin against the Infinite. A being of infinite goodness and wisdom has no right to create any being whose life is not a blessing. Infinite wisdom has no right to create a failure, and surely a man destined to everlasting failure is not a conspicuous success. The doctrine of eternal punishment is the most infamous of all doctrines—born of ignorance, cruelty and fear. Around the angel of immortality, Christianity has coiled this serpent. Upon Love's breast the church has placed the eternal asp. And yet in the same book in which is taught this most frightful of dogmas, we are assured that "the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."

A few days ago upon the wide sea, was found a barque called "The Tiger," Captain Kreuger, in command. The vessel had been one hundred and twenty-six days upon the sea. For days the crew had been without water, without food, and were starving. For nine days not a drop had passed their lips. The crew consisted of the captain, a mate, and eleven men. At the end of one hundred and eighteen days from Liverpool they killed the captain's Newfoundland dog. This lasted them four days. During the next five days they had nothing. For weeks they had had no light and were unable to see the compass at night. On the one hundred and twenty-fifth day Captain Kreuger, a German, took a revolver in his hand, stood up before the men, and placing the weapon at his temple said: "Boys, we can't stand this much longer, and to save you all, I am willing to die." The mate grasped the revolver and begged the captain to wait another day. The next day, upon the horizon of their despair, they saw the smoke of the steamship Nebo. They were rescued.

Suppose that Captain Kreuger was not a Christian, and suppose that he had sent the ball crashing through his brain, and had done so simply to keep the crew from starvation, do you tell me that a God of infinite mercy would forever damn that man?

Do not misunderstand me. I insist that every passage in the Bible upholding crime was written by savage man. I insist that if there is a God, he is not, never was, and never will be in favor of slavery, polygamy, wars of extermination, or religious persecution. Does any Christian believe that if the real God were to write a book now, he would uphold the crimes commanded in the Old

Testament? Has Jehovah improved? Has infinite mercy become more merciful?
Has infinite wisdom intellectually advanced?

XI

WILL any one claim that the passages upholding slavery have liberated mankind? Are we indebted to polygamy for our modern homes? Was religious liberty born of that infamous verse in which the husband is commanded to kill his wife for worshiping an unknown God?

The usual answer to these objections is, that no country has ever been civilized without a Bible. The Jews were the only people to whom Jehovah made his will directly known. Were they better than other nations? They read the Old Testament and one of the effects of such reading was, that they crucified a kind, loving, and perfectly innocent man. Certainly they could not have done worse, without a Bible. In crucifying Christ the Jews followed the teachings of his Father. If Jehovah was in fact God, and if that God took upon himself flesh and came among the Jews, and preached what the Jews understood to be blasphemy; and if the Jews in accordance with the laws given by this same Jehovah to Moses, crucified him, then I say, and I say it with infinite reverence, he reaped what he had sown. He became the victim of his own injustice.

But I insist that these things are not true. I insist that the real God, if there is one, never commanded man to enslave his fellow-man, never told a mother to sell her babe, never established polygamy, never urged one nation to exterminate another, and never told a husband to kill his wife because she suggested the worship of another God.

From the aspersions of the pulpit, from the slanders of the church, I seek to rescue the reputation of the Deity. I insist that the Old Testament would be a better book with all these passages left out; and whatever may be said of the rest of the Bible, the passages to which I have called attention can, with vastly more propriety, be attributed to a devil than to a god.

Take from the New Testament the idea that belief is necessary to salvation; that Christ was offered as atonement for the sins of mankind; that heaven is the reward of faith, and hell the penalty of honest investigation, and that the punishment of the human soul will go on forever; take from it all miracles and foolish stories, and I most cheerfully admit that the good passages are true. If they are true, it makes no difference whether they are inspired or not. Inspiration is only necessary to give authority to that which is repugnant to human reason. Only that which never happened needs to be substantiated by a miracle. The universe is natural.

The church must cease to insist that passages upholding the institutions of savage men were inspired of God. The dogma of atonement must be abandoned. Good deeds must take the place of faith. The savagery of eternal punishment must be renounced. It must be admitted that credulity is not a virtue, and that investigation is not a crime. It must be admitted that miracles are the children of mendacity, and that nothing can be more wonderful than the majestic, unbroken, sublime, and eternal procession of causes and effects. Reason must be the arbiter. Inspired books attested by miracles cannot stand against a demonstrated fact. A religion that does not command the respect of the greatest minds will, in a little while, excite the mockery of all.

A man who does not believe in intellectual liberty is a barbarian. Is it possible that God is intolerant? Could there be any progress, even in heaven, without intellectual liberty? Is the freedom of the future to exist only in perdition? Is it not, after all, barely possible that a man acting like Christ can be saved? Is a man to be eternally rewarded for believing according to evidence, without evidence, or against evidence? Are we to be saved because we are good, or because another was virtuous? Is credulity to be winged and crowned, whilst honest doubt is chained and damned?

If Jehovah, was in fact God, he knew the end from the beginning. He knew that his Bible would be a breast-work behind which all tyranny and hypocrisy would crouch. He knew that his Bible would be the auction-block on which women would stand while their babes were sold from their arms. He knew that this Bible would be quoted by tyrants; that it would be the defense of robbers called kings, and of hypocrites called priests. He knew that he had taught the Jewish people nothing of importance. He knew that he had found them free and left them slaves. He knew that he had never fulfilled a single promise made to them. He knew that while other nations had advanced in art and science his chosen people were savage still. He promised them the world, and gave them a desert. He promised them liberty and he made them slaves. He promised them victory and he gave them defeat. He said they should be kings and he made them serfs. He promised them universal empire and gave them exile. When one finishes the Old Testament he is compelled to say: "Nothing can add to the misery of a nation whose king is Jehovah!"

The Old Testament filled this world with tyranny and injustice, and the New gives us a future filled with pain for nearly all of the sons of men.

The Old Testament describes the hell of the past, and the New the hell of the future.

The Old Testament tells us the frightful things that God has done, the New the frightful things that he will do.

These two books give us the sufferings of the past and the future—the injustice, the agony and the tears of both worlds.

ORTHODOXY.

A LECTURE.

ORTHODOXY.

IT is utterly inconceivable that any man believing in the truth of the Christian religion should publicly deny it, because he who believes in that religion would believe that, by a public denial, he would peril the eternal salvation of his soul. It is conceivable, and without any great effort of the mind, that millions who do not believe in the Christian religion should openly say that they did. In a country where religion is supposed to be in power—where it has rewards for pretence, where it pays a premium upon hypocrisy, where it at least is willing to purchase silence—it is easily conceivable that millions pretend to believe what they do not. And yet I believe it has been charged against myself not only that I was insincere, but that I took the side I am on for the sake of popularity; and the audience tonight goes far toward justifying the accusation.

ORTHODOX RELIGION DYING OUT.

It gives me immense pleasure to say to this audience that orthodox religion is dying out of the civilized world. It is a sick man. It has been attacked with two diseases—softening of the brain and ossification of the heart. It is a religion that no longer satisfies the intelligence of this country; that no longer satisfies the brain; a religion against which the heart of every civilized man and woman protests. It is a religion that gives hope only to a few; that puts a shadow upon the cradle; that wraps the coffin in darkness and fills the future of mankind with flame and fear. It is a religion that I am going to do what little I can while I live to destroy. In its place I want humanity, I want good fellowship, I want intellectual liberty—free lips, the discoveries and inventions of genius, the demonstrations of science—the religion of art, music and poetry—of good houses, good clothes, good wages—that is to say, the religion of this world.

RELIGIOUS DEATHS AND BIRTHS.

We must remember that this is a world of progress, a world of perpetual change—a succession of coffins and cradles. There is perpetual death, and there is perpetual birth. By the grave of the old, forever stand youth and joy; and when an old religion dies, a better one is born. When we find out that an assertion is a falsehood a shining truth takes its place, and we need not fear the destruction of the false. The more false we destroy the more room there will be for the true.

There was a time when the astrologer sought to read in the stars the fate of men and nations. The astrologer has faded from the world, but the astronomer has taken his place. There was a time when the poor alchemist, bent and wrinkled and old, over his crucible endeavored to find some secret by which he could change the baser metals into purest gold. The alchemist has gone; the chemist took his place; and, although he finds nothing to change metals into gold, he finds something that covers the earth with wealth. There was a time when the soothsayer and augur flourished. After them came the parson and the priest; and the parson and the priest must go. The preacher must go, and in his place must come the teacher—the real interpreter of Nature. We are done with the supernatural. We are through with the miraculous and the impossible. There was once the prophet who pretended to read the book of the future. His place has been taken by the philosopher, who reasons from cause to effect—who finds the facts by which we are surrounded and endeavors to reason from these premises and to tell what in all probability will happen. The prophet has gone, the philosopher is here. There was a time when man sought aid from heaven—when he prayed to the deaf sky. There was a time when everything depended on the supernaturalist. That time in Christendom is passing away. We now depend upon the naturalist—not upon the believer in ancient falsehoods, but on the discoverer of facts—on the demonstrator of truths. At last we are beginning to build on a solid foundation, and as we progress, the supernatural dies. The leaders of the intellectual world deny the existence of the supernatural. They take from all superstition its foundation.

THE RELIGION OF RECIPROCITY.

Supernatural religion will fade from this world, and in its place we shall have reason. In the place of the worship of something we know not of, will be the religion of mutual love and assistance—the great religion of reciprocity. Superstition must go. Science will remain. The church dies hard. The brain of the world is not yet developed. There are intellectual diseases as well as physical—there are pestilences and plagues of the mind.

Whenever the new comes the old protests, and fights for its place as long as it has a particle of power. We are now having the same warfare between superstition and science that there was between the stage coach and the locomotive. But the stage coach had to go. It had its day of glory and power, but it is gone. It went West. In a little while it will be driven into the Pacific. So we find that there is the same conflict between the different sects and different schools not only of philosophy but of medicine.

Recollect that everything except the demonstrated truth is liable to die. That is the order of Nature. Words die. Every language has a cemetery. Every now and then a word dies and a tombstone is erected, and across it is written "obsolete." New words are continually being born. There is a cradle in which a word is rocked. A thought is married to a sound, and a child-word is born. And there comes a time when the word gets old, and wrinkled, and expressionless, and is carried mournfully to the grave. So in the schools of medicine. You can remember, so can I, when the old allopathists, the bleeders and blisterers, reigned supreme. If there was anything the matter with a man they let out his blood. Called to the bedside, they took him on the point of a lancet to the edge of eternity, and then practiced all their art to bring him back. One can hardly imagine how perfect a constitution it took a few years ago to stand the assault of a doctor. And long after the old practice was found to be a mistake hundreds and thousands of the ancient physicians clung to it, carried around with them, in one pocket a bottle of jalap, and in the other a rusty lancet, sorry that they could not find some patient with faith enough to allow the experiment to be made again.

So these schools, and these theories, and these religions die hard. What else can they do? Like the paintings of the old masters, they are kept alive because so much money has been invested in them. Think of the amount of money that has been invested in superstition! Think of the schools that have been founded for the more general diffusion of useless knowledge! Think of the colleges wherein men are taught that it is dangerous to think, and that they must never use their brains except in the act of faith! Think of the millions and billions of dollars that have been expended in churches, in temples, and in cathedrals! Think of the thousands and thousands of men who depend for their living upon the ignorance of mankind! Think of those who grow rich on credulity and who fatten on faith! Do you suppose they are going to die without a struggle? What are they to do? From the bottom of my heart I sympathize with the poor clergyman that has had all his common sense educated out of him, and is now to be thrown upon the cold and unbelieving world. His prayers are not answered; he gets no help from on high, and the pews are beginning to criticize the pulpit. What is the man to do? If he suddenly changes he is gone. If he preaches what he really believes he will get notice to quit. And yet, if he and the congregation would come together and be perfectly honest, they would all admit that they believe little and know nothing.

Only a little while ago a couple of ladies were riding together from a revival, late at night, and one said to the other, as they rode along: "I am going to say something that will shock you, and I beg of you never to tell it to anybody else. I am going to tell it to you." "Well, what is it?" Said she: "I do not believe the Bible." The other replied: "Neither do I."

I have often thought how splendid it would be if the ministers could but come together and say: "Now, let us be honest. Let us tell each other, honor bright" — like Dr. Curry, of Chicago, did in the meeting the other day — "just what we believe." They tell a story that in the old time a lot of people, about twenty, were in Texas in a little hotel, and one fellow got up before the fire, put his hands behind him, and said: "Boys, let us all tell our real names." If the ministers and their congregations would only tell their real thoughts they would find that they are nearly as bad as I am, and that they believe as little.

Orthodoxy dies hard, and its defenders tell us that this fact shows that it is of divine origin. Judaism dies hard. It has lived several thousand years longer than Christianity. The religion of Mohammed dies hard.

Buddhism dies hard. Why do all these religions die hard? Because intelligence increases slowly.

Let me whisper in the ear of the Protestant: Catholicism dies hard. What does that prove? It proves that the people are ignorant and that the priests are cunning.

Let me whisper in the ear of the Catholic: Protestantism dies hard. What does that prove? It proves that the people are superstitious and the preachers stupid.

Let me whisper in all your ears: Infidelity is not dying—it is growing—it increases every day. And what does that prove? It proves that the people are learning more and more—that they are advancing—that the mind is getting free, and that the race is being civilized.

The clergy know that I know that they know that they do not know.
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THE BLOWS THAT HAVE SHATTERED THE SHIELD AND SHIVERED THE LANCE OF
SUPERSTITION.

MOHAMMED.

Mohammed wrested from the disciples of the cross the fairest part of Europe. It was known that he was an impostor, and that fact sowed the seeds of distrust and infidelity in the Christian world. Christians made an effort to rescue from the infidels the empty sepulchre of Christ. That commenced in the eleventh century and ended at the close of the thirteenth. Europe was almost depopulated. The fields were left waste, the villages were deserted, and nations were

impoverished, every man who owed a debt was discharged from payment if he put a cross upon his breast and joined the Crusades. No matter what crime he had committed, the doors of the prison were open for him to join the hosts of the cross. They believed that God would give them victory, and they carried in front of the first Crusade a goat and a goose, believing that both those animals were blessed by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. And I may say that those same animals are in the lead to-day in the orthodox world. Until the year 1291 they endeavored to gain possession of that sepulchre, and finally the hosts of Christ were driven back, baffled and beaten,—a poor, miserable, religious rabble. They were driven back, and that fact sowed the seeds of distrust in Christendom. You know that at that time the world believed in trial by battle—that God would take the side of the right—and there had been a trial by battle between the cross and the crescent, and Mohammed had been victorious. Was God at that time governing the world? Was he endeavoring to spread his gospel?

THE DESTRUCTION OF ART.

You know that when Christianity came into power it destroyed every statue it could lay its ignorant hands upon. It defaced and obliterated every painting; it destroyed every beautiful building; it burned the manuscripts, both Greek and Latin; it destroyed all the history, all the poetry, all the philosophy it could find, and reduced to ashes every library that it could reach with its torch. And the result was, that the night of the Middle Ages fell upon the human race. But by accident, by chance, by oversight, a few of the manuscripts escaped the fury of religious zeal; and these manuscripts became the seed, the fruit of which is our civilization of to-day. A few statues had been buried; a few forms of beauty were dug from the earth that had protected them, and now the civilized world is filled with art, the walls are covered with paintings, and the niches filled with statuary. A few manuscripts were found and deciphered. The old languages were learned, and literature was again born. A new day dawned upon mankind. Every effort at mental improvement had been opposed by the church, and yet, the few things saved from the general wreck—a few poems, a few works of the ancient thinkers, a few forms wrought in stone, produced a new civilization destined to overthrow and destroy the fabric of superstition.

THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA.

What was the next blow that this church received? The discovery of America. The Holy Ghost who inspired men to write the Bible—did not know of the existence of this continent, never dreamed of the Western Hemisphere. The Bible left out half the world. The Holy Ghost did not know that the earth is round. He

did not dream that the earth is round. He believed it was flat, although he made it himself. At that time heaven was just beyond the clouds. It was there the gods lived, there the angels were, and it was against that heaven that Jacob's ladder leaned when the angels went up and down. It was to that heaven that Christ ascended after his resurrection. It was up there that the New Jerusalem was, with its streets of gold, and under this earth was perdition. There was where the devils lived; where a pit was dug for all unbelievers, and for men who had brains. I say that for this reason: Just in proportion that you have brains, your chances for eternal joy are lessened, according to this religion. And just in proportion that you lack brains your chances are increased. At last they found that the earth is round. It was circumnavigated by Magellan. In 1519 that brave man set sail. The church told him: "The earth is flat, my friend; don't go, you may fall off the edge." Magellan said: "I have seen the shadow of the earth upon the moon, and I have more confidence in the shadow than I have in the church." The ship went round. The earth was circumnavigated. Science passed its hand above it and beneath it, and where was the old heaven and where was the hell? Vanished forever! And they dwell now only in the religion of superstition. We found there was no place there for Jacob's ladder to lean against; no place there for the gods and angels to live; no place to hold the waters of the deluge; no place to which Christ could have ascended. The foundations of the New Jerusalem crumbled. The towers and domes fell, and in their places infinite space, sown with an infinite number of stars; not with New Jerusalems, but with countless constellations.

COPERNICUS AND KEPLER.

Then man began to grow great, and with that came Astronomy, In 1473 Copernicus was born. In 1543 his great work appeared. In 1616 the system of Copernicus was condemned by the pope, by the infallible Catholic Church, and the church was about as near right upon that subject as upon any other. The system of Copernicus was denounced. And how long do you suppose the church fought that? Let me tell you. It was revoked by Pius VII in the year of grace 1821. For two hundred and seventy-eight years after the death of Copernicus the church insisted that his system was false, and that the old Bible astronomy was true. Astronomy is the first help that we ever received from heaven. Then came Kepler in 1609, and you may almost date the birth of science from the night that Kepler discovered his first law. That was the break of the day. His first law, that the planets do not move in circles but in ellipses; his second law, that they describe equal spaces in equal times; his third law, that the squares of their periodic times are proportional to the cubes of their distances. That man gave us the key to the heavens. He opened the infinite book, and in it read three lines.

I have not time to speak of Galileo, of Leonardo da Vinci, of Bruno, and of hundreds of others who contributed to the intellectual wealth of the world.

SPECIAL PROVIDENCE.

The next thing that gave the church a blow was Statistics. We found by taking statistics that we could tell the average length of human life; that this human life did not depend upon infinite caprice; that it depended upon conditions, circumstances, laws and facts, and that these conditions, circumstances, and facts were during long periods of time substantially the same. And now, the man who depends entirely upon special providence gets his life insured. He has more confidence even in one of these companies than he has in the whole Trinity. We found by statistics that there were just so many crimes on an average committed; just so many crimes of one kind and so many of another; just so many suicides, so many deaths by drowning, so many accidents on an average, so many men marrying women, for instance, older than themselves; so many murders of a particular kind; just the same number of mistakes; and I say to-night, statistics utterly demolish the idea of special providence.

Only the other day a gentleman was telling me of a case of special providence. He knew it. He had been the subject of it. A few years ago he was about to go on a ship when he was detained. He did not go, and the ship was lost with all on board. "Yes!" I said, "Do you think the people who were drowned believed in special providence?" Think of the infinite egotism of such a doctrine. Here is a man that fails to go upon a ship with five hundred passengers and they go down to the bottom of the sea— fathers, mothers, children, and loving husbands and wives waiting upon the chores of expectation. Here is one poor little wretch that did not happen to go! And he thinks that God, the Infinite Being, interfered in his poor little withered behalf and let the rest all go. That is special providence. Why does special providence allow all the crimes? Why are the wife beaters protected, and why are the wives and children left defenseless if the hand of God is over us all? Who protects the insane? Why does Providence permit insanity? But the church cannot give up special providence. If there is no such thing, then no prayers, no worship, no churches, no priests. What would become of National Thanksgiving?

You know we have a custom every year of issuing a proclamation of thanksgiving. We say to God, "Although you have afflicted all the other countries, although you have sent war, and desolation, and famine on everybody else, we have been such good children that you have been kind to us, and we hope you will keep on." It does not make a bit of difference whether we have good times or not— the thanksgiving is always exactly the same. I remember a few years ago a governor of Iowa got out a proclamation of that kind. He went

on to tell how thankful the people were and how prosperous the State had been. There was a young fellow in that State who got out another proclamation, saying that he feared the Lord might be misled by official correspondence; that the governor's proclamation was entirely false; that the State was not prosperous; that the crops had been an almost utter failure; that nearly every farm in the State was mortgaged, and that if the Lord did not believe him, all he asked was that he would send some angel in whom he had confidence, to look the matter over and report.

CHARLES DARWIN.

This century will be called Darwin's century. He was one of the greatest men who ever touched this globe. He has explained more of the phenomena of life than all of the religious teachers. Write the name of Charles Darwin on the one hand and the name of every theologian who ever lived on the other, and from that name has come more light to the world than from all of those. His doctrine of evolution, his doctrine of the survival of the fittest, his doctrine of the origin of species, has removed in every thinking mind the last vestige of orthodox Christianity. He has not only stated, but he has demonstrated, that the inspired writer knew nothing of this world, nothing of the origin of man, nothing of geology, nothing of astronomy, nothing of nature; that the Bible is a book written by ignorance—at the instigation of fear. Think of the men who replied to him. Only a few years ago there was no person too ignorant to successfully answer Charles Darwin; and the more ignorant he was the more cheerfully he undertook the task. He was held up to the ridicule, the scorn and contempt of the Christian world, and yet when he died, England was proud to put his dust with that of her noblest and her grandest. Charles Darwin conquered the intellectual world, and his doctrines are now accepted facts. His light has broken in on some of the clergy, and the greatest man who to-day occupies the pulpit of one of the orthodox churches, Henry Ward Beecher, is a believer in the theories of Charles Darwin—a man of more genius than all the clergy of that entire church put together.

And yet we are told in this little creed that orthodox religion is about to conquer the world! It will be driven to the wilds of Africa. It must go to some savage country; it has lost its hold upon civilization. It is unfortunate to have a religion that cannot be accepted by the intellect of a nation. It is unfortunate to have a religion against which every good and noble heart protests. Let us have a good religion or none. My pity has been excited by seeing these ministers endeavor to warp and twist the passages of Scripture to fit the demonstrations of science. Of course, I have not time to recount all the discoveries and events that have assisted in the destruction of superstition. Every fact is an enemy of the

church. Every fact is a heretic. Every demonstration is an infidel. Everything that ever really happened testifies against the supernatural.

The church teaches that man was created perfect, and that for six thousand years he has degenerated. Darwin demonstrated the falsity of this dogma. He shows that man has for thousands of ages steadily advanced; that the Garden of Eden is an ignorant myth; that the doctrine of original sin has no foundation in fact; that the atonement is an absurdity; that the serpent did not tempt, and that man did not "fall."

Charles Darwin destroyed the foundation of orthodox Christianity. There is nothing left but faith in what we know could not and did not happen. Religion and science are enemies. One is a superstition; the other is a fact. One rests upon the false, the other upon the true. One is the result of fear and faith, the other of investigation and reason.

THE CREEDS.

I have been talking a great deal about the orthodox religion. Often, after having delivered a lecture, I have met some good, religious person who has said to me:

"You do not tell it as we believe it." "Well, but I tell it as you have it written in your creed."

"Oh, we don't mind the creed any more." "Then, why do you not change it?" "Oh, well, we understand it as it is, and if we tried to change it, maybe we would not agree."

Possibly the creeds are in the best condition now. There is a tacit understanding that they do not believe them, that there is a way to get around them, and that they can read between the lines; that if they should meet now to form new creeds they would fail to agree; and that now they can say as they please, except in public. Whenever they do so in public the church, in self-defense, must try them; and I believe in trying every minister that does not preach the doctrine he agrees to. I have not the slightest sympathy with a Presbyterian preacher who endeavors to preach infidelity from a Presbyterian pulpit and receives Presbyterian money. When he changes his views he should step down and out like a man, and say, "I do not believe your doctrine, and I will not preach it. You must hire some other man."

THE LATEST CREED.

But I find that I have correctly interpreted the creeds. There was put into my hands the new Congregational creed. I have read it, and I will call your attention to it to-night, to find whether that church has made any advance; to find whether the sun of science has risen in the heavens in vain; whether they are still the children of intellectual darkness; whether they still consider it necessary for you to believe something that you by no possibility can understand, in order to be a winged angel forever. Now, let us see what their creed is. I will read a little of it.

They commence by saying that they "*Believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible*"

They say, now, that there is the one personal God; that he is the maker of the universe and its ruler. I again ask the old question, Of what did he make it? If matter has not existed through eternity, then this God made it. Of what did he make it? What did he use for the purpose? There was nothing in the universe except this God. What had the God been doing for the eternity he had been living? He had made nothing—called nothing into existence; never had had an idea, because it is impossible to have an idea unless there is something to excite an idea. What had he been doing? Why does not the Congregational Church tell us? How do they know about this Infinite Being? And if he is infinite how can they comprehend him? What good is it to believe in something that you know you do not understand, and that you never can understand?

In the Episcopalian creed God is described as follows:

"There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts or passions"

Think of that!—without body, parts, or passions. I defy any man in the world to write a better description of nothing. You cannot conceive of a finer word-painting of a vacuum than "without body, parts, or passions." And yet this God, without passions, is angry at the wicked every day; this God, without passions, is a jealous God, whose anger burneth to the lowest hell. This God, without passions, loves the whole human race; and this God, without passions, damns a large majority of mankind. This God without body, walked in the Garden of Eden, in the cool of the day. This God, without body, talked with Adam and Eve. This God, without body, or parts met Moses upon Mount Sinai, appeared at the door of the tabernacle, and talked with Moses face to face as a man speaketh to his friend. This description of God is simply an effort of the church to describe a something of which it has no conception.

GOD AS A GOVERNOR.

So, too, I find the following:

"We believe that the Providence of God, by which he executes his eternal purposes in the government of the world, is in and over all events"

Is God the governor of the world? Is this established by the history of nations? What evidence can you find, if you are absolutely honest and not frightened, in the history of the world, that this universe is presided over by an infinitely wise and good God?

How do you account for Russia? How do you account for Siberia? How do you account for the fact that whole races of men toiled beneath the master's lash for ages without recompense and without reward? How do you account for the fact that babes were sold from the arms of mothers—arms that had been reached toward God in supplication? How do you account for it? How do you account for the existence of martyrs? How do you account for the fact that this God allows people to be burned simply for loving him? Is justice always done? Is innocence always acquitted? Do the good succeed? Are the honest fed? Are the charitable clothed? Are the virtuous shielded? How do you account for the fact that the world has been filled with pain, and grief, and tears? How do you account for the fact that people have been swallowed by earthquakes, overwhelmed by volcanoes, and swept from the earth by storms? Is it easy to account for famine, for pestilence and plague if there be above us all a Ruler infinitely good, powerful and wise?

I do not say there is none. I do not know. As I have said before, this is the only planet I was ever on. I live in one of the rural districts of the universe, and do not know about these things as much as the clergy pretend to, but if they know no more about the other world than they do about this, it is not worth mentioning.

How do they answer all this? They say that God "permits" it. What would you say to me if I stood by and saw a ruffian beat out the brains of a child, when I had full and perfect power to prevent it? You would say truthfully that I was as bad as the murderer. Is it possible for this God to prevent it? Then, if he does not he is a fiend; he is no god... But they say he "permits" it. What for? So that we may have freedom of choice. What for? So that God may find, I suppose, who are good and who are bad. Did he not know that when he made us? Did he not know exactly just what he was making? Why should he make those whom he knew would be criminals? If I should make a machine that would walk your streets and take the lives of people you would hang me. And if God made a man whom he knew would commit murder, then God is guilty of that murder. If God

made a man knowing that he would beat his wife, that he would starve his children, that he would strew on either side of his path of life the wrecks of ruined homes, then I say the being who knowingly called that wretch into existence is directly responsible. And yet we are to find the providence of God in the history of nations. What little I have read shows me that when man has been helped, man has done it; when the chains of slavery have been broken, they have been broken by man; when something bad has been done in the government of mankind, it is easy to trace it to man, and to fix the responsibility upon human beings. You need not look to the sky; you need throw neither praise nor blame upon gods; you can find the efficient causes nearer home – right here.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

What is the next thing I find in this creed?

"We believe that man was made in the image of God, that he might know, love, and obey God, and enjoy him forever"

I do not believe that anybody ever did love God, because nobody ever knew anything about him. We love each other. We love something that we know. We love something that our experience tells us is good and great and beautiful. We cannot by any possibility love the unknown. We can love truth, because truth adds to human happiness. We can love justice, because it preserves human joy. We can love charity. We can love every form of goodness that we know, or of which we can conceive, but we cannot love the infinitely unknown. And how can we be made in the image of something that has neither body, parts, nor passions?

THE FALL OF MAN.

The Congregational Church has not outgrown the doctrine of "original sin." We are told that:

"Our first parents, by disobedience, fell under the condemnation of God, and that all men are so alienated from God that there is no salvation from the guilt and power of sin except through God's redeeming power."

Is there an intelligent man or woman now in the world who believes in the Garden of Eden story? If you find any man who believes it, strike his forehead and you will hear an echo. Something is for rent. Does any intelligent man now believe that God made man of dust, and woman of a rib, and put them in a garden, and put a tree in the midst of it? Was there not room outside of the garden to put his tree, if he did not want people to eat his 'apples'?

If I did not want a man to eat my fruit, I would not put him in my orchard.

Does anybody now believe in the story of the serpent? I pity any man or woman who, in this nineteenth century, believes in that childish fable. Why did Adam and Eve disobey? Why, they were tempted. By whom? The devil. Who made the devil? God. What did God make him for? Why did he not tell Adam and Eve about this serpent? Why did he not watch the devil, instead of watching Adam and Eve? Instead of turning them out, why did he not keep him from getting in? Why did he not have his flood first, and drown the devil, before he made a man and woman.

And yet, people who call themselves intelligent— professors in colleges and presidents of venerable institutions—teach children and young men that the Garden of Eden story is an absolute historical fact. I defy any man to think of a more childish thing. This God, waiting around Eden—knowing all the while what would happen—having made them on purpose so that it would happen, then does what? Holds all of us responsible, and we were not there. Here is a representative before the constituency had been born. Before I am bound by a representative I want a chance to vote for or against him; and if I had been there, and known all the circumstances, I should have voted “No!” And yet, I am held responsible.

We are told by the Bible and by the churches that through this fall of man

“Sin and death entered the world”

According to this, just as soon as Adam and Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit, God began to contrive ways by which he could destroy the lives of his children. He invented all the diseases—all the fevers and coughs and colds—all the pains and plagues and pestilences—all the aches and agonies, the malaria and spores; so that when we take a breath of air we admit into our lungs unseen assassins; and, fearing that some might live too long, even under such circumstances, God invented the earthquake and volcano, the cyclone and lightning, animalcules to infest the heart and brain, so small that no eye can detect—no instrument reach. This was all owing to the disobedience of Adam and Eve!

In his infinite goodness, God invented rheumatism and gout and dyspepsia, cancers and neuralgia, and is still inventing new diseases. Not only this, but he decreed the pangs of mothers, and that by the gates of love and life should crouch the dragons of death and pain. Fearing that some might, by accident, live too long, he planted poisonous vines and herbs that looked like food. He caught the serpents he had made and gave them fangs and curious organs, ingeniously

devised to distill and deposit the deadly drop. He changed the nature of the beasts, that they might feed on human flesh. He cursed a world, and tainted every spring and source of joy. He poisoned every breath of air; corrupted even light, that it might bear disease on every ray; tainted every drop of blood in human veins; touched every nerve, that it might bear the double fruit of pain and joy; decreed all accidents and mistakes that maim and hurt and kill, and set the snares of life-long grief, baited with present pleasure,—with a moment's joy. Then and there he foreknew and foreordained all human tears. And yet all this is but the prelude, the introduction, to the infinite revenge of the good God. Increase and multiply all human griefs until the mind has reached imagination's farthest verge, then add eternity to time, and you may faintly tell, but never can conceive, the infinite horrors of this doctrine called "The Fall of Man."

THE ATONEMENT.

We are further told that:

"All men are so alienated from God that there is no alleviation from the guilt and power of sin, except through God's redeeming grace;"

And that:

"We believe that the love of God to sinful man has found its highest expression in the redemptive work of his Son, who became man, uniting his divine nature with our human nature in one person; who was tempted like other men and yet without sin, and by his humiliation, his holy obedience, his sufferings, his death on the cross, and his resurrection, became a perfect redeemer; whose sacrifice of himself for the sins of the world declares the righteousness of God, and is the sole and sufficient ground of forgiveness and of reconciliation with him"

The absurdity of the doctrine known as "The Fall of Man," gave birth to that other absurdity known as "The Atonement." So that now it is insisted that, as we are rightfully charged with the sin of somebody else, we can rightfully be credited with the virtues of another. Let us leave out of our philosophy both these absurdities. Our creed will read a great deal better with both of them out, and will make far better sense.

Now, in consequence of Adam's sin, everybody is alienated from God. How? Why? Oh, we are all depraved, you know; we all do wrong. Well, why? Is that because we are depraved? No. Why do we make so many mistakes? Because there is only one right way, and there is an almost infinite number of wrong ways; and as long as we are not perfect in our intellects we must make mistakes. "There is no darkness but ignorance," and alienation, as they call it, from God, is

simply a lack of intellect. Why were we not given better brains? That may account for the alienation.

The church teaches that every soul that finds its way to the shore of this world is against God – naturally hates God; that the little dimpled child in the cradle is simply a chunk of depravity. Everybody against God! It is a libel upon the human race; it is a libel upon all the men who have worked for wife and child; upon all mothers who have suffered and labored, wept and worked; upon all the men who have died for their country; upon all who have fought for human liberty. Leave out the history of religion and there is little left to prove the depravity of man.

Everybody that comes is against God! Every soul, they think, is like the wrecked Irishman, who drifted to an unknown island, and as he climbed the shore saw a man and said to him, "Have you a Government here?" The man replied "We have." "Well," said he, "I'm forinst it!"

The church teaches us that such is the attitude of every soul in the universe of God. Ought a god to take any credit to himself for making depraved people? A god that cannot make a soul that is not totally depraved, I respectfully suggest, should retire from the business. And if a god has made us, knowing that we are totally depraved, why should we go to the same being to be "born again?"

THE SECOND BIRTH.

The church insists that we must be "born again," and that all who are not the subjects of this second birth are heirs of everlasting fire. Would it not have been much better to have made another Adam and Eve? Would it not have been better to change Noah and his people, so that after that a second birth would not have been necessary? Why not purify the fountain of all human life? Why allow the earth to be peopled with depraved and monstrous beings, each one of whom must be re-made, re-formed, and born again?

And yet, even reformation is not enough. If the man who steals becomes perfectly honest, that is not enough; if the man who hates his fellow-man, changes and loves his fellow-man, that is not enough; he must go through that mysterious thing called the second birth; he must be born again. He must have faith; he must believe something that he does not understand, and experience what they call "conversion." According to the church, nothing so excites the wrath of God – nothing so corrugates the brows of Jehovah with hatred – as a man relying on his own good works. He must admit that he ought to be damned, and that of the two he prefers it, before God will consent to save him.

I met a man the other day, who said to me, "I am a Unitarian Universalist." "What do you mean by that?" I asked. "Well," said he, "this is what I mean: the Unitarian thinks he is too good to be damned, and the Universalist thinks God is too good to damn him, and I believe them both."

Is it possible that the sacrifice of a perfect being was acceptable to God? Will he accept the agony of innocence for the punishment of guilt? Will he release Barabbas and crucify Christ?

INSPIRATION.

What is the next thing in this great creed?

"We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the record of God's revelation of Himself in the work of redemption; that they were written by men under the special guidance of the holy spirit; that they are able to make wise unto salvation; and that they constitute an authoritative standard by which religious teaching and human conduct are to be regulated and judged."

This is the creed of the Congregational Church; that is, the result reached by a high-joint commission appointed to draw up a creed for their churches; and there we have the statement that the Bible was written "by men under the special guidance of the Holy Spirit."

What part of the Bible? All of it? All of it. And yet what is this Old Testament that was written by an infinitely good God? The being who wrote it did not know the shape of the world he had made; knew nothing of human nature. He commands men to love him, as if one could love upon command. The same God upheld the institution of human slavery; and the church says that the Bible that upholds that institution was written by men under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Then I disagree with the Holy Spirit.

This church tells us that men under the guidance of the Holy Spirit upheld the institution of polygamy—I deny it; that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit these men upheld wars of extermination and conquest—I deny it; that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit these men wrote that it was right for a man to destroy the life of his wife if she happened to differ with him on the subject of religion—I deny it. And yet that is the book now upheld in this creed of the Congregational Church.

If the devil had written upon the subject of slavery, which side would he have taken? Let every minister answer. If you knew the devil had written a work on human slavery, in your judgment, would he uphold slavery, or denounce it? Would you regard it as any evidence that he ever wrote it, if it upheld slavery?

And yet, here you have a work upholding slavery, and you say that it was written by an infinitely good God! If the devil upheld polygamy, would you be surprised? If the devil wanted to kill men for differing with him would you be astonished? If the devil told a man to kill his wife, would you be shocked? And yet, you say, that is exactly what God did. If there be a God, then that creed is blasphemy. That creed is a libel upon him who sits on heaven's throne. If there be a God, I ask him to write in the book in which my account is kept, that I denied these lies for him.

I do not believe in a slaveholding God! I do not worship a polygamous Holy Ghost, nor a Son who threatens eternal pain; I will not get upon my knees before any being who commands a husband to slay his wife because she expresses her honest thought. Suppose a book should be found old as the Old Testament in which slavery, polygamy and war are all denounced, would Christians think that it was written by the devil?

Did it ever occur to you that if God wrote the Old Testament, and told the Jews to crucify or kill anybody that disagreed with them on religion, and that this God afterward took upon himself flesh and came to Jerusalem, and taught a different religion, and the Jews killed him—did it ever occur to you that he reaped exactly what he had sown? Did it ever occur to you that he fell a victim to his own tyranny, and was destroyed by his own hand? Of course I do not believe that any God ever was the author of the Bible, or that any God was ever crucified, or that any God was ever killed, or ever will be, but I want to ask you that question.

Take this Old Testament, then, with all its stories of murder and massacre; with all its foolish and cruel fables; with all its infamous doctrines; with its spirit of caste; with its spirit of hatred, and tell me whether it was written by a good God. If you will read the maledictions and curses of that book, you will think that God, like Lear, had divided heaven among his daughters, and then, in the insanity of despair, had launched his curses on the human race.

And yet, I must say—I must admit—that the Old Testament is better than the New. In the Old Testament, when God had a man dead, he let him alone. When he saw him quietly in his grave he was satisfied. The muscles relaxed, and the frown gave place to a smile. But in the New Testament the trouble commences at death. In the New Testament God is to wreak his revenge forever and ever. It was reserved for one who said, "Love your enemies," to tear asunder the veil between time and eternity and fix the horrified gaze of man upon the gulfs of eternal fire. The New Testament is just as much worse than the Old, as hell is worse than sleep; just as much worse, as infinite cruelty is worse than dreamless rest; and yet, the New Testament is claimed to be a gospel of love and peace.

Is it possible that: *"The Scriptures constitute the authoritative standard by which religious teaching and human conduct are to be regulated and judged"*?

Are we to judge of conduct by the Old Testament, by the New, or by both? According to the Old, the slaveholder was a just and generous man; a polygamist was a model of virtue. According to the New, the worst can be forgiven and the best can be lost. How can any book be a standard, when the standard itself must be measured by human reason? Is there a standard of a standard? Must not the reason be convinced? and, if so, is not the reason of each man the final arbiter of that man? If he takes a book as a standard, does he so take it because it is to him reasonable? In what way is the human reason to be ignored? Why should a book take its place, unless the reason has been convinced that the book is the proper standard? If this is so, the book rests upon the reason of those who adopt it. Are they to be saved because they act in accordance with their reason, and are others to be damned because they act by the same standard—their reason? No two are alike. Can we demand of all the same result? Suppose the compasses were not constant to the pole no two compasses exactly alike—would you expect all ships to reach the same harbor?

THE REIGN OF TRUTH AND LOVE.

I also find in this creed the following: *"We believe that Jesus Christ came to establish among men the Kingdom of God, the reign of truth and love, of righteousness and peace"*

Well, that may have been the object of Jesus Christ. I do not deny it. But what was the result? The Christian world has caused more war than all the rest of the world beside. Most of the cunning instruments of death have been devised by Christians. All the wonderful machinery by which the life is blown from men, by which nations are conquered and enslaved—all these machines have been born in Christian brains. And yet he came to bring peace, they say; but the Testament says otherwise: *"I came not to bring peace, but a sword."* And the sword was brought. What are the Christian nations doing to-day in Europe? Is there a solitary Christian nation that will trust any other? How many millions of Christians are in the uniform of forgiveness, armed with the muskets of love?

There was an old Spaniard on the bed of death, who sent for a priest, and the priest told him that he would have to forgive his enemies before he died. He said, *"I have none."* *"What! no enemies?"* *"Not one,"* said the dying man; *"I killed the last one three months ago."*

How many millions of Christians are now armed and equipped to destroy their fellow-Christians? Who are the men in Europe crying against war? Who wishes to have the nations disarmed? Is it the church? No; the men who do not believe in what they call this religion of peace. When there is a war, and when they make a few thousand widows and orphans; when they strew the plain with dead patriots, Christians assemble in their churches and sing "Te Deum Laudamus." Why? Because he has enabled a few of his children to kill some others of his children. This is the religion of peace —the religion that invented the Krupp gun, that will hurl a ball weighing two thousand pounds through twenty-four inches of solid steel. This is the religion of peace that covers the sea with men-of-war, clad in mail, in the name of universal forgiveness. This is the religion that drills and uniforms five millions of men to kill their fellows.

THE WARS IT BROUGHT.

What effect has this religion had upon the nations of the earth? What have the nations been fighting about? What was the Thirty Years' War in Europe for? What was the war in Holland for? Why was it that England persecuted Scotland? Why is it that England persecutes Ireland even to this day? At the bottom of every one of these conflicts you will find a religious question. The religion of Jesus Christ, as preached by his church, causes war, bloodshed, hatred, and all uncharitableness; and why? Because, they say, a certain belief is necessary to salvation. They do not say, if you behave yourself you will get there ; they do not say, if you pay your debts and love your wife and love your children, and are good to your friends, and your neighbors, and your country, you will get there; that will do you no good; you have got to believe a certain thing. No matter how bad you are, you can instantly be forgiven; and no matter how good you are, if you fail to believe that which you cannot understand, the moment you get to the Day of Judgment nothing is left but to damn you, and all the angels will shout "hallelujah."

What do they teach to-day? Nearly every murderer goes to heaven; there is only one step from the gallows to God, only one jerk between the halter and heaven. That is taught by this church.

I believe there ought to be a law to prevent the giving of the slightest religious consolation to any man who has been found guilty of murder. Let a Catholic understand that if he imbrues his hands in his brother's blood, he can have no extreme unction. Let it be understood that he can have no forgiveness through the church; and let the Protestant understand that when he has committed that crime the community will not pray him into heaven. Let him go with his victim. The victim, dying in his sins, goes to hell, and the murderer has the happiness of

seeing him there. If heaven grows dull and monotonous, the murderer can again give life to the nerve of pleasure by watching the agony of his victim.

The truth is, Christianity has not made friends; it has made enemies. It is not, as taught, the religion of peace, it is the religion of war. Why should a Christian hesitate to kill a man that his God is waiting to damn? Why should a Christian not destroy an infidel who is trying to assassinate his soul? Why should a Christian pity an unbeliever—one who has rejected the Bible—when he knows that God will be pitiless forever? And yet we are told, in this creed, that “we believe in the ultimate prevalence of the Kingdom of Christ over all the earth”

What makes you? Do you judge from the manner in which you are getting along now? How many people are being born a year? About fifty millions. How many are you converting a year, really, truthfully? Five or six thousand. I think I have overstated the number. Is orthodox Christianity on the increase? No. There are a hundred times as many unbelievers in orthodox Christianity as there were ten years ago. What are you doing in the missionary world? How long is it since you converted a Chinaman? A fine missionary religion, to send missionaries with their Bibles and tracts to China, but if a Chinaman comes here, mob him, simply to show him the difference between the practical and theoretical workings of the Christian religion. How long since you have had an intelligent convert in India? In my judgment, never; there never has been an intelligent Hindoo converted from the time the first missionary put his foot on that soil; and never, in my judgment, has an intelligent Chinaman been converted since the first missionary touched that shore. Where are they? We hear nothing of them, except in the reports. They get money from poor old ladies, trembling on the edge of the grave, and go and tell them stories, how hungry the average Chinaman is for a copy of the New Testament, and paint the sad condition of a gentleman in the interior of Africa without the works of Dr. McCosh, longing for a copy of *The Princeton Review*,—in my judgment, a pamphlet that would suit a savage. Thus money is scared from the dying, and frightened from the old and feeble.

About how long is it before this kingdom is to be established? No one objects to the establishment of peace and good will. Every good man longs for the time when war shall cease. We are all hoping for a day of universal justice—a day of universal freedom—when man shall control himself, when the passions shall become obedient to the intelligent will. But the coming of that day will not be hastened by preaching the doctrines of total depravity and eternal revenge. That sun will not rise the quicker for preaching salvation by faith. The star that shines above that dawn, the herald of that day, is Science, not superstition,—Reason, not religion.

To show you how little advance has been made, how many intellectual bats and mental owls still haunt the temple, still roost above the altar, I call your attention to the fact that the Congregational Church, according to this creed, still believes in the resurrection of the dead, and in their Confession of Faith, attached to the creed, I find that they also believe in the literal resurrection of the body.

THE RESURRECTION.

Does anybody believe that, who has the courage to think for himself? Here is a man, for instance, that weighs 200 pounds and gets sick and dies weighing 120; how much will he weigh in the morning of the resurrection? Here is a cannibal, who eats another man; and we know that the atoms you eat go into your body and become a part of you. After the cannibal has eaten the missionary, and appropriated his atoms to himself, and then dies, to whom will the atoms belong in the morning of the resurrection? Could the missionary maintain an action of replevin, and if so, what would the cannibal do for a body? It has been demonstrated, in so far as logic can demonstrate anything, that there is no creation and no destruction in Nature. It has been demonstrated, again and again, that the atoms in us have been in millions of other beings; have grown in the forests and in the grass, have blossomed in flowers, and been in the metals. In other words, there are atoms in each one of us that have been in millions of others; and when we die, these atoms return to the earth, again appear in grass and trees, are again eaten by animals, and again devoured by countless vegetable mouths and turned into wood; and yet this church, in the nineteenth century, in a council composed of, and presided over by, professors and presidents of colleges and theologians, solemnly tells us that it believes in the literal resurrection of the body. This is almost enough to make one despair of the future – almost enough to convince a man of the immortality of the absurd. They know better. There is not one so ignorant but knows better.

THE JUDGMENT-DAY.

And what is the next thing?

"We believe in a final judgment, the issues of which are everlasting punishment and everlasting life"

At the final judgment all of us will be there. The thousands, and millions, and billions, and trillions, and quadrillions that have died will be there. The books will be opened, and each case will be called. The sheep and the goats will be divided. The unbelievers will be sent to the left, while the faithful will proudly walk to the right. The saved, without a tear, will bid an eternal farewell to those who loved them here – to those they loved. Nearly all the human race will go

away to everlasting punishment, and the fortunate few to eternal life. This is the consolation of the Congregational Church! This is the hope that dispels the gloom of life!

PIOUS EVASIONS.

When the clergy are caught, they give a different meaning to the words and say the world was not made in seven days. They say “good whiles” — “epochs.”

And in this same Confession of Faith and in this creed they say that the Lord’s Day is holy — every seventh day. Suppose you lived near the North Pole where the day is three months long. Then which day would you keep? If you could get to the North Pole you could prevent Sunday from ever overtaking you. You could walk around the other way faster than the world could revolve. How would you keep Sunday then? Suppose we invent something that can go one thousand miles an hour? We can chase Sunday clear around the globe. Is there anything that can be more perfectly absurd than that a space of time can be holy? You might as well talk about a virtuous vacuum. We are now told that the Bible is not a scientific book, and that after all we cannot depend on what God said four thousand years ago — that his ways are not as our ways — that we must accept without evidence, and believe without understanding.

I heard the other night of an old man. He was not very well educated, and he got into the notion that he must have reading of the Bible and family worship. There was a bad boy in the family, and they were reading the Bible by course. In the fifteenth chapter of Corinthians is this passage: “Behold, brethren, *I* show you a mystery; we shall not all die, but we shall all be changed.” This boy had rubbed out the “c” in “changed.” So when the old man put on his spectacles, and got down his Bible, he read: “Behold, brethren, *I* show you a mystery, we shall not all die, but we shall all be hanged.” The old lady said, “Father, I don’t think it reads that way.” He said, “Who is reading this?” “Yes mother, it says ‘hanged,’ and, more than that, I see the sense of it. Pride is the besetting sin of the human heart, and if there is anything calculated to take the pride out of a man it is hanging.” It is in this way that ministers avoid and explain the discoveries of Science.

People ask me, if I take away the Bible what are we going to do? How can we get along without the revelation that no one understands? What are we going to do if we have no Bible to quarrel about? What are we to do without hell? What are we going to do with our enemies? What are we going to do with the people we love but don’t like?

"No BIBLE, No CIVILIZATION."

They tell me that there never would have been any civilization if it had not been for this Bible. The Jews had a Bible; the Romans had not. Which had the greater and the grander government? Let us be honest. Which of those nations produced the greatest poets, the greatest soldiers, the greatest orators, the greatest statesmen, the greatest sculptors? Rome had no Bible. God cared nothing for the Roman Empire. He let the men come up by chance. His time was taken up with the Jewish people. And yet Rome conquered the world, including the chosen people of God. The people who had the Bible were defeated by the people who had not. How was it possible for Lucretius to get along without the Bible?—how did the great and glorious of that empire? And what shall we say of Greece? No Bible. Compare Athens with Jerusalem. From Athens come the beauty and intellectual grace of the world. Compare the mythology of Greece with the mythology of Judea; one covering the earth with beauty, and the other filling heaven with hatred and injustice. The Hindoos had no Bible; they had been forsaken by the Creator, and yet they became the greatest metaphysicians of the world. Egypt had no Bible. Compare Egypt with Judea. What are we to do without the Bible? What became of the Jews who had a Bible? Their temple was destroyed and their city was taken; and they never found real prosperity until their God deserted them. The Turks attributed all their victories to the Koran. The Koran gave them their victories over the believers in the Bible. The priests of each nation have accounted for the prosperity of that nation by its religion.

The Christians mistake an incident for a cause, and honestly imagine that the Bible is the foundation of modern liberty and law. They forget physical conditions, make no account of commerce, care nothing for inventions and discoveries, and ignorantly give the credit to their inspired book.

The foundations of our civilization were laid centuries before Christianity was known. The intelligence of courage, of self-government, of energy, of industry, that uniting made the civilization of this century, did not come alone from Judea, but from every nation of the ancient world.

MIRACLES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

There are many things in the New Testament that I cannot accept as true.

I cannot believe in the miraculous origin of Jesus Christ. I believe he was the son of Joseph and Mary; that Joseph and Mary had been duly and legally married; that he was the legitimate offspring of that union. Nobody ever believed the contrary until he had been dead at least one hundred and fifty years. Neither Matthew, Mark, nor Luke ever dreamed that he was of divine origin. He

did not say to either Matthew, Mark, or Luke, or to any one in their hearing, that he was the Son of God, or that he was miraculously conceived. He did not say it. It may be asserted that he said it to John, but John did not write the gospel that bears his name. The angel Gabriel, who, they say, brought the news, never wrote a word upon the subject. The mother of Christ never wrote a word upon the subject. His alleged father never wrote a word upon the subject, and Joseph never admitted the story. We are lacking in the matter of witnesses. I would not believe such a story now. I cannot believe that it happened then. I would not believe people I know, much less would I believe people I do not know.

At that time Matthew and Luke believed that Christ was the son of Joseph and Mary. And why? They say he descended from David, and in order to show that he was of the blood of David, they gave the genealogy of Joseph. And if Joseph was not his father, why did they not give the genealogy of Pontius Pilate or of Herod? Could they, by giving the genealogy of Joseph, show that he was of the blood of David if Joseph was in no way related to Christ? And yet that is the position into which the Christian world is driven. In the New Testament we find that in giving the genealogy of Christ it says, "who was the son of Joseph?" and the church has interpolated the words "as was supposed." Why did they give a supposed genealogy? It will not do. And that is a thing that cannot in any way, by any human testimony, be established.

If it is important for us to know that he was the Son of God, I say, then, that it devolves upon God to give us the evidence. Let him write it across the face of the heavens, in every language of mankind. If it is necessary for us to believe it, let it grow on every leaf next year. No man should be damned for not believing, unless the evidence is overwhelming. And he ought not to be made to depend upon say so, or upon "as was supposed." He should have it directly, for himself. A man says that God told him a certain thing, and he tells me, and I have only his word. He may have been deceived. If God has a message for me he ought to tell it to me, and not to somebody that has been dead four or five thousand years, and in another language.

Besides, God may have changed his mind on many things; he has on slavery, and polygamy at least, according to the church; and yet his church now wants to go and destroy polygamy in Utah with the sword. Why do they not send missionaries there with copies of the Old Testament? By reading the lives of Abraham and Isaac, and Lot, and a few other patriarchs who ought to have been in the penitentiary, maybe they can soften their hearts.

MORE MIRACLES.

There is another miracle I do not believe,—the resurrection. I want to speak about it as we would about any ordinary transaction. In the first place, I do not believe that any miracle was ever performed, and if there was, you cannot prove it. Why? Because it is altogether more reasonable to believe that the people were mistaken about it than that it happened. And why? Because, according to human experience, we know that people will not always tell the truth, and we never saw a miracle ourselves, and we must be governed by our experience; and if we go by our experience, we must say that the miracle never happened—that the witnesses were mistaken.

A man comes into Jerusalem, and the first thing he does is to cure the blind. He lets the light of day visit the night of blindness. The eyes are opened, and the world is again pictured upon the brain. Another man is clothed with leprosy. He touches him and the disease falls from him, and he stands pure, and clean, and whole. Another man is deformed, wrinkled, and bent. He touches him, and throws around him again the garment of youth. A man is in his grave, and he says, "Come forth!" And the man walks in life, feeling his heart throb and his blood going joyously through his veins. They say that actually happened. I do not know.

There is one wonderful thing about the dead people that were raised—we do not hear of them any more. What became of them? If there was a man in this city who had been raised from the dead, I would go to see him to-night. I would say, "Where were you when you got the notice to come back? What kind of a country is it? What kind of opening there for a young man? How did you like it? Did you meet there the friends you had lost? Is there a world without death, without pain, without a tear? Is there a land without a grave, and where good-bye is never heard?" Nobody ever paid the slightest attention to the dead who had been raised. They did not even excite interest when they died the second time. Nobody said, "Why, that man is not afraid. He has been there once. He has walked through the valley of the shadow." Not a word. They pass quietly away.

I do not believe these miracles. There is something wrong somewhere about that business. I may suffer eternal punishment for all this, but I cannot, I do not, believe.

There was a man who did all these things, and thereupon they crucified him. Let us be honest. Suppose a man came into this city and should meet a funeral procession, and say, "Who is dead?" and they should reply, "The son of a widow; her only support." Suppose he should say to the procession, "Halt!" and to the undertaker, "Take out that coffin, and unscrew that lid. Young man, I say

unto thee, arise!" and the dead should step from the coffin and in a moment afterward hold his mother in his arms. Suppose this stranger should go to your cemetery and find some woman holding a little child in each hand, while the tears fell upon a new-made grave, and he should say to her, "Who lies buried here?" and she should reply, "My husband;" and he should cry, "I say unto thee, oh grave, give up thy dead!" and the husband should rise, and in a moment after have his lips upon his wife's, and the little children with their arms around his neck; do you think that the people of this city would kill him? Do you think any one would wish to crucify him? Do you not rather believe that every one who had a loved one out in that cemetery would go to him, even upon their knees, and beg him to give back their dead? Do you believe that any man was ever crucified who was the master of death?

Let me tell you to-night if there shall ever appear upon this earth the master, the monarch, of death, all human knees will touch the earth. He will not be crucified. All the living who fear death; all the living who have lost a loved one, will bow to him. And yet we are told that this worker of miracles, this man who could clothe the dead dust in the throbbing flesh of life, was crucified. I do not believe that he worked the miracles, I do not believe that he raised the dead, I do not believe that he claimed to be the Son of God. These things were told long after he was dead; told because the ignorant multitude demanded mystery and wonder; told, because at that time the miraculous was believed of all the illustrious dead. Stories that made Christianity powerful then, weaken it now. He who gains a triumph in a conflict with a devil, will be defeated by science.

There is another thing about these foolish miracles. All could have been imitated. Men could pretend to be blind; confederates could feign sickness, and even death.

It is not very difficult to limp or to hold an arm as though it were paralyzed; or to say that one is afflicted with "an issue of blood." It is easy to say that the son of a widow was raised from the dead, and if you fail to give the name of the son, or his mother, or the time and place where the wonder occurred, it is quite difficult to show that it did not happen.

No one can be called upon to disprove anything that has not apparently been established. I say apparently, because there can be no real evidence in support of a miracle.

How could we prove, for instance, the miracle of the loaves and fishes? There were plenty of other loaves and other fishes in the world? Each one of the five thousand could have had a loaf and a fish with him. We would have to show that there was no other possible way for the people to get the bread and fish

except by miracle, and then we are only half through. We must then show that they did, in fact, get enough to feed five thousand people, and that more was left than was had in the beginning.

Of course this is simply impossible. And let me ask, why was not the miracle substantiated by some of the multitude?

Would it not have been a greater wonder if Christ had *created* instead of multiplied the loaves and fishes?

How can we now prove that a certain person more than eighteen hundred years ago was possessed by seven devils?

How was it ever possible to prove a thing like that?

How can it be established that some evil spirits could talk while others were dumb, and that the dumb ones were the hardest to control?

If Christ wished to convince his fellow-men by miracles, why did he not do something that could not by any means have been a counterfeit?

Instead of healing a withered arm, why did he not find some man whose arm had been cut off, and make another grow?

If he wanted to raise the dead, why did he not raise some man of importance, some one known to all?

Why did he do his miracles in the obscurity of the village, in the darkness of the hovel?

Why call back to life people so insignificant that the public did not know of their death?

Suppose that in May, 1865, a man had pretended to raise some person by the name of Smith from the dead, and suppose a religion had been founded on that miracle, would it not be natural for people, hundreds of years after the pretended miracle, to ask why the founder of that religion did not raise from the dead Abraham Lincoln, instead of the unknown and obscure Mr. Smith?

How could any man now, in any court, by any known rule of evidence, substantiate one of the miracles of Christ?

Must we believe anything that cannot in any way be substantiated?

If miracles were necessary to convince men eighteen centuries ago, are they not necessary now?

After all, how many men did Christ convince with his miracles? How many walked beneath the standard of the master of Nature?

How did it happen that so many miracles convinced so few? I will tell you. The miracles were never performed. No other explanation is possible.

It is infinitely absurd to say that a man who cured the sick, the halt and blind, raised the dead, cast out devils, controlled the winds and waves, created food and held obedient to his will the forces of the world, was put to death by men who knew his superhuman power and who had seen his wondrous works. If the crucifixion was public, the miracles were private. If the miracles had been public, the crucifixion could not have been. Do away with the miracles, and the superhuman character of Christ is destroyed. He becomes what he really was—a man. Do away with the wonders, and the teachings of Christ cease to be authoritative. They are then worth the reason, the truth that is in them, and nothing more. Do away with the miracles, and then we can measure the utterances of Christ with the standard of our reason. We are no longer intellectual serfs, believing what is unreasonable in obedience to the command of a supposed god. We no longer take counsel of our fears, of our cowardice, but boldly defend what our reason maintains. Christ takes his appropriate place with the other teachers of mankind. His life becomes reasonable and admirable. We have a man who hated oppression; who despised and denounced superstition and hypocrisy; who attacked the heartless church of his time; who excited the hatred of bigots and priests, and who rather than be false to his conception of truth, met and bravely suffered even death.

THE RESURRECTION.

The miracle of the resurrection I do not and cannot believe. If it was the fact, if the dead Christ rose from the grave, why did he not appear to his enemies? Why did he not visit Pontius Pilate? Why did he not call upon Caiaphas, the high priest? upon Herod? Why did he not again enter the temple and end the old dispute with demonstration? Why did he not confront the Roman soldiers who had taken money to falsely swear that his body had been stolen by his friends? Why did he not make another triumphal entry into Jerusalem? Why did he not say to the multitude: "Here are the wounds in my feet, and in my hands, and in my side. I am the one you endeavored to kill, but Death is my slave"? Simply because the resurrection is a myth. It makes no difference with his teachings. They are just as good whether he wrought miracles or not. Twice two are four; that needs no miracle. Twice two are five—a miracle can not help that. Christ's

teachings are worth their effect upon the human race. It makes no difference about miracle or wonder. In that day every one believed in the impossible. Nobody had any standing as teacher, philosopher, governor, king, general, about whom there was not supposed to be something miraculous. The earth was covered with the sons and daughters of gods and goddesses.

In Greece, in Rome, in Egypt, in India, every great man was supposed to have had either a god for his father, or a goddess for his mother. They accounted for genius by divine origin. Earth and heaven were at that time near together. It was but a step for the gods from the blue arch to the green earth. Every lake and valley and mountain top was made rich with legends of the loves of gods. How could the early Christians have made converts to a man, among a people who believed so thoroughly in gods—in gods that had lived upon the earth; among a people who had erected temples to the sons and daughters of gods? Such people could not have been induced to worship a man—a man born among barbarous people, citizen of a nation weak and poor and paying tribute to the Roman power. The early Christians therefore preached the gospel of a god.

THE ASCENSION.

I cannot believe in the miracle of the ascension, in the bodily ascension of Jesus Christ. Where was he going? In the light shed upon this question by the telescope, I again ask, where was he going? The New Jerusalem is not above us. The abode of the gods is not there. Where was he going? Which way did he go? Of course that depends upon the time of day he left. If he left in the evening, he went exactly the opposite way from that he would have gone had he ascended in the morning. What did he do with his body? How high did he go? In what way did he overcome the intense cold? The nearest station is the moon, two hundred and forty thousand miles away. Again I ask, where did he go? He must have had a natural body, for it was the same body that died. His body must have been material, otherwise he would not as he rose have circled with the earth, and he would have passed from the sight of his disciples at the rate of more than a thousand miles per hour.

It may be said that his body was “spiritual.” Then what became of the body that died? Just before his ascension we are told that he partook of broiled fish with his disciples. Was the fish “spiritual?”

Who saw this miracle?

They say the disciples saw it. Let us see what they say. Matthew did not think it was worth mentioning. He does not speak of it. On the contrary, he says that the last words of Christ were: “Lo, I am, with you always, even unto the end of

the world." Is it possible that Matthew saw this, the most miraculous of miracles, and yet forgot to put it in his life of Christ? Think of the little miracles recorded by this saint, and then determine whether it is probable that he witnessed the ascension of Jesus Christ.

Mark says: "So, then, after the Lord had spoken unto them he was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God." This is all he says about the most wonderful vision that ever astonished human eyes, a miracle great enough to have stuffed credulity to bursting; and yet all we have is this one, poor, meager verse. We know now that most of the last chapter of Mark is an interpolation, and as a matter of fact, the author of Mark's gospel said nothing about the ascension one way or the other.

Luke says: "And it came to pass while he blessed them he was parted from them and was carried up into Heaven."

John does not mention it. He gives as Christ's last words this address to Peter: "Follow thou Me." Of course, he did not say that as he ascended. It seems to have made very little impression upon him; he writes the account as though tired of the story. He concludes with an impatient wave of the hand.

In the Acts we have another account. A conversation is given not spoken of in any of the others, and we find there two men clad in white apparel, who said: "Ye men of Galilee why stand ye here gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus that was taken up into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go up into heaven."

Matthew did not see the men in white apparel, did not see the ascension. Mark forgot the entire transaction, and Luke did not think the men in white apparel worth mentioning. John had not confidence enough in the story to repeat it. And yet, upon such evidence, we are bound to believe in the bodily ascension, or suffer eternal pain.

And here let me ask, why was not the ascension in public?

CASTING OUT DEVILS.

Most of the miracles said to have been wrought by Christ were recorded to show his power over evil spirits. On many occasions, he is said to have "cast out devils" – devils who could speak, and devils who were dumb.

For many years belief in the existence of evil spirits has been fading from the mind, and as this belief grew thin, ministers endeavored to give new meanings to the ancient words. They are inclined now to put "disease" in the place of

“devils,” and most of them say, that the poor wretches supposed to have been the homes of fiends, were simply suffering from epileptic fits! We must remember that Christ and these devils often conversed together. Is it possible that fits can talk? These devils often admitted that Christ was God. Can epilepsy certify to divinity? On one occasion the fits told their name, and made a contract to leave the body of a man provided they would be permitted to take possession of a herd of swine. Is it possible that fits carried Christ himself to the pinnacle of a temple? Did fits pretend to be the owner of the whole earth? Is Christ to be praised for resisting such a temptation? Is it conceivable that fits wanted Christ to fall down and worship them?

The church must not abandon its belief in devils. Orthodoxy cannot afford to put out the fires of hell. Throw away a belief in the devil, and most of the miracles of the New Testament become impossible, even if we admit the supernatural. If there is no devil, who was the original tempter in the garden of Eden? If there is no hell, from what are we saved; to what purpose is the atonement? Upon the obverse of the Christian shield is God, upon the reverse, the devil. No devil, no hell. No hell, no atonement. No atonement, no preaching, no gospel.

NECESSITY OF BELIEF.

Does belief depend upon evidence? I think it does somewhat in some cases. How is it when a jury is sworn to try a case, hearing all the evidence, hearing both sides, hearing the charge of the judge, hearing the law, are upon their oaths equally divided, six for the plaintiff and six for the defendant? Evidence does not have the same effect upon all people. Why? Our brains are not alike. They are not the same shape. We have not the same intelligence, or the same experience, the same sense. And yet I am held accountable for my belief. I must believe in the Trinity—three times one is one, once one is three, and my soul is to be eternally damned for failing to guess an arithmetical conundrum. That is the poison part of Christianity—that salvation depends upon belief. That is the accursed part, and until that dogma is discarded Christianity will be nothing but superstition.

No man can control his belief. If I hear certain evidence I will believe a certain thing. If I fail to hear it I may never believe it. If it is adapted to my mind I may accept it; if it is not, I reject it. And what am I to go by? My brain. That is the only light I have from Nature, and if there be a God it is the only torch that this God has given me to find my way through the darkness and night called life. I do not depend upon hearsay for that. I do not have to take the word of any other man nor get upon my knees before a book. Here in the temple of the mind I consult the God, that is to say my reason, and the oracle speaks to me and I obey the

oracle. What should I obey? Another man's oracle? Shall I take another man's word—not what he thinks, but what he says some God has said to him?

I would not know a god if I should see one. I have said before, and I say again, the brain thinks in spite of me, and I am not responsible for my thoughts. I cannot control the beating of my heart. I cannot stop the blood that flows through the rivers of my veins. And yet I am held responsible for my belief. Then why does not God give me the evidence? They say he has. In what? In an inspired book. But I do not understand it as they do. Must I be false to my understanding? They say: "When you come to die you will be sorry if you do not." Will I be sorry when I come to die that I did not live a hypocrite? Will I be sorry that I did not say I was a Christian when I was not? Will the fact that I was honest put a thorn in the pillow of death? Cannot God forgive me for being honest? They say that when he was in Jerusalem he forgave his murderers, but now he will not forgive an honest man for differing from him on the subject of the Trinity.

They say that God says to me, "Forgive your enemies." I say, "I do;" but he says, "I will damn mine." God should be consistent. If he wants me to forgive my enemies he should forgive his. I am asked to forgive enemies who can hurt me. God is only asked to forgive enemies who cannot hurt him. He certainly ought to be as generous as he asks us to be. And I want no God to forgive me unless I am willing to forgive others, and unless I do forgive others. All I ask, if that be true, is that this God should act according to his own doctrine. If I am to forgive my enemies, I ask him to forgive his. I do not believe in the religion of faith, but of kindness, of good deeds. The idea that man is responsible for his belief is at the bottom of religious intolerance and persecution.

How inconsistent these Christians are! In St. Louis the other day I read an interview with a Christian minister—one who is now holding a revival. They call him the boy preacher—a name that he has borne for fifty or sixty years. The question was whether in these revivals, when they were trying to rescue souls from eternal torture, they would allow colored people to occupy seats with white people; and that revivalist, preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, said he would not allow the colored people to sit with white people; they must go to the back of the church. These same Christians tell us that in heaven there will be no distinction. That Christ cares nothing for the color of the skin. That in Paradise white and black will sit together, swap harps, and cry hallelujah in chorus; yet this minister, believing as he says he does, that all men who fail to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will eternally perish, was not willing that a colored man should sit by a white man and hear the gospel of everlasting peace.

According to this revivalist, the ship of the world is going down; Christ is the only life-boat; and yet he is not willing that a colored man, with a soul to save, shall sit by the side of a white brother, and be rescued from eternal death. He admits that the white brother is totally depraved; that if the white brother had justice done him he would be damned; that it is only through the wonderful mercy of God that the white man is not in hell; and yet such a being, totally depraved, is too good to sit by a colored man! Total depravity becomes arrogant; total depravity draws the color line in religion, and an ambassador of Christ says to the black man, "Stand away; let your white brother hear first about the love of God."

I believe in the religion of humanity. It is far better to love our fellow-men than to love God. We can help them. We cannot help him. We had better do what we can than to be always pretending to do what we cannot.

Virtue is of no color; kindness, justice and love, of no complexion.

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

Now I come to the last part of this creed—the doctrine of eternal punishment. I have concluded that I will never deliver a lecture in which I will not attack the doctrine of eternal pain. That part of the Congregational creed would disgrace the lowest savage that crouches and crawls in the jungles of Africa. The man who now, in the nineteenth century, preaches the doctrine of eternal punishment, the doctrine of an eternal hell, has lived in vain. Think of that doctrine! The eternity of punishment! I find in this same creed—in this latest utterance of Congregationalism—that Christ is finally going to triumph in this world and establish his kingdom. This creed declares that "we believe in the ultimate prevalence of the kingdom of God over all the earth." If their doctrine is true he will never triumph in the other world. The Congregational Church does not believe in the ultimate prevalence of the kingdom of Christ in the world to come. There he is to meet with eternal failure. He will have billions in hell forever.

In this world we never will be perfectly civilized as long as a gallows casts its shadow upon the earth. As long as there is a penitentiary, within the walls of which a human being is immured, we are not a perfectly civilized people. We shall never be perfectly civilized until we do away with crime. And yet, according to this Christian religion, God is to have an eternal penitentiary; he is to be an everlasting jailer, an everlasting turnkey, a warden of an infinite dungeon, and he is going to keep prisoners there forever, not for the purpose of reforming them—because they are never going to get any better, only worse—but for the purpose of purposeless punishment. And for what? For something they failed to believe in this world. Born in ignorance, supported by poverty,

caught in the snares of temptation, deformed by toil, stupefied by want—and yet held responsible through the countless ages of eternity! No man can think of a greater horror; no man can dream of a greater absurdity. For the growth of that doctrine ignorance was soil and fear was rain. It came from the fanged mouths of serpents, and yet it is called “glad tidings of great joy.”

SOME WHO ARE DAMNED.

We are told “God so loved the world” that he is going to damn almost everybody. If this orthodox religion be true, some of the greatest, and grandest, and best who ever lived are suffering God’s torments to-night. It does not appear to make much difference with the members of the church. They go right on enjoying themselves about as well as ever. If this doctrine is true, Benjamin Franklin, one of the wisest and best of men, who did so much to give us here a free government, is suffering the tyranny of God to-night, although he endeavored to establish freedom among men. If the churches were honest, their preachers would tell their hearers: “Benjamin Franklin is in hell, and we warn all the youth not to imitate Benjamin Franklin. Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, with its self-evident truths, has been damned these many years.” That is what all the ministers ought to have the courage to say. Talk as you believe. Stand by your creed, or change it. I want to impress it upon your minds, because the thing I wish to do in this world is to put out the fires of hell. I will keep on as long as there is one little red coal left in the bottomless pit. As long as the ashes are warm I shall denounce this infamous doctrine.

I want you to know that according to this creed the men who founded this great and splendid Government are in hell to-night. Most of the men who fought in the Revolutionary war, and wrested from the clutch of Great Britain this continent, have been rewarded by the eternal wrath of God. Thousands of the old Revolutionary soldiers are in torment tonight. Let the preachers have the courage to say so. The men who fought in 1812, and gave to the United States the freedom of the seas, have nearly all been damned. Thousands of heroes who served our country in the Civil war, hundreds who starved in prisons, are now in the dungeons of God, compared with which, Andersonville was Paradise. The greatest of heroes are there; the greatest of poets, the greatest scientists, the men who have made the world beautiful—they are all among the damned if this creed is true.

Humboldt, who shed light, and who added to the intellectual wealth of mankind; Goethe, and Schiller, and Lessing, who almost created the German language—all gone—all suffering the wrath of God tonight, and every time an angel thinks of one of those men he gives his harp an extra twang. Laplace, who read the heavens like an open book—he is there. Robert Burns, the poet of

human love—he is there. He wrote the “Prayer of Holy Willie.” He fastened on the cross the Presbyterian creed, and there it is, a lingering crucifixion. Robert Burns increased the tenderness of the human heart. Dickens put a shield of pity before the flesh of childhood —God is getting even with him. Our own Ralph Waldo Emerson, although he had a thousand opportunities to hear Methodist clergymen, scorned the means of grace, lived to his highest ideal, gave to his fellow-men his best and truest thought, and yet his spirit is the sport and prey of fiends to-night.

Longfellow, who has refined thousands of homes, did not believe in the miraculous origin of the Savior, doubted the report of Gabriel, loved his fellow-men, did what he could to free the slaves, to increase the happiness of man, yet God was waiting for his soul—waiting to cast him out and down forever. Thomas Paine, author of the “Rights of Man;” offering his life in both hemispheres for the freedom of the human race; one of the founders of this Republic, is now among the damned; and yet it seems to me that if he could only get God’s attention long enough to point him to the American flag he would let him out. Auguste Comte, author of the “Positive Philosophy,” who loved his fellow-men to that degree that he made of humanity a god, who wrote his great work in poverty, with his face covered with tears—they are getting their revenge on him now.

Voltaire, who abolished torture in France; who did more for human liberty than any other man, living or dead; who was the assassin of superstition, and whose dagger still rusts in the heart of Catholicism—he is with the rest. All the priests who have been translated have had their happiness increased by looking at Voltaire.

Giordano Bruno, the first star of the morning after the long night; Benedict Spinoza, the pantheist, the metaphysician, the pure and generous man; Diderot, the encyclopedist, who endeavored to get all knowledge in a small compass, so that he could put the peasant on an equality intellectually with the prince; Diderot, who wished to sow all over the world the seed of knowledge, and loved to labor for mankind, while the priests wanted to burn; who did all he could to put out the fires—he was lost, long, long ago. His cry for water has become so common that his voice is now recognized through all the realms of heaven, and the angels laughing, say to one another, “That is Diderot.”

David Hume, the Scotch philosopher, is there, with his inquiry about the “Human Understanding” and his argument against miracles. Beethoven, master of music, and Wagner, the Shakespeare of harmony, who made the air of this world rich forever, they are there; and to-night they have better music in hell than in heaven!

Shelley, whose soul, like his own "Skylark," was a winged joy, has been damned for many, many years; and Shakespeare, the greatest of the human race, who did more to elevate mankind than all the priests who ever lived and died, he is there; but founders of inquisitions, builders of dungeons, makers of chains, inventors of instruments of torture, tearers, and burners, and branders of human flesh, stealers of babes, and sellers of husbands and wives and children, and they who kept the horizon lurid with the fagot's flame for a thousand years—are in heaven to-night. I wish heaven joy!

That is the doctrine with which we are polluting the souls of children. That is the doctrine that puts a fiend by the dying bed and a prophecy of hell over every cradle. That is "glad tidings of great joy."

Only a little while ago, when the great flood came upon the Ohio, sent by him who is ruling the world and paying particular attention to the affairs of nations, just in the gray of the morning they saw a house floating down and on its top a human being. A few men went out to the rescue. They found there a woman, a mother, and they wished to save her life. She said: "No, I am going to stay where I am. In this house I have three dead babes; I will not desert them." Think of a love so limitless—stronger and deeper than despair and death! And yet, the Christian religion says, that if that woman, that mother, did not happen to believe in their creed God would send her soul to eternal fire! If there is another world, and if in heaven they wear hats, when such a woman climbs the opposite bank of the Jordan, Christ should lift his to her.

The doctrine of eternal pain is my trouble with this Christian religion. I reject it on account of its infinite heartlessness. I cannot tell them too often, that during our last war Christians, who knew that if they were shot they would go right to heaven, went and hired wicked men to take their places, perfectly willing that these men should go to hell provided they could stay at home. You see they are not honest in it, or they do not believe it, or as the people say, "they don't sense it." They have not imagination enough to conceive what it is they believe, and what a terrific falsehood they assert. And I beg of every one who hears me to-night, I beg, I implore, I beseech you, never to give another dollar to build a church in which that lie is preached. Never give another cent to send a missionary with his mouth stuffed with that falsehood to a foreign land. Why, they say, the heathen will go to heaven, any way, if you let them alone. What is the use of sending them to hell by enlightening them? Let them alone. The idea of going and telling a man a thing that if he does not believe, he will be damned, when the chances are ten to one that he will not believe it, is monstrous. Do not tell him here, and as quick as he gets to the other world and finds it is necessary to believe, he can say "Yes." Give him a chance.

ANOTHER OBJECTION.

My objection to orthodox religion is that it destroys human love, and tells us that the love of this world is not necessary to make a heaven in the next.

No matter about your wife, your children, your brother, your sister — no matter about all the affections of the human heart — when you get there, you will be with the angels. I do not know whether I would like the angels. I do not know whether the angels would like me. I would rather stand by the ones who have loved me and whom I know; and I can conceive of no heaven without the loved of this earth. That is the trouble with this Christian religion. Leave your father, leave your mother, leave your wife, leave your children, leave everything and follow Jesus Christ. I will not. I will stay with my people. I will not sacrifice on the altar of a selfish fear all the grandest and noblest promptings of my heart.

Do away with human love and what are we? What would we be in another world, and what would we be here? Can any one conceive of music without human love? Of art, or joy? Human love builds every home. Human love is the author of all beauty. Love paints every picture, and chisels every statue. Love builds every fireside. What could heaven be without human love? And yet that is what we are promised — a heaven with your wife lost, your mother lost, some of your children gone. And you expect to be made happy by falling in with some angel! Such a religion is infamous. Christianity holds human love for naught; and yet Love is the only bow on Life's dark cloud. It is the morning and the evening star. It shines upon the babe, and sheds its radiance on the quiet tomb. It is the mother of art, inspirer of poet, patriot and philosopher. It is the air and light of every heart — builder of every home, kindler of every fire on every hearth. It was the first to dream of immortality. It fills the world with melody — for music is the voice of love. Love is the magician, the enchanter that changes worthless things to joy, and makes right royal kings and queens of common clay. It is the perfume of that wondrous flower, the heart, and without that sacred passion, that divine swoon, we are less than beasts; but with it, earth is heaven, and we are gods.

And how are you to get to this heaven? On the efforts of another. You are to be a perpetual heavenly pauper, and you will have to admit through all eternity that you never would have been there if you had not been frightened. "I am here," you will say, "I have these wings, I have this musical instrument, because I was scared. I am here. The ones who loved me are among the damned; the ones I loved are also there — but I am here, that is enough."

What a glorious world heaven must be! No reformation in that world—not the slightest. If you die in Arkansas that is the end of you! Think of telling a boy in the next world, who lived and died in Delaware, that he had been fairly treated! Can anything be more infamous?

All on an equality—the rich and the poor, those with parents loving them, those with every opportunity for education, on an equality with the poor, the abject and the ignorant—and this little day called life, this moment with a hope, a shadow and a tear, this little space between your mother's arms and the grave, balances eternity.

God can do nothing for you when you get there. A Methodist preacher can do more for the soul here than its creator can there. The soul goes to heaven, where there is nothing but good society; no bad examples; and they are all there, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and yet they can do nothing for that poor unfortunate except to damn him. Is there any sense in that?

Why should this be a period of probation? It says in the Bible, I believe, "Now is the accepted time." When does that mean? That means whenever the passage is pronounced. "Now is the accepted time." It will be the same to-morrow, will it not? And just as appropriate then as to-day, and if appropriate at any time, appropriate through all eternity.

What I say is this: There is no world—there can be no world—in which every human being will not have the eternal opportunity of doing right.

That is my objection to this Christian religion; and if the love of earth is not the love of heaven, if those we love here are to be separated from us there, then I want eternal sleep. Give me a good cool grave rather than the furnace of Jehovah's wrath. I pray the angel of the resurrection to let me sleep Gabriel, do not blow! Let me alone! If, when the grave bursts, I am not to meet the faces that have been my sunshine in this life, let me sleep. Rather than that this doctrine of endless punishment should be true, I would gladly see the fabric of our civilization crumbling fall to unmeaning chaos and to formless dust, where oblivion broods and even memory forgets. I would rather that the blind Samson of some imprisoned force, released by chance, should so wreck and strand the mighty world that man in stress and strain of want and fear should shudderingly crawl back to savage and barbaric night. I would rather that every planet should in its orbit wheel a barren star!

WHAT I BELIEVE.

I think it is better to love your children than to love God, a thousand times better, because you can help them, and I am inclined to think that God can get along without you. Certainly we cannot help a being without body, parts, or passions!

I believe in the religion of the family. I believe that the roof-tree is sacred, from the smallest fiber that feels the soft cool clasp of earth, to the topmost flower that spreads its bosom to the sun, and like a spendthrift gives its perfume to the air. The home where virtue dwells with love is like a lily with a heart of fire—the fairest flower in the entire world. And I tell you God cannot afford to damn a man in the next world who has made a happy family in this. God cannot afford to cast over the battlements of heaven the man who has a happy home upon this earth. God cannot afford to be unpitiful to a human heart capable of pity. God cannot clothe with fire the man who has clothed the naked here; and God cannot send to eternal pain a man who has done something toward improving the condition of his fellow-man. If he can, I had rather go to hell than to heaven and keep the company of such a god.

IMMORTALITY.

They tell me that the next terrible thing I do is to take away the hope of immortality! I do not, I would not, I could not. Immortality was first dreamed of by human love; and yet the church is going to take human love out of immortality. We love, therefore we wish to live. A loved one dies and we wish to meet again; and from the affection of the human heart grew the great oak of the hope of immortality. Around that oak has climbed the poisonous vines of superstition. Theologians, pretenders, soothsayers, parsons, priests, popes, bishops, have taken advantage of that. They have stood by graves and promised heaven. They have stood by graves and prophesied a future filled with pain. They have erected their toll-gates on the highway of life and have collected money from fear.

Neither the Bible nor the church gave us the idea of immortality. The Old Testament tells us how we lost immortality, and it does not say a word about another world, from the first mistake in Genesis to the last curse in Malachi. There is not in the Old Testament a burial service.

No man in the Old Testament stands by the dead and says, “We shall meet again.” From the top of Sinai came no hope of another world.

And when we get to the New Testament, what do we find? "They that are accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection of the dead." As though some would be counted unworthy to obtain the resurrection of the dead. And in another place. "Seek for honor, glory, immortality." If you have it, why seek it? And in another place, "God, who alone hath immortality." Yet they tell us that we get our idea of immortality from the Bible. I deny it.

I would not destroy the faintest ray of human hope, but I deny that we got our idea of immortality from the Bible. It existed long before Moses. We find it symbolized through all Egypt, through all India. Wherever man has lived he has made another world in which to meet the lost of this.

The history of this belief we find in tombs and temples wrought and carved by those who wept and hoped. Above their dead they laid the symbols of another life.

We do not know. We do not prophesy a life of pain. We leave the dead with Nature, the mother of us all. Under the bow of hope, under the sevenhued arch, let the dead sleep.

If Christ was in fact God, why did he not plainly say there is another life? Why did he not tell us something about it? Why did he not turn the tearstained hope of immortality into the glad knowledge of another life? Why did he go dumbly to his death and leave the world in darkness and in doubt? Why? Because he was a man and did not know.

What consolation has the orthodox religion for the widow of the unbeliever, the widow of a good, brave, kind man? What can the orthodox minister say to relieve the bursting heart of that woman? What can he say to relieve the aching hearts of the orphans as they kneel by the grave of that father, if that father did not happen to be an orthodox Christian? What consolation have they? When a Christian loses a friend the tears spring from his eyes as quickly as from the eyes of others. Their tears are as bitter as ours. Why? The echoes of the words spoken eighteen hundred years ago are so low, and the sounds of the clods upon the coffin are so loud; the promises are so far away, and the dead are so near.

We do not know, we cannot say, whether death is a wall or a door; the beginning or end of a day; the spreading of pinions to soar, or the folding forever of wings; the rise or the set of a sun, or an endless life that brings the rapture of love to every one.

A FABLE.

There is the fable of Orpheus and Eurydice. Eurydice had been captured and taken to the infernal regions, and Orpheus went after her, taking with him his harp and playing as he went. When he came to Pluto's realm he began to play, and Sisyphus, charmed by the music, sat down upon the stone that he had been heaving up the mountain's side for so many years, and which continually rolled back upon him; Ixion paused upon his wheel of fire; Tantalus ceased his vain efforts for water; the daughters of the Danaides left off trying to fill their sieves with water; Pluto smiled, and for the first time in the history of hell the cheeks of the Furies were wet with tears. The god relented, and said, "Eurydice may go with you, but you must not look back." So Orpheus again threaded the caverns, playing as he went, and as he reached the light he failed to hear the footsteps of Eurydice. He looked back, and in a moment she was gone. Again and again Orpheus sought his love. Again and again looked back.

This fable gives the idea of the perpetual effort made by the human mind to rescue truth from the clutch of error.

Some time Orpheus will not look back. Some day Eurydice will reach the blessed light, and at last there will fade from the memory of men the monsters of superstition.

MYTH AND MIRACLE.

MYTH AND MIRACLE.

HAPPINESS is the true end and aim of life. It is the task of intelligence to ascertain the conditions of happiness, and when found the truly wise will live in accordance with them. By happiness is meant not simply the joy of eating and drinking — the gratification of the appetite — but good, wellbeing, in the highest and noblest forms. The joy that springs from obligation discharged, from duty done, from generous acts, from being true to the ideal, from a perception of the beautiful in nature, art and conduct. The happiness that is born of and gives birth to poetry and music, that follows the gratification of the highest wants.

Happiness is the result of all that is really right and sane.

But there are many people who regard the desire to be happy as a very low and degrading ambition. These people call themselves spiritual. They pretend to care nothing for the pleasures of "sense." They hold this world, this life, in contempt. They do not want happiness in this world — but in another. Here, happiness degrades — there, it purifies and ennobles.

These spiritual people have been known as prophets, apostles, augurs, hermits, monks, priests, popes, bishops and parsons. They are devout and useless. They do not cultivate the soil. They produce nothing. They live on the labor of others. They are pious and parasitic. They pray for others, if the others will work for them. They claim to have been selected by the Infinite to instruct and govern mankind. They are "meek" and arrogant, "long-suffering" and revengeful.

They ever have been, now are, and always will be the enemies of liberty, of investigation and science. They are believers in the supernatural, the miraculous and the absurd. They have filled the world with hatred, bigotry and fear. In defense of their creeds they have committed every crime and practiced every cruelty.

They denounce as worldly and sensual those who are gross enough to love wives and children, to build homes, to fell the forests, to navigate the seas, to cultivate the earth, to chisel statues, to paint pictures and fill the world with love and art.

They have denounced and maligned the thinkers, the poets, the dramatists, the composers, the actors, the orators, the workers — those who have conquered the world for man.

According to them this world is only the vestibule of the next, a kind of school, an ordeal, a place of probation. They have always insisted that this life should be spent in preparing for the next; that those who supported and obeyed the “spiritual guides” — the shepherds, would be rewarded with an eternity of joy, and that all others would suffer eternal pain.

These spiritual people have always hated labor. They have added nothing to the wealth of the world. They have always lived on alms — on the labor of others. They have always been the enemies of innocent pleasure, and of human love.

These spiritual people have produced a literature. The books they have written are called sacred. Our sacred books are called the Bible. The Hindoos have the Vedas and many others, the Persians the Zend Avesta — the Egyptians had the Book of the Dead — the Aztecs the Popol Vuh, and the Mohammedans have the Koran.

These books, for the most part, treat of the unknowable. They describe gods and winged phantoms of the air. They give accounts of the origin of the universe, the creation of man and the worlds beyond this. They contain nothing of value. Millions and millions of people have wasted their lives studying these absurd and ignorant books.

The “spiritual people” in each country claimed that their books had been written by inspired men — that God was the real author, and that all men and women who denied this would be, after death, tormented forever.

And yet, the worldly people, the uninspired, the wicked, have produced a far greater literature than the spiritual and the inspired.

Not all the sacred books of the world equal Shakespeare’s “volume of the brain.” A purer philosophy, grander, nobler, fell from the lips of Shakespeare’s clowns than the Old Testament *or* the New, contains.

The Declaration of Independence is nobler far than all the utterances from Sinai’s cloud and flame. “A Man’s a Man for a’ That,” by Robert Burns, is better than anything the sacred books contain. For my part, I would rather hear Beethoven’s Sixth Symphony than to read the five books of Moses. Give me the Sixth Symphony — this sound-wrought picture of the fields and woods, of flowering hedge and happy home, where thrushes build and swallows fly, and mothers sing to babes; this echo of the babbled lullaby of brooks that, dallying, wind and fall where meadows bare their daisied bosoms to the sun; this joyous mimicry of summer rain, the laugh of children, and the rhythmic rustle of the

whispering leaves; this strophe of peasant life; this perfect poem of content and love.

I would rather listen to Tristan and Isolde—that Mississippi of melody—where the great notes, winged like eagles, lift the soul above the cares and griefs of this weary world—than to all the orthodox sermons ever preached. I would rather look at the Venus de Milo than to read the Presbyterian creed.

The spiritual have endeavored to civilize the world through fear and faith—by the promise of reward and the threat of pain in other worlds. They taught men to hate and persecute their fellow-men. In all ages they have appealed to force. During all the years they have practiced fraud. They have pretended to have influence with the gods — that their prayers gave rain, sunshine and harvest — that their curses brought pestilence and famine, and that their blessings filled the world with plenty. They have subsisted on the fears their falsehoods created. Like poisonous vines, they have lived on the oak of labor. They have praised charity, but they never gave. They have denounced revenge, but they never forgave.

Whenever the spiritual have had power, art has died, learning has languished, science has been despised, liberty destroyed, the thinkers have been imprisoned, the intelligent and honest have been outcasts, and the brave have been murdered.

The “spiritual” have been, are, and always will be the enemies of the human race.

For all the blessings that we now enjoy—for progress in every form, for science and art—for all that has lengthened life, that has conquered disease, that has lessened pain, for raiment, roof and food, for music in its highest forms—for the poetry that has ennobled and enriched our lives—for the marvelous machines now working for the world—for all this we are indebted to the worldly—to those who turned their attention to the affairs of this life. They have been the only benefactors of our race.

II

AND yet all of these religions — these “sacred books,” these priests, have been naturally produced. From the dens and caves of savagery to the palaces of civilization men have traveled by the necessary paths and roads. Back of every step has been the efficient cause. In the history of the world there has been no chance, no interference from without, nothing miraculous. Everything in accordance with and produced by the facts in nature.

We need not blame the hypocritical and cruel. They thought and acted as they were compelled to think and act.

In all ages man has tried to account for himself and his surroundings. He did the best he could. He wondered why the water ran, why the trees grew, why the clouds floated, why the stars shone, why the sun and moon journeyed through the heavens. He was troubled about life and death, about darkness and dreams. The seas, the volcanoes, the lightning and thunder, the earthquake and cyclone, filled him with fear. Behind all life and growth and motion, and even inanimate things, he placed a spirit — an intelligent being — a fetich, a person, something like himself — a god, controlled by love and hate. To him causes and effects became gods — supernatural beings. The Dawn was a maiden, wondrously fair, the Sun, a warrior and lover; the Night, a serpent, a wolf — the Wind, a musician; Winter, a wild beast; Autumn, Proserpine gathering flowers.

Poets were the makers of these myths. They were the first to account for what they saw and felt. The great multitude mistook these fancies for facts. Myths strangely alike, were produced by most nations, and gradually took possession of the world.

The Sleeping Beauty, a myth of the year, has been found among most peoples. In this myth, the Earth was a maiden — the Sun was her lover. She had fallen asleep in winter. Her blood was still and her breath had gone. In the Spring the lover came, clasped her in his arms, covered her lips and cheeks with kisses. She was thrilled, her heart began to beat, she breathed, her blood flowed, and she awoke to love and joy. This myth has made the circuit of the globe.

So, Red Riding-Hood is the history of a day. Little Red Riding-Hood — the morning, touched with red, goes to visit her kindred, a day that is past. She is attacked by the wolf of night and is rescued by the hunter, Apollo, who pierces the heart of the beast with an arrow of light.

The beautiful myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is the story of the year. Eurydice has been captured and carried to the infernal world. Orpheus, playing upon his harp, goes after her. Such is the effect of his music when he reaches the realm of Pluto, the laughterless, that Tantalus ceases his efforts to slake his thirst. He listens and forgets his withered lips, the daughters of the Danaides cease their vain efforts to fill the sieve with water, Sisyphus sits down on the stone that he so often had heaved against the mountain's misty side, Ixion pauses upon his wheel of fire, even Pluto smiles, and for the first time in the history of hell the cheeks of the Furies are wet with tears.

"Give me back Eurydice," cried Orpheus, and Pluto said: "Take her, but look not back." Orpheus led the way and Eurydice followed. Just as he reached the upper world, he missed her footsteps, turned, looked, and she vanished.

And thus the summer comes, is lost, and comes again through all the years.

So, our ancestors believed in the Garden of Eden, in the Golden Age, in the blessed time when all were good and pure—when nature satisfied the wants of all. The race, like the old man, has golden dreams of youth. The morning was filled with light and life and joy, and the evening is always sad. When the old man was young, girls were beautiful and men were honest. He remembers his Eden. And so the whole world has had its age of gold.

Our fathers were believers in the Elysian Fields. They were in the far, far West. They saw them at the setting of the sun. They saw the floating isles of gold in sapphire seas; the templed mist with spires and domes of emerald and amethyst; the magic caverns of the clouds, resplendent with the rays of every gem. And as they looked, they thought the curtain had been drawn aside and that their eyes had for a moment feasted on the glories of another world.

The myth of the Flood has also been universal. Finding shells of the seas on plain and mountain, and everywhere some traces of the waves, they thought the world had been submerged—that God in wrath had drowned the race, except a few his mercy saved.

The Hindus say that Menu, a holy man, dipped from the Ganges some water, and in the basin saw a little fish. The fish begged him to throw him back into the river, and Menu, having pity, cast him back. The fish then told Menu that there was to be a flood—told him to build an ark, to take on board, people, animals and food, and that when the flood came, he, the fish, would save him. The saint did as he was told, the flood came, the fish returned. By that time he had grown to be a whale with a horn in his head. About this horn Menu fastened a rope, attached the other end to the ark, and the fish towed the boat across the raging

waves to a mountain's top, where it rested until the waters subsided. The name of this wonderful fish was Matsaya.

Many other nations told similar stories of floods and arks and the sending forth of doves.

In all these myths and legends of the past we find philosophies and dreams and efforts, stained with tears, of great and tender souls who tried to pierce the mysteries of life and death, to answer the questions of the whence and whither, and who vainly sought with bits of shattered glass to make a mirror that would in very truth reflect the face and form of Nature's perfect self. These myths were born of hopes and fears, of tears and smiles, and they were touched and colored by all there is of joy and grief between the rosy dawn of birth and death's sad night. They clothed even the stars with passion, and gave to gods the faults and frailties of the sons of men. In them the winds and waves were music, and all the springs, the mountains, woods and perfumed dells were haunted by a thousand fairy forms. They thrilled the veins of Spring with tremulous desire, made tawny Summer's billowy breast the throne and home of love, filled Autumn's arms with sunkissed grapes and gathered sheaves, and pictured Winter as a weak old king, who felt, like Lear, upon his withered face, Cordelia's tears.

These myths, though false in fact, are beautiful and true in thought, and have for many ages and in countless ways enriched the heart and kindled thought.

III.

IN all probability the first religion was Sun-worship. Nothing could have been more natural. Light was life and warmth and love. The sun was the fireside of the world. The sun was the "allseeing" — the "Sky Father." Darkness was grief and death, and in the shadows crawled the serpents of despair and fear.

The sun was a great warrior, fighting the hosts of Night. Apollo was the sun, and he fought and conquered the serpent of Night. Agni, the generous, who loved the lowliest and visited the humblest, was the sun. He was the god of fire, and the crossed sticks that by friction leaped into flame were his emblem. It was said that, in spite of his goodness, he devoured his father and mother, the two pieces of wood being his parents. Baldur was the sun. He was in love with the Dawn — a maiden — he deserted her and traveled through the heavens alone. At the twilight they met, were reconciled, and the drops of dew were the tears of joy they shed.

Krishna was the sun. At his birth the Ganges thrilled from its source to the sea. All the trees, the dead as well as the living, burst into leaf and bud and flower.

Hercules was a sun-god.

Jonah the same, rescued from the fiends of Night and carried by the fish through the under world. Samson was a sun-god. His strength was in his hair — in his beams. He was shorn of his strength by Delilah, the shadow — the darkness. So, Osiris, Bacchus, Mithra, Hermes, Buddha, Quetzalcoatl, Prometheus, Zoroaster, Perseus, Codom Lao-tsze Fo-hi, Horus and Rameses were all sun-gods.

All these gods had gods for fathers and all their mothers were virgins.

The births of nearly all were announced by stars.

When they were born there was celestial music — voices declared that a blessing had come upon the earth.

When Buddha was born, the celestial choir sang: "This day is born for the good of men Buddha, and to dispel the darkness of their ignorance — to give joy and peace to the world."

Krishna was born in a cave, and protected by shepherds. Bacchus, Apollo, Mithra and Hermes were all born in caves. Buddha was born in an inn — according to some, under a tree.

Tyrants sought to kill all of these gods when they were babes.

When Krishna was born, a tyrant killed the babes of the neighborhood.

Buddha was the child of Maya, a virgin, in the kingdom of Madura. The king arrested Maya before the child was born, imprisoned her in a tower. During the night when the child was born, a great wind wrecked the tower, and carried mother and child to a place of safety. The next morning the king sent his soldiers to kill the babes, and when they came to Buddha and his mother, the babe appeared to be about twelve years of age, and the soldiers passed on.

So Typhon sought in many ways to destroy the babe Horus. The king pursued the infant Zoroaster. Cadmus tried to kill the infant Bacchus.

All of these gods were born on the 25th of December.

Nearly all were worshiped by "wise men."

All of them fasted for forty days.

All met with a violent death.

All rose from the dead.

The history of these gods is the history of our Christ. He had a god for a father, a virgin for a mother. He was born in a manger, or a cave—on the 25th of December. His birth was announced by angels. He was worshiped by wise men, guided by a star. Herod, seeking his life, caused the death of many babes. Christ fasted for forty days. So, it rained for forty days before the flood—Moses was on Mt. Sinai for forty days. The temple had forty pillars and the Jews wandered in the wilderness for forty years. Christ met with a violent death, and rose from the dead.

These things are not accidents—not coincidences. Christ was a sun-god. All religions have been born of sun-worship. To-day, when priests pray, they shut their eyes. This is a survival of sun-worship. When men worshiped the sun, they had to shut their eyes. Afterwards, to flatter idols, they pretended that the glory of their faces was more than the eyes could bear.

In the religion of our day there is nothing original. All of its doctrines, its symbols and ceremonies are but the survivals of creeds that perished long ago. Baptism is far older than Christianity—than Judaism. The Hindus, the Egyptians, the Greeks and Romans had holy water. The eucharist was borrowed from the Pagans. Ceres was the goddess of the fields, Bacchus the god of the vine. At the

harvest festival they made cakes of wheat and said: "These are the flesh of the goddess." They drank wine and cried: "This is the blood of our god."

The cross has been a symbol for many thousands of years. It was a symbol of immortality — of life, of the god Agni, the form of the grave of a man. An ancient people of Italy, who lived long before the Romans, long before the Etruscans, so long that not one word of their language is known, used the cross, and beneath that emblem, carved on stone, their dead still rest. In the forests of Central America, ruined temples have been found, and on the walls the cross with the bleeding victim. On Babylonian cylinders is the impression of the cross. The Trinity came from Egypt. Osiris, Isis and Horus were worshiped thousands of years before our Father, Son and Holy Ghost were thought of. So the Tree of Life grew in India, China and among the Aztecs long before the Garden of Eden was planted. Long before our Bible was known, other nations had their sacred books, temples and altars, sacrifices, ceremonies and priests. The "Fall of Man" is far older than our religion, and so are the "Atonement" and the Scheme of Redemption.

In our blessed religion there is nothing new, nothing original.

Among the Egyptians the cross was a symbol of the life to come. And yet the first religion was, and all religions growing out of that, were naturally produced. Every brain was a field in which Nature sowed the seeds of thought. The rise and set of sun, the birth and death of day, the dawns of silver and the dusks of gold, the wonders of the rain and snow, the shroud of Winter and the many colored robe of Spring, the lonely moon with nightly loss or gain, the serpent lightning and the thunder's voice, the tempest's fury and the zephyr's sigh, the threat of storm and promise of the bow, cathedral clouds with dome and spire, earthquake and strange eclipse, frost and fire, the snow-crowned mountains with their tongues of flame, the fields of space sown thick with stars, the wandering comets hurrying past the fixed and sleepless sentinels of night, the marvels of the earth and air, the perfumed flower, the painted wing, the waveless pool that held within its magic breast the image of the startled face, the mimic echo that made a record in the viewless air, the pathless forests and the boundless seas, the ebb and flow of tides — the slow, deep breathing of some vague and monstrous life — the miracle of birth, the mystery of dream and death, and over all the silent and immeasurable dome. These were the warp and woof, and at the loom sat Love and Fancy, Hope and Fear, and wove the wondrous tapestries whereon we find pictures of gods and fairy lands and all the legends that were told when Nature rocked the cradle of the infant world.

IV.

WE must remember that there is a great difference between a myth and a miracle. A myth is the idealization of a fact. A miracle is the counterfeit of a fact. There is the same difference between a myth and a miracle that there is between fiction and falsehood—between poetry and perjury. Miracles belong to the far past and the far future. The little line of sand, called the present, between the seas, belongs to common sense, to the natural.

If you should tell a man that the dead were raised two thousand years ago, he would probably say: "Yes, I know that." If you should say that a hundred thousand years from now all the dead will be raised, he might say: "Probably they will." But if you should tell him that you saw a dead man raised and given life that day, he would likely ask the name of the insane asylum from which you had escaped.

Our Bible is filled with accounts of miracles and yet they always fail to convince.

Jehovah, according to the Scriptures, wrought hundreds of miracles for the benefit of the Jews. With many miracles he rescued them from slavery, guided them on their journey with a miraculous cloud by day and a miraculous pillar of fire by night—divided the sea that they might escape from the Egyptians, fed them with miraculous manna and supernatural quails, raised up hornets to attack their enemies, caused water to follow them wherever they wandered and in countless ways manifested his power, and yet the Jews cared nothing for these wonders. Not one of them seems to have been convinced that Jehovah had done anything for the people.

In spite of all these miracles, the Jews had more confidence in a golden calf, made by themselves, than in Jehovah. The reason of this is, that the miracles were never performed, and never invented until hundreds of years after those, who had wandered over the desert of Sinai, were dust.

The miracles attributed to Christ had no effect. No human being seems to have been convinced by them. Those whom he raised from the dead, cured of leprosy, or blindness, failed to become his followers. Not one of them appeared at his trial. Not one offered to bear witness of his miraculous power.

To this there is but one explanation: The miracles were never performed. These stories were the growth of centuries. The casting out of devils, the changing of water into wine, feeding the multitude with a few loaves and fishes, resisting the devil, using a fish for a pocketbook, curing the blind with clay and saliva, stilling

the tempest, walking on the water, the resurrection and ascension, happened and only happened, in the imaginations of men, who were not born until several generations after Christ was dead.

In those days the world was filled with ignorance and fear. Miracles happened every day. The supernatural was expected. Gods were continually interfering with the affairs of this world. Everything was told except the truth, everything believed except the facts. History was a circumstantial account of occurrences that never occurred. Devils and goblins and ghosts were as plentiful as saints. The bones of the dead were used to cure the living. Cemeteries were hospitals and corpses were physicians. The saints practiced magic, the pious communed with God in dreams, and the course of events was changed by prayer. The credulous demanded the marvelous, the miraculous, and the priests supplied the demand. The sky was full of signs, omens of death and disaster, and the darkness thick with devils endeavoring to mislead and enslave the souls of men.

Our fathers thought that everything had been made for man, and that demons and gods gave their entire attention to this world. The people believed that they were the sport and prey, the favorites or victims, of these phantoms. And they also believed that the Creator, the God, could be influenced by sacrifice, by prayers and ceremonies.

This has been the mistake of the world. All the temples have been reared, all the altars erected, all the sacrifices offered, all the prayers uttered in vain. No god has interfered, no prayer has been answered, no help received from heaven. Nothing was created, nothing has happened for, or with reference to man. If not a human being lived,— if all were in their graves, the sun would continue to shine, the wheeling world would still pursue its flight, violets would spread their velvet bosoms to the day, the spendthrift roses give their perfume to the air, the climbing vines would hide with leaf and flower the fallen and the dead, the changing seasons would come and go, time would repeat the poem of the year, storms would wreck and whispering rains repair, Spring with deft and unseen hands would weave her robes of green, life with countless lips would seek fair Summer's swelling breasts, Autumn would reap the wealth of leaf and fruit and seed, Winter, the artist, would etch in frost the pines and ferns, while Wind and Wave and Fire, old architects, with ceaseless toil would still destroy and build, still wreck and change, and from the dust of death produce again the throb and breath of life.

V.

A FEW years ago a few men began to think, to investigate, to reason. They began to doubt the legends of the church, the miracles of the past. They began to notice what happened. They found that eclipses came at certain intervals and that their coming could be foretold. They became satisfied that the conduct of men had nothing to do with eclipses—and that the stars moved in their orbits unconscious of the sons of men. Galileo, Copernicus, and Kepler destroyed the astronomy of the Bible, and demonstrated that the “inspired” story of creation could not be true, and that the church was as ignorant as the priests were dishonest.

They found that the myth-makers were mistaken, that the sun and stars did not revolve about the earth, that the firmament was not solid, that the earth was not flat, and that the so-called philosophy of the theologians was absurd and idiotic.

The stars became witnesses against the creeds of superstition.

With the telescope the heavens were explored. The New Jerusalem could not be found.

It had faded away.

The church persecuted the astronomers and denied the facts. In February, in the year of grace sixteen hundred, the Catholic Church, the “Triumphant Beast,” having in her hands, her paws, the keys of heaven and hell, accused Giordano Bruno of having declared that there were other worlds than this. He was tried, convicted, imprisoned in a dungeon for seven years. He was offered his liberty if he would recant. Bruno, the atheist, the philosopher, refused to stain his soul by denying what he believed to be true. He was taken from his cell by the priests, by those who loved their enemies, led to the place of execution. He was clad in a robe on which representations of devils had been painted—the devils that were soon to claim his soul. He was chained to a stake and about his body the wood was piled. Then priests, followers of Christ, lighted the fagots and flames consumed the greatest, the most perfect martyr, that ever suffered death.

And yet the Italian agent of God, the infallible Leo XIII., only a few years ago, denounced Bruno, the “bravest of the brave,” as a coward.

The church murdered him, and the pope maligned his memory. Fagot and falsehood—two weapons of the church.

A little while ago a few men began to examine rocks and soils, mountains, islands, reefs and seas. They noticed the valleys and deltas that had been formed by rivers, the many strata of lava that had been changed to soil, the vast deposits of metals and coal, the immense reefs that the coral had formed, the work of glaciers in the far past, the production of soil by the disintegration of rock, by the growth and decay of vegetation and the countless evidences of the countless ages through which the Earth has passed. The geologists read the history of the world written by wave and flame, attested by fossils, by the formation of rocks, by mountain ranges, by volcanoes, by rivers, islands, continents and seas.

The geology of the Bible—of the “divinely inspired” church, of the “infallible” pope, was found to be utterly false and foolish.

The Earth became a witness against the creeds of superstition.

Then came Watt and Galvani with the miracles of steam and electricity, while countless inventors created the wonderful machines that do the work of the world. Investigation took the place of credulity. Men became dissatisfied with huts and rags, with crusts and creeds. They longed for the comforts, the luxuries of life. The intellectual horizon enlarged, new truths were discovered, old ideas were thrown aside, the brain was developed, the heart civilized and science was born. Humboldt, Laplace and hundreds of others explained the phenomena of nature, called attention to the ancient and venerable mistakes of sanctified ignorance and added to the sum of knowledge. Darwin and Haeckel gave their conclusions to the world. Men began to really think, the myths began to fade, the miracles to grow mean and small, and the great structure, known as theology, fell with a crash.

Science denies the truth of myth and miracle, denies that human testimony can substantiate the miraculous, denies the existence of the supernatural. Science asserts the absolute, the unvarying uniformity of nature. Science insists that the present is the child of all the past, — that no power can change the past, and that nature is forever the same,

The chemist has found that just so many atoms of one kind unite with just so many of another—no more, no less, always the same. No caprice in chemistry; no interference from without.

The astronomers know that the planets remain in their orbits—that their forces are constant. They know that light is forever the same, always obeying the angle of incidence, traveling with the same rapidity,— casting the same shadow, under the same circumstances in all worlds. They know that the eclipses will occur at the times foretold—neither hastening nor delaying. They know that the

attraction of gravitation is always the same, always in perfect proportion to mass and distance, neither weaker nor stronger, unvarying forever. They know that the facts in nature cannot be changed or destroyed and that the qualities of all things are eternal.

The men of science know that the atomic integrity of the metals is always the same, that each metal is true to its nature and that the particles cling to each other with the same tenacity,—the same force. They have demonstrated the persistence of force, that it is forever active, forever the same, and that it cannot be destroyed.

These great truths have revolutionized the thought of the world.

Every art, every employment, all study, all experiment, the value of experience, of judgment, of hope, all rest on a belief in the uniformity of nature, on the eternal persistence and indestructibility of force.

Break one link in the infinite chain of cause and effect, and the Master of Nature appears. The broken link would become the throne of a god.

The uniformity of Nature denies the supernatural and demonstrates that there is no interference from without. There is no place, no office left for gods. Ghosts fade from the brain and the shriveled deities fall palsied from their thrones.

The uniformity of Nature renders a belief in “special providence” impossible. Prayer becomes a useless agitation of the air, and religious ceremonies are but motions, pantomimes, mindless and meaningless.

The naked savage, worshiping a wooden god, is the religious equal of the robed pope kneeling before an image of the Virgin. The poor African who carries roots and bark to protect himself from evil spirits is on the same intellectual plane of one who sprinkles his body with “holy water.”

All the creeds of Christendom, all the religions of the heathen world are equally absurd. The cathedral, the mosque and the joss house have the same foundation. Their builders do not believe in the uniformity of Nature, and the business of all priests is to induce a so-called infinite being to change the order of events, to make causes barren of effects and to produce effects without, and in spite of, natural causes. They all believe in the unthinkable and pray for the impossible.

Science teaches us that there was no creation and that there can be no destruction. The infinite denies creation and defies destruction. An infinite person, an “infinite being” is an infinite impossibility. To conceive of such a

being is beyond the power of the mind. Yet all religions rest upon the supposed existence of the unthinkable, the inconceivable. And the priests of these religions pretend to be perfectly familiar with the designs, will, and wishes of this unthinkable, this inconceivable.

Science teaches that that which really is has always been, that behind every effect is the efficient and necessary cause, that there is in the universe neither chance nor interference, and that energy is eternal. Day by day the authority of the theologian grows weaker and weaker. As the people become intelligent they care less for preachers and more for teachers. Their confidence in knowledge, in thought and investigation increases. They are eager to know the discoveries, the useful truths, the important facts made, ascertained and demonstrated by the explorers in the domain of the natural. They are no longer satisfied with the platitudes of the pulpit, and the assertions of theologians. They are losing confidence in the "sacred Scriptures" and in the protecting power and goodness of the supernatural. They are satisfied that credulity is not a virtue and that investigation is not a crime.

Science is the providence of man, the worker of true miracles, of real wonders. Science has "read a little in Nature's infinite book of secrecy." Science knows the circuits of the winds, the courses of the stars. Fire is his servant, and lightning his messenger. Science freed the slaves and gave liberty to their masters. Science taught man to enchain, not his fellows, but the forces of nature, forces that have no backs to be scarred, no limbs for chains to chill and eat, forces that have no hearts to break, forces that never know fatigue, forces that shed no tears. Science is the great physician. His touch has given sight. He has made the lame to leap, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and in the pallid face his hand has set the rose of health. Science has given his beloved sleep and wrapped in happy dreams the throbbing nerves of pain. Science is the destroyer of disease, builder of happy homes, the preserver of life and love. Science is the teacher of every virtue, the enemy of every vice. Science has given the true basis of morals, the origin and office of conscience, revealed the nature of obligation, of duty, of virtue in its highest, noblest forms, and has demonstrated that true happiness is the only possible good. Science has slain the monsters of superstition, and destroyed the authority of inspired books. Science has read the records of the rocks, records that priestcraft cannot change, and on his wondrous scales has weighed the atom and the star.

Science has founded the only true religion. Science is the only Savior of this world.

VI.

FOR many ages religion has been tried. For countless centuries man has sought for help from heaven. To soften the heart of God, mothers sacrificed their babes! but the God did not hear, did not see, and did not help. Naked savages were devoured by beasts, bitten by serpents, killed by flood and frost. They prayed for help, but their God was deaf. They built temples and altars, employed priests and gave of their substance, but the volcano destroyed and the famine came. For the sake of God millions murdered their fellow-men, but the God was silent. Millions of martyrs died for the honor of God, but the God was blind. He did not see the flames, the scaffolds. He did not hear the prayers, the groans. Thousands of priests in the name of God tortured their fellow-men, stretched them on racks, crushed their feet in iron boots, tore out their tongues, and extinguished their eyes. The victims implored the protection of God, but their god did not hear, did not see. He was deaf and blind. He was willing that his enemies should torture his friends.

Nations tried to destroy each other for the sake of God, and the banner of the cross dripping with blood floated over a thousand fields—but the god was silent. He neither knew nor cared. Pestilence covered the earth with dead, the priests prayed, the altars were heaped with sacrifices, but the god did not see, did not hear. The miseries of the world did not lessen the joys of heaven. The clouds gave no rain, the famine came, and withered babes with pallid lips sought the breasts of dead mothers, while starving fathers knelt and prayed, but the god did not hear. Through many centuries millions were enslaved, babes were sold from mothers, husbands from wives, backs were scarred with the lash. The poor wretches lifted their clasped hands toward heaven and prayed for justice, for liberty—but their god did not hear. He cared nothing for the sufferings of slaves, nothing for the tears of wives and mothers, nothing for the agony of men. He answered no prayers. He broke no chains. He freed no slaves.

The miserable wretches appealed to the priests of God, but they were on the other side. They defended the masters. The slaves had nothing to give.

During all these years it was claimed by the theologians that their God was governing the world, that he was infinitely powerful, wise and good — and that the “powers” of the earth were “ordained” by him. During all these years the church was the enemy of progress. It hated all physicians and told the people to rely on prayer, amulets and relics. It persecuted the astronomers and geologists, denounced them as infidels and atheists, as enemies of the human race. It poisoned the fountains of learning and insisted that teachers should distort the facts in nature to the end that they might harmonize with the “inspired” book.

During all these years the church misdirected the energies of man, and when it reached the zenith of its power, darkness fell upon the world.

In all nations and in all ages, religion has failed. The gods have never interfered. Nature has produced and destroyed without mercy and without hatred. She has cared no more for man than for the leaves of the forest, no more for nations than for hills of ants, nothing for right or wrong, for life or death, for pain or joy.

Man through his intelligence must protect himself. He gets no help from any other world. The church has always claimed and still claims that it is the only reforming power, that it makes men honest, virtuous and merciful, that it prevents violence and war, and that without its influence the race would return to barbarism.

Nothing can exceed the absurdity of these claims.

If we wish to improve the condition of mankind — if we wish for nobler men and women we must develop the brain, we must encourage thought and investigation. We must convince the world that credulity is a vice, — that there is no virtue in believing without, or against evidence, and that the really honest man is true to himself. We must fill the world with intellectual light. We must applaud mental courage. We must educate the children, rescue them from ignorance and crime. Schoolhouses are the real temples, and teachers are the true priests. We must supply the wants of the mind, satisfy the hunger of the brain. The people should be familiar with the great poets, with the tragedies of Æschylus, the dramas of Shakespeare, with the poetry of Homer and Virgil. Shakespeare should be taught in every school, found in every house.

Through photography the whole world may become acquainted with the great statues, the great paintings, the victories of art. In this way the mind is enlarged, the sympathies quickened, the appreciation of the beautiful intensified, the taste refined and the character ennobled.

The great novels should be read by all. All should be acquainted with the men and women of fiction, with the ideal world. The imagination should be developed, trained and strengthened. Superstition has degraded art and literature. It gave us winged monsters, scenes from heaven and hell, representations of gods and devils, sculptured the absurd and painted the impossible in the name of Art. It gave us the dreams of the insane, the lives of fanatical saints, accounts of miracles and wonders, of cures wrought by the bones of the dead, descriptions of Paradise, purgatory and the eternal dungeon, discourses on baptism, on changing wine and wafers into the blood and flesh of

God, on the forgiveness of sins by priests, on fore-ordination and accountability, predestination and free will, on devils, ghosts and goblins, the ministrations of guardian angels, the virtue of belief and the wickedness of doubt. And this was called "sacred literature."

The church taught that those who believed, counted beads, mumbled prayers, and gave their time or property for the support of the gospel were the good and that all others were traveling the "broad road" to eternal pain. According to the theologians, the best people, the saints, were dead, and real beauty was to be found only in heaven. They denounced the joys of life as husks and filthy rags, declared that the world had been cursed, and that it brought forth thistles and thorns because of the sins of man. They regarded the earth as a kind of dock, running out into the sea of eternity, — on which the pious waited for the ship on which they were to be transported to another world.

But the real poets and the real artists clung to this world, to this life. They described and represented things that exist. They expressed thoughts of the brain, emotions of the heart, the grieves and joys, the hope and despair of men and women. They found strength and beauty on every hand. They found their angels here. They were true to human experience and they touched the brain and heart of the world. In the tragedies and comedies of life, in the smiles and tears, in the ecstasies of love, in the darkness of death, in the dawn of hope, they found their materials for statue and song, for poem and painting. Poetry and art are the children of this world, born and nourished here. They are human. They have left the winged monsters of heaven, the malicious deformities of hell, and have turned their attention to men and women, to the things of this life.

There is a poem called "The Skylark," by Shelley, graceful as the motions of flames. Another by Robert Burns, called "The Daisy," exquisite, perfect as the pearl of virtue in the beautiful breast of a loving girl. Between this lark and this daisy, neither above nor below, you will find all the poetry of the world. Eloquence, sublimity, poetry and art must have the foundation of fact, of reality. Imaginary worlds and beings are nothing to us.

At last the old creeds are becoming cruel and vulgar. We now have imagination enough to put ourselves in the place of others. Believers in hell, in eternal pain, like murderers, lack imagination. The murderer has not imagination enough to see his victim dead. He does not see the sightless and pathetic eyes. He does not see the widow's arms about the corpse, her lips upon the dead. He does not hear the sobs of children. He does not see the funeral. He does not hear the clods as they fall on the coffin. He does not feel the hand of arrest, the scene of the trial is not before him. He does not hear the awful verdict, the sentence of

the court, the last words. He does not see the scaffold, nor feel about his throat the deadly noose.

Let us develop the brain, civilize the heart, and give wings to the imagination.

VII

IF we abandon myth and miracle, if we discard the supernatural and the scheme of redemption, how are we to civilize the world?

Is falsehood a reforming power? Is credulity the mother of virtue? Is there any saving grace in the impossible and absurd? Did wisdom perish with the dead? Must the civilized accept the religion of savages?

If we wish to reform the world we must rely on truth, on fact, on reason. We must teach men that they are good or bad for themselves, that others cannot be good or bad for them, that they cannot be charged with the crimes, or credited with the virtues of others. We must discard the doctrine of the atonement, because it is absurd and immoral. We are not accountable for the sins of "Adam" and the virtues of Christ cannot be transferred to us. There can be no vicarious virtue, no vicarious vice. Why should the sufferings of the innocent atone for the crimes of the guilty? According to the doctrine of the atonement right and wrong do not exist in the nature of things, but in the arbitrary will of the Infinite. This is a subversion of all ideas of justice and mercy.

An act is good, bad, or indifferent, according to its consequences. No power can step between an act and its natural consequences. A governor may pardon the criminal, but the natural consequences of the crime remain untouched. A god may forgive, but the consequences of the act forgiven, are still the same. We must teach the world that the consequences of a bad action cannot be avoided, that they are the invisible police, the unseen avengers, that accept no gifts, that hear no prayers, that no cunning can deceive.

We do not need the forgiveness of gods, but of ourselves and the ones we injure. Restitution without repentance is far better than repentance without restitution.

We know nothing of any god who rewards, punishes or forgives.

We must teach our fellow-men that honor comes from within, not from without, that honor must be earned, that it is not alms, that even an infinite God could not enrich the beggar's palm with the gem of honor.

Teach them also that happiness is the bud, the blossom and the fruit of good and noble actions, that it is not the gift of any god; that it must be earned by man — must be deserved.

In this world of ours there is no magic, no sleight-of-hand, by which consequences can be made to punish the good and reward the bad.

Teach men not to sacrifice this world for some other, but to turn their attention to the natural, to the affairs of this life. Teach them that theology has no known foundation, that it was born of ignorance and fear, that it has hardened the heart, polluted the imagination and made fiends of men.

Theology is not for this world. It is no part of real religion. It has nothing to do with goodness or virtue. Religion does not consist in worshiping gods, but in adding to the well-being, the happiness of man. No human being knows whether any god exists or not, and all that has been said and written about "our god," or the gods of other people, has no known fact for a foundation. Words without thoughts, clouds without rain.

Let us put theology out of religion.

Church and state should be absolutely divorced. Priests pretend that they have been selected by, and that they get their power from God. Kings occupy their thrones in accordance with the will of God. The pope declares that he is the agent, the deputy of God and that by right he should rule the world. All these pretensions and assertions are perfectly absurd and yet they are acknowledged and believed by millions. Get theology out of government and kings will descend from their thrones. All will admit that governments get their powers from the consent of the governed, and that all persons in office are the servants of the people. Get theology out of government and chaplains will be dismissed from Legislatures, from Congress, from the army and navy. Get theology out of government and people will be allowed to express their honest thoughts about "inspired books" and superstitious creeds. Get theology out of government and priests will no longer steal a seventh of our time. Get theology out of government and the clergy will soon take their places with augurs and soothsayers, with necromancers and medicine-men.

Get theology out of education. Nothing should be taught in a school that somebody does not know. There are plenty of things to be learned about this world, about this life. Every child should be taught to think, and that it is dangerous not to think. Children should not be taught the absurdities, the cruelties and imbecilities of superstition. No church should be allowed to control the common school, and public money should not be divided between the hateful and warring sects. The public school should be secular, and only the useful should be taught. Many of our colleges are under the control of churches. Presidents and professors are mostly ministers of the gospel and the result is that all facts inconsistent with the creeds are either suppressed or denied. Only those

professors who are naturally stupid or mentally dishonest can retain their places. Those who tell the truth, who teach the facts, are discharged.

In every college truth should be a welcome guest. Every professor should be a finder, and every student a learner, of facts. Theology and intellectual dishonesty go together. The teacher of children should be intelligent and perfectly sincere.

Let us get theology out of education.

The pious denounce the secular schools as godless. They should be. The sciences are all secular, all godless. Theology bears the same relation to science that the black art does to chemistry, that magic does to mathematics. It is something that cannot be taught, because it cannot be known. It has no foundation in fact. It neither produces, nor accords with, any image in the mind. It is not only unknowable but unthinkable. Through hundreds and thousands of generations men have been discussing, wrangling and fighting about theology. No advance has been made. The robed priest has only reached the point from which the savage tried to start.

We know that theology always has and always will make enemies. It sows the seeds of hatred in families and nations. It is selfish, cruel, revengeful and malicious. It has heaven for the few and perdition for the many. We now know that credulity is not a virtue and that intellectual courage is. We must stop rewarding hypocrisy and bigotry. We must stop persecuting the thinkers, the investigators, the creators of light, the civilizers of the world.

VIII.

WILL the unknown, the mysteries of life and death, the world that lies beyond the limitations of the mind, forever furnish food for superstition? Will the gods and ghosts perish or simply retreat before the advancing hosts of science, and continue to crouch and lurk just beyond the horizon of the known? Will darkness forever be the womb and mother of the supernatural?

A little while ago priests told peasants that the New Jerusalem, the celestial city was just above the clouds. They said that its walls and domes and spires were just beyond the reach of human sight. The telescope was invented and those who looked at the wilderness of stars, saw no city, no throne. They said to the priests: "Where is your New Jerusalem?" The priests cheerfully and confidently replied. "It is just beyond where you see."

At one time it was believed that a race of men existed "with their heads beneath their shoulders." Returning travelers from distant lands were asked about these wonderful people and all replied that they had not seen them. "Oh," said the believers in the monsters, "the men with heads beneath their shoulders live in a country that you did not visit." And so the monsters lived and flourished until the entire world was known. We cannot know the universe. We cannot travel infinite distances, and so, somewhere in shoreless space there will always be room for gods and ghosts, for heavens and hells. And so it may be that superstition will live and linger until the world becomes intelligent enough to build upon the foundation of the known, to keep the imagination within the domain of the probable, and to believe in the natural — *until the supernatural shall have been demonstrated.*

Savages knew all about gods, about heavens and hells before they knew anything about the world in which they lived. They were perfectly familiar with evil spirits, with the invisible phantoms of the air, long before they had any true conception of themselves. So, they knew all about the origin and destiny of the human race. They were absolutely certain about the problems, the solution of which, philosophers know, is beyond the limitations of the mind. They understood astrology, but not astronomy, knew something of magic, but nothing about chemistry. They were wise only as to those things about which nothing can be known.

The poor Indian believed in the "Great Spirit" and saw "design" on every hand. — Trees were made that he might have bows and arrows, wood for his fire and bark for his wigwam — rivers and lakes to give him fish, wild beasts and corn that he might have food, and the animals had skins that he might have clothes.

Primitive peoples all reasoned in the same way, and modern Christians follow their example. They knew but little of the world and thought that it had been made expressly for the use of man. They did not know that it was mostly water, that vast regions were locked in eternal ice and that in most countries the conditions were unfavorable to human life. They knew nothing of the countless enemies of man that live unseen in water, food and air. Back of the little good they knew they put gods and back of the evil, devils. They thought it of the greatest importance to gain the good will of the gods, who alone could protect them from the devils. Those who worshiped these gods, offered sacrifices, and obeyed priests, were considered loyal members of the tribe or community, and those who refused to worship were regarded as enemies and traitors. The believers, in order to protect themselves from the anger of the gods, exiled or destroyed the infidels.

Believing as they did, the course they pursued was natural. They not only wished to protect themselves from disease and death, from pestilence and famine in this world but the souls of their children from eternal pain in the next. Their gods were savages who demanded flattery and worship not only, but the acceptance of a certain creed. As long as Christians believe in eternal punishment they will be the enemies of those who investigate and contend for the authority of reason, of those who demand evidence, who care nothing for the unsupported assertions of the dead or the illogical inferences of the living.

Science always has been, is, and always will be modest, thoughtful, and truthful. It has but one object: The ascertainment of truth. It has no prejudice, no hatred. It is in the realm of the intellect and cannot be swayed or changed by passion. It does not try to please God, to gain heaven or avoid hell. It is for this world, for the use of man. It is perfectly candid. It does not try to conceal, but to reveal. It is the enemy of mystery, of pretence and cane. It does not ask people to be solemn, but sensible. It calls for and insists on the use of all the senses, of all the faculties of the mind. It does not pretend to be "holy" or "inspired." It courts investigation, criticism and even denial. It asks for the application of every test, for trial by every standard. It knows nothing of blasphemy and does not ask for the imprisonment of those who ignorantly or knowingly deny the truth. The good that springs from knowledge of the truth is the only reward it offers, and the evil resulting from ignorance is the only punishment it threatens. Its effort is to reform the world through intelligence.

On the other hand theology is, always has been, and always will be, ignorant, arrogant, puerile and cruel. When the church had power, hypocrisy was crowned and honesty imprisoned. Fraud wore the tiara and truth was a convict. Liberty was in chains, Theology has always sent the worst to heaven, the best to hell.

Let me give you a scene from the day of judgment. Christ is upon his throne, his secretary by his side. A soul appears. This is what happens —

“What is your name?”

Torquemada.

“Were you a Christian?”

I was.

“Did you endeavor to convert your fellowmen?”

I did. I tried to convert them by persuasion, by preaching and praying and even by force.

“What did you do?”

I put the heretics in prison, in chains. I tore out their tongues, put out their eyes, crushed their bones, stretched them upon racks, roasted their feet, and if they remained obdurate I flayed them alive or burned them at the stake.

“And did you do all this for my glory?”

Yes, all for you. I wanted to save some, I wanted to protect the young and the weak minded.

“Did you believe the Bible, the miracles — that I was God, that I was born of a virgin and kept money in the mouth of a fish?”

Yes, I believed it all. My reason was the slave of faith.

“Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord. I was hungry and you gave me meat, naked and you clothed me.”

Another soul arises.

“What is your name?”

Giordano Bruno.

“Were you a Christian?”

At one time I was, but for many years I was a philosopher, a seeker after truth.

“Did you seek to convert your fellow-men?”

Not to Christianity, but to the religion of reason. I tried to develop their minds, to free them from the slavery of ignorance and superstition. In my day the church taught the holiness of credulity — the virtue of unquestioning obedience, and in your name tortured and destroyed the intelligent and courageous. I did what I could to civilize the world, to make men tolerant and merciful, to soften the hearts of priests, and banish torture from the world. I expressed my honest thoughts and walked in the light of reason.

“Did you believe the Bible, the miracles? Did you believe that I was God, that I was born of a virgin and that I suffered myself to be killed by the Jews to appease the wrath of God—that is, of myself— so that God could save the souls of a few?”

“No, I did not. I did not believe that God was ever born into my world, or that God learned the trade of a carpenter, or that he “increased in knowledge,” or that he cast devils out of men, or that his garments could cure diseases, or that he allowed himself to be murdered, and in the hour of death “forsook” himself! These things I did not and could not believe. But I did all the good I could. I enlightened the ignorant, comforted the afflicted, defended the innocent, divided even my poverty with the poor, and did the best I could to increase the happiness of my fellow-men. I was a soldier in the army of progress.—I was arrested, imprisoned, tried and convicted by the church — by the “Triumphant Beast.” I was burned at the stake by ignorant and heartless priests and my ashes given to the winds.

Then Christ, his face growing dark, his brows contracted with wrath, with uplifted hands, with half averted face, cries or rather shrieks: “Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

This is the justice of God—the mercy of the compassionate Christ. This is the belief, the dream and hope of the orthodox theologian—“the consummation devoutly to be wished.”

Theology makes God a monster, a tyrant, a savage; makes man a servant, a serf, a slave; promises heaven to the obedient, the meek, the frightened, and threatens the self-reliant with the tortures of hell.

It denounces reason and appeals to the passions — to hope and fear. It does not answer the arguments of those who attack, but resorts to sophistry, falsehood and slander. It is incapable of advancement. It keeps its back to the sunrise, lives

on myth and miracle, and guards with a miser's care the "sacred" superstitions of the past.

In the great struggle between the supernatural and the natural, between gods and men, we have passed midnight. All the forces of civilization, all the facts that have been found, all the truths that have been discovered are the allies of science — the enemies of the supernatural.

We need no myths, no miracles, no gods, no devils.

IX.

FOR thousands of generations the myths have been taught and the miracles believed. Every mother was a missionary and told with loving care the falsehoods of "faith" to her babe. The poison of superstition was in the mother's milk. She was honest and affectionate and her character, her goodness, her smiles and kisses, entered into, mingled with, and became a part of the superstition that she taught. Fathers, friends and priests united with the mothers, and the children thus taught, became the teachers of their children and so the creeds were kept alive.

Childhood loves the romantic, the mysterious, the monstrous. It lives in a world where cause has nothing to do with effect, where the fairy waves her hand and the prince appears. Where wish creates the thing desired and facts become the slaves of amulet and charm. The individual lives the life of the race, and the child is charmed with what the race in its infancy produced.

There seems to be the same difference between mistakes and facts that there is between weeds and corn. Mistakes seem to take care of themselves, while the facts have to be guarded with all possible care. Falsehoods like weeds flourish without care. Weeds care nothing for soil or rain. They not only ask no help but they almost defy destruction. In the minds of children, superstitions, legends, myths and miracles find a natural, and in most instances a lasting home. Thrown aside in manhood, forgotten or denied, in old age they oft return and linger to the end.

This in part accounts for the longevity of religious lies. Ministers with clasped hands and uplifted eyes ask the man who is thinking for himself how he can be wicked and heartless enough to attack the religion of his mother. This question is regarded by the clergy as unanswerable. Of course it is not to be asked by the missionaries, of the Hindus and the Chinese. The heathen are expected to desert the religion of their mothers as Christ and his apostles deserted the religion of their mothers. It is right for Jews and heathen, but not for thinkers and philosophers.

A cannibal was about to kill a missionary for food. The missionary objected and asked the cannibal how he could be so cruel and wicked.

The cannibal replied that he followed the example of his mother. "My mother," said he, "was good enough for me. Her religion is my religion. The last time I saw her she was sitting, propped up against a tree, eating cold missionary."

But now the mother argument has mostly lost its force, and men of mind are satisfied with nothing less than truth.

The phenomena of nature have been investigated and the supernatural has not been found. The myths have faded from the imagination, and of them nothing remains but the poetic. The miraculous has become the absurd, the impossible. Gods and phantoms have been driven from the earth and sky. We are living in a natural world.

Our fathers, some of them, demanded the freedom of religion. We have taken another step. We demand the Religion of Freedom.

O Liberty, thou art the god of my idolatry! Thou art the only deity that hateth bended knees. In thy vast and unvalled temple, beneath the roofless dome, star-gemmed and luminous with suns, thy worshipers stand erect! They do not cringe, or crawl, or bend their foreheads to the earth. The dust has never borne the impress of their lips. Upon thy altars mothers do not sacrifice their babes, nor men their rights. Thou askest naught from man except the things that good men hate — the whip, the chain, the dungeon key. Thou hast no popes, no priests, who stand between their fellow-men and thee. Thou carest not for foolish forms, or selfish prayers. At thy sacred shrine hypocrisy does not bow, virtue does not tremble, superstition's feeble tapers do not burn, but Reason holds aloft her inextinguishable torch whose holy light will one day flood the world.