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WORKS OF
Robert G. Ingersoll

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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 a 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 earth, and the heretics who have died are supposed, at this moment, to be suffering the agonies of the damned. The

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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 the 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.

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

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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, imbedded 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 all kinds of free-thinking as a crime, and this crime he calls heresy. When he had the 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

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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 to 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, 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 the Eighth, 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 whatever 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 offense—death.

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Your attention is called to these six articles established during the reign of Henry the Eighth, 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, 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 hard-

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ship and scorned danger and death. 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 taught men to kill 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 was 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 place of God; for disputing the efficacy of a vicarious atonement; for thinking that 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 Pres-

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byterian, 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 she did 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 Lafranc, and still more unfortunately for the world, the fruit of this marriage was a son called Jean Chauvin, who afterward 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 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 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 by the name of 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 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

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supreme, and the will of Calvin became the law of Geneva.

Under the benign administration of Calvin, James Gruet was beheaded because he had written some profane verses. The slightest word against Calvin or his absurd doctrine 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 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. Servetus¹ 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

¹ Michael Servetus, a Spanish physician; born, 1511; died, 1553.

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, for anything he might have said that had wounded his feelings. Servetus was bound to the stake, 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 flame climbed around 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 in Geneva, 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 min-

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ister, raised his voice. The name of this man should never be forgotten. It was Castalion.¹ 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, Castalion was in all things the opposite of Calvin. To plead for the right of individual judgment was considered as a crime, and Castalion 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 Castalion Calvin heaped every epithet, until his malice was satisfied and his imagination 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

¹ Sebastian Castalion (or Chatillon), a French Protestant clergyman; born, 1515; died, 1563.

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 rivaled the adherents of Calvin, and 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 slavery, 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 one was allowed to differ

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from 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 upon the Presbyterian Church. To the ennobling influence of the arts and science 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 ex-

press 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 congregation 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 the 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 awakened 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

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proportion as 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 these 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 has been charged:

First. With speaking in an ambiguous language in relation to that dear old doctrine of the fall of man. 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 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 Collyer¹ and John Stuart Mill.²

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 devoted his life to the elevation of man, the discovery of truth, and the promulgation of what he believed to be right?

¹ Robert Collyer, an American Unitarian clergyman; born, 1823.

² John Stuart Mill, an English philosophical writer, logician, and economist; born, 1806; died, 1873.

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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 outside 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 having failed to preach the efficacy of "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 to suffer death, someone 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

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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 Spencer¹ and his "evolution," Darwin² and his "origin of species," Bastian³ and his "spontaneous generation," Huxley⁴ and his "protoplasm," Tyndall⁵ 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 everything 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 Socrates⁶ and Penelope⁷ at heaven's

¹ Herbert Spencer, an English philosopher; born, 1820; died, 1903.

² Charles Robert Darwin, an English naturalist; born, 1809; died, 1882.

³ Henry Charlton Bastian, an English physician and biologist; born, 1837.

⁴ Thomas Henry Huxley, an English biologist; born, 1825; died, 1895.

⁵ John Tyndall, a British physicist; born, 1820; died, 1893.

⁶ Socrates, a Greek philosopher; born about 470 B.C.; died, 399 B.C.

⁷ Penelope, in Greek legend, the wife of Odysseus and mother of Telemachus; she was famous as a model of the domestic virtues.

gate was, to say the least, a trifle more cordial than that of Catherine II.¹

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.

Catherine II assassinated her husband. Stepping upon his corpse, she mounted the throne. She was the murderess of Prince Ivan, the 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, Catherine was probably one of the most intellectual beasts that ever wore a crown.

Catherine, 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 "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 vocations of life.

If this doctrine is true, God, to say the least

¹ Catherine II, Empress of Russia; born, 1729; usurped the throne, 1762; died, 1796.

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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 his 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 mighty 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 Motts¹ and Coopers²—the Mansfields³

¹ Mrs. Lucretia Coffin Mott, an American social reformer and preacher in the Society of Friends; born, 1793; died, 1880.

² Anthony Ashley Cooper, an English philanthropist; born, 1801; died, 1885.

³ Charles Blachford Mansfield, an English chemist and traveler; born, 1819; died, 1855.

and Marshalls¹—the Wilberforces² and Sumners³—the Angelos⁴ and Raphaels⁵—were never honored by a “call.” These 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 Psalm⁶ 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.

¹ John Marshall, an English anatomist and surgeon; born, 1818; died, 1891.

² William Wilberforce, an English philanthropist, statesman, and orator, famous as an opponent of the slave-trade; born, 1759; died, 1833.

³ Charles Sumner, an American statesman and opponent of the slave-trade; born, 1811; died, 1874.

⁴ Angelo (Michelangelo Buonarrotti), an Italian sculptor, painter, architect, and poet; born, 1475; died, 1564.

⁵ Raphael Sanzio, an Italian painter; born, 1483; died, 1520.

⁶ Verses 6-30.

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“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 Catherine 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"?¹

Did Julius Cæsar 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 unwallled 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."²

Did Cæsar take the city of Jericho³ "and utterly destroy all that was in the city, both man and woman, 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"?⁴

¹ Deuteronomy 2:33, 34.

² Deuteronomy 3:4-6.

³ Joshua 6:21.

⁴ Joshua 10:40.

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, or give me none.

Tenth. With having repudiated the doctrines 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 offense 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 cruel creed, and such children as have been baptized, ought at this very moment to be dashed down to the lowest glowing gulf of the 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.

A minister once asked an old lady, a member of his church, what she thought of the doctrine of total depravity, and the dear old soul replied that she thought it a mighty good doctrine if the Lord would only give the people grace enough to live up to it!

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 sense in this doctrine; that it is abhorrent to all who have not been the

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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.

As to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, I wish with all my heart that it may prove to be a fact. I really hope that every saint, no matter how badly he may break on the first quarter, nor how many shoes he may cast at the half-mile pole, will foot it bravely down the long home-stretch, and win eternal heaven by at least a neck.

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 Eliot¹ to the execution of the last Modoc,² 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,³ the Saybrook Platform,⁴ and the resolutions of the Evangelical Alliance.⁵ 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

¹ John Eliot, an Anglo-American missionary to the Indians of New England, called "the Apostle of the Indians"; born, 1604; died, 1690.

² Modoc (or Modock), a tribe of Indians, formerly occupying the shores of Little Klamath, Modoc, and Clear Lakes, in Oregon.

³ Thirty-nine Articles, a declaration issued in 1563 by Elizabeth, Queen of England, stating the rules of the Anglican Church.

⁴ Saybrook Platform, a declaration of principles adopted by a Congregational synod at Saybrook in 1708.

⁵ The Evangelical Alliance, the name of an association of Christians belonging to Evangelical denominations, organized by a world's convention at London in 1846, with the object of promoting Christian intercourse between the different Protestant denominations and more effective coöperation in Christian work.

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of their own, no prejudices 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 lion's 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 and 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 Christna 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 alienate from God; but he that, living, embraceth 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 never be 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

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ambition of man, Presbyterianism is the most hideous.

But what shall I say more? for the time would fail me to tell of Sabellianism,¹ of a "model 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, and 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

¹ Sabellism, the doctrine taught by Sabellius, a Roman presbyter, who lived during the close of the second century and the beginning of the third century A.D. He attempted to explain the doctrine of the Trinity on philosophical grounds.

Faith must be! It reminds one of the dinner described by Sydney Smith,¹ 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 molted 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

¹ Sydney Smith, an English clergyman, wit, and essayist; born, 1771; died, 1845.

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 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; 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 the 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 Eglon¹ of superstition, science has a message from truth.

¹ Eglon, in Old Testament history, a king of the Moabites who captured Jericho and occupied it for eighteen years, during which he oppressed the Hebrews and obliged them to pay tribute.

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,¹ 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 can not, stop the onward march of the human race. Heresy can not be burned, nor imprisoned, nor starved. It laughs at presbyteries and synods, at Œcumenical 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 new thoughts. Heresy is a cradle; orthodoxy a coffin.

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

Is it possible that an infinite Deity is unwilling that man should investigate the phenomena by which he is surrounded? Is it possible that

¹ Voltaire, the surname of François Marie Arouet, a French writer; born, 1694; died, 1778.

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a god delights in threatening and terrifying men? What glory, what honor, and what renown a god must win in 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 ears to the splendid promises 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 Christ. 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 by signs. It makes no appeal to faith, to ignorance, to credulity, or to fear. It has no punishment for unbelief and no reward for hypocrisy. It appears to man in the name of demonstration. It has nothing to conceal. It has no fear of being read, 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

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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.

SOME REASONS WHY

[This lecture was delivered on April 25, 1881, at Booth's Theater in New York City before an intensely interested audience.]

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: The history of the world shows that religion has made enemies instead of friends. That one word "religion" paints the horizon of the past with every form of agony and torture, and when one pronounces the name of "religion" we think of fifteen hundred years of persecution, of six thousand years of hatred, slander, and vituperation. Strange, but true, that those who have loved God most have loved men least; strange that in countries where there has been the most religion there has been the most agony; and that is one reason why I am opposed to what is known as religion. [Applause.]

By religion I mean the duties that men are supposed to owe to God: by religion I mean, not what man owes to man, but what we owe to some Invisible, Infinite, and Supreme Being. The question arises, Can any relation exist between finite man and infinite being? An infinite being is absolutely conditional. An infinite be-

ing can not want, can not receive, and a finite being can not give to the infinite. Can I increase his happiness or decrease his misery? Does he need my strength or my life? What can I do for him? I say, nothing. For one, I do not believe there is any God who gives rain or sunshine for praying. [Applause.] For one, I do not believe there is any being who helps man simply because he kneels. I may be mistaken, but that is my doctrine, that the finite can not by any possibility help the infinite or the infinite be indebted to the finite; that the finite can not by any possibility assist a being who is all in all. What can we do? We can help man; we can help clothe the naked, feed the hungry; we can help break the chains of the slave; we can help weave a garment of joy that will finally cover this world. [Applause.] That is all that man can do. Wherever he has endeavored to do more he has simply increased the misery of his fellows. I can find out nothing of these things myself by my unaided reasoning. If there is an infinite God and I have not reason enough to comprehend His universe, whose fault is it?

I am told that we have the inspired will of God. I do not know exactly what they mean by inspired. No two sects agree on that word. Some tell me that every great work is inspired, that Shakespeare is inspired. I would be less

apt to dispute that than a similar remark about any other book on this earth. [Applause.] If the Jehovah had wanted to have a book written, the inspiration of which should not be disputed, He should have waited until Shakespeare lived. Whatever they mean by inspiration they at least mean that it is true. If it is true, it does not need to be inspired. The truth will take care of itself. Nothing except a falsehood needs inspiration. [Applause.] What is inspiration? A man looks at the sea and the sea says something to him. Another man looks at the same sea, and the sea tells another story to him. The sea can not tell the same story to any two human beings. There is not a thing in nature, from a pebble to a constellation, that tells the same story to any two human beings. It depends upon the man's experience, his intellectual development, and what chord of memory it touches. One looks upon the sea and is filled with grief; another looks upon it and laughs.

Last year, riding in the cars from Boston to Portsmouth, there sat opposite me a lady and gentleman. As we reached the latter place the woman, for the first time in her life, caught a burst of the sea, and she looked and said to her husband: "Is not that beautiful?" and he looked and said: "I'll bet you can dig clams right there." [Laughter.]

Another illustration. A little while ago a

gentleman was walking with another in South Carolina, at Charleston,—one who had been upon the other side. Said the Northerner to the Southerner, “Did you ever see such a night as this; did you ever in your life see such a moon?” “Oh, my God,” said he, “you ought to have seen that moon before the war.” [Laughter.]

I simply say these things to convince you that everything in nature has a different story to tell every human being. So the Bible tells a different story to every man that reads it. History proves what I say. Why so many sects? Why so much persecution? Simply because two people could not understand it exactly alike. You may reply that God intended it should be so understood, and that is the real revelation that God intended. For instance, I write a letter to Smith; I want to convey to him certain thoughts. If I am honest, I will use the words which will convey to him my thoughts, but not being infinite I do not know exactly how Smith will understand my words; but if I were infinite, I would be bound to use the words that I knew Smith would get my exact idea from. [Applause.] If God intended to make a revelation to me, He has to make it to me through my brain and my reasoning. He can not make a revelation to another man for me. That other man will have God’s words for it

but I will only have that man's word for it. [Laughter.] As that man has been dead for several thousand years, and as I do not know what his reputation was for truth and veracity in the neighborhood in which he lived,—[laughter]—I will wait for the Lord to speak again. Suppose when I read it, the revelation to me, through the Bible, is that it is not true, and God knew that I would know that when I did read it, and knew, if I did not say it, I would be dishonest. Is it possible that He would damn me for being honest and give me wings if I would play the hypocrite? [Applause.] The inspiration of the Bible depends upon the ignorance of the gentleman who reads it. [Laughter.] Yet they tell me this book was written by the Creator of every shining star.

Now let us see. I want to be honest and candid. I have just as much at stake in the way of soul as any doctor of divinity that ever lived, and more than some I have met. [Laughter.] According to this book, the first attempt at peopling this world was a failure. God had to destroy all but eight. He saved some of the same kind to start again, which I think was a mistake. [Laughter.] After that, the people still getting worse, He selected from the wide world a few of the tribe of Abraham. He had no time to waste with everybody. He had no time to throw away on Egypt. It had at that

time a vast and splendid civilization, in which there were free schools; in which the one man married the one wife; where there were courts of law; where there were codes of laws.

Neither could he give attention to India, that had at that time a literature as splendid almost as ours, a language as perfect, that had produced poets, philosophers, statesmen. He had no time to waste with them, but took a few of the tribe of Abraham, and he did his best to civilize these people. He was their Governor, their Executive, their Supreme Court. He established a despotism, and from Mount Sinai he proclaimed his laws. They did not pay much attention to them. He wrought thousands of miracles to convince them that he was a God.

Is it not perfectly wonderful that the priest of one religion never believes the miracle told by the priest of another? [Laughter.] Is it possible that they know each other? [Laughter.] I heard a story the other day. A gentleman was telling a very remarkable circumstance that happened to himself, and all the listeners except one said, "Is it possible: did you ever hear such a wonderful thing in all your life?" They noticed that this one man did not appear to take a very vivid interest in the story, so one said to him, "You do not express much astonishment at the story?" "No," says he, "I am a liar myself."

I find by reading this book that a worse Government was never established than that established by Jehovah; that the Jews were the most unfortunate people who lived upon the globe. Let us compare this book. In all civilized countries it is not only admitted, but passionately asserted, that slavery is an infamous crime; that a war of extermination is murder; that polygamy enslaves woman, degrades man, and destroys home; that nothing is more infamous than the slaughter of decrepit men and helpless women and of prattling babes; that the captured maiden should not be given to her captors; that wives should not be stoned to death for differing in religion from their husbands. We know there was a time in the history of most nations when all these crimes were regarded as divine institutions. Nations entertaining these views to-day are called savage, and with the exception of the Fiji Islanders, some tribes in central Africa, and a few citizens of Delaware,—[laughter]—no human being can be found degraded enough to agree upon those subjects with Jehovah.

To-day, the fact that a nation has abolished and abandoned those things is the only evidence that it can offer to show that it is not still barbarous; but a believer in the inspiration of the Bible is compelled to say there was a time when slavery was right, when polygamy was the high-

est form of virtue, when wars of extermination were waged with the sword of mercy, and when the Creator of the whole world commanded the soldier to sheathe the dagger of murder in the dimpled breast of infancy. The believer of the inspiration of the Bible is compelled to say there was a time when it was right for a husband to murder his wife because they differed upon subjects of religion. I deny that such a time ever was. If I knew the real God said it, I would still deny it. [Applause.]

Four thousand years ago, if the Bible is true, God was in favor of slavery, polygamy, wars of extermination, and religious persecution. Now we are told the devil is in favor of all those things, and God is opposed to them, in other words, the devil stands now where God stood four thousand years ago; yet they tell me God is just as good now as He was then, and the devil just as bad now as he was then.

Other nations believed in slavery, polygamy, and war and persecution without ever having received one ray of light from heaven. That shows that a special revelation is not necessary to teach a man to do wrong. Other nations did no worse without the Bible than the Jews did with it. Suppose the devil had inspired a book? In what respect would he have differed from God on the subject of slavery, polygamy, wars of extermination, and religious persecution?

Suppose we knew that after God had finished his book the devil had gotten possession of it, and had written a few passages to suit himself, which passages, O Christian, would you pick out now as having probably been written by the devil? which of these two, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," or "Kill all the males among the little ones, and kill every man, but all the women and girls keep alive for yourselves,"—which of those two passages would they select as having been written by the devil? [Applause.] If God wrote the last, there is no need of a devil.

Is there a Christian in the wide world who does not wish that God, from the thunder and lightning of Sinai, had said: "You shall not enslave your fellow-man"? I am opposed to any man who is in favor of slavery. [Applause.] If a revolution is needed at all it is to prevent man enslaving his fellow-man. But they say God did the best he could; that the Jews were so bad that He had to come up kind of slow. [Laughter.] If he had told them suddenly they must not murder and steal, they would not have paid any respect to the Ten Commandments.

Suppose you go to the cannibal islands to prevent the gentlemen there from eating missionaries, and you found they ate them raw. The first move is to induce them to cook them. [Laughter.] After you get them to eat cooked missionaries, you will then, without their know-

ing it, occasionally slip in a little mutton. [Laughter.] We will go on gradually decreasing missionaries and increasing mutton,—[laughter]—until finally they will be so cultivated that they will prefer the sheep to the priest. [Laughter.] I think the missionaries would object to that mode, of course.

I know this book was written by the Jews themselves. If they were to write it now it would be different to-day. They are a civilized people. I do not wish it understood that a word I say to-night touches the slightest prejudice in any man's mind against the Jewish people. They are as good a people as live to-day. I will say right here, they never had any luck until Jehovah abandoned them. [Laughter.]

Now we come to the New Testament. They tell me that is better than the Old. I say it is worse. The great objection to the Old Testament is that it is cruel; but in the Old Testament the revenge of God stopped with the portals of the tomb. He never threatened punishment after death. He never threatened one thing beyond the grave. It was reserved for the New Testament to make known the doctrine of eternal punishment.

Is the New Testament inspired? I have not time to give many reasons, but I will give some. In the first place, they tell me that the very fact the witnesses disagree in minor mat-

ters shows that they have not conspired to tell the same story. Good. And I say in every lawsuit where four or five witnesses testify, or endeavor to testify, to the same transaction, it is natural that they should differ on minor points. Why? Because no two occupy exactly the same position; no two see exactly alike; no two remember precisely the same, and their disagreement is due to and accounted for by the imperfection of human nature and the fact that they did not all have an equal opportunity to know. But if you admit or say that the four witnesses were inspired by an infinite being who did see it all, then they should remember all the same, because inspiration does not depend on memory.

That brings me to another point. Why were there four gospels? What is the use of more than one correct account of anything? [Laughter.] If you want to spread it, send copies. [Laughter.] No human being has got the ingenuity to tell me why there were four gospels when one correct gospel would have been enough. Why should there have been four original multiplication tables? [Laughter.] One is enough, and if anybody has got any use for it he can copy that one. The very fact we have got four gospels shows that it is not an inspired book.

The next point is that according to the New Testament the salvation of the world depended upon the atonement. Only one of the books in

the New Testament says anything about that, and that is John. The church followed John, and they ought to follow John because the church wrote that book called John. According to that the whole world was to be damned on account of the sins of one man; and that absurdity was the father and mother of another absurdity, that the whole world could be saved on account of the virtue of another man. I deny both propositions. No man can sin for me; no man can be virtuous for me; I must reap what I sow. But they say the law must be satisfied. What kind of a law is it that would demand punishment of the innocent? Just think of it. Here is a man about to be hanged, and another comes up and says: "That man has got a family, and I have not; that man is in good health and I am not well, and I will be hung in his place." And the governor says, "All right. There has a murder been committed, and we have got to have a hanging,—we do not care who." [Laughter.]

Under the Mosaic dispensation there was no remission of sins without the shedding of blood. If a man committed murder he brought a pair of doves or a sheep to the priest, and the priest laid his hands on the animal, and the sins of the man were transferred to the animal. You see how that could be done easy enough. [Laughter.] Then they killed the animal, and sprinkled

its blood on the altar. That let the man off. And why did God demand the sacrifice of a sheep? I will tell you: because priests love mutton. [Laughter.]

To make the innocent suffer is the greatest crime. I do not wish to go to heaven on the virtues of somebody else. If I can not settle by the books and go, I do not wish to go. I do not want to feel as if I were there on sufferance,—that I was in the poorhouse of the universe, supported by the town. [Laughter.]

They tell us Judas betrayed Christ. Well, if Christ had not been betrayed no atonement would have been made, and then every human soul would have been damned and heaven would have been for rent. [Laughter.] Supposing that Judas knew the Christian system, then perhaps he thought that by betraying Christ he could get forgiven not only for the sins that he had already committed, but for the sin of betrayal, and if, on the way to Calvary, and later, some brave, heroic soul had rescued Christ from the mob, he would have made his own damnation sure. It will not do. There is no logic in that.

They say God tried to civilize the Jews. If He had succeeded, according to the Christian system, we all would have been damned, because if the Jews had been civilized they would not have crucified Christ. They would have believed in freedom of speech, and as a result the

world would have been lost for two thousand years. The Christian world has been trying to explain the atonement, and they have always ended by failing to explain it.

Now I come to the second objection, which is that certain belief is necessary to salvation. I will believe according to the evidence. In my mind are certain scales which weigh everything, and my integrity stands there and knows which side goes up and which side goes down. If I am an honest man, I will report the weights like an honest man. They say I must believe a certain thing or I will be eternally damned. They tell me that to believe is the safer way. I deny it. The safest thing you can do is to be honest. No man, when the shadows of the last hours were gathering around him, ever wished that he had lived the life of a hypocrite. [Applause.] If I find at the day of judgment that I have been mistaken, I will say so like a man. If God tells me then that He is the author of the Old Testament I will admit that He is worse than I thought He was, and when He comes to pronounce sentence upon me I will say to Him: do unto others as you would that others should do unto you. [Applause.] I have a right to think; I can not control my belief; my brain is my castle, and if I do not defend it, my soul becomes a slave and a serf. [Applause.]

If you throw away your reason, your soul

is not worth saving. Salvation depends not upon belief, but upon deed—upon kindness, upon justice, upon mercy. Your own deeds are your savior, and you can be saved in no other way. [Applause.]

I am told in this Testament to love my enemies. I can not; I will not. I do not hate enemies; I do not wish to injure enemies, but I do not care about seeing them. I do not like them. I love my friends, and the man who loves enemies and friends loves me. [Applause.] The doctrine of non-resistance is born of weakness. The man that first said it said it because it was the best he could do under the circumstances. [Applause.] While the church said love your enemies, in her sacred vestments gleamed the daggers of assassination. [Applause.] With her cunning hand she wore 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 and hypocrisy wore the miter and the tiara.

If Christ was in fact God, He knew of the future, He knew what crimes and horrors would be committed in His name. He knew the fires of persecution would climb around the limbs of countless martyrs, that brave men and women would languish in dungeons and darkness, that the church would use instruments of torture, that in His name His followers would trade in

human flesh, that cradles would be robbed and women's breasts unbabed for gold, and yet He died with voiceless lips. [Applause.]

If Christ was God, why did He not tell His disciples, and through them the world, "Man shall not persecute his fellow-man"? Why did He not say, "I am God"? why did He not explain the doctrine of the Trinity? why did He not tell what manner of baptism was pleasing to Him? why did He not say the Old Testament is true? why did He not write His Testament Himself? why did He leave His words to accident, to ignorance, to malice, and to chance? Why did He not say something positive, definite, satisfactory about another world? Why did He not turn the tear-stained hope of immortality to the glad knowledge of another life? [Applause.] Why did He go dumbly to His death, leaving the world to misery and to doubt?

Because He was a man.

[Colonel Ingersoll read several extracts from the Bible, which he said originated with Zoroaster, Buddha, Cicero, Epictetus, Pythagoras, and other ancient writers, and he read extracts from various pagan writers, which he claimed contrasted favorably with the best things in the Bible. He continued:]

No God has a right to create a man who is to be eternally damned. Infinite wisdom has no

right to make a failure, and a man that is to be eternally damned is not a conspicuous success. [Laughter.] Infinite wisdom has no right to make an investment that will not finally pay a dividend. No God has a right to add to the agony of this universe, and yet around the angels of immortality Christianity has coiled this serpent of eternal pain. Upon love's breast the church has placed that asp, and yet people talk to me about the consolations of religion. [Laughter.]. A few days ago the bark *Tiger* was found upon the wide sea one hundred and twenty-six days from Liverpool. For nine days not a mouthful of food or a drop of water was to be had. There were on board the captain, mate, and eleven men. When they had been out a hundred and seventeen days they killed the captain's dog. Nine days more—no food, no water, and Captain Kruger stood upon the deck in the presence of his starving crew, with a revolver in his hand, put it upon his temple, and said, "Boys, this can not last much longer; I am willing to die to save the rest of you." The mate grasped the revolver from his hand, and said, "Wait"; and the next day upon the horizon of despair was the smoke of the ship which rescued them. Do you tell me to-night if Captain Kruger was not a Christian, and he had sent that ball crashing through his generous brain, that there was an Almighty waiting to clutch

his naked soul that he might damn him forever? [Applause.] It will not do.

Ah, but they tell me you have no right to pick the bad things out of the Bible. I say, an infinite God has no right to put bad things into His Bible. Does anybody believe if God was going to write a book now He would uphold slavery; that He would favor polygamy; that He would say kill the heathen, stab the women, dash out the brains of the children? We have civilized Him.

We make our own God, and we make Him better day by day. Some honest people really believe that in some wonderful way we are indebted to Moses for geology, to Joshua for astronomy and military tactics, to Samson for weapons of war, to Daniel for holy curses, to Solomon for the art of cross-examination, to Jonah for the science of navigation, to St. Paul for steamships and locomotives, to the four Gospels for telegraphs and sewing-machines, to the Apocalypse for looms, sawmills, and telephones; and that to the Sermon on the Mount we are indebted for mortars and Krupp guns. [Laughter.]

We are told that no nation has ever been civilized without a Bible. The Jews had one, and yet they crucified a perfectly innocent man. They could not have done much worse without a Bible. [Laughter.] God must have known

six thousand years ago that it was impossible to civilize people without a Bible just as well as they know it now. Why did he ever allow a nation to be without a Bible? Why did he not give a few leaves to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden? [Laughter.]

Take from the Bible the miracles, and I admit that the good passages are true. If they are true, they do not need to be inspired. Miracles are the children of mendacity. Nothing can be more wonderful than the majestic, sublime, and eternal march of cause and effect. [Applause.] Reason must be the final arbiter. An inspired book can not stand against a demonstrated fact. Is a man to be rewarded eternally for believing without evidence or against evidence? Do you tell me that the less brain a man has the better chance he has for heaven? Think of a heaven filled with men who never thought. Better that all that is should cease to be; better that God had never been; better that all the springs and seeds of things should fall and wither in great Nature's realm; better that causes and effects should lose relation; better that every life should change to breathless death and voiceless blank, and every star to blind oblivion and moveless naught, than that this religion should be true.

The religion of the future is humanity. The religion of the future will say to every man, you

have the right to think and investigate for yourself.

Liberty is my religion. [Applause.] Everything that is true, every good thought, every beautiful thing, every self-denying action—all these make my Bible. Every bubble, every star, are passages in my Bible. A constellation is a chapter. Every shining world is a part of it. You can not interpolate it: you can not change it. It is the same forever. My Bible is all that speaks to man. Every violet, every blade of grass, every tree, every mountain crowned with snow, every star that shines, every throb of love, every honest act, all that is good and true combined, make my Bible, and upon that book I stand. [Applause.]

ORTHODOXY

LADIES 'AND GENTLEMEN: It is utterly inconceivable that any man believing in the truth of the Christian religion could 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 pretense, 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 to-night goes far toward justifying the accusation. [Applause.]

It gives me immense pleasure to say to this immense audience that orthodox religion is dying out of the civilized world. [Applause.] It is a sick man. [Laughter.] It has been attacked with two diseases—softening of the

brain and ossification of the heart. [Laughter.] It is a religion that no longer satisfies the intelligence of this country; a religion 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; a religion that puts a shadow upon the cradle; a religion 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 and in its place I want humanity, I want good-fellowship, I want a brain without a chain, I want a religion that every good heart will cheerfully applaud. [Applause.]

We must remember that this is a world of progress, a world of change. 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, wrinkled and old, over his crucible and endeavored to find some secret by which he could change the baser metals into purest gold. The alchemist is gone; the chemist has taken 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, and after them came the parson and the priest; and the parson and priest must go. [Applause.] The preacher must go, and in his place must come the teacher—that real interpreter of nature. We are done with the supernatural. We are through with the miraculous and the wonderful.

There was once a prophet who pretended to read in the book of the future. His place has been taken by the philosopher, who reasons from cause to effect—a man who finds the facts by which he is surrounded and endeavors to reason from these premises, and to tell what in all probability will happen in the future. The prophet is gone, the philosopher is here.

There was a time when man sought aid entirely from heaven—when he prayed to the deaf sky. There was a time when the world depended upon the supernaturalist. That time in Christendom has passed. We now depend upon the naturalist—not upon the disciple of faith, but upon the discoverer of facts—upon the

demonstrator of truth. At last we are beginning to build upon a solid foundation, and just as we progress the supernatural must die.

Religion of the supernatural kind will fade from this world, and in its place we will 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. [Applause.]

The church, however, dies a little hard. [Laughter.] The brain of the world is not yet developed. There are intellectual diseases the same as diseases of the body. Intellectual mumps and measles still afflict mankind. [Laughter.]

Whenever the new comes, the old protests, and the old fights for its place as long as it has a particle of power. And we are now having the same warfare between superstition and science that there was between the stage-coach and the locomotive. [Laughter.] But the stage-coach had to go. It had its day of glory and power, but it is gone. It went West. [Laughter.] In a little while it will be driven into the Pacific, with the last Indian aboard. [Laughter.] So we find that there is the same conflict between the different sects and the different schools, not only of philosophy, but of medicine. Recollect that everything except the demon-

strated 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 the word "obsolete." New words are continually being born. There is a cradle in which a word is rocked. A thought is molded to a sound, and the child-word is born. And then comes a time when the word gets old, and wrinkled, and expressionless, and is carried mournfully to the grave, and that is the end of it.

So in the schools of medicine. You can remember, so can I, when the old allopathist reigned supreme. If there was anything the matter with a man, they let out his blood. [Laughter.] Called to the bed-side, they took him to the edge of eternity with medicine, and then practiced all their art to bring him back to life. [Laughter.] One can hardly imagine how perfect a constitution it took a few years ago to stand the assault of a doctor. [Laughter.] And long after it was found to be a mistake hundreds and thousands of the old 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 idiotic 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. [Laughter.] 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! [Laughter.] Think of the colleges wherein men are taught that it is dangerous to think, and that they must never use their brains except in an 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! [Laughter and applause.] Think of those who grow rich on credulity and who fatten on faith! [Renewed laughter and applause.] Do you suppose they are going to die without a struggle? [Laughter.] They will die if they do not struggle. [Laughter.] 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 out upon the cold and uncharitable world. His prayers are not answered; he gets no help from on high, and the pews are beginning to criticise the pulpit. What is the man to do? If he suddenly changes he is gone.

[Laughter.] If he preaches what he really believes, he will get notice to quit. [Laughter.] And yet if he and the congregation would come together and be perfectly honest, they would all admit they did not believe anything of it. [Laughter and applause.]

Only a little while ago a couple of ladies were riding together, from a revival, in a carriage 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?" Says she: "I do not believe in the Bible." The other replied: "Neither do I." [Laughter and applause.]

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, just what we believe." [Applause.]

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 says he: "Boys, let us all tell our real names." [Great laughter and applause.]

If the ministers and their congregations would only tell their real thoughts they would find that they are nearly as bad as I am,—[laughter and

applause]—and that they believe just about as little. [Laughter.]

Now, I have been talking a great deal about the orthodox religion; and, after having delivered a lecture, I would meet some good, religious person, and he would say 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, well," he says, "we do not mind that any more." "Well, why do you not change it?" "Oh, well," he says, "we understand it."

Possibly the creed is in the best possible condition for them now. There is a tacit understanding that they do not believe it. There is a tacit understanding that they have got some way to get around it, that they read between the lines; and if they should meet now to form a creed, they might fail to agree; and the creed is now so that 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 as he agrees to. I have not the slightest sympathy with a Presbyterian preacher who endeavors to preach infidelity from his pulpit and receive Presbyterian money. [Applause and laughter.] 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 bigger fool than I am." [Laughter.]

But I find that I get the creed very nearly right. To-day there was put into my hands the new Congregational creed. I have just read it, and I thought I would call your attention to it to-night, to find whether the church has made any advance; to find whether it has been affected by the light of science; to find whether the sun of knowledge 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 of earth, and of all things visible and invisible." I am perfectly willing that He should make the invisible, if they want Him to. [Laughter.] 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 something you do not understand—that you never can understand?

In the old creeds they described this God as a being without body and parts or passions. Think of that! Something without body and parts or passions. I defy any man in the world to write a letter descriptive of nothing. [Laughter and applause.] You can not conceive of a finer word-painting of a vacuum than a something without body and 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 the same. [Laughter and applause.]

So, too, He is the ruler of the world, and I find here that we find His Providence in the government of the nations? What nations? What evidence can you find, if you are abso-

lutely honest and not frightened, in the history of nations, 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? How do you account for the fact that justice does not always triumph? How do you account for the fact that innocence is not a perfect shield? 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 volcanoes, swept from the earth by storms, died by famine, if there is above us a Ruler who is infinitely good and infinitely powerful? [Applause.]

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. [Laughter.] I live in one of the rural districts of the universe. [Laughter.] I know not about these things as much

as the clergy. [Laughter.] And if they know no more about the other world than they do about this, it is not worth mentioning. [Laughter.]

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? You would say truthfully that I was as bad as the murderer. That is what you would say. Is it possible for this God to prevent it? Then, if He does not, He is a fiend; He is not good.

But they say He "permits it." What for? So 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 commit murder, you would hang me. [Laughter.] Why not? And if God made a man whom He knew would commit murder, then God is guilty of that murder. [Applause.] If God made a man, knowing 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 called that wretch

into existence is directly responsible. [Applause.]

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 had to do 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 will not look to the sky; you need throw neither praise nor blame; you can find the efficient causes nearer home—right here. [Applause.]

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 good and beautiful. We can not 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 can not love the infinitely unknown.

And how can we be made in the image of something that has neither body and parts nor passions? [Applause and laughter.]

“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 there is, strike here—[tapping his forehead]—and you will hear an echo. [Laughter and applause.] Something is for rent. Does any human being now believe that God made man of dust, and a 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 apple? [Laughter.]

If I did not want a man to eat my fruit I would not put him in my orchard. [Laughter.]

Does anybody now believe in the snake story? [Laughter.] I pity any man or woman who, in this nineteenth century, believes in that childish fable. Why did they disobey? Why, they were tempted. Who by? The devil. Who made the devil? [Laughter and applause.] What did He make him for? [Renewed laughter.] Why did he not tell Adam and Eve about this fellow? [Laughter.] Why did He not

watch the devil, instead of watching Adam and Eve? [Laughter.] Instead of turning them out, why did He not keep him from getting in? [Laughter.] Why did He not have His flood first and drown the devil, before He made man and woman? [Laughter and applause.]

And yet people who call themselves intelligent—professors in colleges and presidents of venerable institutions—teach children, and young men who ought to be children, that the Garden of Eden story is an absolute historical fact! Well, I guess it will not be long until that will fade from the imagination of men. I defy any man to think of a more childish thing. This God waiting around there—[laughter]—knowing all the while what would happen—[laughter]—made them on purpose so it would happen; and then what does He do? Holds all of us responsible; and we were not there! [Loud laughter.] 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;—[laughter]—and if I had been there, and known all the circumstances, I should have voted against him. [Laughter and applause.] And yet, I am held responsible.

What did Adam do? I can not see that it amounted to much anyway. A god that can create something out of nothing ought not to

have complained of the loss of an apple. [Laughter.] I can hardly have the patience to speak upon such a subject.

Now, that absurdity gave birth to another—that, while we could be rightfully charged with the rascality of somebody else, we could also be credited with the virtues of somebody else; and the atonement is the absurdity which offsets the other absurdity of the fall of man. Let us leave them both out; it reads a great deal better with both of them out; it makes better sense. [Laughter and applause.]

Now, in consequence of that, everybody is alienated from God. How? Why? Oh, we are all depraved, you know; we all want to 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 ones; 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 upon our part. Why were we not given better brains? That may account for the alienation. But 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. [Laughter.] 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; it is a libel upon all the wives who have suffered and labored, wept and worked, for children; it is a libel upon all the men who have died for their country; it is a libel upon all who have fought for human liberty; it is a libel upon the human race. [Applause.] Leave out the history of the church, and there is nothing left in this world to prove the depravity of man. [Applause.]

Everybody that comes is against God. Every soul, they think, is like the wrecked Irishman.

He was wrecked in the sea and drifted to an unknown island, and as he climbed up the shore he saw a man, and said to him, "Have you a government here?" The man said, "We have." "Well," said he, "I am agin it!" [Laughter and applause.]

The church teaches us that that 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 can not make a soul that is not totally depraved, I respectfully suggest, should retire from the business. [Laughter and applause.] And if a god has made us, knowing that we would be totally depraved, why should we go to the same being for repairs? [Laughter and applause.]

What is the next? "That all men are so

alienated from God that there is no salvation from the guilt and power of his sin except through God's redeeming grace."

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 the mysterious thing called the second birth; he must be born again. That is not enough unless he has faith; he must believe something that he does not understand. Reformation is not enough; there must be what they call conversion. I deny it.

According to the church, nothing so excites the wrath of God—nothing so corrugates the brows of Jehovah with revenge—as a man relying on his own good works. [Laughter and applause.] He must admit that he ought to be damned, and that of the two he prefers it,—[laughter]—before God will consent to save him.

I saw a man the other day, and he said to me, "I am a Unitarian Universalist; that is what I am." Said I, "What do you mean by that?" "Well," said he, "here 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." [Laughter and applause.]

What is the next thing in this great creed?

“We believe that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the records of God’s revelation of Himself in the work of redemption; that they are written by men under the special guidance of the Holy Spirit: 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, it is the result of the high-joint-commission appointed to draw up a creed for 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. The being who wrote it 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 the Bible that upholds that institution was written by men under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Then I disagree with the Holy Ghost upon that institution. [Laughter and loud applause.]

The church tells us that men under the guidance of the Holy Ghost upheld the institution of polygamy—I deny it. That under the guid-

ance of the Holy Ghost these men upheld wars of extermination and conquest—I deny it. That under the guidance of the Holy Ghost 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, honor bright. If you knew the devil had written a little 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, wise, and beneficent God!

If the devil upheld polygamy would you be surprised? If the devil wanted to kill somebody for differing with him, would you be surprised? If the devil told a man to kill his wife, would you be astonished? And yet, you say, that is exactly what the God of us all did. If there be a God, then that creed is blasphemy. That creed is a libel upon Him who sits upon heaven's throne. [Applause.] I want—if there be a God—I want Him to write in the book of His eternal

remembrance that I denied these lies for Him. [Laughter and applause.]

I do not believe in a slave-holding God; I do not worship a polygamous Holy Ghost;—[laughter]—I do not get upon my knees before any being who commands a husband to slay his wife because she expresses her honest thought. [Applause.]

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 God afterwards 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? [Applause.] Did it ever occur to you that He fell a victim to His own tyranny, and was destroyed by His own law! 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. Why, if you will read the maledictions and curses of that book, you would

think that God, like Lear, had divided heaven among his daughters, and then, in the insanity of despair, had launched his curses upon the human race. [Applause.]

And yet, I must say—I must admit—that the Old Testament is better than the New. In the Old Testament, when God got a man dead, He let him alone. [Laughter.] When He saw him quietly in his grave He was satisfied. [Laughter.] The muscles relaxed, and a smile broke over the Divine face. But in the New Testament the trouble commences just at death. [Laughter and applause.] 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 men upon the gulfs of eternal fire.

The New Testament is just as much worse than the Old, as hell is worse than sleep;—[laughter]—just as much worse as infinite cruelty is worse than annihilation; and yet, the New Testament is pointed to as a gospel of love and peace.

But “more of that hereafter,” as the ministers say. [Laughter.]

“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. [Laughter.] I do not deny it. But what was the result? [Renewed laughter.] The Christian world has caused more war than all the rest of the world besides; all the cunning instruments of death have been devised by Christians; all the wonderful machinery by which the brains are blown out of a man, by which nations are conquered and subdued—all these machines have been born in Christian brains. And yet He came to bring peace, they say; but the Testament says otherwise:¹ “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? [Laughter.] How many millions of Christians are in the uniform of everlasting forgiveness, loving their enemies? [Laughter.]

There was an old Spaniard upon the bed of death, and he sent for a priest, and the priest told him that he would have to forgive his enemies before he died. He says, “I have not any.” “What! no enemies?” “Not one,” said the dying man, “I killed the last one three weeks ago.” [Laughter.]

How many millions of Christians are now armed and equipped to destroy their fellow-Christians? Who are the men in Europe crying out against war? Who wishes to have the

¹ “I came not to send peace, but a sword.”—Matthew 10:34.

nations disarmed? Is it the church? No; it is 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, then Christians assemble in their churches and sing "Te Deum Laudamus" to God. Why? Because He has enabled a few of His children to kill some others of His children. [Laughter and applause.] This is the religion of peace—the religion that invented the Krupp gun, that will hurl a bullet 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, all in the name of universal forgiveness. [Laughter.]

What effect had this religion 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 unto this day? At the bottom of every one of these conflicts you will find a religious question. [Applause.]

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 pretty well 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. Oh, yes, no matter how bad you are, you can instantly be forgiven then; and no matter how good you are, if you fail to believe that, the moment you get to the day of judgment nothing is left but to damn you forever, and all the angels will shout "hallelujah." [Laughter and applause.]

What do they teach to-day? Every murderer goes to heaven; there is only one step from the gallows to God; only one jerk between the halter and heaven. [Laughter.] That is taught by this same church. I believe there ought to be a law to prevent the slightest religious consolation being given to any man who has been guilty of murder. Let a Catholic understand that if he imbrues his hands in his brother's blood, he can have no extreme unction;—[applause]—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. [Applause.] Let him go with his victim. The victim, you know,

dying in his sins, goes to hell, and the murderer has the happiness of seeing him there. [Laughter.] And if heaven grows dull and monotonous, the murderer can again give life to the nerve of pleasure by watching the agony of his victim. I am opposed to that kind of forgiveness. [Laughter.] And yet that is the religion of universal peace to everybody. [Laughter.]

Now, what is the next thing that I wish to call your attention to?

“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? [Laughter.] How many people are being born a year? About fifty millions. How many are you converting a year; really, truthfully? Five or six thousand. [Laughter.] I think I have overestimated the number. [Laughter.] Is orthodox Christianity on the increase? No. There are a hundred times as many unbelievers in orthodox Christianity as there were ten years ago. [Applause.] What are you doing in the missionary world? How long is it since you converted a Chinaman? [Laughter.] 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 theo-

retical workings of the Christian religion. [Laughter and applause.] How long since you have had a convert in India? In my judgment, never; there never has been an intelligent Hindu converted from the time the first missionary put his foot upon 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. [Laughter.] 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,—[laughter]—and paint the sad condition of a gentleman in the interior of Africa without the work of Dr. McCosh,¹—[laughter]—longing for a copy of the *Princeton Review*. [Laughter.] In my judgment, it is a book that would suit a savage. [Laughter and applause.] 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?

What is the next thing here? They all also believe in the resurrection of the dead, and in their Confession of Faith hereto attached I find they also believe in the resurrection of the body. Does anybody believe that that has ever

¹ James McCosh, a Scottish-American philosopher and educator; born, 1811; died, 1894.

thought? [Laughter.] Here is a man, for instance, that weighs two hundred pounds, and gets sick and dies weighing one hundred and twenty; how much will he weigh in the morning of the resurrection? [Laughter and loud applause.] 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 he dies, who will the atoms belong to in the morning of the resurrection—[laughter and applause]—in an action of replevin brought by the missionary against the cannibal? [Renewed laughter.]

It has been demonstrated again and again that there is no creation in nature, and no destruction in nature. It has been demonstrated again and again that the atoms that are in us have been in millions of other beings; grown in the forest, in the grass, blossomed in the flowers, 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, and again spring in vegetation, taken up in the leaves of the trees, turned into wood. And yet we have a church, in the nineteenth century, getting up this doctrine, presided over by professors, by presidents of colleges, and by theologians,—[laughter]—who

tell us that they believe in the resurrection of the body. [Laughter and applause.]

They know better. There is not one so ignorant but what he knows better.

And what is the next thing? "And in a final judgment." It will be a set day. All of us will be there,—[laughter]—and the thousands, and millions, and billions, and trillions, and quadrillions that have died will be there. It will be the day of judgment, and the books will be opened and our case will be called. [Applause and laughter.] Does anybody believe in that now that has got the slightest sense?—one who knows enough to "chew gum without a string"? [Applause and laughter.]

"The issues of which are everlasting punishment for the wicked and everlasting life for the redeemed."

That is the doctrine to-day of the Congregational Church, and that is the doctrine that I oppose. That is the doctrine that I defy and deny.

But I must hasten on. Now this comes to us after all the discussion that has been, and we are told that this religion is finally to conquer this world. This is the same religion that failed to successfully meet the hordes of Mohammed. Mohammed wrested from the disciples of the Cross the fairest part of Europe. It was known that he was an impostor. They knew he was because the people of Mecca said

so, and they knew that Christ was not because the people of Jerusalem said he was.

This impostor wrested from the disciples of Christ the fairest part of Europe, and that fact sowed the seeds of distrust and infidelity in the minds of the Christian world. And the next was an effort to rescue from the infidels the empty sepulcher of Christ. That commenced in the eleventh century and ended in 1291. Europe was almost depopulated. For every man who owed a debt, the debt was discharged if he put a cross on his breast and joined the Crusades. No matter what crime he had committed, the doors of the prison were opened for him to join the Crusades. And what was the result? They believed that God would give them victory over the infidel, and they carried in front of the first Crusade a goat and a goose, believing that both those animals had been 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. [Laughter and applause.] Until 1291 they endeavored to get that sepulcher, until finally the hosts of Christ were driven back baffled, beaten, and demoralized—a poor, miserable religious rabble. They were driven back, and that fact sowed the seeds of distrust in Christendom.

You know at that time the world believed in trial by battle—that God would take the side

of right—and there had been a trial by battle between the Cross and Mohammed, and Mohammed had been victorious. [Applause.]

Well, what was the next? You know 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 destroyed the manuscripts, both Greek and Latin; it destroyed all the history, all the poetry, all the philosophy it could find, and burned every library that it could reach with its torch. And the result was 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; a few statues had been buried, and the result was, that these manuscripts became the seed, the fruit of which is our civilization of to-day. [Applause.] A few forms of beauty were dug from the earth that had protected them, and now the civilized world is filled with art, with painting, and with statuary, in spite of the rage of the early church.

What is the next blow that this church received? The discovery of America. That is the next. The Holy Ghost, who inspired a man to write the Bible, did not know of the existence of this continent, never dreamed of it; the result was that His Bible never spoke of it. He did not dream that the earth is round. He

believed it was flat, although He made it Himself,—[applause and laughter]—and at that time heaven was just up there beyond the clouds. There was where the gods lived, there was where the angels were, and it was against that heaven that Jacob's ladder was that angels ascended and descended. It was to that heaven that Christ ascended after His resurrection. It was up there where the New Jerusalem was, with its streets of gold, and under this earth was perdition; there was where the devils lived; there was where a pit was dug for all unbelievers, and for men who had brains,—[laughter and applause]—and I say that for this reason: That just in proportion that you have brains, just in that proportion your chances for eternal joy are lessened, according to this religion. And just in proportion that you lack brains, your chances in proportion are increased. [Applause.]

They believe, under there, that they discovered America. 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 off. [Laughter.] You will go off the edge." [Laughter.] Magellan said: "I have seen the shadow of the earth upon the moon, and I have more confidence in the shadow even than I have in the church." [Applause.] The ship went

round. The earth was circumnavigated. Science passed its hand above it and beneath it, and where was the heaven, and where was the hell? Vanished forever! And they dwell now only in the religion of superstition. [Applause.] We found there was no place for Jacob's ladder to lean against; no place there for the gods and angels to live; no place there to empty the waters of the deluge; no place there to which Christ could have ascended; and the foundations of the New Jerusalem crumbled, and the towers and domes fell and became simple space—space sown with an infinite number of stars; not with new Jerusalems, but with constellations.

Then man began to grow great, and with that you know came astronomy. Now just see what they did in that. In 1473 Copernicus was born. In 1543 he published his great work. In 1616 the system of Copernicus was condemned by the Pope, by the infallible Catholic Church,—[applause]—and the church is about as near right upon that subject as upon any other. [Laughter.] 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 five years the church insisted that that system was false, and that the old idea was true.

Astronomy is the first help that we ever received from heaven. [Applause and laughter.]

Then came Kepler¹ in 1609, and you may almost date the birth of science from the night that Kepler discovered his first law. That was the dawn of the day of intelligence—his first law, that the planets do not move in circles; his second law, that they described equal spaces in equal times; his third law, that there was a direct relation between weight and velocity. That man gave us a key to heaven. That man opened its infinite book, and we now read it, and he did more good than all the theologians that ever lived. [Applause.]

I have not time to speak of the others—of Galileo,² of Leonardo da Vinci,³ and of hundreds of others that I could mention.

The next thing that gave this church a blow was statistics. Away went special Providence. 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 those conditions, cir-

¹ Johann Kepler, a German astronomer; born, 1571; announced the first two of Kepler's laws of planetary motion in 1609, and the third in 1618; died, 1630.

² Galileo Galilei, an Italian physicist and astronomer; born, 1564; died, 1642.

³ Leonardo da Vinci, an Italian painter, architect, sculptor, scientist, engineer, and musician; born, 1452; died, 1519.

cumstances, and facts were ever active. And now you will see the man who depends entirely upon special Providence gets his life insured. [Laughter and applause.] He has more confidence even in one of these companies than he has in the whole Trinity. [Laughter and applause.]

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; just so many accidents on an average; just so many men marrying women, for instance, older than themselves; just so many murders of a particular kind; just the same number of accidents; and I say to-night statistics utterly demolish the idea of special Providence. [Applause.]

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. Yes, sir! [Laughter.] 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 and all on board. Yes! I said, "Do you think the fellows that were drowned believed in special Providence?" [Laughter and applause.] 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 shores of expectation. Here is one poor little wretch that did not happen to go! [Laughter.] And he thinks that God, the Infinite Being, interfered in his poor little withered behalf and let the rest all go. [Laughter and applause.] That is special Providence!

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.” [Laughter.] It does not make a bit of difference whether we have good times or not—not a bit; the thanksgiving is always exactly the same. [Laughter.]

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, how prosperous the State had been; and there was a young fellow in that State who got out another proclamation, saying: Fearing that the Lord might be misled by official correspondence,—[applause and laughter]—he went on to say that the governor’s proclamation was entirely false; that the State was not prosperous; that the crops had been an almost entire failure; that

nearly every farm in the State was mortgaged, that if the Lord did not believe him, all he asked was: He would send some angel in whom He had confidence to look the matter over for himself. [Applause and laughter.]

Of course I have not time to recount the enemies of the church. Every fact is an enemy of superstition. Every fact is a heretic. Every demonstration is an infidel. Everything that ever happened testified against the supernatural. I have only spoken of a few of the blows that shattered the shield and shivered the lance of superstition.

Here is another one—the doctrine of Charles Darwin.¹ [Applause.] This century will be called Darwin's century, one of the greatest men who ever touched this globe. [Applause.] He has explained more of the phenomena of life than all of the religious teachers. [Applause.] Write the name of Charles Darwin there (on the one hand) and the name of every theologian that ever lived there (on the other hand), and from that name has come more light to the world than from all those. [Applause.] 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

¹ Charles Robert Darwin, an English naturalist; born, 1809; died, 1882.

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—by the instigation of fear! [Applause.] Think of the men who replied to him. Only a few years ago there was no parson too ignorant to successfully answer Charles Darwin; and the more ignorant he was the more cheerfully he undertook the task. [Applause and laughter.] He was held up to the ridicule, the scorn, and the 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. [Applause.]

Charles Darwin conquered the intellectual world, and the doctrine of evolution is now an accepted fact. [Applause.] His light has broken in on some of the early clergy—[laughter]—and the greatest man who to-day occupies the pulpit is a believer in the evolution theory of Charles Darwin—and that is Henry Ward Beecher,¹—[applause]—a man of more brains than the entire clergy of that entire church put together. [Applause and laughter.]

And yet we are told in this little creed that orthodox religion is about to conquer the world.

¹ Henry Ward Beecher, an American clergyman, lecturer, and author; born, 1813; died, 1887.

[Laughter.] It will be driven to the wilds of Africa. It must go to some savage country; it has lost its hold upon civilization, and I tell you it is unfortunate to have a religion; it is unfortunate to have a religion that can not 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 one or none. Oh! my pity has been excited by seeing these ministers endeavor to warp and twist the passages of Scripture to fit some demonstration in science.

These pious evasions! These solemn pretenses! When they are caught in one way they give a different meaning to the words and say the world was not made in seven days. They say "good whiles"—[laughter]—epochs. And in this same confession here of faith and creeds they believe the Lord's day is holy—every seventh day. Suppose you lived near the North Pole where the day is three months long. [Laughter.] Then which day will you keep? [Laughter.] Suppose you could get to the North Pole, you could prevent Sunday from ever overtaking you. [Laughter.] You could walk around the other way faster than the world could revolve. [Laughter.] How would you keep Sunday then? Suppose we ever invent anything that can go one thousand miles an hour? We can just chase Sunday clear

around the globe. [Applause and laughter.] 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 pious vacuum. [Laughter.]

These pious evasions I heard the other night of an old man. He was not very well educated, you know, and he got into the notion that he must have reading of the Bible and have family worship; and there was a bad boy in the family—a pretty smart boy—and they were reading the Bible by course, and in the fifteenth of Corinthians¹ is this passage: “Behold, brethren, I show you a mystery; we shall not all die, but we shall be changed.” And this boy rubbed out the “c” in the “changed.” [Laughter.] So next night the old man got on his specs and got down his Bible and said: “Behold, brethren, I show you a mystery, we shall not all die, but we shall be hanged.” The old lady said, “Father, I do not think it reads that way.” He says, “Who is reading this?” [Laughter and applause.] “Yes, mother, it says ‘be 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.” [Laughter.]

I keep going back to this book; I keep going back to the miracles, to the prophecies, to the

¹ I. Corinthians 15:51.

fables, and 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? [Laughter.] 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 do not like?

They tell me that there never would have been any civilization if it had not been for this Bible. Um! [Laughter.] 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 by the Jewish people. [Laughter.] And yet Rome conquered the world, and even conquered God's chosen people. The people that had the Bible were defeated by the people who had not. How was it possible for Lucretius¹ to get along without the Bible? How did the great and glorious of that empire?

And what shall we say of Greece? No Bible.

¹Lucretius (Titus Lucretius Carus), a Roman philosophical poet; born about 96 B.C.; died, 55 B.C.

Compare Athens with Jerusalem. From Athens comes 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. [Applause.]

The Hindus 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 even Egypt with Judea.

What are we to do without the Bible? What became of the Jews who had no Bible; their temple was destroyed and their city was taken; and, as I said before, they never found real prosperity until their God deserted them. Do without the Bible.

Now I come again to the New Testament. There are a few things in there, I give you my word, I can not believe. [Laughter.] I can not—I can not 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 marriage,—[applause]—and nobody ever believed the contrary until He had been dead one hundred and fifty years. [Applause.] 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 anyone in their hearing,

that He was the Son of God, or that He was miraculously conceived. He did not say it. The angel Gabriel, who, they say, brought the news, never wrote a word upon the subject. His mother never wrote a word upon the subject. His father never wrote a word upon the subject. We are lacking in the matter of witnesses. [Laughter.] I would not believe it now! I can not believe it then. I would not believe people I know, much less would I believe people I do not know. [Laughter.]

I say that at that time Matthew, Mark, and Luke believed that He was the son of Joseph and Mary. And why? They say He descended from the blood of 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 not give the genealogy of Pontius Pilate or Herod? [Laughter and applause.] 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 David; and yet that is the position into which the Christian world is now driven. It says the son of Joseph, and then interpolates the words "as was supposed." [Laughter.] Why, then, do they give a supposed genealogy? It will not do.

And that is a thing that can not in any way, by any human testimony, be established; and

if it important for us to know that He was the Son of God, I say then that it devolves upon God to give us 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. [Applause.] And he ought not to be made to depend upon say-so. He should have it directly for himself. A man says God told him so and so, and he tells me, and I have not anyone's word but that fellow's. He may have been deceived. If God has a message for me He ought to tell it to me, and not somebody that has been dead four or five thousand years, and in another language; God may have changed His mind on many things; He has on slavery at least, and polygamy; and yet His church now wants to go out here and destroy polygamy in Utah with a sword. Why do not they send missionaries there with copies of the Old Testament? [Applause and laughter.] By reading the lives of Abraham, and Isaac, and Lot, and a few other fellows that ought to have been in the penitentiary, they can soften their hearts. [Laughter.]

Now, there is another miracle I do not believe. I want to speak about it as we would about any ordinary transaction in the world. In the first place, I do not believe that any mir-

acle was ever performed, and if there was you can not prove it. Why? Because it is altogether more reasonable that the people lied 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, and we have got to be governed by our experience, and if we go by our experience, it is in favor that the thing never happened; that the man is mistaken. Now, I want you to remember it.

Here is a man that comes into Jerusalem, and the first thing he does he cures the blind. He lets the light of day visit the darkness of blindness. The eyes are opened and the whole 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, bent. He touches him and throws upon him again the garment of youth. A man is in his grave, and He says, "Come forth!" and he again walks in life, feeling his heart throb and beat, and his blood going joyously through his brains. They say that 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. [Laughter.] What became of them? Why, if there was a man in this town

that had been raised from the dead, I would go to see him to-night. [Laughter.] I would say, "Where were you when you got the notice to come back? What kind of country is it? What kind of opening there for a young man? How did you like it?" [Laughter.] But nobody ever paid the slightest attention to them there. They did not even excite interest when they died the second time. Nobody said, "Why, that man is not afraid. He has been there." [Laughter.] Not a word. They pass away quietly. You see I do not believe it. There is something wrong somewhere about that business. [Laughter.]

And then there is another trouble in my mind. Now, you know I may suffer eternal punishment for all this. [Laughter.]

Here is a man that does all these things, and thereupon they crucify Him. Now, then, let us be honest. Suppose a man came into Chicago and he should meet a funeral procession, and he should say, "Who is dead?" and they should say, "The son of a widow; her only support," and he should say to the procession, "Halt!" And to the undertaker, "Take out that coffin, unscrew that lid. Young man, I say unto thee, arise!" And the latter should step from the coffin and in one moment after hold his mother in his arms. Suppose he should go to your cemetery and should 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 say, "I say unto thee, O 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. Suppose that it is so. Do you think that the people of Chicago would kill him? Do you think anyone would wish to crucify him? Do you not rather believe that everyone who had a loved one out in that cemetery would go to him even upon their knees and beg him and implore 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, he will not be touched. All the living who fear death, all the living who have lost a loved one, will stand and cling to him. And yet we are told that this worker of miracles, this worker of wonders, this man who could clothe the dead in the throbbing flesh of life, was crucified by the Jewish people. [Applause.] It was never dreamed that he did a miracle until a hundred years after he was dead.

There is another miracle I do not believe, I can not believe it, and that is the resurrection. And why? If it was the fact, if the dead got out of the grave, why did He not show himself to His enemies? Why did He not again visit Pontius Pilate? Why did He not call upon Caiaphas, the high priest? Why did He not make another triumphal entry into Jerusalem? Why did He not again enter the temple and dispute with the doctors? 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." Why did He not? Simply because the thing never happened. [Applause.] I can not believe it.

But recollect, it makes no difference with its teachings. They are exactly as good whether He wrought miracles or not. Twice two are four; that needs no miracle. Twice two are five—a miracle would not help that. Christ's teachings are worth their effect upon the human race. It makes no difference about miracle or about wonder, but you must remember in that day everyone believed in miracles. Nobody had any standing as a teacher, a philosopher, a governor, or a king, about whom there was not something miraculous. The earth was then covered with the sons and daughters of the gods and goddesses. That was believed in Greece, in Rome,

in Egypt, in Hindustan; everybody, nearly, believed in such things.

Then there is another miracle that I can not believe in, and that is the ascension—the bodily ascension of Jesus Christ. Where was He going? Since the telescope has been pointed at the stars, where was He going? The New Jerusalem is not there. The abode of the gods is not there. Where was He going? Which way did He go? That depends upon the time of day that He left. [Laughter.] If He left in the night He went exactly the opposite way from what He would in the day. [Laughter.]

Who saw this miracle? They say the disciples. Let us see what they say about it. Matthew did not think it was worth mentioning. He does not speak of it at all. On the contrary he says that the last words of Christ were: “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” That is what he says. Mark, he saw it. “So, then, after the Lord had spoken unto them He was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God.” That is all he has to say about the most wonderful thing that ever blessed human vision—about a miracle great enough to have stuffed credulity to bursting; and yet we have one poor, little meager verse. So, then, after He had quit speaking, He was caught up and sat on the right hand of God. How does he know He was

on the right hand? [Laughter.] Did he see Him after He had sat down? [Laughter.] Luke says: "And it came to pass while He blessed them He was parted from them and was carried up into heaven." But John does not mention it. He gives as His last words this address to Peter: "Follow thou Me." Of course He did not say that as He ascended. [Laughter and applause.] 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: "Men of Galilee, why stand ye 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 that; Mark forgot it; Luke did not think it was worth mentioning, and John did not believe it. [Laughter.] And yet upon that evidence we are led to believe that the most miraculous of all miracles actually occurred. I can not believe it.

I may be mistaken; but the church is now trying to parry, and when they come to the little miracles of the New Testament all they say is: "Christ did not cast out devils; these men had fits." [Laughter.] He cured fits. Then I read in another place about the fits talking. Christ held a dialogue with the fits, and the fits told him his name,—[laughter]—

and the fits at that time were in a crazy man. [Laughter.] And the fits made a contract that they would go out of the man provided they would be permitted to go into swine. [Laughter.] How can fits that attack a man take up a residence in swine? [Laughter.] The church must not give up the devil. He is the right bower. [Laughter.] No devil, no hell;—[laughter]—no hell, no preach;—[laughter]—no fire, no insurance. [Laughter and applause.]

I read another miracle—that this devil took Christ and put him on the pinnacle of a temple. Was that fits too? [Laughter.] Why is not the theological world honest? Why do they not come up and admit what they know the book means? They have not the courage.

Now, their next doctrine is the absolute necessity of belief. That depends upon this: Can a man believe as he wants to? Can you? Can anybody? Does belief depend at all upon the evidence? I think it does somewhat in some cases. [Laughter.] How is it that 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, and upon their oaths, are equally divided, six for the plaintiff and six for the defendant? It is because evidence does not have the same effect upon all people. Why? Our brains are not alike—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—[laughter]—and my soul is to be eternally damned for failing to guess an arithmetical conundrum. And that is the poison part of Christianity—that salvation depends upon belief—that is the poison part, and until that dogma is discarded religion 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 by which to find my way through the darkness and the night called life. [Applause.] 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 go and 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 and not what he thinks, but what God said to him?

I would not know a god if I should see one.

[Laughter.] I have said before, and I say again, the brain thinks in spite of me, and I am not responsible for my thought. No more can I control the beating of my heart, the expansion and contraction of my lungs for a moment; no more can I stop the blood that flows through the rivers of the veins. And yet I am held responsible for my belief. Then why does not the 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 you did not." Will I be sorry when I come to die that I did not live a hypocrite? Will I be sorry 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? [Applause.] God can not forgive me for that. They say when He was in Jerusalem, He forgave His murderers. Now He will not forgive an honest man for differing with Him on the subject of the Trinity. [Laughter.]

They say that God says to me, "Forgive your enemies." I say, "All right; 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 can not 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 do forgive others. All I ask, if that be true, is that this God should live according to His own doctrine. If I am to forgive my enemies I ask Him to forgive His. That is justice, that is right. Here are these millions to-day who say: "We are to be saved by belief, by faith; but what are we to believe?"

In St. Louis last Sunday 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. [Laughter.] 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,—[laughter]—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. The same people go and sit right next to them in heaven,—[laughter]—swap harps with them,—[laughter]—and yet this man, believing as he says he does, that if he did not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ he would eternally perish, was not willing that the colored man should sit by a white man while he heard the gospel of everlasting peace. He was not willing that the colored man should get into the

lifeboat of Christ, although there was plenty of room; he would not let them get into the boat with white men, although those white men might be totally depraved, and if they had justice done them, according to his doctrine, would be eternally damned—and yet he has the impudence to put on airs, although he ought to be eternally damned, and go and sit by the colored man. His doctrine of religion, the color line, has not my respect. [Applause.] I believe in the religion of humanity, and it is far better to love our fellow-men than to love God, because we can help them, and we can not help Him. [Laughter and applause.] You had better do what you can than to be always pretending to do what you can not. [Applause.]

Now I come to the last part of the Bible—this creed—and that is, eternal punishment; and I have concluded; and I have said I will never deliver a lecture that I do not give the full benefit of its name. 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 eternal hell, has lived in vain. Think of that doctrine! The eternity of punishment! Why, I find in that same creed that Christ is finally going to triumph in this world and es-

tablish His kingdom; but if their doctrine is true, He will never triumph in the other world. 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, behind the walls of which a human being is immured, we are not a civilized people. We will never be perfectly civilized until we do away with crime and criminals. 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, not for the purpose of reforming them—because they are never going to get any better, only getting worse—[laughter]—but just for the purpose of punishing them. And what for? For something they did in this world; born in ignorance, educated it may be in poverty, and yet responsible through the countless ages of eternity. No man can think of a greater horror; no man can think of a greater absurdity. For the growth of that doctrine ignorance was soil and fear was rain. [Applause.] That doctrine came from the fanged mouths of wild beasts, and yet it is the “glad tidings of great joy.” [Laughter.]

“God so loved the world” he is going to damn most everybody, and if this Christian

religion be true, some of the greatest, and grandest, and best who ever lived upon this earth, are suffering its torments to-night. It does not appear to make much difference, however, with this church. They go right on enjoying themselves as well as ever. [Laughter.] If their doctrine is true, Benjamin Franklin,¹ 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, while 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 any and all the youth not to imitate Benjamin Franklin. Thomas Jefferson,² the 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 mind, because the thing I wish to do in this world is to put out the fires of hell. I want to keep at it just as long as there is one little coal red—[laughter]—in the bottomless pit. As long as the ashes are warm—[laughter]—I shall denounce this infamous doctrine.

¹ Benjamin Franklin, an American philosopher, statesman, diplomatist, and author; born, 1706; died, 1790.

² Thomas Jefferson, an American statesman; born, 1743; president of the United States, 1801-1809; died, 1826.

I want you to know that the men who founded this great and glorious government are there. The 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. The old Revolutionary soldiers are in hell by the thousands. [Laughter.] 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, nearly all of them have been damned since 1815—all that were killed.

The greatest of heroes, they are there. The greatest of poets, the greatest scientists, the men who have made the world beautiful and grand, they are all, I tell you, among the damned, if this creed is true. Humboldt,¹ who shed light, and who added to the intellectual wealth of mankind; Goethe,² and Schiller,³ and Lessing,⁴ who almost created the German language—all gone! All suffering the wrath of God to-night,—[laughter]—and every time an angel thinks

¹ Alexander von Humboldt, a German scientist and author; born, 1769; died, 1859.

² Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, a German poet, dramatist, and prose-writer; born, 1749; died, 1832.

³ Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller, a German poet, dramatist, and historian; born, 1759; died, 1805.

⁴ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, a German dramatist and critic; born, 1729; died, 1781.

of one of those men he gives his harp an extra twang. [Laughter.] Laplace,¹ who read the heavens like an open book—he is there. Robert Burns,² the poet of human love—he is there because he wrote the “Prayer of Holy Willie”; because he fastened upon the cross the Presbyterian creed, and made it a lingering crucifixion; and yet that man added to the tenderness of human heart. Dickens,³ who put a shield of pity before the flesh of childhood—God is getting even with him. [Laughter.] Our own Ralph Waldo Emerson,⁴ although he had a thousand opportunities to hear Methodist clergymen,—[laughter]—scorned the means of grace—[laughter]—and the Holy Ghost is delighted that he is in hell to-night.

Longfellow⁵ refined hundreds and thousands of homes, but he did not believe in the miraculous origin of the Savior. No, sir; he doubted the report of Gabriel. [Laughter.] He loved his fellow-men; he did what he could to free the slaves; he did what he could to make man-

¹ Marquis Pierre Simon de Laplace, a French astronomer and mathematician; born, 1749; died, 1827.

² Robert Burns, a Scotch lyric poet; born, 1759; died, 1796.

³ Charles Dickens, an English novelist; born, 1812; died, 1870.

⁴ Ralph Waldo Emerson, an American essayist, lecturer, and poet; born, 1803; died, 1882.

⁵ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, an American poet; born, 1807; died, 1882.

kind happy; but God was just waiting for him. [Laughter.] He had His constable right there. [Laughter.] Thomas Paine,¹—[applause]—the author of the *Rights of Man*, offering his life in both hemispheres for the freedom of the human race, and one of the founders of the Republic—it has often seemed to me that if we could get God's attention long enough to point Him to the American flag, He would let him out. [Laughter and applause.] Comte,² the 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,³ who abolished torture in France; who did more for human liberty than any other man, living or dead;—[applause]—who was the assassin of superstition, and whose dagger still rusts in the heart of Catholicism;—[applause]—all the priests who have been translated have their happiness increased by looking at Voltaire.

Glorious country where the principal occupation is watching the miseries of the lost! Gior-

¹ Thomas Paine, an Anglo-American political writer and free-thinker; born, 1737; died, 1809.

² Isidore Auguste Marie François Xavier Comte, a French philosopher; born, 1798; died, 1857.

³ Voltaire, the surname of François Marie Arouet, a French writer; born, 1694; died, 1778.

dano Bruno,¹ Benedict Spinoza,² Diderot,³ the encyclopedist, who endeavored to get all knowledge in a small compass so that he could put the peasant on an equality with the prince intellectually, the man who wished to sow all over the world the seeds of knowledge, who loved to labor for mankind. While the priests wanted to burn, he did all he could to put out the fire—he has been lost long, long ago. [Laughter.] His cry for water has become so common that his voice is now recognized through all the realms of hell, and they say to one another, “That is Diderot.” David Hume,⁴ the philosopher, he is there with the rest. Beethoven,⁵ the Shakespeare of music, he has been lost, and Wagner,⁶ the master of melody, and who has made the air of the world rich forever, he is there, and they have better music in hell than

¹ Giordano Bruno, an Italian philosopher; born about 1548; entered the Dominican Order at Naples in 1563; left Italy in 1576 to avoid the consequences of his disbelief in the doctrines of transubstantiation and of the immaculate conception; returned in 1592 and was arrested by order of the Inquisition; was burned at the stake, 1600.

² Benedict (or Baruch) Spinoza, a Dutch-Jewish philosopher; born, 1632; died, 1677.

³ Denis Diderot, a French philosopher and writer; born, 1713; died, 1784.

⁴ David Hume, a Scottish philosopher and historian; born, 1711; died, 1776.

⁵ Ludwig von Beethoven, an Austrian musical composer; born, 1770; died, 1827.

⁶ Wilhelm Richard Wagner, a German operatic composer and poet; born, 1813; died, 1883.

in heaven. [Applause and laughter.] Shelley,¹ whose soul, like his own *Skylark*, was a winged joy—he has been damned for many, many years; and Shakespeare,² the greatest of the human race,—[applause]—who has done more to elevate mankind than all the priests who ever lived and died—[applause]—he is there, and all the founders of inquisitions, the builders of dungeons, the makers of chains, the inventors of instruments of torture, tearers, and burners, and branders of human flesh, stealers of babes and sellers of husbands, and wives, and children, the drawers of the swords of persecution, and they who kept the horizon lurid with the fagot's flame for a thousand years—they are in heaven to-night. [Applause.] Well, I wish heaven joy of such company.

And that is the doctrine with which we are polluting the souls of children. That is the doctrine that puts a fiend by their 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 in the world and paying particular attention to the affairs of nations, just in the gray of the morning they saw a house floating down,

¹ Percy Bysshe Shelley, an English poet; born, 1792; died, 1822.

² William Shakespeare, an English poet and dramatist; born, 1564; died, 1616.

and on its top a human being; and a few men went out to the rescue in a little boat, and they found there a mother, a woman, and they wanted to rescue her, and she said: "No, I am going to stay where I am. I have three dead babes in this house." Think of a love so limitless, stronger and deeper than despair and death, and yet the Christian religion says that if that woman did not happen to believe in their creed, God would send that mother's soul to eternal fire. If there is another world, and if in heaven they wear hats, when such a woman climbs up the opposite bank of the Jordan, Christ should lift His to her.

That is the trouble I have with this Christian religion, its infinite heartlessness; and I can not 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,—[laughter]—perfectly willing the men should go to hell, provided they could stay at home. You see they are not honest in it; they do not believe it, or, as the people say, "they don't sense it"; they have not religion enough to conceive what it is they believe and what a terrific falsehood they assert.

And I beg of everyone 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. [Applause.] 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 anyway 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. Do not tell him, and as quick as he gets to the other world and finds it necessary to believe, he will say "yes." Give him a chance.

My objection to the Christian religion is that it destroys human love, and tells you and me that the love of your dear ones is not necessary in this world 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 along 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 folks who have loved me and whom I know; and I can conceive of no heaven without the love of this earth. [Applause.] That is the trouble with the Christian religion; leave your father, leave your mother, leave your wife, leave your children, leave everything and follow Jesus Christ.

I will not. [Applause.] I will stay with the folks. [Laughter.] I will not sacrifice on the altar of a selfish fear all the grandest and noblest promptings of my heart.

You do away with human love, and what are we without it? What would we be in another world, and what would we be here without it? Can anyone conceive of music without human love? Human love builds every home—human love is the author of all the beauty in this world. Love paints every picture and chisels every statue; love, I tell you, builds every fireside. What would heaven be without 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. [Laughter.]

Such a religion is demoralizing; and how are you to get there? On the efforts of another. You are to be a perpetually heavenly pauper, and you will have to admit through all eternity that you never would have got 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.” [Laughter.] What a glorious world!

And then think of it! No reformation in the next world—not the slightest. If you die in Arkansas that is the end of you. At the end

you will be told that being born in Arkansas you had a fair chance. Think of telling a boy in the next world, who lived and died in Delaware, that he had a fair show! 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 ray called life, this little moment with a shadow and a tear, this little space between your mother's arms and the grave, that balances an entire eternity.

And God can do nothing for you when you get there. A little Methodist preacher can do more for the soul here than its Creator can when you get 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,¹ 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.

¹ II. Corinthians 6:2.

What I say is this: There is no world—there can be no world—in which every human being will not have an opportunity of doing right. [Applause.] That is my objection to this Christian religion, and if the love of earth is not the love of heaven, if those who love us here are to be separated there, then I want eternal sleep. Give me a good cold grave rather than the furnace of Jehovah's wrath.

Gabriel, do not blow! [Laughter.] Let me alone! [Laughter.]

If, when the grave bursts, I am not to meet faces that have been my sunshine in this life, let me sleep on. Rather than that the doctrine of endless punishment should be true, I would like to see the fabric of our civilization crumble and fall into unmeaning chaos and to formless dust, where oblivion broods and where even memory forgets. I would rather a Samson of some unprisoned force, released by chance, should so wreck and strain 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 would in its orbit wheel a barren star rather than that the Christian religion should be true. [Applause.]

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. [Laughter.] I believe in the religion of the family. I believe that the roof-tree is sacred from the smallest fiber held in the soft, moist clasp of the earth to the little blossom on the topmost bough that gives its fragrance to the happy air. [Applause.] The family where virtue dwells with love is like a lily with a heart of fire—the fairest flower in all this world. And I tell you God can not afford to damn a man in the next world who has made a happy family in this. God can not afford to cast over the battlements of heaven the man who has built a happy home here. God can not afford to be unpitying to a human heart capable of pity. God can not clothe with fire the man who has clothed the naked here; and God can not send to eternal pain a man who has done something towards improving the condition of his fellow-man. [Applause.] If He can, I had rather go to hell than to heaven and keep the company of such a God.

They tell me 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. [Applause.] And around that oak has climbed the poisonous vine, superstition. Theologians, pretenders, soothsayers, parsons, priests, popes, bishops, have taken all that hope, and they have had the impudence to stand by the grave and prophesy a future of pain. They have erected their toll-gates on the highway to the other world, and have collected money from the poor people on the way, and they have collected it from their fear. The church did not give us the idea of immortality; the Bible did not give us the idea of immortality. Let me tell you now the Old Testament tells you how you lost immortality; it does not say another word about another world from the first mistake in Genesis to the last curse of Malachi. [Laughter and applause.] There is not in the Old Testament one burial service.

No man in the Old Testament stands by the bed and says, "I will meet thee again"—not one word. From the top of Sinai came no hope of another world. And when we get to the New Testament, what do we find there? "Have thy heart counted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection of the dead."¹ As

¹ "And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection of the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage."—Luke 20: 34-35.

though some would be counted unworthy to obtain the resurrection of the dead! And in another place:¹ "Seek for honor, glory, immortality." If you have got it, why seek for it? And in another place:² "God, who alone hath immortality," and yet they tell us that we get our idea of immortality from the Bible. I deny it. If Christ was in fact God, why did He not plainly say there was another life? Why did He not tell us something about it? Why did He not turn the tear-stained 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. [Applause.] I would not destroy the smallest star of human hope, but I deny that we got our idea of immortality from the Bible. It existed long before Moses existed. We find it symbolized through all Egypt, through all India. Wherever man has lived, his religion has made another world in which to meet the lost. [Applause.] It is not born of the Bible. The idea of immortality, like the great sea, has ebbed and flowed in the human heart, beating with its countless waves against the rocks and

¹ "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life."—Romans 2: 6-7.

² "Our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Who only hath immortality."—I. Timothy 6: 14-16.

sands of fate and time. It was not born of the Bible. It was born of the human heart, 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. [Applause.]

We do not know. We do not prophesy a life of pain. We leave the dead with Nature, the mother of us all, under a seven-hued bow of hope. Under the seven-hued arch let the dead sleep.

“Ah, but you take away the consolation of religion.” What consolation has religion for the widow of the unbeliever, the widow of a good, brave, kind man who lies dead? What can the orthodox ministers say to relieve the bursting heart of that woman? What can the orthodox ministers say to relieve the aching hearts of the little 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? I find that 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 echo of the promises spoken eighteen hundred years ago is so low, and the sound of the clods upon the coffin so loud, the promises are so far away, and the dead are so near. That is the reason. And they find no consolation there.

I say honestly we do not know; we can not

say. We can not 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; whether it is the rising or the setting of a sun, or an endless life that brings rapture and love to everyone—we do not know; we can not say.

There is an old 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; and when he came to the infernal regions he began to play, and Sysiphus sat down upon the stone that he had been heaving up the side of the mountain so many years, and which continually rolled back upon him; Ixion paused upon his wheel of fire; Tantalus ceased in his vain efforts for water; the daughters of the Danaïdæ 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; monsters relented and they said, “Eurydice may go with you, but you must not look back.” So he again threaded the caverns, playing as he went, and as he again reached the light he failed to hear the footsteps of Eurydice, and he looked back and in a moment she was gone.

This old fable gives to us the idea of the perpetual effort to rescue truth from the clutches

of monsters. Some time Orpheus will not look back. Some day Eurydice will reach the blessed light, and at some time there will fade from the memory of men the superstition of religion.
[Great applause.]

WHICH WAY?

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: For thousands of years men have been asking the questions: "How shall we civilize the world? How shall we protect life, liberty, property, and reputations? How shall we do away with crime and poverty? How clothe, and feed, and educate, and civilize mankind?" These are the questions that are asked by thoughtful men and thoughtful women. The question with them is not, "What will we do in some other world?" Time enough to ask that when we get there. The business we will attend to now is, how are we to civilize the world? What priest shall I ask? What sacred volume shall I search? What oracle can I consult? At what shrine must I bow to find out what is to be done? Each church has a different answer; each has a different recipe for the salvation of the people, but not while they are in this world. All that is to be done in this world is to get ready for the next.

In the first place I am met by the theological world. Have I the right to inquire? They say, "Certainly; it is your duty to inquire." Each church has a recipe for the salvation of this world, but not while you are in this world—

afterward. They treat time as a kind of pier—a kind of dock—running out into the great ocean of eternity; and they treat us all as though we were waiting there, sitting on our trunks, for the Gospel Ship.

I want to know what to do here. Have I the right to inquire? Yes. If I have the right to inquire, then I have the right to investigate. If I have the right to investigate, I have the right to accept. If I have the right to accept, I have the right to reject. And what religion have I the right to reject? That which does not conform with my reason, with my standard of truth, with my standard of common sense.

Millions of men have been endeavoring to govern this world by means of the supernatural. Thousands and thousands of churches exist, thousands of cathedrals and temples have been built, millions of men have been engaged to preach this Gospel; and what has been the result in this world? Will one church have any sympathy with another? Does the religion of one country have any respect for that of another? Or does not each religion claim to be the only one? And does not the priest of every religion, with infinite impudence, consign the disciples of all others to eternal fire?

Why is it the churches have failed to civilize this world? Why is it that the Christian coun-

tries are no better than any other countries? Why is it that Christian men are no better than any other men? Why is it that ministers as a class are no better than doctors, or lawyers, or merchants, or mechanics, or locomotive engineers—and the locomotive engineer is a thousand times more useful. Give me a good engineer and a bad preacher to go through this world with rather than a bad engineer and a good preacher.

There is this curious fact about the believers in the supernatural: The priests of one church have no confidence in the miracles and wonders told by the priests of the other churches. Maybe they know each other. A Christian missionary will tell the Hindu of the miracles of the Bible; the Hindu smiles. The Hindu tells the Christian missionary of the miracles of his sacred books; and the missionary looks upon him with pity and contempt. No priest takes the word of another.

I heard once a little story that illustrates this point: A gentleman in a little party was telling a most wonderful occurrence, and when he had finished everybody said: "Is it possible? Why, did you ever hear anything like that?" All united in a kind of wondering chorus except one man. He said nothing. He was perfectly still and unmoved; and one who had been greatly astonished by the story said to him:

“Did you hear that story?” “Yes.” “Well, you do not appear to be excited.” “Well, no,” he said; “I am a liar myself.”

There is another trouble with the supernatural. It has no honesty; it is consumed by egotism; it does not think—it knows; consequently it has no patience with the honest doubter. And how has the church treated the honest doubter? He has been answered by force, by authority, by Popes, by Cardinals, and Bishops, and Councils, and, above all, by mobs. In that way the honest doubter has been answered. There is this difference between the minister, the church, the clergy, and the men who believe in this world. I might as well state the question—I may go further than you. The real question is this: Are we to be governed by a Supernatural Being, or are we to govern ourselves? That is the question. Is God the source of power; or does all authority spring, in governing, from the consent of the governed? That is the question. In other words, is the universe a monarchy, a despotism, or a democracy? I take the democratic side, not in a political sense. The question is, whether this world should be governed by God or by man; and when I say “God” I mean the Being that these gentlemen have created and enthroned upon the ignorance of mankind.

Now let us admit, for the sake of argument,

that the Bible is true. Let us admit, for the sake of argument, that God once governed this world—not that He did, but let us admit it, and I intend to speak of no god but our God, because we all insist that of all the gods ours is the best, and, if He is not good, we need not trouble ourselves about the others. Let them take care of themselves.

Now, the first question is, whether this world shall be governed by God or man. Admitting that the Being spoken of in the Bible is God, He governed this world once. There was a Theocracy at the start. That was the first government of the world. Now, how do you judge of a man? The best test of a man is, how does he use power? That is the supreme test of manhood. How does he treat those within his control? The greater the man, the grander the man, the more careful he is in the use of power—the tenderer he is, the nearer just, the greater, the more merciful, the grander, the more charitable. Tell me how a man treats his wife or his children, his poor debtors, his servants, and I will tell you what manner of man he be. That, I say, is the supreme test, and we know to-night how a good and great man treats his inferiors. We know that. And a man endeavoring to raise his fellow-men higher in the scale of civilization—what will that man appeal to? Will he appeal to the lowest or to the highest

that is in man? Let us be honest. Will he appeal to prejudiced prejudice—the fortress, the armor, the sword and shield of ignorance? Will he appeal to credulity—the ring in the nose by which priests lead stupidity? Will he appeal to the cowardly man? Will he play upon his fears—fear, the capital stock of imposture, the lever and fulcrum of hypocrisy? Will he appeal to the selfishness and all the slimy serpents that crawl in the den of savagery? Or will he appeal to reason, the torch of the mind? Will he appeal to justice? Will he appeal to charity, which is justice in blossom? Will he appeal to liberty and love? These are the questions. What will he do? What did our God do? Let us see.

The first thing we know of Him is in the Garden of Eden. How did He endeavor to make His children great, and strong, and good, and free? Did He say anything to Adam and Eve about the sacred relation of marriage? Did He say anything to them about loving children? Did He say anything to them about learning anything under heaven? Did He say one word about intellectual liberty? Did He say one word about reason or about justice? Did He make the slightest effort to improve them? All that He did in the world was to give them one poor, little, miserable, barren command, “Thou shalt not eat of a certain

fruit." That's all that amounted to anything: and, when they sinned, did this great God take them in the arms of His love and endeavor to reform them? No; He simply put upon them a curse. When they were expelled He said to the woman: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow. In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children. Thy husband shall rule over thee." God made every mother a criminal, and placed a perpetual penalty of pain upon human love. Our God made wives slaves—slaves of their husbands. Our God corrupted the marriage relation and paralyzed the firesides of this world. That is what our God did. And what did he say to poor Adam? "Cursed be the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field, and in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Did He say one word calculated to make him a better man? Did He put in the horizon of the future one star of hope? Let us be honest, and see what this God did, and we will judge of Him simply by ordinary common sense.

After a while Cain murdered his brother, and he was detected by this God. And what did this God say to him? Did He say one word of the crime of shedding human blood? Not a word. Did He say one word calculated to

excite in the breast of Cain the slightest real sorrow for his deed? Not the slightest? Did He tell him anything about where Abel was? Nothing. Did He endeavor to make him a better man? Not a bit. What had He ever taught him before on that subject? Nothing. And so Cain went out to the other sons and daughters of Adam, according to the Bible, and they multiplied and increased until they covered the earth. God gave them no code of laws. God never built them a schoolhouse. God never sent a teacher. God never said a word to them about a future state. God never held up before their gaze that dazzling reward of heaven; never spoke about the lurid gulfs of hell; kept divine punishment a perfect secret, and, without having given them the slightest opportunity, simply drowned the world. Splendid administration! Cleveland¹ will do better than that. And, after the waters had gone away, then He gave them some commandments. I suppose that He saw by that time that they needed guidance.

And here are the commandments:

1. You may eat all kinds of birds, beasts, and fishes.
2. You must not eat blood; if you do, I will kill you.

¹ Grover Cleveland, an American statesman; born, 1837; president of the United States, 1885-1889, and 1893-1897; died, 1908.

3. Whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.

Nothing more. No good advice; not a word about government; not a word about the rights of man, or woman, or child; not a word about any law of nature; not a word about any science—nothing, not even arithmetic.

Nothing. And so He let them go on, and in a little while they came to the same old state, and began building the Tower of Babel; and He went there and confounded, as they said, their languages. Never said a word to them; never told them how foolish it was to try and reach heaven that way. And the next we find Him talking to Abraham, and with Abraham He makes a contract. And how did He do it? "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee." Fine contract for a God. And thereupon He made certain promises to Abraham—promised to give him the whole world, all the nations round about, and that his seed should be as the sands of the sea. Never kept one of His promises—not one. He made the same promises to Isaac, and broke every one. Then He made them all over to Jacob, and broke every one; made them again to Moses, and broke them all. Never said a word about anybody behaving themselves—not a word. Finally, these people whom He had taken under His special care became slaves in the land of

Egypt. How ashamed God must have been! Finally He made up His mind to rescue them from that servitude, and He sent Moses and Aaron. He never said a word to Moses or Aaron that Pharaoh was wrong. He never said a word to them about how the women felt when their male children were taken and destroyed. He simply sent Moses before Pharaoh with a cane in his hand that he could turn into a serpent; and, when Pharaoh called in magicians and they did the same, Pharaoh laughed. And then they made frogs; and Pharaoh sent for his magicians, and they did the same, and Pharaoh still laughed. And this God had infinite power, but Pharaoh defeated Him at every point!

It puts me in mind of the story that great Fenian told when the great excitement was about Ireland. An Irishman was telling about the condition of Ireland. He said: "We have got in Ireland now over three hundred thousand soldiers, all equipped. Every man of them has got a musket and ammunition. They are ready to march at a minute's notice." "But," said the other man, "why do they not march?" "Why," said the other man, "the police will not let them." How admirable!

Imagine the infinite God endeavoring to liberate the Hebrews, and prevented by a king who would not let the children of Israel go until

He had done some little miracles with sticks! Think of it! "But," said Christians, "you must wait a little while if you wish to find the foundation of law."

Christians now assert that from Sinai came to this world all knowledge of right and wrong, and that from its flaming top we received the first ideas of law and justice. Let us look at those Ten Commandments. Which of those Ten Commandments were new, and which of those Ten Commandments were old?

"Thou shalt not kill." That was as old as life. Murder has been a crime, also, because men object to being murdered. If you read the same Bible you will find that Moses, seeing an Israelite and an Egyptian contending together, smote the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand. After he had committed that crime Moses fled from the land. Why? Simply because there was a law against murder. That is all.

"Honor thy father and thy mother." That is as old as birth. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." That is as old as sex. "Thou shalt not steal." That is as old as work, and as old as property. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." That is as old as the earth.

Never was there a nation, never was there a tribe on earth that did not have substantially those commandments. What, then, were new?

First, "Thou shalt worship no other God; thou shalt have no other God." Why? "Because I am a jealous God." Second, "Thou shalt not make any graven image." Third, "Thou shalt not take My name in vain." Fourth, "Thou shalt not work on the Sabbath day."

What use were these commandments? None—not the slightest. How much better it would have been if God from Sinai, instead of the commandments, had said: "Thou shalt not enslave thy fellow-man; no human being is entitled to the results of another's labor." Suppose He had said: "Thou shalt not persecute for opinion's sake: thought and speech must be forever free." Suppose he had said, instead of "Thou shalt not work on the Sabbath day," "A man shall have but one wife; a woman shall have but one husband; husbands shall love their wives; wives shall love their husbands and their children with all their hearts and as themselves"—how much better it would have been for this world.

Long before Moses was born the Egyptians taught one God; but afterwards, I believe, in their weakness, they degenerated into a belief in the Trinity. They taught the divine origin of the soul, and taught judgment after death. They taught as a reward for belief in their doctrine eternal joy, and as a punishment for non-

belief eternal pain. Egypt, as a matter of fact, was far better governed than Palestine. The laws of Egypt were better than the laws of God. In Egypt woman was equal to man. Long before Moses was born there were queens upon the Egyptian throne. Long before Moses was born they had a written code of laws, and their laws were administered by courts and judges. They had rules of evidence. They understood the philosophy of damages. Long before Moses was born they had asylums for the insane and hospitals for the sick. Long before God appeared on Sinai there were schools in Egypt, and the highest office next to the throne was opened to the successful scholar. The Egyptian married but one wife. His wife was called the lady of the house. Women were not secluded; and, above all and over all, the people of Egypt were not divided into castes, and were infinitely better governed than God ever thought of. I am speaking of the God of this Bible. If Moses had remembered more of what he saw in Egypt his government would have been far better than it was.

Long before these commandments were given, Zoroaster taught the Hindus that there was one infinite and supreme God. They had a code of laws, and their laws were administered by judges in their courts. By those laws, at the death of a father, the unmarried daughter re-

ceived twice as much of his property as his son. Compare those laws with the laws of Moses.

So, too, the Romans had their code of laws. The Romans were the greatest lawyers the world produced. The Romans had a code of civil laws, and that code to-day is the foundation of all law in the civilized world. The Romans built temples to Truth, to Faith, to Valor, to Concord, to Modesty, to Charity, and to Chastity. And so with the Grecians. And yet you will find Christian ministers to-day contending that all ideas of law, of justice, and of right came from Sinai, from the Ten Commandments, from the Mosaic laws. No lawyer who understands his profession will claim that is so. No lawyer who has studied the history of law will claim it. No man who knows history itself will claim it. No man will claim it but an ignorant zealot.

Let us go another step—let us compare the ideas of this God with the ideas of uninspired men. I am making this long preface because I want to get it out of your minds that the Bible is inspired.

Now let us go along a little and see what is God's opinion of liberty. Nothing is of more value in this world to-day than liberty, liberty of body and liberty of mind. Without liberty, the universe would be as a dungeon into which human beings are flung like poor and miserable

convicts. Intellectual liberty is the air of the soul, the sunshine of the mind. Without it we should be in darkness. Now Jehovah commanded the Jewish people to take captives the strangers and sojourners among them, and ordered that they and their children should be bondsmen and bondswomen for ever.

Now let us compare Jehovah to Epictetus¹—a man to whom no revelation was ever made—a man to whom this God did not appear. Let us listen to him: “Remember your servants are to be treated as your own brothers—children of the same God.” On the subject of liberty is not Epictetus a better authority than Jehovah, who told the Jews to make bondsmen and bondswomen of the heathen round about?

And He said they were to make them their bondsmen and bondswomen forever. Why? Because they were heathen. Why? Because they were not children of the Jews. He was the God of the Jews and not of the rest of mankind. So He said to His chosen people: “Pillage upon the enemy and destroy the people of other gods. Buy the heathen round about.” Yet Cicero,² a poor pagan lawyer, said this—and he had not even read the Old

¹ Epictetus of Hierapolis, a stoic philosopher; lived in the first century A.D.

² Marcus Tullius Cicero, a Roman orator, philosopher, and statesman; born, 106 B.C.; assassinated, 43 B.C.

Testament—had not even had the advantage of being enlightened by the prophets: “They who say that we should love our fellow-citizens, and not foreigners, destroy the universal brotherhood of mankind, and with it benevolence and justice would perish forever.” Is not Cicero greater than Jehovah?

The Bible, inspired by Jehovah says: “If a man smite his servant with a rod and he die under his hand he shall be punished. If he continue a day or two and then die, he shall not be punished.” Zeno,¹ the founder of the Stoics, who had never heard of Jehovah, and never read a word of Moses, said this: “No man can be the owner of another, the title is bad. Whether the slave became a slave by conquest or by purchase, the title is bad.”

Let us come and see whether Jehovah has any humanity in Him. Jehovah ordered the Jewish general to make war, and this was the order: “And when the Lord thy God shall deliver 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 I have already quoted, said: “Treat those in thy power as thou wouldst have thy superiors treat thee.”

I am on the side of the pagan. Is it possible

¹ Zeno, a Greek philosopher, founder of the Stoic school; lived in the fifth century B.C.

that a Being of infinite goodness said:¹ "I will heap mischiefs 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 also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison serpent of the dust. The sword without and the terror within shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also, with the man of gray hairs"? While Seneca,² a poor, uninspired Roman, said: "A wise man will not pardon any crime that ought to be punished, but will accomplish in another way all that is sought. He will spare some; he will pardon and watch over some because of their youth; he will pardon these on account of their ignorance. His clemency will not fail what is sought by justice, but his clemency will fulfill justice." That was said by Seneca.

Can we believe that this Jehovah said: "Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg. Let them seek their bread out of desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let the stranger spoil his labor. Let not one extend mercy unto them, neither let any favor his fatherless children." Did Jehovah

¹ Deuteronomy 32: 23-24.

² Lucius Annæus Seneca, a Roman Stoic philosopher; born about 4 B.C.; died, 65 A.D.

say this? Surely He had never heard this line—this plaintive music from the Hindu: “Sweet is the lute to those who have not heard the voices of their own children.”

Let us see the generosity of Jehovah out of the cloud of darkness on Mount Sinai. He said to the Jews: “Thou shalt have no other God before Me. Thou shalt not bow down to any other gods, for the Lord thy God is a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me.” Just think of God saying to people: “If you do not love Me I will damn you.” Contrast this with the words put by the Hindu poet into the mouth of Brahma: “I am the same to all mankind. They who honestly worship other gods involuntarily worship me. I am he that partaketh of all worship. I am the reward of worship.” How perfectly sublime! Let me read it to you again: “I am the same to all mankind. They who honestly worship other gods involuntarily worship me. I am he that partaketh of all worship. I am the reward of worship.” Compare these passages. The first is a dungeon which crude hands have digged with jealous slime. The other is like the dome of the firmament, inlaid with constellations.

Is it possible God ever said: “If a prophet deceive when he hath spoken a thing, I, the

Lord, have deceived that prophet"? Compare that passage with the poet, a pagan: "Better remain silent the remainder of life than speak falsely." Can we believe a Being of infinite mercy gave this command: "Put every man his sword by his side; go from the gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. Consecrate yourselves this day. Let every man lay his sword even upon his son, upon his brother, that he bestow blessing upon Me this day"? Surely that was not the outcome of a great, magnanimous spirit, like that of the Roman emperor, who declared: "I had rather keep a single Roman citizen alive than slay a thousand enemies."

Compare the last command given to the children of Israel with the words of Marcus Aurelius:¹ "I have formed an ideal of the State, in which there is the same law for all, and equal rights and equal liberty of speech established for all—an Empire where nothing is honored so much as the freedom of the citizens." I am on the side of the Roman emperor.

What is more beautiful than the old story from Sufi? There was a man who for seven years did every act of good, every kind of

¹ Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, a Roman emperor and philosopher; born, 121 A.D.; succeeded to the throne, 161 A.D.; died, 180 A.D.

charity, and at the end of the seven years he mounted the steps to the gate of heaven and knocked. A voice cried, "Who is there?" He cried, "Thy servant, O Lord"; and the gate was shut. Seven other years he did every good work, and again mounted the three steps to heaven and knocked. The voice cried, "Who is there?" He answered, "Thy slave, O God"; and the gates were shut. Seven other years he did every good deed, and again mounted the steps to heaven, and the voice said: "Who is there?" He replied, "Thyself, O God"; and the gates wide open flew. Is there anything in our religion so warm or so beautiful as that? Compare that story from a pagan with the Presbyterian religion.

Take this story of Endesthora, who was a king of Egypt, and started for the place where the horizon touched the earth, where he was to meet God. With him followed Argune, and Bemis, and Traubation. They were taught that, when any man started after God in that way, if he had been guilty of any crime he would fall by the way. Endesthora walked at the head and suddenly he missed Argune. He said, "He was not always merciful in the hour of victory." A little while after he missed Bemis, and said, "He fought not so much for the rights of man as for his own glory." A little farther on he missed Traubation. He said,

“My God, I know no reason for his failing to reach the place where the horizon touches the earth”; and the god Ram appeared to him, and, opening the curtains of the sky, said to him, “Enter.” And Endesthora said: “But where are my brethren? Where are Argune, and Bemis, and Traubation?” And the god said: “They sinned in their time, and they are condemned to suffer below.” Then said Endesthora: “I do not wish to enter into your heaven without my friends. If they are below, then I will join them.” But the god said: “They are here before you, I simply said this to try your soul.” Endesthora simply turned and said: “But what of my dog?” The god said, “Thou knowest that, if the shadow of a dog fall upon the sacrifice, it is unclean. How, then, can a dog enter heaven?” And Endesthora replies: “I know that, and I know another thing; that ingratitude is the blackest of crimes, whether it be to man or beast. That dog has been my faithful friend. He has followed me and I will not desert even him.” And the god said: “Let the dog follow.” Compare that with the Bible stories.

Long before the advent of Christ, Aristotle¹ said: “We should conduct ourselves toward others as we would have them conduct them-

¹ Aristotle, a Greek philosopher and the founder of the Peripatetic school; born, 384 B.C.; died, 332 B.C.

selves toward us." Seneca¹ said: "Do not to your neighbor what you would not have your neighbor do to you." Socrates² said: "Act toward others as you would have others act toward you. Forgive your enemies, render good for evil, and kiss even the hand that is upraised to smite." Krishna³ said: "Cease to do evil; aim to do well; love your enemies. It is the law of love that virtue is the only thing that has strength." Poor, miserable pagans! Did you ever hear anything like this?

Is it possible that one of the authors of the New Testament was inspired when he said that man was not created for woman, but woman for man? Epictetus said: "What is more delightful than to be so dear to your wife as to be on her account dearer even to yourself?" Compare that with St. Paul:⁴ "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto the Lord." That was inspiration. This was writ-

¹ Lucius Annæus Seneca, a Roman Stoic philosopher; born about 4 B.C.; died, 65 A.D.

² Socrates, a Greek philosopher; born about 470 B.C.; died, 399 B.C.

³ Krishna, a Hindu deity.

⁴ "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church: and he is the Saviour of the body."—Ephesians 5:22, 23.

ten by 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. In the house where the woman is not honored, let the curse be pronounced. Where the wife is honored, there God is truly worshiped." I wish Jehovah had said something like that from Sinai. Is there anything as beautiful as this in the New Testament: "Shall I tell you where Nature is more blest and fair? It is where those we love abide. Though the space be small, it is ample as Earth; though it be a desert, through it run the rivers of Paradise."

Compare these things with the curses pronounced in the Old Testament, where you read of the heathen being given over to butchery and death, and the women and babes to destruction; and, after you have read them, read the chapters of horrors in the New Testament, threatening eternal fire and flame; and then read this, the greatest thought uttered by 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 mighty;
It becomes the thronèd monarch better than his crown."¹

¹ Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*.

Compare that with your doctrine of the New Testament! If Jehovah was an infinite God and knew things from the beginning, He knew that His Bible would be a breast-work behind which tyranny and hypocrisy would crouch, and knew His Bible would be the auction-block on which the mother would stand while her babe was sold from her, because He knew His Bible would be quoted by tyrants; that it would be quoted in defense of robbers called kings and by hypocrites called priests. He knew that He had taught the Jewish people; He knew that He had found them free and left them slaves; He knew that He had broken every single promise made to them; He knew that, while other nations advanced in knowledge, in art, in science, His chosen people were subjects still. He promised them the world; He gave them a desert. He promised them liberty, and made them slaves. He promised them power; He gave them exile, and anyone who reads the Old Testament is compelled to say that nothing could add to their misery.

Let us be honest. How do you account for this religion? This world, where did it come from? You hear every minister say that man is a religious animal—that religion is natural. While man is an ignorant animal man will be a theological animal, and no longer. Where did we get this religion? The savage knew but

little of nature, but thought that everything happened in reference to him. He thought his sins caused earthquakes, and that his virtues made the sunshine.

Nothing is so egotistic as ignorance. You know, and so do I, that if no human being existed, the sun would shine, and that tempests would now and then devastate the earth, violets would spread their velvet bosoms to the sun, daisies would grow, roses would fill the air with perfume, and now and then volcanoes would illuminate the horizon with their lurid glare, the grass would grow, the waters would run, and so far as nature is concerned, everything would be as joyous as though the earth were filled with happy homes. We know the barbarian savage thinks that all this was on his account. He thinks that there dwelt two very powerful deities; that there was a good one because he knows good things happen to him, and that there was a bad one because he knows bad things happen to him. Behind the evil influence he puts a devil, and behind the good an intention of a god; and then he imagines both these beings are in opposition, and that, between them, they struggle for the possession of his ignorant soul. He also thinks that the place where the good deity lives is heaven, and that the place where the other deity keeps himself is a place of torture and punishment. And about that time

other barbarians have chosen to keep the ignorant ones in subjection by means of the doctrine of fear and punishment.

There is no reforming power in fear. You can scare a man, maybe, so bad that he will not do a thing, but you can not scare him so bad he will not want to do it. There is no reforming power in punishment or brute force; but our barbarian rather imagined that every being would punish in accordance with his power and his dignity, and that God would subject them to torture in the same way as those who made Him angry. They knew the king would inflict torments upon one in his power, and they supposed that God would inflict torture according to His power. They knew that the worst torture was a slow, burning fire; added to it the idea of eternity, and hell was produced. That was their idea.

All meanness, revenge, selfishness, cruelty, and hatred of which men here are capable burst into blossom and bore fruit in that one word, hell.

In this way a God of infinite wisdom experimented with man, keeping him between an outstretched abyss beneath and a heaven above; and in time the man came to believe that he could please God by having read a few sacred books, could count beads, could sprinkle water, eat little square pieces of bread, and that he could

shut his eyes and say words to the clouds; but the moment he left this world nothing remained except to damn him. He was to be kept miserable one day in seven, and he could slander and persecute other men all the other days in the week. That was the chance God gave a man here, but the moment he left this world that settled it. He would go to eternal pain or else to eternal joy.

That was the way that the supernatural governed this world—through fear, through terror, through eternity of punishment and that government, I say to-night, has failed.

How has it been kept alive so long? It was born in ignorance. Let me tell you, whoever attacks a creed will be confronted with a list of great men who have believed in it. Probably their belief in that creed was the only weakness they had. But he will be asked, "So you know more than all the great men who have taught and all the respectable men who have believed in that faith?" For the church is always going about to get a certificate from some governors, or even perhaps members of the legislature, and you are told, because So-and-so believed all these things, and you have no more talents than they, that you should believe the same thing.

But I contend, as against this argument, that you should not take the testimony of these men unless you are willing to take at the same time

all their beliefs on other subjects. Then, again, they tell you that the rich people are all on their side, and I say so, too. The churches to-day seek the rich, and poverty unwillingly seeks them. Light thrown from diamonds adorns the repentant here. We are told that the rich, the fortunate, and the holders of place are Christians now; and yet ministers grow eloquent over the poverty of Christ, who was born in a manger, and say that the Holy Ghost passed the titled ladies of the world and selected the wife of a poor mechanic for the mother of God.

Such is the difference between theory and practice. The church condemns the men of Jerusalem who held positions and who held the pretensions of the Saviør in contempt. They admit that He was so little known that they had to bribe a man to point Him out to the soldiers. They assert that He performed miracles; yet He remained absolutely unknown, hidden in the depths of obscurity. No one knew Him, and one of His disciples had to be bribed to point Him out. Surely He and His disciples could have met the arguments which were urged against their religion at that time.

So long as the church honored philosophers she kept her great men in the majority. How is it now? I say to-night that no man of genius in the world is in the orthodox pulpit so far as I know. Where are they? Where are the

orthodox great men? I challenge the Christian church to produce a man like Alexander von Humboldt.¹ I challenge the world to produce a naturalist like Haeckel.² I challenge the Christian world to produce a man like Darwin.³ Where in the ranks of orthodoxy are historians like Draper⁴ and Buckle?⁵ Where are the naturalists like Tyndall,⁶ philosophers like Mill⁷ and Spencer,⁸ and women like George Eliot⁹ and Harriet Martineau?¹⁰ You may get tired of the great-men argument; but the names of the great thinkers, the naturalists and scientists of our time, can not be matched by the supernatural world.

What is the next argument they will bring forward? The father and mother argument. "You must not disgrace your parents." How did Christ come to leave the religion of His

¹ Alexander von Humboldt, a German scientist and author; born, 1769; died, 1859.

² Ernst Heinrich Haeckel, a German naturalist, born, 1834.

³ Charles Robert Darwin, an English naturalist; born, 1809; died, 1882.

⁴ John William Draper, an Anglo-American chemist, physiologist, and historian; born, 1811; died, 1882.

⁵ Henry Thomas Buckle, an English historian; born, 1821; died, 1862.

⁶ John Tyndall, a British physicist; born, 1820; died, 1893.

⁷ John Stuart Mill, an English philosophical writer, logician, and economist; born, 1806; died, 1873.

⁸ Herbert Spencer, an English philosopher; born, 1820.

⁹ George Eliot, the pen-name of Marian Evans Lewes Cross, an English novelist; born, 1819; died, 1880.

¹⁰ Harriet Martineau, an English author; born, 1802; died, 1876.

mother? That argument proves too much. There is one way every man can honor his mother—that is by finding out more than she knew. There is one way a man can honor his father—by correcting the old man's errors.

Most people imagine that the creed we have came from the brain and heart of Christ. They have no idea how it was made. They think it was all made at one time. They do not understand that it was a slow growth. They do not understand that theology is a science made up of mistakes, prejudices, and falsehoods. Let me tell you a few facts: The Emperor Constantine,¹ who lifted the Christian religion into power, murdered his wife and his eldest son the very year that he convened the Council of Nice to decide whether Jesus Christ was man or God; and that was not decided until the year of grace 325. Then Theodosius² called a council at Constantinople in 381, and this council decided that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father.

¹ Constantine I (Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus), surnamed the Great, a Roman emperor; born, 272 A.D.; appointed Cæsar, 306 A.D.; became sole Augustus, 323 A.D.; put his son Crispus to death for high treason, 324 A.D.; according to a tradition, without historical foundation, this son was the victim of a plot on the part of his step-mother, who was suffocated in a bath as soon as Constantine discovered his son's innocence; Constantine died, 337 A.D.

² Theodosius (I) the Great, a Roman emperor; born about 346 A.D.; became emperor of the East, 379 A.D.; became sole emperor, 394 A.D.; died, 395 A.D.

You see, there was a little doubt on that question before this was done. Then another council was called later to determine who the Virgin Mary really was, and it was solemnly decided that she was the mother of Christ. In 431, and then in 451, a council was held in Chalcedon, by the Emperor Marcian,¹ and that decided that Christ had two natures—a human and a divine. In 680 another council was held at Constantinople; and in 1274, at Lyons, it was decided that the Holy Ghost proceeded not only from the Father but from the Son; and when you take into consideration the fact that a belief in the Trinity is absolutely essential to salvation, you see how important it was that these doctrines should have been established in 1274, when millions of people had dropped into hell in the interim solely because they had forgotten that question. At last we know how religions are made. We know how miracles are manufactured. We know the history of relics, and bones, and pieces of the true cross. And at last we understand apostolic succession. At last we have examined other religions, and we find them all the same, and we are beginning to suspect that ours is like the rest. I think we understand it.

I read a little story, a short time ago, from

¹ Marcian (Marcianus), a Roman emperor; born about 391 A.D.; became emperor of the East, 450 A.D.; died, 457 A.D.

the Japanese, that throws light upon the question. There was an old priest at a monastery. This monastery was built over the bones of what he called a saint, and people came there and were cured of many diseases. This priest had an assistant. After the assistant grew up and got quite to understand his business, the old priest gave him a little donkey, and told him that henceforth he was to take care of himself. The young priest started out with his little donkey, and asked alms of those he met. Few gave to him. Finally he got very poor. He could not raise money enough to feed the donkey. Finally the donkey died; he was about to bury it when a thought occurred to him. He buried the donkey and sat down on the grave, and to the next stranger that passed he said: "Will you not give a little money to erect a shrine over the bones of a sinless one?" Thereupon a man gave some money. Others followed his example, a shrine was raised, and in a little while a monastery was built over the bones of the sinless one. Down in the grave the young priest made an orifice, so that persons afflicted with any disease could reach down and touch the bones of the sinless one. Hundreds were thus cured, and persons left their crutches as testimonials to the miraculous power of the bones of the sinless one. Finally the priest became so rich that he thought he would

visit his old master. He went to the old monastery with a fine retinue. His old master asked him how he became so rich and prosperous. He replied: "Old age is stupid, but youth has thought." Later on he explained to the old priest how the donkey had died, and how he had raised a monastery over the bones of the sinless one; and again reminded him that old age is stupid, but youth has thought. The old priest exclaimed: "Not quite so fast, young man; not quite so fast. Do not imagine you worked out anything new. This shrine of mine is built over the bones of the mother of your little donkey."

We have now reached a point in the history of the world when we know that theocracy as a form of government is a failure, and we see that theology as a foundation of government is an absolute failure. We can see that theocracy and theology created, not liberty, but despotism. We know enough of the history of the churches in this world to know that they never can civilize mankind; that they are not imbued with the spirit of progress; that they are not imbued with the spirit of justice and mercy.

What I ask you to-night is: What has the church done to civilize mankind? What has the church done for us? How has it added to the prosperity of this world? Has it ever produced anything? Nothing. Why, they say, it

has been charitable. How can a beggar be charitable? A beggar produces nothing. The church has been an eternal and everlasting pauper. It is not charitable. It is an object of charity, and yet it claims to be charitable. The giver is the charitable one. Somebody who has made something, somebody who has by his labor produced something, he alone can be charitable.

And let me say another thing: The church is always on the wrong side.

Let us take, first, the Episcopal Church—if you call that a church. Let me tell you one thing about that church. You know what is called the rebellion in England in 1688? Do you know what caused it? I will tell you. King James was a Catholic, and notwithstanding that fact, he issued an edict of toleration for the dissenters and Catholics. And what next did he do? He ordered all the bishops to have this edict of toleration read in the Episcopal churches. They refused to do it—most of them. You recollect that trial of the seven bishops? That is what it was all about; they would not read the edict of toleration. Then what happened? A strange thing to say, and it is one of the miracles of this world: the dissenters, in whose favor that edict was issued, joined hands with the Episcopalians, and raised the rebellion against the king, because he wanted

to give the dissenters liberty, and these dissenters and these Episcopalians, on account of toleration, drove King James into exile. That is the history of the first rebellion the Church of England ever raised against the king, simply because he issued an edict of toleration and the poor, miserable wretches in whose favor the edict was issued joined hands with their oppressors.

I want to show you how much the Church of England has done for England. I get it from good authority. Let me read it to you to show how little influence the Christian church, the Church of England, had with the government of that country. Let me tell you that up to the reign of George I there were in that country sixty-seven offenses punishable with death. There is not a lawyer in this city who can think of those offenses and write them down in one day. Think of it! Sixty-seven offenses punishable with death! Now, between the accession of George I and the termination of the reign of George III there were added one hundred and fifty-six new crimes punishable with death, making in all two hundred and twenty-three crimes in England punishable with death. There is no lawyer in this State who can think of that many crimes in a week.

“ Now, during all those years the government was becoming more and more cruel; more and

more barbarous; and we do not find, and we have not found, that the Church of England, with its fifteen or twenty thousand ministers, with its more than a score of bishops in the House of Lords, has ever raised its voice or perfected any organization in favor of a more merciful code, or in condemnation of the enormous cruelty which the laws were continually inflicting. And was not Voltaire¹ justified in saying that ‘The English were a people who murdered by law’?”

Now, that is an extract from a speech made by John Bright² in May, 1883. That shows what the Church of England did. Two hundred and twenty-three offenses in England punishable with death, and no minister, no bishop, no church organization raising his or its voice against the monstrous cruelty! And why? Even then it was better than the law of Jehovah.

And the Protestants were as bad as the Catholics. You remember the time of Henry IV³ in France, when the Edict of Nantes was issued simply to give the Protestants the right to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience. Just as soon as that edict was is-

¹ Voltaire, the surname of Marie François Arouet, a French writer; born, 1694; died, 1778.

² John Bright, an English statesman and orator; born, 1811; died, 1889.

³ Henry (IV) of Navarre, king of France; born, 1553; claimed the throne, 1589; crowned king, 1594; died, 1610.

sued the Protestants themselves, in the cities where they had the power, prevented the Catholics from worshiping their God according to the dictates of their conscience and it was on account of the refusal of those Protestants to allow the Catholics to worship God as they desired that there was a civil war lasting for seven years in France. Richelieu ¹ came into authority about the second or third year of that war. He made no difference between Protestants and Catholics; and it was owing to Richelieu that the 'Thirty Years' War terminated. It was owing to Richelieu that the Peace of Westphalia ² was made in 1643, although I believe he had been dead a year before that time; but it was owing to him: and it was the first peace ever made between nations on a secular basis with everything religious left out, and it was the last great religious war.

You may ask me what I want. Well, in the first place I want to get theology out of government. It has no business there. Man gets his authority from man, and is responsible only to man. I want to get theology out of politics. Our ancestors in 1776 retired God from politics, because of the jealousies among the churches, and the result has been splendid for mankind.

¹ Armand Jean du Plessis, Cardinal and Duc de Richelieu, a French statesman; born, 1585; died, 1642.

² The Peace of Westphalia was signed October 24, 1648.

I want to get theology out of education. Teach the children what somebody knows, not what somebody guesses.

I want to get theology out of morality, and out of charity. Do not give for God's sake, but for man's sake.

I want you to know another thing: that neither Protestants nor Catholics are fit to govern this world. They are not fit to govern themselves. How could you elect a minister of any religion President of the United States? Could you elect a bishop of the Catholic Church; or a Methodist bishop, or Episcopal minister, or one of the elders? No. And why? We are afraid of the ecclesiastic spirit. We are afraid to trust the liberties of men in the hands of people who acknowledge that they are bound by a standard different from that of the welfare of mankind.

The histories of Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Cuba, and Brazil all show that slavery existed where Catholicism was a power. I would suggest an education that would rule theology out of the Government, and teach people to rely more on themselves and less on Providence.

There are two ways of living—the broad way of life lived for others, and the narrow theological way.

It is wise to so live that death can be serenely

faced, and then, if there is another world, the best way to prepare for it is to make the best of this; and if there be no other world, the best way to live here is to so live as to be happy and make everybody else happy.

WHAT IS RELIGION?

[This address was delivered before the Thirty-second annual convention of the Free Religious Association, in Hollis Street Theater, Boston, Massachusetts, on Friday, June 2, 1899.]

It is asserted that an infinite God created all things, governs all things, and that the creature should be obedient and thankful to the creator; that the creator demands certain things, and that the person who complies with these demands is religious. This kind of religion has been substantially universal.

For many centuries and by many peoples it was believed that this God demanded sacrifices; that he was pleased when parents shed the blood of their babes. Afterwards it was supposed that he was satisfied with the blood of oxen, lambs, and doves, and that in exchange for, or on account of, these sacrifices this God gave rain, sunshine, and harvest. It was also believed that if the sacrifices were not made, this God sent pestilence, famine, flood, and earthquake.

The last phase of this belief in sacrifice was, according to the Christian doctrine, that God accepted the blood of his Son, and that after his

Son had been murdered he, God, was satisfied and wanted no more blood.

During all these years and by all these peoples it was believed that this God heard and answered prayer, that he forgave sins, and saved the souls of true believers. This, in a general way, is the definition of religion.

Now, the questions are, Whether religion was founded on any known fact? Whether such a being as God exists? Whether he was the creator of yourself and myself? Whether any prayer was ever answered? Whether any sacrifice of babe or ox secured the favor of this unseen God?

First. Did an infinite God create the children of men?

Why did he create the intellectually inferior?

Why did he create the deformed and helpless?

Why did he create the criminal, the idiotic, the insane?

Can infinite wisdom and power make any excuse for the creation of failures?

Are the failures under obligation to their creator?

Second. Is an infinite God the governor of this world?

Is he responsible for all the chiefs, kings, emperors, and queens?

Is he responsible for all the wars that have been waged, for all the innocent blood that has been shed?

Is he responsible for the centuries of slavery, for the backs that have been scarred with the lash, for the babes that have been sold from the breasts of mothers, for the families that have been separated and destroyed?

Is this God responsible for religious persecution, for the inquisition, for the thumb-screw and rack, and for all the instruments of torture?

Did this God allow the cruel and vile to destroy the brave and virtuous? Did he allow tyrants to shed the blood of patriots?

Did he allow his enemies to torture and burn his friends?

What is such a God worth?

Would a decent man, having the power to prevent it, allow his enemies to torture and burn his friends?

Can we conceive of a devil base enough to prefer his enemies to his friends?

If a good and infinitely powerful God governs this world, how can we account for cyclones, earthquakes, pestilence, and famine?

How can we account for cancers, for microbes, for diphtheria, and the thousand diseases that prey on infancy?

How can we account for the wild beasts that

devour human beings, for the fanged serpents whose bite is death?

How can we account for a world where life feeds on life?

Were beak and claw, tooth and fang, invented and produced by infinite mercy?

Did infinite goodness fashion the wings of the eagles so that their fleeing prey could be overtaken?

Did infinite goodness create the beasts of prey with the intention that they should devour the weak and helpless?

Did infinite goodness create the countless worthless living things that breed within and feed upon the flesh of higher forms?

Did infinite wisdom intentionally produce the microscopic beasts that feed upon the optic nerve?

Think of blinding a man to satisfy the appetite of a microbe!

Think of life feeding on life! Think of the victims! Think of the Niagara of blood pouring over the precipice of cruelty!

In view of these facts, what, after all, is religion?

It is fear.

Fear builds the altar and offers the sacrifice.

Fear erects the cathedral and bows the head of man in worship.

Fear bends the knees and utters the prayer.

Fear pretends to love.

Religion teaches the slave virtues—obedience, humility, self-denial, forgiveness, non-resistance.

Lips, religious and fearful, tremblingly repeat this passage: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." This is the abyss of degradation.

Religion does not teach self-reliance, independence, manliness, courage, self-defense. Religion makes God a master and man his serf. The master can not be great enough to make slavery sweet.

If this God exists, how do we know that he is good? How can we prove that he is merciful? That he cares for the children of men? If this God exists, he has on many occasions seen millions of his poor children plowing the fields, sowing and planting the grain, and when he saw them he knew that they depended on the expected crop for life, and yet this good God, this merciful being, withheld the rain. He caused the sun to rise, to steal all moisture from the land, but gave no rain. He saw the seeds that man had planted wither and perish, but he sent no rain. He saw the people with sad eyes upon the barren earth, and he sent no rain. He saw them slowly devour the little they had, and saw them when the days of hunger came, saw them slowly waste away, saw their hungry, sunken eyes, heard their prayers, saw them devour the miserable animals that they had, saw

fathers and mothers insane with hunger kill and eat their shriveled babes, and yet the heaven above them was as brass and the earth beneath as iron, and he sent no rain. Can we say that in the heart of this God there blossomed the flower of pity? Can we say that he cared for the children of men? Can we say that his mercy endureth forever?

Do we prove that this God is good because he sends the cyclone that wrecks villages and covers the fields with the mangled bodies of fathers, mothers, and babes? Do we prove his goodness by showing that he has opened the earth and swallowed thousands of his helpless children, or that with the volcanoes he has overwhelmed them with rivers of fire? Can we infer the goodness of God from the facts we know?

If these calamities did not happen, would we suspect that God cared nothing for human beings? If there were no famine, no pestilence, no cyclone, no earthquake, would we think that God is not good?

According to the theologians, God did not make all men alike. He made races differing in intelligence, stature, and color. Was there goodness, was there wisdom in this?

Ought the superior races to thank God that they are not the inferior? If we say yes, then I ask another question. Should the inferior races thank God that they are not superior, or

should they thank God that they are not beasts?

When God made these different races, he knew that the superior would enslave the inferior, knew that the inferior would be conquered and finally destroyed.

If God did this, and knew the blood that would be shed, the agonies that would be endured, saw the countless fields covered with corpses of the slain, saw all the bleeding backs of slaves, all the broken hearts of mothers bereft of babes, if he saw and knew all this, can we conceive of a more malicious fiend?

Why, then, should we say that God is good?

The dungeons against whose dripping walls the brave and generous have sighed their souls away; the scaffolds stained and glorified with noble blood; the hopeless slaves with scarred and bleeding backs; writhing martyrs clothed in flame; the virtuous stretched on racks, their joints and muscles torn apart; the flayed and bleeding bodies of the just; the extinguished eyes of those who sought for truth; the countless patriots who fought and died in vain; the burdened, beaten, weeping wives; the shriveled faces of neglected babes; the murdered millions of the vanished years; the victims of the winds and waves, of flood and flame, of imprisoned forces in the earth, of lightning stroke, of lava's molten stream, of famine, plague, and lingering pain; the mouths that drip with blood, the fangs

that poison, the beaks that wound and tear; the triumphs of the base, the rule and sway of wrong, the crowns that cruelty has worn, and the robed hypocrites with clasped and bloody hands who thanked their God—a phantom fiend—that liberty had been banished from the world; these souvenirs of the dreadful past, these horrors that still exist, these frightful facts deny that any God exists who has the will and power to guard and bless the human race.

Most people cling to the supernatural. If they give up one god they imagine another. Having outgrown Jehovah, they talk about the power that works for righteousness.

What is this power?

Man advances, and necessarily advances through experience. A man wishing to go to a certain place comes to where the road divides. He takes the left hand, believing it to be the right road, and travels until he finds that it is the wrong one. He retraces his steps and takes the right-hand road and reaches the place desired. The next time he goes to the same place he does not take the left-hand road. He has tried that, and knows that it is the wrong road. He takes the right road, and thereupon these theologians say, "There is a power that works for righteousness."

A child, charmed by the beauty of the flame, grasps it with its dimpled hand. The hand is

burned, and after that the child keeps its hand out of the fire. The power that works for righteousness has taught the child a lesson.

The accumulated experience of the world is a power and force that works for righteousness. This force is not conscious, not intelligent. It has no will, no purpose. It is a result.

So thousands have endeavored to establish the existence of God by the fact that we have what is called the moral sense, that is to say, a conscience.

It is insisted by these theologians, and by many of the so-called philosophers, that this moral sense, this sense of duty, of obligation, was imported, and that conscience is an exotic. Taking the ground that it was not produced here, was not produced by man, they then imagine a God from whom it came.

Man is a social being, we live together in families, tribes, and nations.

The members of a family, of a tribe, of a nation, who increase the happiness of the family, of the tribe, or of the nation, are considered good members. They are praised, admired, and respected. They are regarded as good—that is to say, as moral.

The members who add to the misery of the family, the tribe, or the nation, are considered bad members. They are blamed, despised, punished. They are regarded as immoral.

The family, the tribe, the nation, creates a standard of conduct, or morality. There is nothing supernatural in this.

The greatest of human beings has said, "Conscience is born of love."

The sense of obligation, of duty was naturally produced.

Among savages the immediate consequences of actions are taken into consideration. As people advance the remote consequences are perceived. The standard of conduct becomes higher. The imagination is cultivated. A man puts himself in the place of another. The sense of duty becomes stronger, more imperative. Man judges himself.

He loves, and love is the commencement, the foundation of the highest virtues. He injures one that he loves. Then come regret, repentance, sorrow, conscience; in all this there is nothing supernatural.

Man has deceived himself. Nature is a mirror in which man sees his own image, and all supernatural religions rest on the pretense that the image, which appears to be behind this mirror, has been caught.

All the metaphysicians of the spiritual type, from Plato¹ to Swedenborg,² have manufac-

¹ Plato, a Greek philosopher; born, 429 or 427 B.C.; died, 347 B.C.

² Emanuel Swedenborg, a Swedish philosopher and theosophist; born, 1688; died, 1772.

tured their facts, and all founders of religion have done the same.

Suppose that an infinite God exists, what can we do for him? Being infinite, he is conditionless; being conditionless, he can not be benefited or injured. He can not want. He has.

Think of the egotism of a man who believes that an infinite being wants his praise!

What has our religion done? Of course it is admitted by Christians that all other religions are false, and consequently we need examine only our own.

Has Christianity done good? Has it made men nobler, more merciful, nearer honest? When the church had control were men made better and happier?

What has been the effect of Christianity in Italy, in Spain, in Portugal, in Ireland?

What has religion done for Hungary or Austria? What was the effect of Christianity in Switzerland, in Holland, in Scotland, in England, in America? Let us be honest. Could those countries have been worse without any religion? Could they have been worse had they had any other religion than Christianity?

Would Torquemada¹ have been worse had he

¹ Tomas de Torquemada, a Spanish Dominican prior; born about 1420; made first inquisitor-general of Castile, 1483; died, 1498.

been a follower of Zoroaster?¹ Would Calvin² have been more bloodthirsty if he had believed in the religion of the South Sea Islanders? Would the Dutch have been more idiotic if they had denied the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and worshiped the blessed trinity of sausage, beer, and cheese? Would John Knox³ have been any worse had he deserted Christ and become a follower of Confucius?

Take our own dear, merciful Puritan Fathers. What did Christianity do for them? They hated pleasure. On the door of life they hung the crape of death. They muffled all the bells of gladness. They made cradles by putting rockers on coffins. In the Puritan year there were twelve Decembers. They tried to do away with infancy and youth, with the prattle of babes and the song of the morning.

The religion of the Puritan was an unadulterated curse. The Puritan believed the Bible to be the word of God, and this belief has always made those who held it cruel and wretched. Would the Puritan have been worse if he had adopted the religion of the North American Indians?

¹ Zoroaster or Zorathushtra, the founder of the Perso-Iranian national religion.

² John Calvin, a French-Swiss religious reformer; born, 1509; died, 1564.

³ John Knox, a Scottish religious reformer; born, 1505; died, 1572.

Let me refer to just one fact showing the influence of a belief in the Bible on human beings.

“On the day of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth she was presented with a Geneva Bible by an old man representing Time, with Truth standing by his side as a child. The Queen received the Bible, kissed it, and pledged herself to diligently read therein. In the dedication of this blessed Bible the Queen was piously exhorted to put all papists to the sword.”

In this incident we see the real spirit of Protestant lovers of the Bible. In other words, it was just as fiendish, just as infamous, as the Catholic spirit.

Has the Bible made the people of Georgia kind and merciful? Would the lynchers be more ferocious if they worshiped gods of wood and stone?

Religion has been tried, and in all countries, in all times, has failed.

Religion has never made man merciful.

Remember the inquisition.

What effect did religion have on slavery?

What effect upon Libby, Salisbury, and Andersonville?

Religion has always been the enemy of science, of investigation and thought.

Religion has never made man free.

It has never made man moral, temperate, industrious, and honest.

Are Christians more temperate, nearer virtuous, nearer honest than savages?

Among savages do we not find that their vices and cruelties are the fruits of their superstitions?

To those who believe in the uniformity of nature, religion is impossible.

Can we affect the nature and qualities of substance by prayer? Can we hasten or delay the tides by worship? Can we change winds by sacrifices? Will kneelings give us wealth? Can we cure disease by supplication? Can we add to our knowledge by ceremony? Can we receive virtue or honor as alms?

Are not the facts in the mental world just as stubborn—just as necessarily produced—as the facts in the material world? Is not what we call mind just as natural as what we call body?

Religion rests on the idea that nature has a master and that this master will listen to prayer; that this master punishes and rewards; that he loves praise and flattery and hates the brave and free.

Has man obtained any help from heaven?

If we have a theory, we must have facts for the foundation. We must have cornerstones. We must not build on guesses, fancies, analogies, or inferences. The structure must have a basement. If we build, we must begin at the bottom.

I have a theory and I have four cornerstones.

The first stone is that matter—substance—can not be destroyed, can not be annihilated.

The second stone is that force can not be destroyed, can not be annihilated.

The third stone is that matter and force can not exist apart—no matter without force—no force without matter.

The fourth stone is that that which can not be destroyed could not have been created; that the indestructible is the uncreatable.

If these cornerstones are facts, it follows as a necessity that matter and force are from and to eternity, that they can neither be increased nor diminished.

It follows that nothing has been or can be created; that there never has been or can be a creator.

It follows that there could not have been any intelligence, any design, back of matter and force.

There is no intelligence without force; there is no force without matter. Consequently there could not by any possibility have been any intelligence, any force, back of matter.

It therefore follows that the supernatural does not and can not exist. If these four cornerstones are facts, nature has no master. If matter and force are from and to eternity, it fol-

lows as a necessity that no God exists; that no God created or governs the universe; that no God exists who answers prayer; no God who succors the oppressed; no God who pities the sufferings of innocence; no God who cares for the slaves with scarred flesh, the mothers robbed of their babes; no God who rescues the tortured, and no God that saves a martyr from the flames. In other words, it proves that man has never received any help from heaven; that all the sacrifices have been in vain, and that all prayers have died unanswered in the heedless air. I do not pretend to know. I say what I think.

If matter and force have existed from eternity, it then follows that all that has been possible has happened, all that is possible is happening, and all that will be possible will happen.

In the universe there is no chance, no caprice. Every event has parents.

That which has not happened could not. The present is the necessary product of all the past, the necessary cause of all the future.

In the infinite chain there is, there can be, no broken, no missing link. The form and motion of every star, the climate of every world, all forms of vegetable and animal life, all instinct, intelligence, and conscience, all assertions and denials, all vices and virtues, all thoughts and dreams, all hopes and fears, are necessities.

Not one of the countless things and relations in the universe could have been different.

If matter and force are from eternity, then we can say that man had no intelligent creator, that man was not a special creation.

We now know, if we know anything, that Jehovah, the divine potter, did not mix and mold clay into the forms of men and women, and then breathe the breath of life into their forms.

We now know that our first parents were not foreigners. We know that they were natives of this world, produced here, and that their life did not come from the breath of any God. We now know, if we know anything, that the universe is natural, and that men and women have been naturally produced. We now know our ancestors, our pedigree. We have the family tree.

We have all the links of the chain, twenty-six links, inclusive, from moner to man.

We did not get our information from inspired books. We have fossil facts and living forms.

From the simplest creatures, from blind sensation, from organisms with one vague want, to a single cell with a nucleus, to a hollow ball filled with fluid, to a cup with double walls, to a flat worm, to a something that begins to breathe, to an organism that has a spinal cord, to a link between the invertebrate and the vertebrate, to one that has a cranium—a house for

a brain—to one with fins, still onward to one with fore and hinder fins, to the reptile, mammalia, to the marsupials, to the lemurs, dwellers in trees, to the simiæ, to the pithecanthropi, and lastly to man.

We know the paths that life has traveled. We know the footsteps of advance. They have been traced. The last link has been found. For this we are indebted, more than to all others, to the greatest of biologists, Ernst Haeckel.¹

We now believe that the universe is natural and we deny the existence of the supernatural.

For thousands of years men and women have been trying to reform the world. They have created gods and devils, heavens and hells; they have written sacred books, performed miracles, built cathedrals and dungeons; they have crowned and uncrowned kings and queens; they have tortured and imprisoned, flayed alive and burned; they have preached and prayed; they have tried promises and threats; they have coaxed and persuaded; they have preached and taught, and in countless ways have endeavored to make people honest, temperate, industrious, and virtuous; they have built hospitals and asylums, universities and schools, and seem to have done their very best to make mankind better and happier, and yet they have not succeeded.

¹ Ernst Heinrich Haeckel, a German naturalist; born, 1834.

Why have the reformers failed? I will tell them why.

Ignorance, poverty, and vice are populating the world. The gutter is a nursery. People unable even to support themselves fill the tenements, the huts, and hovels with children. They depend on the Lord, on luck and charity. They are not intelligent enough to think about consequences or to feel responsibility. At the same time they do not want children, because a child is a curse, a curse to them and to itself. The babe is not welcome, because it is a burden. These unwelcome children fill the jails and prisons, the asylums and hospitals, and they crowd the scaffolds. A few are rescued by chance or charity, but the great majority are failures. They become vicious, ferocious. They live by fraud and violence, and bequeath their vices to their children.

Against this inundation of vice the forces of reform are helpless, and charity itself becomes an unconscious promoter of crime.

Failure seems to be the trademark of nature. Why? Nature has no design, no intelligence. Nature produces without purpose, sustains without intention, and destroys without thought. Man has a little intelligence, and he should use it. Intelligence is the only lever capable of raising mankind.

The real question is, can we prevent the ig-

norant, the poor, the vicious, from filling the world with their children?

Can we prevent this Missouri of ignorance and vice from emptying into the Mississippi of civilization?

Must the world forever remain the victim of ignorant passion? Can the world be civilized to that degree that consequences will be taken into consideration by all?

Why should men and women have children that they can not take care of, children that are burdens and curses? Why? Because they have more passion than intelligence, more passion than conscience, more passion than reason.

You can not reform these people with tracts and talk. You can not reform these people with preach and creed. Passion is, and always has been, deaf. These weapons of reform are substantially useless. Criminals, tramps, beggars, and failures are increasing every day. The prisons, jails, poorhouses, and asylums are crowded. Religion is helpless. Law can punish, but it can neither reform criminals nor prevent crime. The tide of vice is rising. The war that is now being waged against the forces of evil is as hopeless as the battle of the fireflies against the darkness of night.

There is but one hope. Ignorance, poverty, and vice must stop populating the world. This can not be done by moral suasion. This can

not be done by talk or example. This can not be done by religion or by law, by priest or by hangman. This can not be done by force, physical or moral. To accomplish this there is but one way. Science must make woman the owner, the mistress of herself. Science, the only possible savior of mankind, must put it in the power of woman to decide for herself whether she will or will not become a mother.

This is the solution of the whole question. This frees woman. The babes that are then born will be welcome. They will be clasped by glad hands to happy breasts. They will fill homes with light and joy.

Men and women who believe that slaves are purer, truer than the free, who believe that fear is a safer guide than knowledge, that only those are really good who obey the commands of others, and that ignorance is the soil in which the perfect, perfumed flower of virtue grows, will with protesting hands hide their shocked faces.

Men and women who think that light is the enemy of virtue, that purity dwells in darkness, that it is dangerous for human beings to know themselves and the facts in nature that affect their well being, will be horrified at the thought of making intelligence the master of passion.

But I look forward to the time when men and women by reason of their knowledge of

consequences, of the morality born of intelligence, will refuse to perpetuate disease and pain, will refuse to fill the world with failures.

When that time comes, the prison walls will fall, the dungeons will be flooded with light, and the shadow of the scaffold will cease to curse the earth. Poverty and crime will be childless. The withered hands of want will not be stretched for alms. They will be dust. The whole world will be intelligent, virtuous, and free.

Religion can never reform mankind because religion is slavery.

It is far better to be free, to leave the forts and barricades of fear, to stand erect and face the future with a smile.

It is far better to give yourself sometimes to negligence, to drift with wave and tide, with the blind forces of the world, to think and dream, to forget the chains and limitations of this breathing life, to forget purpose and object, to lounge in the picture gallery of the brain, to feel once more the clasps and kisses of the past, to bring life's morning back, to see again the forms and faces of the dead, to paint fair pictures for the coming years, to forget all gods, their promises and threats, to feel within your veins life's joyous stream and hear the martial music, the rhythmic beating of your fearless heart.

And then to rouse yourself to do all useful

things, to reach with thought and deed the ideal in your brain, to give your fancies wing, that they, like chemist bees, may find art's nectar in the weeds of common things; to look with trained and steady eyes for facts, to find the subtle threads that join the distant with the now, to increase knowledge, to take burdens from the weak, to develop the brain, to defend the right, to make a palace for the soul.

This is real religion. This is real worship.

CRUMBLING CREEDS

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“How do you account for the great change that has taken place in the religious thought of the world?”

There is a desire in each brain to harmonize the knowledge that it has. If a man knows, or thinks he knows, a few facts, he will naturally use those facts for the purpose of determining the accuracy of his opinions on other subjects. This is simply an effort to establish or prove the unknown by the known—a process that is constantly going on in the minds of all intelligent people.

It is natural for a man not governed by fear, to use what he knows in one department of human inquiry, in every other department that he investigates. The average of intelligence has in the last few years greatly increased. Man may have as much credulity as he ever had, on some subjects, but certainly on the old subjects he has less. There is not as great a difference to-day between the members of the learned professions and the common people. Man is

governed less and less by authority. He cares but little for the conclusions of the universities. He does not feel bound by the action of synods or ecumenical councils—neither does he bow to the decisions of the highest tribunals, unless the reasons given for the decisions satisfy his intellect. One reason for this is, that the so-called “learned” do not agree among themselves—that the universities dispute each other—that the synod attacks the ecumenical council—that the parson snaps his fingers at the priest, and even the Protestant bishop holds the pope in contempt. If the learned can thus disagree, there is no reason why the common people should hold to one opinion. They are at least called upon to decide as between the universities or synods; and in order to decide, they must examine both sides, and having examined both sides, they generally have an opinion of their own.

There was a time when the average man knew nothing of medicine—he simply opened his mouth and took the dose. If he died, it was a dispensation of Providence—if he got well, it was a triumph of science. Now this average man not only asks the doctor what is the matter with him—not only asks what medicine will be good for him,—but insists on knowing the philosophy of the cure—asks the doctor why he gives it—what result he

expects—and as a rule has a judgment of his own.

So in law. The average business man has an exceedingly good idea of the law affecting his business. There is nothing now mysterious about what goes on in courts or in the decisions of judges—they are published in every direction, and all intelligent people who happen to read these opinions have their ideas as to whether the opinions are right or wrong. They are no longer the victims of doctors or of lawyers or of courts.

The same is true in the world of art and literature. The average man has an opinion of his own. He is no longer a parrot repeating what somebody else says. He not only has opinions, but he has the courage to express them. In literature the old models fail to satisfy him. He has the courage to say that Milton¹ is tiresome—that Dante² is prolix—that they deal with subjects having no human interest. He laughs at Young's³ "Night Thoughts" and Pollok's⁴ "Course of Time"—knowing that both are filled with hypocrisies and absurdities. He no longer falls upon his knees before the mechanical poetry of Mr.

¹ John Milton, an English poet; born, 1608; died, 1674.

² Dante Alighieri, an Italian poet; born, 1265; died, 1321.

³ Edward Young, an English poet; born, 1681; died, 1765.

⁴ Robert Pollok, a Scottish religious poet; born about 1798; died, 1827.

Pope.¹ He chooses—and stands by his own opinion. I do not mean that he is entirely independent, but that he is going in that direction.

The same is true of pictures. He prefers the modern to the old masters. He prefers Corot² to Raphael.³ He gets more real pleasure from Millet⁴ and Troyon⁵ than from all the pictures of all the saints and donkeys of the Middle Ages.

In other words, the days of authority are passing away.

The same is true in music. The old no longer satisfies, and there is a breadth, color, wealth, in the new that makes the old poor and barren in comparison.

To a far greater extent this advance, this individual independence, is seen in the religious world. The religion of our day—that is to say, the creeds—at the time they were made, were in perfect harmony with the knowledge, or rather with the ignorance, of man in all other departments of human inquiry. All orthodox creeds agreed with the sciences of their day—with the astronomy and geology and biology and political conceptions of the Middle Ages. These creeds

¹ Alexander Pope, an English poet; born, 1688; died, 1744.

² Jean Baptiste Camille Corot, a French landscape-painter; born, 1796; died, 1875.

³ Raphael Sanzio; an Italian painter; born, 1483; died, 1520.

⁴ Francis Davis Millet, an American painter; born, 1846.

⁵ Constant Troyon, a French painter; born, 1810; died, 1865.

were declared to be the absolute and eternal truth. They could not be changed without abandoning the claim that made them authority. The priests, through a kind of unconscious self-defense, clung to every word. They denied the truth of all discovery. They measured every assertion in every other department by their creeds. At last the facts against them became so numerous—their congregations became so intelligent—that it was necessary to give new meanings to the old words. The cruel was softened—the absurd was partially explained, and they kept these old words, although the original meanings had fallen out. They became empty purses, but they retained them still.

Slowly but surely came the time when this course could not longer be pursued. The words must be thrown away—the creeds must be changed—they were no longer believed—only occasionally were they preached. The ministers became a little ashamed—they began to apologize. Apology is the prelude to retreat.

Of all the creeds, the Presbyterian, the old Congregational, were the most explicit, and for that reason the most absurd. When those creeds were written, those who wrote them had perfect confidence in their truth. They did not shrink because of their cruelty. They cared nothing for what others called absurdity. They failed not

to declare what they believed to be "the whole counsel of God."

At that time, cruel punishments were inflicted by all governments. People were torn asunder, mutilated, burned. Every atrocity was perpetrated in the name of justice, and the limit of pain was the limit of endurance. These people imagined that God would do as they would do. If they had had it in their power to keep a victim alive for years in the flames, they would most cheerfully have supplied the fagots. They believed that God could keep the victim alive forever, and that therefore his punishment would be eternal.

As man becomes civilized he becomes merciful, and the time came when civilized Presbyterians and Congregationalists read their own creeds with horror.

I am not saying that the Presbyterian creed is any worse than the Catholic. It is only a little more specific. Neither am I saying that it is more horrible than the Episcopal. It is not. All orthodox creeds are alike infamous. All of them have good things, and all of them have bad things. You will find in every creed the blossom of mercy and the oak of justice, but under the one and around the other are coiled the serpents of infinite cruelty.

The time came when orthodox Christians began dimly to perceive that God ought at least

to be as good as they were. They felt that they were incapable of inflicting eternal pain, and they began to doubt the propriety of saying that God would do that which a civilized Christian would be incapable of.

We have improved in all directions for the same reasons. We have better laws now because we have a better sense of justice. We are believing more and more in the government of the people. Consequently we are believing more and more in the education of the people, and from that naturally results greater individuality and a greater desire to hear the honest opinions of all.

The moment the expression of opinion is allowed in any department, progress begins. We are using our knowledge in every direction. The tendency is to test all opinions by the facts we know. All claims are put in the crucible of investigation—the object being to separate the true from the false. He who objects to having his opinions thus tested is regarded as a bigot.

If the professors of all the sciences had claimed that the knowledge they had was given by inspiration—that it was absolutely true, and that there was no necessity of examining further, not only, but that it was a kind of blasphemy to doubt—all the sciences would have remained as stationary as religion has.

Just to the extent that the Bible was appealed to in matters of science, science was retarded; and just to the extent that science has been appealed to in matters of religion, religion has advanced—so that now the object of intelligent religionists is to adopt a creed that will bear the test and criticism of science.

Another thing may be alluded to in this connection. All the countries of the world are now, and have been for years, open to us. The ideas of other people—their theories, their religions—are now known; and we have ascertained that the religions of all people have exactly the same foundation as our own—that they all arose in the same way, were substantiated in the same way, maintained by the same means, having precisely the same objects in view.

For many years the learned of the religious world were examining the religions of other countries, and in that work they established certain rules of criticism—pursued certain lines of argument—by which they overturned the claims of those religions to supernatural origin. After this had been successfully done, others, using the same methods on our religion, pursuing the same line of argument, succeeded in overturning ours. We have found that all miracles rest on the same basis—that all wonders were born of substantially the same ignorance and the same fear.

The intelligence of the world is far better distributed than ever before. The historical outlines of all countries are well known. The arguments for and against all systems of religion are generally understood. The average of intelligence is far higher than ever before. All discoveries become almost immediately the property of the whole civilized world, and all thoughts are distributed by the telegraph and press with such rapidity, that provincialism is almost unknown. The egotism of ignorance and seclusion is passing away. The prejudice of race and religion is growing feebler, and everywhere, to a greater extent than ever before, the light is welcomed.

These are a few of the reasons why creeds are crumbling, and why such a change has taken place in the religious world.

Only a few years ago the pulpit was an intellectual power. The pews listened with wonder, and accepted without question. There was something sacred about the preacher. He was different from other mortals. He had bread to eat which they knew not of. He was oracular, solemn, dignified, stupid.

The pulpit has lost its position. It speaks no longer with authority. The pews determine what shall be preached. They pay only for that which they wish to buy—for that which they wish to hear. Of course in every church

there is an advance guard and a conservative party, and nearly every minister is obliged to preach a little for both. He now and then says a radical thing for one part of his congregation, and takes it mostly back on the next Sabbath, for the sake of the others. Most of them ride two horses, and their time is taken up in urging one forward and in holding the other back.

The great reason why the orthodox creeds have become unpopular is, that all teach the dogma of eternal pain.

In old times, when men were nearly wild beasts, it was natural enough for them to suppose that God would do as they would do in his place, and so they attributed to this God infinite cruelty, infinite revenge. This revenge, this cruelty, wore the mask of justice. They took the ground that God, having made man, had the right to do with him as he pleased. At that time they were not civilized to the extent of seeing that a God would not have the right to make a failure, and that a being of infinite wisdom and power would be under obligation to do the right, and that he would have no right to create any being whose life would not be a blessing. The very fact that he made man, would put him under obligation to see to it that life should not be a curse.

The doctrine of eternal punishment is in per-

fect harmony with the savagery of the men who made the orthodox creeds. It is in harmony with torture, with flaying alive and with burnings. The men who burned their fellow-men for a moment, believed that God would burn his enemies forever.

No civilized men ever believed in this dogma. The belief in eternal punishment has driven millions from the church. It was easy enough for people to imagine that the children of others had gone to hell; that foreigners had been doomed to eternal pain; but when it was brought home—when fathers and mothers bent above their dead who had died in their sins—when wives shed their tears on the faces of husbands who had been born but once—love suggested doubts and love fought the dogma of eternal revenge.

This doctrine is as cruel as the hunger of hyenas, and is infamous beyond the power of any language to express—yet a creed with this doctrine has been called “the glad tidings of great joy”—a consolation to the weeping world. It is a source of great pleasure to me to know that all intelligent people are ashamed to admit that they believed it—that no intelligent clergyman now preaches it, except with a preface to the effect that it is probably untrue.

I have been blamed for taking this consolation from the world—for putting out, or trying to

put out, the fires of hell; and many orthodox people have wondered how I could be so wicked as to deprive the world of this hope.

The church clung to the doctrine because it seemed a necessary excuse for the existence of the church. The ministers said: "No hell, no atonement; no atonement, no fall of man; no fall of man, no inspired book; no inspired book, no preachers; no preachers, no salary; no hell, no missionaries; no sulphur, no salvation."

At last, the people are becoming enlightened enough to ask for a better philosophy. The doctrine of hell is now only for the poor, the ragged, the ignorant. Well-dressed people will not have it. Nobody goes to hell in a carriage—they foot it. Hell is for strangers and tramps. No soul leaves a brown-stone front for hell—they start from the tenements, from jails, and from reformatories. In other words, hell is for the poor. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a poor man to get into heaven, or for a rich man to get into hell. The ministers stand by their supporters. Their salaries are paid by the well-to-do, and they can hardly afford to send the subscribers to hell.

Every creed in which is the dogma of eternal pain is doomed. Every church teaching the infinite lie must fall, and the sooner the better.

FAITH THAT SURELY WANES

[Honorable Frank W. Rollins, Governor of New Hampshire, issued in 1899 a proclamation for a fast day, on which Mr. Ingersoll made the following comments:]

THE governor of New Hampshire, undoubtedly a good and sincere man, issued a Fast Day Proclamation to the people of his State, in which I find the following paragraph:

“The decline of the Christian religion, particularly in our rural communities, is a marked feature of the times, and steps should be taken to remedy it. No matter what our belief may be in religious matters, every good citizen knows that when the restraining influences of religion are withdrawn from a community its decay, moral, mental, and financial, is swift and sure. To me this is one of the strongest evidences of the fundamental truth of Christianity. I suggest that as far as possible on Fast Day union meetings be held, made up of all shades of belief, including all who are interested in the welfare of our State, and that in your prayers and other devotions and in your mutual councils you remember and consider the problem of the condition of religion in the rural communities. There are towns where no church bell

sends forth its solemn call from January to January. There are villages where children grow to manhood unchristened. There are communities where the dead are laid away without the benison of the name of the Christ, and where marriages are solemnized only by justices of the peace. This is a matter worthy of your thoughtful consideration, citizens of New Hampshire. It does not augur well for the future. You can afford to devote one day in the year to your fellow-men, to work and thought and prayer for your children and your children's children."

These words of the governor have caused surprise, discussion, and anger. Many ministers have denied that Christianity is declining, and have attacked the governor with the malice of meekness and the savagery of humility.

The question is: Is Christianity declining?

In order to answer this question we must state what Christianity is.

Christians tell us that there are certain fundamental truths that must be believed.

We must believe in God, the creator and governor of the universe; in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son; in the Holy Ghost; in the atonement made by Christ; in salvation by faith; in the second birth; in heaven for believers, in hell for deniers and doubters, and in the inspiration of the Old and New Testaments. They must

also believe in a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God, in special Providence, and in addition to all this they must practice a few ceremonies. This, I believe, is a fair skeleton of Christianity. Of course I can not give an exact definition. Christians do not and never have agreed among themselves. They have been disputing and fighting for many centuries, and to-day they are as far apart as ever.

A few years ago Christians believed in the "fundamental truths." They had no doubts. They knew that God existed; that he made the world. They knew when he commenced to work at the earth and stars and knew when he finished. They knew that he, like a potter, mixed and molded clay into the shape of a man and breathed into its nostrils the breath of life. They knew that he took from this man a rib and framed the first woman.

It must be admitted that sensible Christians have outgrown this belief. Jehovah, the gardener, the potter, the tailor, has been dethroned. The story of creation is believed only by the provincial, the stupid, the truly orthodox. People who have read Darwin¹ and Haeckel² and had sense enough to understand these great men laugh at the legends of the Jews.

¹ Charles Robert Darwin, an English naturalist; born, 1809; died, 1882.

² Ernst Heinrich Haeckel, a German naturalist; born, 1834.

A few years ago most Christians believed that Christ was the Son of God, and not only the Son of God, but God himself.

This belief is slowly fading from the minds of Christians, from the minds of those who have minds.

Many Christians now say that Christ was simply a man—a perfect man. Others say that he was divine, but not actually God—a union of God and man. Some say that while Christ was not God, he was as nearly like God as it is possible for man to be.

The old belief that he was actually God—that he sacrificed himself unto himself; that he deserted himself; that he bore the burden of his own wrath; that he made it possible to save a few of his children by shedding his own blood; that he could not forgive the sins of men until they murdered him—this frightful belief is slowly dying day by day. Most ministers are ashamed to preach these cruel and idiotic absurdities. The Christ of our time is not the Christ of the New Testament—not the Christ of the Middle Ages; nor of Luther,¹ Wesley,² or the Puritan fathers.

The Christ who was God—who was his own

¹ Martin Luther, a German religious reformer; born, 1483; died, 1546.

² John Wesley, an English religious reformer, the founder of Methodism; born, 1703; died, 1791.

son and his own father—who was born of a virgin, cast out devils, rose from the dead and ascended bodily to heaven—is not the Christ of to-day.

The Holy Ghost has never been accurately defined or described. He has always been a winged influence—a divine aroma; a disembodied essence; a spiritual climate; an enthusiastic flame; a something sensitive and unforgiving; the real Father of Jesus Christ.

A few years ago the clergy had a great deal to say about the Holy Ghost, but now the average minister, while he alludes to this shadowy deity, to round out a prayer, seems to have but little confidence in him. This deity is and always has been extremely vague. He has been represented in the form of a dove; but this form is not associated with much intelligence.

Formerly it was believed that all men were by nature wicked, and that it would be perfectly just for God to damn the entire human race. In fact, it was thought that God, feeling that he had to damn all his children, invented a scheme by which some could be saved and at the same time justice could be satisfied. God knew that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin. For many centuries he was satisfied with the blood of oxen, lambs, and doves. But the sins continued to increase. A greater sacrifice was necessary. So God con-

cluded to make the greatest possible sacrifice—to shed his own blood, *i.e.*, to have it shed by his chosen people. This was the atonement—the scheme of salvation—a scheme that satisfied justice and partially defeated the devil.

No intelligent Christians believe in this atonement. It is utterly unphilosophic. The idea that man made salvation possible by murdering God is infinitely absurd. This makes salvation the blossom of a crime—the blessed fruit of murder. According to this the joys of heaven are born of the agonies of innocence. If the Jews had been civilized—if they had believed in freedom of conscience and had listened kindly and calmly to the teachings of Christ, the whole world, including Christ's mother, would have gone to hell.

Our fathers had two absurdities. They balanced each other. They said that God could justly damn his children for the sin of Adam, and that he could justly save his children on account of the sufferings and virtues of Christ, *i.e.*, on account of his own sufferings and virtues.

This view of the atonement has mostly been abandoned. It is now preached, not that Christ bought souls with his blood, but that he has ennobled souls by his example. The supernatural part of the atonement has, by the more intelligent, been thrown away. So the idea of

imputed sin—of vicarious vice—has been by many abandoned.

Salvation by faith is growing weak. People are beginning to see that character is more important than belief; that virtue is above all creeds. Civilized people no longer believe in a God who will damn an honest, generous man. They see that it is not honest to offer a reward for belief. The promise of reward is not evidence. It is an attempt to bribe.

If God wishes his children to believe, he should furnish evidence. He should not endeavor to make promises and threats take the place of facts. To offer a reward for credulity is dishonest and immoral—infamous.

To say that good people who never hear of Christ ought to be damned for not believing on him is a mixture of idiocy and savagery.

People are beginning to perceive that happiness is a result, not a reward; that happiness must be earned; that it is not alms. It is also becoming apparent that sins can not be forgiven; that no power can step between actions and consequences; that men must “reap what they sow”; that a man who has lived a cruel life can not, by repenting between the last dose of medicine and the last breath, be washed in the blood of the Lamb and become an angel—an angel entitled to an eternity of joy.

All this is absurd, but you may say that it is

not cruel. But to say that a man who has lived a useful life, who has made a happy home, who has lifted the fallen, succored the oppressed, and battled to uphold the right—to say that such a man, because he failed to believe without evidence, will suffer eternal pain, is to say that God is an infinite wild beast.

Salvation for credulity means damnation for investigation.

At one time the “second birth” was regarded as a divine mystery—as a miracle—a something done by a supernatural power; probably by the Holy Ghost. Now ministers are explaining this mystery. A change of heart is a change of ideals. About this there is nothing miraculous.

This happens to most men and women—happens many times in the life of one man. If this happens without excitement, as the result of thought, it is called reformation. If it occurs in a revival, if it is the result of fright, it is called the “second birth.”

A few years ago Christians believed in the inspiration of the Bible. They had no doubts. The Bible was the standard. If some geologist found a fact inconsistent with the Scriptures, he was silenced with a text. If some doubter called attention to a contradiction in the Bible, he was denounced as an ungodly and blaspheming wretch. Christians then knew that the universe was only about six thousand years old, and

any man who denied this was an enemy of Christ and a friend of the devil.

All this has changed. The Bible is no longer the standard. Science has dethroned the inspired volume. Even the theologians are taking facts into consideration. Only ignorant bigots now believe in the plenary inspiration of the Bible.

The intelligent ministers know that the holy Scriptures are filled with mistakes, contradictions, and interpolations. They no longer believe in the flood, in Babel, in Lot's wife, or in the fire and brimstone storm. They are not sure about the burning bush, the plagues of Egypt, the division of the Red Sea, or the miracles in the wilderness. All these wonders are growing foolish. They belong to the Mother Goose of the past, and many clergymen are ashamed to say that they believe them. So the lengthening of the day in order that General Joshua might have more time to kill, the journey of Elijah to heaven, the voyage of Jonah in the fish, and many other wonders of a like kind, have become so transparently false that even a theologian refuses to believe.

The same is true of many of the miracles of the New Testament. No sensible man now believes that Christ cast devils and unclean spirits out of the bodies of men and women. A few years ago all Christians believed all these

devil miracles with all the mind they had. A few years ago only infidels denied these miracles, but now the theologians who are studying the "Higher Criticism" are reaching the conclusions of Voltaire¹ and Paine.² They have just discovered that the objections made by the Deists are supported by the facts.

At the same time these "Higher Critics," while they admit that the Bible is not true, still insist that it is inspired.

The other evening I attended Forepaugh and Sells' circus at Madison Square Garden³ and saw a magnificent panorama of performances. While looking at a man riding a couple of horses I thought of the "Higher Critics." They accept Darwin and cling to Genesis. They admit that Genesis is false in fact and then assert that in a higher sense it is absolutely true.

A lie bursts into blossom and has the perfume of truth. These critics declare that the Bible is the inspired word of God, and then establish the truth of the declaration by showing that it is filled with contradictions, absurdities, and false prophecies.

The horses they ride sometimes get so far

¹ Voltaire, the surname of François Marie Arouet, a French writer; born, 1694; died, 1778.

² Thomas Paine, an Anglo-American political writer and free-thinker; born, 1737; died, 1809.

³ Madison Square Garden, New York City.

apart that it seems to me that walking would be easier on the legs.

So I saw at the circus the "Snake Man." I saw him tie himself into all kinds of knots; saw him make a necktie of his legs; saw him throw back his head and force it between his knees; saw him twist and turn as though his bones were made of rubber, and as I watched him I thought of the mental doublings and contortions of the preachers who have answered me.

Let Christians say what they will, the Bible is no longer the actual word of God, it is no longer perfect, it is no longer quite true.

The most that is now claimed for the Bible by the "Higher Critics" is that some passages are inspired; that some passages are true, and that God has left man free to pick these passages out.

The ministers are preaching infidelity. What would old Lyman Beecher¹ have thought of a man like Dr Abbott?² He would have consigned him to hell. What would John Wesley have thought of a Methodist like Dr. Cadman? He would have denounced him as a child of the devil. What would Calvin³ have thought of a Presbyterian like Professor Briggs?⁴ He

¹ Lyman Beecher, an American Congregational clergyman; born, 1775; died, 1863.

² Lyman Abbott, an American Congregational clergyman; born, 1835.

³ John Calvin, a French-Swiss religious reformer; born, 1509; died, 1564.

⁴ Charles Augustus Briggs, an American theologian; born, 1841.

would have burned him at the stake and through the smoke and flame would have shouted, "You are a dog of Satan." How would Jeremy Taylor¹ have treated an Episcopalian like Heber Newton?

The governor of New Hampshire is right when he says that Christianity has declined. The flames of faith are flickering, zeal is cooling, and even bigotry is beginning to see the other side. I admit that there are still millions of orthodox Christians whose minds are incapable of growth, and who care no more for facts than a monitor does for bullets. Such obstructions on the highway of progress are removed only by death.

The dogma of eternal pain is no longer believed by the reasonably intelligent. People who have a sense of justice know that eternal revenge can not be enjoyed by infinite goodness. They know that hell would make heaven impossible. If Christians believed in hell as they once did the fagots would be lighted again, heretics would be stretched on the rack, and all the instruments of torture would again be stained with innocent blood. Christianity has declined because intelligence has increased.

Men and women who know something of the history of man, of the horrors of plague, famine,

¹ Jeremy Taylor, an English clergyman and theological writer; born, 1613; died, 1667.

and flood, of earthquake, volcano, and cyclone, of religious persecution and slavery, have but little confidence in special Providence. They do not believe that a prayer was ever answered.

Thousands of people who accept Christ as a moral guide have thrown away the supernatural.

Christianity does not satisfy the brain and heart. It contains too many absurdities. It is unphilosophic, unnatural, impossible. Not to resist evil is moral suicide. To love your enemies is impossible. To desert wife and children for the sake of heaven is cowardly and selfish. To promise rewards for belief is dishonest. To threaten torture for honest unbelief is infamous. Christianity is declining because men and women are growing better.

The governor was not satisfied with saying that Christianity had declined, but he added this: "Every good citizen knows that when the restraining influences of religion are withdrawn from a community its decay, moral, mental, and financial, is swift and sure."

The restraining influences of religion have never been withdrawn from Spain or Portugal, from Austria or Italy. The "restraining influences" are still active in Russia. Emperor William¹ relies on them in Germany, and the

¹ William II, German emperor; born, 1859; ascended the throne, 1888.

same influences are very busy taking care of Ireland. If these influences should be withdrawn from Spain there would be "mental, moral, and financial decay." Is not this statement perfectly absurd?

The fact is that religion has reduced Spain to a guitar, Italy to a hand-organ, and Ireland to exile. What are the restraining influences of religion? I admit that religion can prevent people from eating meat on Friday, from dancing in Lent, from going to the theater on holy days, and from swearing in public. In other words, religion can restrain people from committing artificial offenses. But the real question is: Can religion restrain people from committing natural crimes?

The church teaches that God can and will forgive sins.

Christianity sells sin on credit. It says to men and women, "Be good; do right; but no matter how many crimes you commit you can be forgiven." How can such a religion be regarded as a restraining influence? There was a time when religion had power; when the church ruled Christendom; when popes crowned and uncrowned kings. Was there at that time moral, mental, and financial growth? Did the nations thus restrained by religion prosper? When these restraining influences were weakened, when popes were humbled, when creeds

were denied, did morality, intelligence, and prosperity begin to decay?

What are the restraining influences of religion? Did anybody ever hear of a policeman being dismissed because a new church had been organized?

Christianity teaches that a man who does right carries a cross. The exact opposite of this is true. The cross is carried by the man who does wrong. I believe in the restraining influences of intelligence. Intelligence is the only lever capable of raising mankind. If you wish to make men moral and prosperous, develop the brain. Men must be taught to rely on themselves. To supplicate the supernatural is a waste of time.

The only evils that have been caused by the decline of Christianity, as pointed out by the governor, are that in some villages they hear no solemn bells, that the dead are buried without Christian ceremony, that marriages are contracted before justices of the peace, and that children go unchristened.

These evils are hardly serious enough to cause moral, mental, and financial decay. The average church bell is not very musical—not calculated to develop the mind or quicken the conscience. The absence of the ordinary funeral sermon does not add to the horror of death, and the failure to hear a minister say, as he stands by the grave, “One star differs in glory from

another star. There is a difference between flesh of fowl and fish. Be not deceived. Evil communications corrupt good manners," does not necessarily increase the grief of the mourners. So far as children are concerned, if they are vaccinated, it does not make much difference whether they are christened or not.

Marriage is a civil contract, and God is not one of the contracting parties. It is a contract with which the church has no business to interfere. Marriages with us are regulated by law. The real marriage—the uniting of hearts, the lighting of the sacred flame in each—is the work of nature, and is the best work that nature does. The ceremony of marriage gives notice to the world that the real marriage has taken place. Ministers have no real interest in marriages outside of the fees. Certainly marriages by justices of the peace can not cause the mental, moral, and financial decay of a State.

The things pointed out by the governor were undoubtedly produced by the decline of Christianity, but they are not evils, and they can not possibly injure the people morally, mentally, or financially. The governor calls on the people to think, work, and pray. With two-thirds of this I agree. If the people of New Hampshire will think and work without praying, they will grow morally, mentally, and financially. If they pray without working and thinking, they will decay.

Prayer is beggary—an effort to get something for nothing. Labor is the honest prayer.

I do not think that the good and true in Christianity are declining. The good and true are more clearly perceived and more precious than ever. The supernatural, the miraculous part of Christianity is declining. The New Testament has been compelled to acknowledge the jurisdiction of reason. If Christianity continues to decline at the same rate and ratio that it has declined in this generation, in a few years all that is supernatural in the Christian religion will cease to exist. There is a conflict—a battle—between the natural and the supernatural. The natural was baffled and beaten for thousands of years. The flag of defeat was carried by the few, by the brave and wise, by the real heroes of our race. They were conquered, captured, imprisoned, tortured, and burned. Others took their places. The banner was kept in the air. In spite of countless defeats the army of the natural increased. It began to gain victories. It did not torture and kill the conquered. It enlightened and blessed. It fought ignorance with science, cruelty with kindness, slavery with justice, and all vices with virtues. In this great conflict we have passed midnight. When the morning comes its ray will gild but one flag—the flag of the natural.

All over Christendom religions are declining.

Only children and the intellectually undeveloped have faith—the old faith that defies facts. Only a few years ago to be excommunicated by the pope blanched the cheeks of the bravest. Now the result would be laughter. Only a few years ago, for the sake of saving heathen souls, priests would brave all dangers and endure all hardships.

I once read the diary of a priest—one who long ago went down the Illinois River, the first white man to be borne on its waters. In this diary he wrote that he had just been paid for all that he had suffered. He had added a gem to the crown of his glory—had saved a soul for Christ. He had baptized a papoose.

That kind of faith has departed from the world.

The zeal that flamed in the hearts of Calvin, Luther, and Knox¹ is cold and dead. Where are the Wesleys and Whitefields? Where are the old evangelists, the revivalists who swayed the hearts of their hearers with words of flame? The preachers of our day have lost the Promethean fire. They have lost the tone of certainty, of authority. "Thus saith the Lord" has dwindled to "perhaps." Sermons, messages from God, promises radiant with eternal joy, threats lurid with the flames of hell—have

¹ John Knox, a Scottish religious reformer; born, 1505; died, 1572.

changed to colorless essays, to apologies and literary phrases, to inferences and peradventures.

“The blood-dyed vestures of the Redeemer are not waving in triumph over the ramparts of sin and rebellion,” but over the fortresses of faith float the white flags of truce. The trumpets no longer sound for battle, but for parley. The fires of hell have been extinguished, and heaven itself is only a dream. The “eternal verities” have changed to doubts. The torch of inspiration, choked with ashes, has lost its flame. There is no longer in the church “a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind”; no “cloven tongues like as of fire”; no “wonders in the heaven above,” and “no signs in the earth beneath.” The miracles have faded away, and the scepter is passing from superstition to science—science, the only possible savior of mankind.

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

[This lecture was delivered in the Pittsburg Opera House on the evening of October 14, 1879. Colonel Ingersoll commenced with the announcement that he ought probably to say something concerning the Sabbath and followed these words with:]

How anybody ever came to the conclusion that there was any God who demanded that you should feel sorrowful and miserable and bleak one-seventh of the time is beyond my comprehension. Neither can I conceive how they can say that one-seventh of the time is holy. That day is the most sacred day on which the most good has been done for mankind. Now, there was a time among the Jews, when if a man violated the Sabbath they would kill him. They said God told them to do it. I think they were mistaken. If not, if any God did tell them to kill him, then I think he was mistaken. I hope the time will come when every man can spend the Sabbath just as he pleases, provided he does not interfere with the happiness of others. I would fight just as earnestly that the Christian may go to church as that the infidel may have the right to spend the Sabbath as he chooses. Are the people who go to church

the only good people? Are there not a great many bad people who go to church? Not a bank in Pittsburg will lend a dollar to the man who belongs to the church, without security, quicker than the man who does not go to church. Now, I believe that all laws on the statute books should be enforced. I do not blame anybody in this town. I am perfectly willing that every preacher in this town should preach. They are employed to preach, and to preach a certain doctrine, and if they do not preach that doctrine they will be turned out. [Laughter.] I have no objection to that. But I want the same privilege to express my views, and what is the difference, whether a man pays the day he goes in, or pays for it the week before by subscription.

What would the church people think if the theatrical people should attempt to suppress the churches? What harm would it do to have an opera here to-night? It would elevate us more than to hear ten thousand sermons on the worm that never dies. [Laughter.] There is more practical wisdom in one of the plays of Shakespeare than in all the sacred books ever written. What wrong would there be to see one of those grand plays on Sunday? There was a time when the church would not allow you to cook on Sunday. You had to eat your victuals cold. There was a time when they

thought the more miserable you feel the better God feels. [Laughter.] There are sixty odd thousand preachers in the United States. Some people regard them as a necessary evil; some as an unnecessary evil. There are sixty odd thousand churches in the United States; and it does seem to me that with all the wealth on their side; with all the good people on their side; with Providence on their side; with all these advantages they ought to let us at least have the right to speak our thoughts.

[Colonel Ingersoll next entered into his argument on the origin of religion, referring to the first impressions of the savage. Having enunciated these views, the speaker continued:]

The history of the world shows me that the right has not always prevailed. When you see innocent men chained to the stake and the flames licking their flesh, it is natural to ask, why does God permit this? If you see a man in prison with the chains eating into his flesh simply for loving God, you've got to ask why does not a just God interfere? You've got to meet this. It will not do to say that it will all come out for the best. That may do very well for God, but it's awful hard on the man. [Laughter.] Where was the God that permitted slavery for two hundred years in these United States? The

history of the world shows that when a mean thing was done, man did it; when a good thing was done, man did it.

But there was a time when there was a drought, and this tribe of savages with their false notions of religion said somebody has been wicked. Somebody has been lecturing on Sunday. [Laughter.] Then the tribe hunted out the wicked man. They said, you have got to stop. We can not allow you to continue your wickedness, which brings punishment upon the whole of us. What is the reason they allow me to speak to-night? Because the Christians are not as firm in their belief now as they were a thousand years ago. The lukewarmness and hypocrisy of Christians now permit me to speak to-night. If they felt as they did a thousand years ago they would kill me. So religious persecution was born of the instinct of self-defense.

Is there any duty we owe to God? Can we help him? Can we add to his glory or happiness? They tell me this God is infinitely wise, I can not add to his wisdom: infinitely happy—I can not add to his happiness. What can I do? Maybe he wants me to make prayers that will not be answered. I can not see any relation that can exist between the finite and the infinite. I acknowledge that I am under obligations to my fellow-man. We owe duties to our

fellow-man. And what? Simply to make him happy.

The only good is happiness; and the only evil is misery or unhappiness. Only those things are right that tend to increase the happiness of man; only those things are wrong that tend to increase the misery of man. That is the basis of right and wrong. There never would have been the idea of wrong except that man can inflict suffering upon others. Utility, then, is the basis of the idea of right and wrong.

The church tells us this world is a school to prepare us for another, that it is a place to build up character. Well, if that is the only way character can be developed it is bad for children who die before they get any character. What would you think of a schoolmaster who would kill half his pupils the first day?

Now, I read the Bible, and I find that God so loved the world that he made up his mind to damn the most of us. [Laughter.] I have read this book, and what shall I say of it? I believe it is generally better to be honest. Now, I do not believe the Bible. Had I not better say so? They say that if you do you will regret it when you come to die. If that be true, I know a great many religious people who will have no cause to regret it—they do not tell their honest convictions about the Bible.

There are two great arguments of the church—the great man argument and the death-bed. They say the religion of your fathers is good enough. Why should a father object to your inventing a better plow than he had? They say to me, do you know more than all the theologians dead? Being a perfectly modest man I say I think I do. Now we have come to the conclusion that every man has a right to think. Would God give a bird wings and make it a crime to fly? Would he give me brains and make it a crime to think? Any God that would damn one of his children for the expression of his honest thought would not make a decent thief. When I read a book and do not believe it, I ought to say so. I will do so and take the consequences like a man.

And so I object to paying for the support of any other man's belief. I am in favor of the taxation of all church property. If that property belongs to God, he is able to pay the tax. [Laughter.] If we exempt anything, let us exempt the home of the widow and orphan. [Applause.]

[A voice here interrupted the speaker.

Col. Ingersoll—What did the gentleman say?

A voice—Oh, he's drunk.

Col. Ingersoll—I do not think any Christian ought to get drunk and come here to disturb us. (Laughter.)

The speaker resumed.]

The church has to-day \$600,000,000 or \$700,000,000 of property in this country. It must cost \$2,000,000 a week, that is to say \$500 a minute to run these churches. You give me this money and if I do not do more good with it than four times as many churches I will resign. Let them make the churches attractive and they will get more hearers. They will have less empty pews if they have less empty heads in the pulpit. [Laughter.] The time will come when the preacher will become a teacher.

Admitting that the Bible is the Book of God, is that his only good job? Will not a man be damned as quick for denying the equator as denying the Bible? Will he not be damned as quick for denying geology as for denying the scheme of salvation? When the Bible was first written it was not believed. Had they known as much about science as we know now that Bible would not have been written.

[Colonel Ingersoll next gave his views of the Puritans, declared they left Holland to escape persecution, and came here to persecute others. He referred to the persecutions heaped upon those of other religious belief by the Puritans, paid the Catholics the compliment to say that Maryland, which they ruled, was the first colony to enact a law tolerating religious views not held by themselves, and went on to explain that God was never mentioned in the Constitution of the United States because each colony had a different religious belief, and each sect preferred to have God not

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mentioned at all than to have another religious belief than their own recognized.]

In 1776 our forefathers retired God from politics. They said all power comes from the people. They kept God out of the Constitution, and allowed each State to settle the question for itself.

[The present laws of different States were next reviewed, so far as they relate to the prevention of infidels giving testimony and to religious intolerance in any way, and these features were all branded and discussed as a gigantic evil.]

BLASPHEMY

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: There is an old story of a missionary trying to convert an Indian. The Indian made a little circle in the sand and said, "That is what the Indian knows." Then he made another circle a little larger and said, "That is what missionary knows, but outside there the Indian knows just as much as missionary." [Laughter.] I am going to talk mostly outside that circle to-night.

First. What is the origin of the crime known as blasphemy? It is the belief in a god who is cruel, revengeful, quick tempered, and capricious; a god who punishes the innocent for the guilty; a god who listens with delight to the shrieks of the tortured and gazes enraptured on their spurting blood.

You must hold this belief before you can believe in the doctrine of blasphemy. You must believe that this god loves ceremonies, that this god knows certain men to whom he has told all his will. It then follows that, if this god loves ceremonies and has certain men to teach his will and perform these ceremonies, these men must have a place to live in. This place was called a temple, and it was sacred. [Laughter.] And

the pots and pans and kettles and all in it were sacred too. No one but the priests must touch them.

Then the god wrote a book in which he told his covenants to men, and gave this book to priests to interpret. While it was sacrilege to touch with the hands the pots and pans of the temple, it was blasphemy to doubt or question anything in the book. And then the right to think was gone, and the right to use the brain that God had given was taken away, and religion was intrenched behind that citadel called blasphemy.

God was a kind of juggler. He did not wish man to be impudent or curious about how he did things. You must sit in audience and watch the tricks and ask no questions. In front of every fact he has hung the impenetrable curtain of blasphemy. Now then, all the little reason that poor man had is useless. To say anything against the priest was blasphemy and to say anything against God was blasphemy—to ask a question was blasphemy.

Finally we sank to the level of fetichism. We began to worship inanimate things. If you will read your Bible you will find that the Jews had a sacred box. In it were the rod of Aaron and a piece of manna and the tables of stone. To touch this box was a crime. You remember that one time when a careless Jew thought the box

was going to tip he held it. God killed him. [Laughter.] What a warning to baggage smashers of the present day! [Great applause.]

We find that also God concocted a hair oil and threatened death to anyone who imitated it. And we see that he also made a certain perfume and it was death to make anything that smelt like it. It seems to me that is carrying protection too far. [Laughter.]

It always has been blasphemy to say, "I do not know whether God exists or not." In all Catholic countries it is blasphemy to doubt the Bible, to doubt the sacredness of the relics. It always has been blasphemy to laugh at a priest, to ask questions, to investigate the trinity. In a world of superstition reason is blasphemy. In a world of ignorance facts are blasphemy. In a world of cruelty sympathy is a crime, and in a world of lies truth is blasphemy.

Who are the real blasphemers? Webster offers the definition: blasphemy is an insult offered to God by attributing to him a nature and qualities differing from his real nature and qualities and dishonoring him. A very good definition, if you only know what his nature and qualities are. [Laughter.] But that is not revealed; for, studying him through the medium of the Bible, we find him illimitably contradictory.

He commands us not to work on the Sabbath

day, because it is holy. Yet God works himself on the Sabbath day. The sun, moon, and stars swing round in their orbits, and all the creation attributed to this God goes on as on other days. He says: "Honor thy father and mother," and yet this God, in the person of Christ, offered honors, and glory, and happiness an hundred fold to any who would desert their father and mother for him. "Thou shalt not kill," yet God killed the first-born of Egypt, and he commanded Joshua to kill all his enemies, not sparing old or young, man, woman, or child, even an unborn child. "Thou shalt not commit adultery," he says, and yet this God gave the wives of defeated enemies to his soldiers of Joshua's army. Then again he says, "Thou shalt not steal." By this command he protected the inanimate property and the cattle of one man against the hand of another, and yet this God who said, "Thou shalt not steal," established human slavery. The products of industry were not to be interfered with, but the producer might be stolen as often as possible. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," and yet the God who said this said also, "I have sent lying spirits unto Ahab." The only commandment he really kept was, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me."

Is it blasphemous to describe this God as malicious? You know that laughter is a good

index of the character of a man. You like and rejoice with the man whose laugh is free and joyous and full of good will. You fear and dislike him of the sneering laugh. How does God laugh? He says,¹ "I will laugh at their calamity and mock at their misfortune," speaking of some who have sinned. Think of the malice and malignity of that in an infinite God when speaking of the sufferings he is going to impose upon his children. You know that it is said of a Roman emperor that he wrote laws very finely, and posted them so high on the walls that no one could read them, and then he punished the people who disobeyed the laws. That is the acme of tyranny: to provide a punishment for breach of laws the existence of which was unknown.

Now we all know that there is a sin against the Holy Ghost which will not be forgiven in this world nor in the world to come. Hundreds of thousands of people have been driven to the lunatic asylum by the thought that they had committed this unpardonable sin. Every educated minister knows that that part of the Bible is an interpolation, but they all preach it. What that sin against the Holy Ghost is is not speci-

¹ "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsels, and would none of my reproof: I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh."—Proverbs 1:24-26.

fied. I say, "Oh, but, my good God, tell me what this sin is." And he answers, "Maybe now, asking is the crime. Keep quiet." So I keep quiet and go about tortured with the fear that I have committed that sin.

Is it blasphemy to describe God as needing assistance from the legislature? [Laughter.] Calling for the aid of a mob to enforce his will here. Compare that God with a man, even with Henry Bergh.¹ [Applause.] See what Mr. Bergh has done to awaken pity in our people and call sympathy to the rescue of suffering animals. And yet our God was a torturer of dumb brutes. Is it blasphemy to say that our God sent the famine and dried the mother's breast from her infant's withered lips? Is it blasphemy to say that he is the author of the pestilence; that he ordered some of his children to consume others with fire and sword? Is it blasphemy to believe what we read in the 109th Psalm? If these things are not blasphemy, then there is no blasphemy. If there be a God, I desire him to write in the book of judgment opposite my name that I denied these lies for him. [Great applause.]

Let us take another step; let us examine the Presbyterian confession of faith. If it be pos-

¹ Henry Bergh, the founder and president of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; born, 1823; died, 1888.

sible to commit blasphemy, then I contend that the Presbyterian creed is most blasphemous, for, according to that, God is a cruel, unrelenting, revengeful, malignant, and utterly unreasonable tyrant.

I propose now to pay a little attention to the creed.

First, it confesses that there is such a thing as a light of nature. It is sufficient to make man inexcusable but not sufficient for salvation; just light enough to lead man to hell. Now imagine a man who will put a false light on a hilltop to lure a ship to destruction. What would we say of that man? What can we say of a God who gives this false light of nature which, if its lessons are followed, results in hell? That is the Presbyterian God. I do not like him. [Laughter.] Now it occurred to God that the light of nature was somewhat weak, and he thought he'd like another burner. [Great laughter.] Therefore he made his book and gave it to his servants, the priests, that they might give it to men. It was to be accepted not on the authority of Moses, or any other writer, but because it was the word of God. How do you know it is the word of God? You are not to take the word of Moses, or David, or Jeremiah, or Isaiah, or any other man, because the authenticity of their work has nothing to do with the matter; this creed expressly lets them out.

[Laughter.] How are you to know that it is God's word? Because it is God's word. Why is it God's word? What proof have we that it is God's word? Because it is God's word.

Now, then, I find that the next thing in this wonderful confession of faith of the Presbyterians is the decree of predestination. [Reads the decree.] I am pleased to assure you that it is not necessary to understand this. [Laughter.] You have only to believe it. [Laughter.] You see that by the decree of God some men-angels are predestinated to heaven and others to eternal hell, and you observe that their number is so certain and definite that it can neither be changed nor altered. You are asked to believe that billions of years ago this God knew the names of all the men and women whom he was going to save. Had them in his book, that being the only thing except himself that then existed. He had chosen the names by the aid of the secret council. The reason they called it secret was because they knew all about it. [Laughter.]

In making his choice God was not at all bigoted. He did not choose John Smith because he foresaw that Smith was to be a Presbyterian, and was to possess a loving nature, was to be honest and true and noble in all his ways, doing good himself and encouraging others in the same. Oh, no! He was quite as likely to

pick Brown in spite of the fact that he knew long before that Brown would be a wicked wretch. You see he was just as apt to send Smith to the devil and take Brown to heaven—and all for “his glory.”

This God also blinds and hardens—ah! he’s a peculiar God. If sinners persevere, he will blind and harden and give them over at last to their own wickedness instead of trying to reclaim and save them.

Now we come to the comforting doctrine of the total depravity of man, and this leads us to consider how he came that way. Can any person read the first chapters of Genesis and believe them unless his logic was assassinated in the cradle? We read that our first parents were placed in a pleasant garden; that they were given the full run of the place and only forbidden to meddle with the orchard; that they were tempted as God knew they were to be tempted; that they fell as God knew they would fall, and that for this fall which he knew would happen before he made them he fixed the curse of original sin upon them, to be continued to all their children. Why did he not stop right there? Why did he not kill Adam and Eve and make another pair who did not like apples? Then when he brought his flood why did he rescue eight people if their descendants were to be so totally depraved and wicked? Why did he

not have his flood first and then drown the devil? [Laughter.] That would have solved the problem, and he could then have tried experiments unmolested.

The Presbyterian confession says this corruption was in all men. It was born with them, it lived through their life, and after death survived in the children. Well, can not man help himself? No. I'll show you. God has got him. [Laughter.] Listen to this. [Reads extract.] "So that a natural man is not only dead in sin and unable to accomplish salvation, but he is also incapable of preparing himself therefor." Absolutely incapable of taking a trick. [Great laughter.] He is saved, if at all, completely by the mercy of God. If that's the case, then why does he not convert us all? Oh, he does not. He wishes to send the most of us to hell—to show his justice. [Laughter and applause.] Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerate. So also are all persons incapable of unbelief. That includes insane persons and idiots, because an idiot is incapable of unbelief. Idiots are the only fellows who've got the deadwood on God. [Laughter and applause.] Then according to this the man who has lived according to the light of nature, doing the best he knew how to make this earth happy, will be damned by God because he never heard of his Son. Whose fault is it that an infinite

God does not advertise? [Great laughter.] Something wrong about that. I am inclined to think that the Presbyterian Church is wrong. [Applause.]

I find here how utterly unpardonable sin is. There is no sin so small but it is punished with hell, and away you go straight to the deepest burning pit unless your heart has been purified by this confession of faith—unless this snake has crawled in there and made itself a nest.

Why should we help religion? I would like people to ask themselves that question. [Loud applause.] An infinite God, by practicing a reasonable economy, can get along without our assistance. Loudly this confession proclaims that salvation comes from Christ alone. What, then, becomes of the savage, who, having never known the name of Christ, has lived according to the light of nature, kind and heroic and generous, and possessed of and cultivating all the natural virtues? He goes to hell. [Laughter.] God, you see, loves us. [Laughter.] If he had not loved us what would he have done? The light of nature then shows that God is good and therefore to be feared—on account of his goodness—[laughter]—to be served and honored without ceasing. And yet this creed says that on the last day God will damn anyone who has walked according to this light.

It's blasphemy to walk by the light of nature.
[Laughter.]

The next great doctrine is on the preservation of the saints. Now, there are peculiarities about saints. [Laughter.] They are saints without their own knowledge or free will; they may even be down on saints—[laughter]—but it's no good. God has got a rolling hitch on them, and they have to come into the kingdom sooner or later. [Laughter.] It all depends on whether they have been elected or not. God could have made me a saint just as easy as not, but he passed me by. [Laughter.] Now you know the Presbyterians say I trample on holy things. They believe in hell and I come and say there is no hell. I hurt their hearts, they say, and they add that I am going to hell myself. [Laughter.] I thank them for that, but now let us see what these tender Presbyterians say of other churches. Here it is:

This confession of faith calls the pope of Rome antichrist and a son of perdition. Now there are forty Roman Catholics to one Presbyterian on this earth. Do not the Presbyterians rather trample on the things that are holy to the Roman Catholics, and do they respect their feelings? But the Presbyterians have a pope themselves, composed of the presbyters and preachers. This confession attributes to them the keys of heaven and hell and the power

to forgive sins. [Here extracts are read.] Therefore these men must be infallible, for God would never be so foolish as to intrust fallible men with the keys of heaven and hell. I care nothing for their keys nor for any world these keys would open or lock. I prefer the country. [Applause and laughter.] . . .

We are told by this faith that at the last day all the men and women and children who have ever lived on the earth will appear in the self-same bodies they have had when on earth. Everyone who knows anything knows the constant exchange which is going on between the vegetable and animal kingdom. The millions of atoms which compose one of our bodies have all come from animals and vegetables, and they in their turn drew them from animals and vegetables which preceded them. The same atoms which are now in our bodies have previously been in the bodies of our ancestors. The negro from central Africa has many times been mahogany and the mahogany has many times been negro. [Laughter.] A missionary goes to the cannibal islands and a cannibal eats him and dies. The atoms which composed the missionary's body now compose in great part the cannibal's body. [Laughter.] To whom will these atoms belong on the morning of the resurrection? [Laughter.] . . .

How did the devil, who had always lived

in heaven among the best society, ever happen to become bad? If a man surrounded by angels could become bad, why can not a man surrounded by devils become good? . . .

Here is the last Presbyterian joy. At the day of judgment the righteous shall be caught up to heaven and shall stand at the right hand of Christ, and share with him in judging the wicked. Then the Presbyterian husband may have the ineffable pleasure of judging his wife and condemning her to eternal hell, and the boy will say to his mother, echoing the command of God¹—"Depart, thou accursed, into everlasting torment!" Here will come a man who has not believed in God. He was a soldier who took up arms to free the slaves and who rotted to death in Andersonville prison,² rather than accept the offer of his captors to fight against freedom. He loved his wife and his children and his home and his native country and all mankind, and did all the good he knew. God will say to the Presbyterians, "What shall we do to this man?" and they will answer, "Throw him into hell." [Laughter.]

Last night there was a fire in Philadelphia,

¹ "Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."—Matthew 25: 41.

² Andersonville prison was a Confederate military prison at Andersonville, Georgia; the prison was open from 1864-1865, and during that time over twelve thousand prisoners died.

and at a window fifty feet above the ground a Mr. King stood amid flame and smoke and pressed his children to his breast one after the other, kissed them, and threw them to the rescuers with a prayer. That was man. At the last day God takes his children with a curse and hurls them into eternal fire.

That's your God as the Presbyterians describe him. Do you believe that God—if there is one—will ever damn me for thinking him better than he is? If this creed be true, God is the insane keeper of a madhouse.

We have in this city a clergyman who contends that this creed gives a correct picture of God, and furthermore says that God has the right to do with us what he pleases—because he made us. If I could change this lamp into a human being, that would not give me the right to torture him, and if I did torture him and he cried out, "Why torturest thou me?" and I replied, "Because I made you," he would be right in replying, "You made me, therefore you are responsible for my happiness."

No God has a right to add to the sum of human misery. And yet this minister believes an honest thought blasphemy. No doubt he is perfectly honest. Otherwise he would have too much intellectual pride to take the position he does. He says that the Bible offers the only restraint to the savage passions of man. In

lands where there has been no Bible there have been mild and beneficent philosophers, like Buddha and Confucius. Is it possible that the Bible is the only restraint, and yet the nations among whom these men lived have been as moral as we? In Brooklyn and New York you have the Bible, yet do you find that the restraint is a great success? Is there a city on the globe which lacks more in certain directions than some in Christendom, or even the United States? [Laughter.]

What are the natural virtues of man? Honesty, hospitality, mercy in the hour of victory, generosity—do we not find these virtues among some savages? Do we find them among all Christians? [Applause.]

I am also told by these gentlemen that the time will come when the infidel will be silenced by society. Why, that time came long ago. Society gave the hemlock to Socrates. Society in Jerusalem cried out for Barabbas and crucified Jesus. In every Christian country society has endeavored to crush the infidel. Blasphemy is a padlock which hypocrisy tries to put on the lips of all honest men. At one time Christianity succeeded in silencing the infidel, and then came the dark ages when all rule was ecclesiastical, when the air was filled with devils and spooks, when birth was a misfortune, life a prolonged misery of fear and torment, and

death a horrible nightmare. They crushed the infidels, Galileo,¹ Kepler,² Copernicus,³ wherever a ray of light appeared in ecclesiastical darkness.

But I want to tell this minister to-night, and all others like him, that that day is past. [Cheers and great applause.] All the churches in the United States can not even crush me. [Renewed cheering.] The day for that has gone, never to return. If they think they can crush free thought in this country, let them try it. What must this minister think of you and the citizens of this republic when he says, "Take the fear of hell out of men's hearts and a majority of them will become ungovernably wicked." Oh, think of an angel in heaven having to allow that he was scared there.

This minister calls for my arrest. He thinks his God needs help, and would like to see the police crush the infidel. I would advise Mr. Talmage—[hisses]—to furnish his God with a rattle, so that when he is in danger again he can summon the police immediately. [Laughter.]

I will tell you what is blasphemy. It is blasphemy to live on the fruits of other men's labor, to prevent the growth of the human mind,

¹ Galileo Galilei, an Italian physicist and astronomer; born, 1564; died, 1642.

² Johann Kepler, a German astronomer; born, 1571; died, 1630.

³ Copernicus, a Prussian astronomer; born, 1473; died, 1543.

to persecute for opinion's sake, to abuse your wife and children, to increase in any manner the sum of human misery.

I will tell you what is sacred. Our bodies are sacred, our rights are sacred, justice and liberty are sacred.

I will tell you what is the true Bible. It is the sum of all actual knowledge of man, and every man who discovers a new fact adds a new verse to this Bible. It is different from the other Bible because that is the sum of all that its writers and readers do not know. [Applause.]

HUMAN RIGHTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: I suppose that man, from the most grotesque savage up to Haeckel,¹ has had a philosophy by which he endeavored to account for all the phenomena of nature he may have observed. From that mankind may have got their ideas of right and wrong. Now, where there are no rights there can be no duties. Let us always remember that only as man becomes free can he by any possibility become good or great. As I said, every savage has had his philosophy, and by it accounted for everything he observed. He had an idea of rain and rainbow, and he had an idea of a controlling power. One said there is a Being who presides over our world, and who will destroy us unless we do right. Others had many of these beings, but they were invariably like themselves. The most fruitful imagination can not make more than a man, though it may make infinite powers and attributes out of the powers and attributes of man. You can not build a God unless you start with a human being. The savage said, when there was a storm, "Somebody is angry." When lightning leaped

¹ Ernst Heinrich Haeckel, a German naturalist; born, 1834.

from the lurid cloud, he thought, "What have I been doing?" and when he could not think of any wrong he had been doing, he tried to think of some wrong his neighbors had been doing.

I may as well state here that I believe man has come up from the lowest orders of creation, and may have not come up very far; still, I believe we are doing very well, considering.

But, speaking of man's early philosophy, his morality was founded first on self-defense. When gathered together in tribes, he held that this infinite Being would hold the tribe responsible for the actions of any individual who had angered Him. They imagined this Being got angry. Just imagine the serenity of an infinite Being being disturbed and a God breaking into a passion because some poor wretch had neglected to bring two turtle-doves to a priest!

Then they sought out this poor offending individual, to punish him and appease the wrath of this Being. And here commenced religious persecution.

Now, I do not say there is no God, but what I do say is that I do not know. The only difference between me and the theologian is that I am honest. There may or there may not be an infinite Being, but I do not know, and until I do I can not conceive of any obedience I owe to any unknown being.

As soon as men began to imagine they would be held responsible for the act of any other person, there came the necessity for someone to teach them how to keep from offending the Being. Some called him medicine-man, some called him priest; now, we call him theologian. These men set out to teach men how to keep from offending this Being, and they laid down certain laws to regulate the conduct of men. First of all it was necessary to believe in this Power. To disbelieve in Him was the worst offense of all. To have some human being dressed in the skin of a wild beast deny the existence of this infinite Being, was more than the infinite Being could stand. The first thing, therefore, was to believe in this power; the next to support this gentleman standing between you and the supreme wrath. These gentlemen were the lobbyists with the Power, and sometimes succeeded in getting the veto used in favor of their clients.

For ages, as mankind slowly came through the savage state, the world was filled with infinite fear. They accounted for everything bad that happened as the wrath of this Supreme Being. But they went from savagery to barbarism—a step in improvement—and then began to build temples to, and make images of, this Being. Then man began to believe he could influence this Being by prayer, by

getting on his knees to the image he had made.

Nothing, I suppose, astonishes a missionary more than to see a savage in Central Africa on his knees before a stone praying for luck in hunting or in fighting. And yet it strikes me—we have our army chaplains before a battle praying for the success of our side. They do not pray for assistance if our cause is just, but they pray, “Lord, help us!” I can not see the difference between the two.

But there is this said in favor of prayer that, whether successful or not, it is a sort of intellectual exercise. Like a man trying to lift himself by his boot-straps, he may not succeed, but he gets a good deal of exercise.

But as man proceeds, he begins to help himself and to take advantage of mechanical powers to assist him, and he begins to see he can help himself a little, and exactly in the proportion he helps himself he comes to rely less on the power of priest or prayer to help him. Just to the extent we are helpless, to that extent do we rely upon the unknown.

As religion developed itself, keeping pace with the belief in theology, came the belief in demonology. They gave one being the credit of doing all the good things, and must give someone credit for the bad things, and so they created a devil. At one time it was as dis-

reputable to deny the existence of a devil as to deny the existence of a God; to deny the existence of a hell, with its fire and brimstone, as to deny the existence of a heaven with its harp and love.

With the development of religion came the idea that no man should be allowed to bring the wrath of God on a nation by his transgressions, and this idea permeates the Christian world to-day. Now what does this prove? Simply that our religion is founded on fear, and when you are afraid you can not think. Fear drops on its knees and believes. It is only courage that can think.

It was the idea that man's actions could do something, outside of any effect his mechanical works might have, to change the order of nature; that he might commit some offense to bring on an earthquake, but he can not do it. You can not be bad enough to cause an earthquake; neither can you be good enough to stop one. Out of that wretched doctrine and infamous mistake that man's belief could have any effect upon nature grew all these inquisitions, racks, and collars of torture, and all the blood that was ever shed by religious persecution.

In Europe the country was divided between kings and priests. The king held that he got his power from the Unknown; so did the priests. They could not say that they got it from the

people; the people would deny it; the Unknown could not deny it. And thus the altar and throne stood side by side. And Republicanism was a thing unknown.

It has been said that the Pilgrim Fathers came to this country to establish religious liberty. They did no such thing. They were not in favor of it. They came with the Testament in their hands, and with it they could have no idea of religious liberty. When they had established thirteen colonies here, and had struggled for and obtained their independence, they established Federal Government, but did they seek after religious liberty? No! When they formed a Federal Government each church and each colony was jealous of the other. They said to the General Government, "You can not have any religion in the Constitution," but each State could make its own religion, and they made them.

[Here the speaker read copious extracts from the statutes of the different States in reference to the qualifications for the exercise of citizenship,—the religious belief necessary; and, on concluding, asked:]

Had they [the members who drew up these State Constitutions] any idea of religious liberty?

Now, my friends, there is a party started in this country with the object of giving every man,

woman, and child the rights they are entitled to. Now every one of us has the same rights. I have the right to labor and to have the products of my labor. I have the right to think, and furthermore, to express my thoughts, because expression is the reward of my intellectual labor. And yet in the United States there are States where men of my ideas would not be allowed to testify in a court of justice. Is that right? There are States in this country where, if the law had been enforced, I would have been sent to the penitentiary for lecturing. All such laws were enacted by barbarians, and our country will not be free until they are wiped from the statute-books of every State.

Does an Infinite Being need to be protected by a State Legislature? If the Bible is inspired, does the author of it need the support of the law to command respect? We do not need any law to make mankind respect Shakespeare. We come to the altar of that great man and cover it with our gratitude without a statute. Think of a law to govern tastes! Think of a law to govern mind, or any question whatever! Think of the way in which they have supported the Bible! They have terrorized the old with laws, and captured the dear, little innocent children and poisoned their minds with their false stories until, when they have reached the age of manhood, they have been afraid to think for them-

selves. Let us see what the laws are now by which they guard their Bible and their God.

[Here the speaker read extracts from statutes of several States in reference to blasphemy and profanation of the Sabbath, commenting on each as he ran them through. Pursuing the thread of his discourse, he said:]

Every American should see to it that all these laws are done away with once and forever.

There has been a reaction of late years. This country has begun to be prosperous. We do not think much of religion; it is only when hard times come we turn our attention toward it. There are people in this country who say we are getting too irreligious, too scientific. Now, is it not a fact that we are happier to-day than at any period in our history? You live in a great country, though perhaps you do not know it. But live in any other country for a while, and you will find it out. See, then, what we have got by looking a little to the affairs of the world!

The Bible can not stand to-day without the support of the civil power. No religion ever flourished except by the support of the sword, and no religion like this could have been established except by brute force.

At one time we thought a great deal of clergymen, but now we think they are not of as much importance as a man that has invented

something. The church seeing this has made up its mind that it is necessary to do something, and so got up a plan to be acknowledged by law. Here's what they wish to do:

[Here the speaker read some extracts from the Constitution of the National Reform Association. Continuing, he said:]

Our fathers in 1776, building better than they knew, retired the gods from politics. I do not believe Jesus Christ is the ruler of nations. If he is the ruler of one he is the ruler of all. Why does he not then rule one as well as another? If you give him credit for the good things of one, you must denounce him for the tyranny and despotism of others. The revealed word of God is not the standard of civil justice in this country! The Bible is not the standard of right and wrong or of decency in this country.

You can not put God in the Constitution, because if you do, there would be no room for the folks. Whatever you put in the Constitution you must enforce by the sword, and you can not go to war with any man for not believing in your God. God has no business there, and any man that is in favor of putting him there is an enemy to the interests of American institutions.

Now for the purpose of preventing the name

of God being put in the Constitution, there's another little party has been started and these are its doctrines: We want an absolute divorce between church and State. We demand that church property should not be exempt from taxation. If you are going to exempt anything, exempt the homesteads of the poor. Do not exempt a rich corporation, and make men pay taxes to support a religion in which they do not believe. But they say churches do good. I do not know whether they do or not. Do you see such a wonderful difference between a member of a church and the man who does not believe in it? Do church members pay their debts any better than any others? Do they treat their families any better? Did you ever hear of any man coming into a town broke and inquiring where the deacon of a Presbyterian Church lived?

Has not the church opposed every science from the first ray of light until now? Did they not damn into eternal flames the man who discovered the world was round? Did they not damn into eternal flames the man who discovered the movement of the earth in its orbit? Did they not persecute the astronomers? Did they not even try to put down life insurance by saying it was sinful to bet on the time God has given you to live? Science built the academy, superstition the inquisition. Science constructed

the telescope, religion the rack; science made us happy here, and says if there is another life we will all stand an equal chance there; religion made us miserable here, and says a large majority will be eternally miserable there.

Should we, therefore, exempt it from taxation for any good it has done?

The next thing we ask is a perfect divorce between church and school. We say that every school should be secular, because it is just to everybody. If I were an Israelite I would not want to be taxed to have my children taught that his ancestors had murdered a Supreme Being. Let us teach, not the doctrines of the past, but the discoveries of the present; not the five points of Calvinism, but geology and geography. Education is the lever to raise mankind, and superstition is the enemy of intelligence.

We demand, next, that woman shall be put upon an equality with man. Why not? Why should not men be decent enough in the management of the politics of the country for women to mingle with them? It is an outrage that anyone should live in this country for sixty or seventy years and be forced to obey the laws without having any voice in making them. Let us give woman the opportunity to care for herself, since men are not decent enough to seek to care for her. The time will come when we will treat a

woman that works and takes care of two or three children as well as a woman dressed in diamonds who does nothing. The time will come when we will not tell our domestic we expect to meet her in heaven, and yet not be willing to have her speak to us in the drawing-room.

Ignorance is a poor pedestal to set virtue upon and mock-modesty should not have the right to prevent people from knowing themselves. Every child has a right to be well-born, and ignorance has no right to people the world with scrofula and consumption. When we come to the conclusion that God is not taking care of us and that we have to take care of ourselves, then we will begin to have something in the world worth living for.

I would wish there was seated upon the throne of the universe one who would see to it that justice did always prevail. I do not propose to give up the little world I live in for the unknown.

I would wish that the friends who bid us "good-night" in this world might meet us with "good-morning" there. Just as long as we love one another we will hope for another world; just as long as love kisses the lips of death will we believe and hope for a future reunion. I would not take one hope away from the human heart or one joy from the human soul, but I hold in contempt the gentlemen who keep

heaven on sale; I look with contempt on him who keeps it on draught; I look with pitying contempt on him who endeavors to prohibit honest thought by promising a reward in another world. If there is another world we will find when we come there that no one has done enough good to be eternally rewarded, no one has done enough harm to meet with unending, eternal pain and agony. We will find that there is no Being that ever hindered a man from exercising his reason. Now, while we are here, no matter what happens to us hereafter, let us cultivate strength of heart and brain to stand the inevitable. No creed can help you there. When the heart is touched with agony nothing but time can heal it.

I want, if I can, to do a little to increase the rights of men, to put every human being on an equality, to sweep away the clouds of superstition, to make people think more of what happens to-day than of what somebody said happened three thousand years ago. This is all I want: To do what little I can to clutch one-seventh of our time from superstition, to give strength to meet the toils of the next. I want a day of enjoyment, a day to read old books, to meet old friends, and to get acquainted with one's wife and children. I want a day to gather strength to meet the toils of the next. I want to get that day away from the church, away

from superstition and the contemplation of hell, to be the best and sweetest and brightest of all the days in the week.

The best way to make a day sacred is to fill it up with useful labor. That day is best on which most good is done for the human race. I hope to see the time when we will have a day for the opera, the play—good plays—for they do good. You never saw the villain foiled in a play where the audience did not applaud. You never saw them applaud when the rascal was successful in his villainy. If you could go to a theater and see put upon the stage the scenes of the Old Testament, with its butcheries and rapes and deeds of violence, you would detest it all the days of your life. I would like to have every horror of the Old Testament set on this stage, to have somebody represent the Being as he is represented there, giving his brutal orders, and let the orthodox see their God as he really is.

I want to have us all do what little we can to secularize this government—take it from the control of savagery and give it to science, take it from the government of the past and give it to the enlightened present, and in this government let us uphold every man and woman in their rights, that everyone, after he or she comes to the age of discretion, may have a voice in the affairs of the nation. Do this, and we will grow in

grandeur and splendor every day, and the time will come when every man and every woman shall have the same rights as every other man and every other woman has. I believe we are growing better. I do not believe the wail of want shall be heard forever: that the prison and the gallows will always curse the ground. The time will come when liberty and law and love, like the rings of Saturn, will surround the world; when the world will cease making these mistakes; when every man will be judged according to his worth and intelligence.

I want to do all I can to hasten that day.

FARMING

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: 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.

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 in 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 would never 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 ax 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 lie 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 would never 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. [Applause.]

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 care-

less. They have not been proud of their business.

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 the Middle States 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 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 bathroom. 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. [Loud applause.]

In no part of the globe will farming pay better than in the Central States. 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 clutches 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 the Middle States 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 of 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. [Applause.]

About seven hundred years ago, Khayyam,¹ 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 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, inquiring 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.

¹ Omar Khayyam, a Persian poet and astronomer; born in the latter half of the 11th century; died in the first quarter of the 12th century.

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 soil is a curse and almost a disgrace. They must not suppose that education is thrown away upon them unless they become ministers, lawyers, doctors, or statesmen. 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 are hundreds of graduates of Yale and Harvard and other colleges, who are agents for sewing-machines, solicitors for insurance, clerks, copyists,—in short, performing a hundred varieties of menial service. They seem willing to do anything 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 a 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. [Applause.]

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 ax,

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 just punishment they all had

the ague; and they ought to have it now. The man who can not 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 can not 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. 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 sleep.

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 sometimes 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. O daughters and wives, if you would be loved, adorn yourselves—if you would be adored, be beautiful! [Applause.]

There is another fault common with the farmers of our country—they want too much land. You can not, 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 char-

acter 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 defense 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. [Applause.]

A great many farmers seem to think that they are the only laborers in the world. This is a very foolish thing. Farmers can not 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 who 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.

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 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 the 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. In these iron highways 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 railroads 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. Con-

fidence 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 everyone 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 the States is a purchaser of lumber. People who live upon the prairies should 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 can not protect every department of industry. Let us see if all property can not 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 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 fireside 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 grow and gleam in the sacred light of all these flames!

We have the best country in the world. 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. Spofford¹ gives the following facts about interest: "One dollar loaned for one hundred years at six per cent., with 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 amount 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

¹ Ainsworth Rand Spofford, an American librarian; born, 1825; librarian of the Congressional Library, 1865-1897.

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 around you like flowers. They will fill your homes with sunshine 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! [Applause.]

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 can not 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.

In the good old days there would be eleven children in the family and only one skillet. Everything 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,¹ 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 halfstory is simply an oven in which, during the summer, you will bake every night, and feel in

¹ John William Draper, an Anglo-American chemist, physiologist, and historian; born, 1811; died, 1882.

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, irksome, 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 can not 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 someone 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

bathrooms, 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, everybody 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 than in the quiet of the country, out of the mad race for money, place, and power—far from the demands of business—out of the dusty highway where fools struggle and strive for the hollow praise of other fools.

Surrounded by pleasant fields and faithful friends, by those I have loved, I hope to end my

days. And this I hope may be the lot of all who hear my voice. I hope that you, in the country, in houses covered with vines and clothed with flowers, looking from the open window upon rustling fields of corn and wheat, over which will run the sunshine and the shadow, surrounded by those whose lives you have filled with joy, will pass away serenely as the autumn dies.

THE IDEAL

[The following speech was delivered at the Unitarian Club dinner in New York, January 15, 1892, in response to the toast, "The Ideal."]

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:
In the first place, I wish to tender my thanks to this club for having generosity and sense enough to invite me to speak this evening. It is probably the best thing the club has ever done. You have shown that you are not afraid of a man simply because he does not happen to agree entirely with you, although in a very general way it may be said that I come within one of you.

So I think not only that you have honored me—that I most cheerfully and gratefully admit—but, upon my word, I think that you have honored yourselves. And imagine the distance the religious world has traveled in the last few years to make a thing of this kind possible! You know—I presume every one of you knows—that I have no religion—not enough to last a minute—none whatever—that is, in the ordinary sense of that word. And yet you have become so nearly civilized that you are willing to hear what I have to say; and I have become so

nearly civilized that I am willing to say what I think.

And, in the second place, let me say that I have great respect for the Unitarian church. I have great respect for the memory of Theodore Parker.¹ I have great respect for every man who has assisted in reaving the heavens of an infinite monster. I have great respect for every man who has helped to put out the fires of hell. In other words, I have great respect for every man who has tried to civilize my race.

The Unitarian church has done more than any other church—and maybe more than all other churches—to substitute character for creed, and to say that a man should be judged by his spirit; by the climate of his heart; by the autumn of his generosity; by the spring of his hope; that he should be judged by what he does; by the influence that he exerts, rather than by the mythology he may believe. And whether there be one God or a million, I am perfectly satisfied that every duty that devolves upon me is within my reach. It is something that I can do myself, without the help of anybody else, either in this world or any other.

Now, in order to make myself plain on this subject—I think I was to speak about the

¹ Theodore Parker, an American Unitarian clergyman, lecturer, reformer, and author; born, 1810; died, 1860.

·Ideal—I want to thank the Unitarian church for what it has done; and I want to thank the Universalist church, too. They at least believe in a God who is a gentleman; and that is much—more than was ever done by an orthodox church. They believe, at least, in a heavenly father who will leave the latchstring out until the last child gets home; and as that lets me in—especially in reference to the “last”—I have great respect for that church.

Now, let me lay down this proposition number one. The imagination of man has the horizon of experience; and beyond experience or nature man can not go, even in imagination. Man is not a creator. He combines; he adds together; he divides; he subtracts; he does not create, even in the world of imagination. Let me make myself a little plainer: Not one here—not one in the wide, wide world can think of a color that he never saw. No human being can imagine a sound that he has not heard, and no one can think of a taste that he has not experienced. He can add to—that is, add together—combine; but he can not, by any possibility, create.

Man originally, we will say—go back to the age of barbarism—and you will not have to go far; our own childhood, probably, is as far as is necessary—but go back to what is called the age of savagery. Every man was an idealist, as every man is to-day an idealist. Every man

in savage or civilized time, commencing with the first that ever crawled out of a cave and pushed the hair back from his forehead to look at the sun—commence with him and end with Judge Wright—the last expression on the God question—and from that cave to the soul that lives in this temple everyone has been an idealist and has endeavored to account in some way for what he saw and for what he felt; in other words, for the phenomena of nature.

The cheapest way to account for it by the rudest savage is the way it has been accounted for to-night. What makes the river run? There's a god in it. What makes the tree grow? There's a god in it. There's a god in the tree. What makes the star shine? There's a god in it. What makes the sun rise? Why, he's a god himself; and the moon. And what makes the nightingale sing until the air is faint with melody? There's a god in it.

They commenced making gods to account for everything that happens—gods of dreams and gods of love and friendship, and of heroism and courage. Splendid! They kept making more and more. The more they found out in nature, up to a certain point, the more gods they needed; and they kept on making gods until almost every wave of the sea bore a god. Gods on every mountain, and in every vale and field, and by every stream! Gods in flowers, gods in grass;

gods everywhere! All accounting for this world and for what happened in this world.

Then, when they had got about to the top, when their ingenuity had been exhausted, they had not produced anything, and they did not produce anything, beyond their own experience. We are told that they were idolaters. That is a mistake, except in the sense that we are all idolaters. They said, "Here is a god; let us express our idea of him. He is stronger than a man is; let us give him the body of a lion. He is swifter than a man is; let us give him the wings of an eagle. He is wiser than a man is"—and when man was very savage he said, "Let us give him the head of a serpent." A serpent is wonderfully wise; he travels without feet; he climbs without claws; he lives without food, and he is of the simplest conceivable form.

And that was simply to represent their idea of power, of swiftness, of wisdom. And yet this impossible monster was simply made of what man had seen in nature, and he put the various attributes or parts together by his imagination. He created nothing. He simply took these parts of certain beasts, when beasts were supposed to be superior to man in some particulars, and in that way expressed his thought.

You go into the territory of Arizona to-day, and you will find there pictures of God. He was clothed in stone, through which no arrow

could pierce, and so they called God the Stone-Shirted, whom no Indian could kill. That was for the simple and only reason that it was impossible to get an arrow through his armor. They got the idea from the armadillo.

Now, I am simply saying this to show that they were making gods for all these centuries, and making them out of something they found in nature. Then, after they got through with the beast business, they made gods after the image of man. And they are the best gods, so far as I know, that have been made.

So that—but you all know it as well as I do, or you would not be Unitarians—all this has been simply a growth from year to year, from generation to generation, from age to age. And let me tell you the first thing about these gods that they made after the image of men. After a time there were men on the earth who were better than these gods in heaven.

Then those gods began to die, one after another, and dropped from their thrones. The time will probably come in the history of this world when an insurance company can calculate the average life of gods as well as they do now of men. Exactly! because all these gods have been made by folks. And, let me say right here, the folks did the best they could. I do not blame them. Everybody in the business has always done his best. I admit it. I admit that

man has traveled from the first conception up to Unitarianism by a necessary road. Under the conditions he could have come up in no other way. I admit all that. I blame nobody. But I am simply trying to tell, in a very feeble manner, how it is.

Now, in a little while, I say, men got better than their gods. Then the gods began to die. Then we began to find out a few things in nature, and we found out that we were supporting more gods than were necessary—that fewer gods could do the business—and that, from an economical point of view, expenses ought to be cut down. There were too many temples, too many priests, and you always had to give tithes of something to each one, and these gods were about to eat up the substance of the world.

And there came a time when it got to that point that either the gods would eat up the people or the people must destroy some gods, and of course they destroyed the gods, one by one, and in their places they put forces of nature to do the business—forces of nature that needed no church, that needed no theologians—forces of nature that you are under no obligation to; that you do not have to pay anything to keep working. We found that the attraction of gravitation would attend to its business, night and day, at its own expense. There was a great saving. I wish it was the same with all kinds of

law, so that we could all go into some useful business, including myself.

I say they found this. So, day by day, they dispensed with this expense of deities; and the world got along just as well—a good deal better. They used to think—a community thought—that if a man was allowed to say a word against a deity the god would visit his vengeance upon the entire nation. But they found out, after a while, that no harm came of it; so they went on destroying the gods. Now, all these things are relative; and they made gods a little better all the time—I admit that—till we struck the Presbyterian, which is probably the worst ever made. The Presbyterians seem to have bred back.

But no matter. As man became more just, or nearer just, as he became more charitable, or nearer charitable, his god grew to be a little better and a little better. He was very bad in Geneva—the three that we then had. They were very bad in Scotland—horrible! Very bad in New England—infamous! Might as well tell the truth about it—very bad! And then men went to work, finally, to civilize their gods, to civilize heaven, to give heaven the benefit of the freedom of this brave world. That's what we did. We wanted to civilize religion—civilize what is known as Christianity. And nothing on earth needed civilization more; and nothing

needs it more than that to-night. Civilization! I am not so much for the freedom of religion as I am for the religion of freedom.

Now, there was a time when our ancestors—good people, away back, all dead, no great regret expressed at this meeting on that account—there was a time when our ancestors were happy in their belief that nearly everybody was to be lost, and that a few, including themselves, were to be saved. That religion, I say, fitted that time. It fitted their geology. It was a very good running mate for their astronomy. It was a good match for their chemistry. In other words, they were about equal in every department of human ignorance.

And they insisted that there lived up there somewhere—generally up—exactly where nobody has, I believe, yet said—a being, an infinite person “without body, parts, or passions.” And yet without passions he was angry at the wicked every day. Without body he inhabited a certain place, and without parts he was, after all, in some strange and miraculous manner, organized so that he thought.

And I do not know that it is possible for anyone here—I do not know that anyone here is gifted with imagination enough to conceive of such a being. Our fathers had not imagination enough to do so, at least, and so they said of this God that he loves and he hates; he punishes

and he rewards; and that religion has been described perfectly to-night by Judge Wright as really making God a monster and men poor helpless victims. And the highest possible conception of the orthodox man was, finally, to be a good servant—just lucky enough to get in—feathers somewhat singed, but enough left to fly. That was the idea of our fathers. And then came these divisions, simply because men began to think.

And why did they begin to think? Because in every direction, in all departments, they were getting more and more and more information. And then the religion did not fit. When they found out something of the history of this globe they found out that the Scriptures were not true. I will not say not inspired, because I do not know whether they are inspired or not. It is a question, to me, of no possible importance, whether they are inspired or not. The question is, "Are they true?" If they are true, they do not need inspiration; and if they are not true, inspiration will not help them. So that is a matter that I care nothing about.

On every hand, I say, they studied and thought. They began to grow—to have new ideas of mercy, kindness, justice; new ideas of duty—new ideas of life. The old gods, after we got past the civilization of the Greeks—past their mythology, and it is the best mythol-

ogy that man has ever made—the best—after we got past that, I say, the gods cared very little about women. Women occupied no place in the state—no place by the hearth, except one of subordination, and almost of slavery. So the early churches made God after that image who held women in contempt. It was only natural (I am not blaming anybody)—they had to do it, it was part of the *must*!

Now, I say that we have advanced up to the point that we demand, not only intelligence, but justice and mercy, in the sky; we demand that—that idea of God. Then comes my trouble—my trouble. I want to be honest about it. Here is my trouble—and I want it also understood that if I should see a man praying to a stone image or to a stuffed serpent, with that man's wife or daughter or son lying at the point of death, and that poor savage on his knees imploring that image or that stuffed serpent to save his child or his wife, there is nothing in my heart that could suggest the slightest scorn, or any other feeling than of sympathy—any other feeling than that of grief that the stuffed serpent could not answer the prayer and that the stone image did not feel. I want that understood. And wherever man prays for the right—no matter to whom or to what he prays; where he prays for strength to conquer the wrong, I hope his prayer may be heard; and if

I think there is no one to hear it I will hear it, and I am willing to help answer it to the extent of my power.

So I want it distinctly understood that that is my feeling. But here is my trouble: I find this world made on a very cruel plan. I do not say it is wrong. I just say that is the way it seems to me. I may be wrong myself, because this is the only world I was ever in; I am provincial. This grain of sand and tear they call the earth is the only world I have ever lived in. And you have no idea how little I know about the rest of this universe; and you never will know how little I know about it until you examine your own minds on the same subject.

The plan is this: Life feeds on life. Justice does not always triumph. Innocence is not a perfect shield. There is my trouble; there is my trouble. No matter, now, whether you agree with me or not; I beg of you to be honest and fair with me in your thought as I am toward you in mine. That is my trouble.

I hope, as devoutly as you, that there is a power somewhere in this universe that will finally bring everything as it should be. I take a little consolation in the "perhaps"—in the guess that this is only one scene of a great drama, and that when the curtain rises on the fifth act, if I live that long, I may see the coherence and the relation of things. But up to

the present writing—or speaking—I do not. I do not understand it—a God that has life feed on life; every joy in the world born of some agony! I do not understand why in this world, over the Niagara of cruelty, should run this flood of blood. I do not understand it. And, then, why does not justice always triumph? Why is not innocence a perfect shield? These are my troubles.

Suppose a man had control of the atmosphere, knew enough of the secrets of nature, had read enough in “nature’s infinite book of its secrecy,” so that he could control the rain and wind; suppose a man had that power, and suppose that last year he kept the rain from Russia and did not allow the crops to ripen, when hundreds of thousands are famishing and when little babes are found with their lips on the breasts of dead mothers! What would you think of such a man? Now, there is my trouble. If there be a God he understood this. He knew when he withheld his rain that the famine would come. He saw the dead mothers, he saw the empty breasts of death, and he saw the helpless babes. There is my trouble. I am perfectly frank with you and honest. That is my trouble.

Now understand me! I do not say there is no God. I do not know. As I told you before, I have traveled but very little—only in this world.

I want it understood that I do not pretend to know. I say I think. And in my mind the idea expressed by Judge Wright so eloquently and so beautifully is not exactly true. I can not conceive of the God he endeavors to describe, because he gives to that God will, purpose, achievement, benevolence, love, and no form—no organization—no wants. There's the trouble. No wants. And let me say why that is a trouble—anybody can move to adjourn now at any moment—I will tell you why that is a trouble. Man acts only because he wants. You civilize man by increasing his wants, or as his wants increase he becomes civilized. You find a lazy savage who would not hunt an elephant tusk to save your life. But let him have a few tastes of whisky and tobacco, and he will run his legs off for tusks. You have given him another want and he is willing to work. And they nearly all started on the road toward Unitarianism—that is to say toward civilization—in that way. You must increase their wants.

The question arises, "Can an infinite being want anything?" If he does and can not get it, he is not happy. If he does not want anything I can not help him. I am under no obligation to do anything for anybody who does not need anything and who does not want anything. Now, there is my trouble. I may be wrong, and

I may get paid for it some time, but that is my trouble.

I do not see—admitting that all is true that has been said about the existence of God—I do not see what I can do for him; and I do not see either—I can give my word of honor—what he can do for me, judging by what he has done for others. I do not.

And then I come to the other point, that religion, so-called, explains our duties to this supposed being, and we do not even know that he exists, and no human being has got imagination enough to describe him, or to use such words that you understand what he is trying to say. I have listened with great pleasure to Judge Wright this evening, and I have heard a great many other beautiful things on the same subject—none better than his. But I never understood them—never.

Now, then, what is religion? I say, religion is all here in this world—right here—and that all our duties are right here to our fellow-men; that the man that builds a home; marries the girl that he loves; takes good care of her; likes the family; stays home nights, as a general thing; pays his debts; tries to find out what he can; gets all the ideas and beautiful things that his mind will hold; turns a part of his brain into a gallery of the fine arts; has a host of statues there and paintings; then has another niche

devoted to music—a magnificent dome, filled with winged notes that rise to glory—now the man who does that gets all he can from the great ones dead; swaps all the thoughts he can with the ones that are alive; true to the ideal that he has got here in his brain—he is what I call a religious man, because he makes the world better, happier; he puts the dimples of joy in the cheeks of the ones he loves, and he lets the gods run heaven to suit themselves.

And I am not saying that he is right; I do not know.

This is all the religion that I have. It is to make somebody else happier if I can. I do not mean to take any great trouble about it, but if I can do it easily—that, it seems to me, is all there is of real religion.

I divide this world into two classes—the cruel and the kind; and I think a thousand times more of a kind man than I do of an intelligent man. I think more of kindness than I do of genius, I think more of real good human nature in that way—of one who is willing to lend a helping hand and who goes through the world with a face that looks as if its owner was willing to answer a decent question—I think a thousand times more of that than I do of being theologically right; because I do not care whether I am theologically right or not. It is something that is not worth talking about, be-

cause it is something that I never, never, never will understand; and every one of you will die and you will not understand it, either—until after you die, at any rate. I do not know what will happen then.

I am not denying anything. There is another ideal, and it is a beautiful ideal. It is the greatest dream that ever entered the heart or brain of man—the Dream of Immortality. It was born of human affection. It did not come to us from heaven. It was born of the human heart. And when he who loved kissed the lips of her who was dead there came into his heart the dream, “We may meet again.”

And, let me tell you, that Hope of Immortality never came from any religion. That Hope of Immortality has helped make religion. It has been the great oak around which have climbed the poisonous vines of superstition—that Hope of Immortality is the great oak.

And yet the moment a man expresses a doubt about the truth of Joshua or Jonah or the other three fellows in a furnace, up hops some poor little wretch and says, “Why, he doesn’t want to live any more; he wants to die and go down like a dog, and that is the end of him and his wife and children.” They really seem to think that the moment a man is what they call an infidel he has no affections, no heart, no feeling, no hope—nothing—nothing. Just anxious to

be annihilated! But, if the orthodox creed be true, I make my choice to-night. I take hell. And if it is between hell and annihilation, I take annihilation.

I will tell you why I take hell in making the first choice. We have heard from both of those places—heaven and hell—according to the New Testament. There was a rich man in hell, and a poor man, Lazarus, in heaven. And there was another gentleman by the name of Abraham. And the rich man in hell was in flames, and he called for water, and they told him they could not give him any. No bridge! But they did not express the slightest regret that they could not give him any water. Mr. Abraham was not decent enough to say he would if he could; no, sir, nothing. It did not make any difference to him. But this rich man in hell—in torment—his heart was all right, for he remembered his brothers; and he said to this Abraham, “If you can not go, why, send a man to my five brethren, so that they will not come to this place!” Good fellow, to think of his five brothers when he was burning up. Good fellow. Best fellow we ever heard from on the other side—in either world.

So, I say, there is my place. And, incidentally, Abraham at that time gave his judgment as to the value of miracles. He said, “Though one should arise from the dead he wouldn’t help

your five brethren!" "There are Moses and the prophets." No need of raising people from the dead.

That is my idea, in a general way, about religion; and I want the imagination to go to work upon it, taking the perfections of one church, of one school, of one system, and putting them together, just as the sculptor makes a great statue by taking the eyes from one, the nose from another, the limbs from another, and so on; just as they make a great painting from a landscape by putting a river in this place, instead of over there, changing the location of a tree and improving on what they call nature—that is to say, simply by adding to, taking from, that is all we can do. But let us go on doing that until there shall be a church in sympathy with the best human heart and in harmony with the best human brain.

And, what's more, let us have that religion for the world we live in. Right here! Let us have that religion until it can not be said that they who do the most work have the least to eat. Let us have that religion here until hundreds and thousands of women are not compelled to make a living with the needle that has been called "the asp for the breast of the poor," and to live in tenements, in filth, where modesty is impossible.

I say, let us preach that religion here until

men will be ashamed to have forty or fifty millions, or any more than they need, while their brethren lack bread—while their sisters die from want. Let us preach that religion here until man will have more ambition to become wise and good than to become rich and powerful. Let us preach that religion here among ourselves until there are no abused and beaten wives. Let us preach that religion until children are no longer afraid of their own parents and until there is no back of a child bearing the scars of a father's lash. Let us preach it, I say, until we understand and know that every man does as he must, and that, if we want better men and women, we must have better conditions.

Let us preach this grand religion until everywhere, the world over, men are just and kind to each other. And then, if there be another world, we will be prepared for it. And if I come into the presence of an infinite, good, and wise being, he will say, "Well, you did the best you could. You did very well, indeed. There is plenty of work for you to do here. Try to get a little higher than you were before." Let us preach that one drop of restitution is worth an ocean of repentance.

And if there is a life of eternal progress before us, I shall be as glad as any other angel to find that out.

But I will not sacrifice the world I have for one I know not of. I will not live here in fear, when I do not know that that which I fear lives.

I am going to live a perfectly free man. I am going to reap the harvest of my mind, no matter how poor it is, whether it is wheat or corn or worthless weeds. And I am going to scatter it. Some may "fall on stony ground." But I think I have struck good soil to-night.

And so, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you a thousand times for your attention. I beg that you will forgive the time that I have taken, and allow me to say, once more, that this event marks an epoch in religious liberty in the United States.