

LECTURES OF COL. R.G. INGERSOLL - LATEST

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Ingersoll's Lecture on Thomas Paine–Delivered in Central Music Hall,
Chicago, January 29, 1880 (From the Chicago Times, Verbatim Report)

Ladies and Gentlemen:–It so happened that the first speech–the very
first public speech I ever made–took occasion to defend the memory of

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Thomas Paine.

I did it because I had read a little something of the history of my country. I did it because I felt indebted to him for the liberty I then enjoyed—and whatever religion may be true, ingratitude is the blackest of crimes. And whether there is any God or not, in every star that shines, gratitude is a virtue.

The man who will tell the truth about the dead is a good man, and for one, about this man, I intend to tell just as near the truth as I can.

Most history consists in giving the details of things that never happened—most biography is usually the lie coming from the mouth of flattery, or the slander coming from the lips of malice, and whoever attacks the religion of a country will, in his turn, be attacked. Whoever attacks a superstition will find that superstition defended by all the meanness of ingenuity. Whoever attacks a superstition will find that there is still one weapon left in the arsenal of Jehovah—slander.

I was reading, yesterday, a poem called the "Light of Asia," and I read in that how a Boodh seeing a tigress perishing of thirst, with her mouth upon the dry stone of a stream, with her two cubs sucking at her dry and empty dugs, this Boodh took pity upon this wild and famishing beast, and, throwing from himself the Yellowrobe of his order, and stepping naked before this tigress, said: "Here is meat for you and your cubs." In one moment the crooked daggers of her claws ran riot in his flesh, and in another he was devoured. Such, during nearly all the history of this world, has been the history of every man who has stood in front of superstition.

Thomas Paine, as has been so eloquently said by the gentleman who introduced me, was a friend of man, and whoever is a friend of man is also a friend of God—if there is one. But God has had many friends who were the enemies of their fellow-men. There is but one test by which to measure any man who has lived. Did he leave this world better than he found it? Did he leave in this world more liberty? Did he leave in this world more goodness, more humanity, than when he was born? That is the test. And whatever may have been the faults of Thomas Paine, no American who appreciates liberty, no American who believes in true democracy and pure republicanism, should ever breathe one word against his name. Every American, with the divine mantle of charity, should cover all his faults, and with a never-tiring tongue should recount his virtues.

He was a common man. He did not belong to the aristocracy. Upon the head of his father God had never poured the divine petroleum of authority. He had not the misfortune to belong to the upper classes. He had the fortune to be born among the poor and to feel against his great heart the throb of the toiling and suffering masses. Neither was it his misfortune to have been educated at Oxford. What little sense he

had was not squeezed out at Westminster. He got his education from books. He got his education from contact with fellow-men, and he thought, and a man is worth just what nature impresses upon him. A man standing by the sea, or in a forest, or looking at a flower, or hearing a poem, or looking in the eyes of the woman he loves, receives all that he is capable of receiving—and if he is a great man the impression is great, and he uses it for the purpose of benefiting his fellow-man.

Thomas Paine was not rich, he was poor, and his father before him was poor, and he was raised a sailmaker, a very lowly profession, and yet that man became one of the mainstays of liberty in this world. At one time he was an excise man, like Burns. Burns was once—speak it softly—a gauger—and yet he wrote poems that will wet the cheek of humanity with tears as long as the world travels in its orb around the sun.

Poverty was his brother, necessity his master. He had more brains than books; more courage than politeness; more strength than polish. He had no veneration for old mistakes, no admiration for ancient lies. He loved the truth for truth's sake and for man's sake. He saw oppression on every hand, injustice everywhere, hypocrisy at the altar, venality on the bench, tyranny on the throne, and with a splendid courage he espoused the cause of the weak against the strong, of the enslaved many against the titled few.

In England he was nothing. He belonged to the lower classes—that is, the useful people. England depended for her prosperity upon her mechanics and her thinkers, her sailors and her workers, and they are the only men in Europe who are not gentlemen. The only obstacles in the way of progress in Europe were the nobility and the priests, and they are the only gentlemen.

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

Paine gave to the world his "Common Sense." It was the first argument for separation; the first assault upon the British form of government; the first blow for a republic, and it aroused our fathers like a trumpet's blast. He was the first to perceive the destiny of the new world. No other pamphlet ever accomplished such wonderful results. It was filled with arguments, reasons, persuasions, and unanswerable logic. It opened a new world. It filled the present with hope and the future with honor. Everywhere the people responded, and in a few months the Continental Congress declared the colonies free and independent states.

A new nation was born.

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

In my judgment Thomas Paine was the best political writer that ever lived. "What he wrote was pure nature, and his soul and his pen ever went together." Ceremony, pageantry, and all the paraphernalia of power had no effect upon him. He examined into the why and wherefore of things. He was perfectly radical in his mode of thought. Nothing short of the bed-rock satisfied him. His enthusiasm for what he believed to be right knew no bounds. During all the dark scenes of the revolution never for a moment did he despair. Year after year his brave words were ringing through the land, and by the bivouac fires the weary soldiers read the inspiring words of "Common Sense," filled with ideas sharper than their swords, and consecrated themselves anew to the cause of freedom.

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

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

Some said it was to the interest of the colonies to be free. Paine answered this by saying: "To know whether it be the interest of the continent to be independent, we need ask only this simple, easy question: 'Is it the interest of man to be a boy all his life?'" He found many who would listen to nothing, and to them he said: "That to argue with a man who has renounced his reason is like giving medicine to the dead." This sentiment ought to adorn the walls of every orthodox church.

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

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

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

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

At the close of the Revolution no one stood higher in America than Thomas Paine. The best, the wisest, the most patriotic were his friends and admirers; and had he been thinking only of his own good he might have rested from his toils and spent the remainder of his life in comfort and in ease. He could have been what the world is pleased to call "respectable." He would have died surrounded by clergymen, warriors, and statesmen, and at his death there would have been an imposing funeral, miles of carriages, civic societies, salvos of artillery, a Nation in mourning, and, above all, a splendid monument covered with lies. He chose rather to benefit mankind. At that time the seeds sown by the great infidels were beginning to bear fruit in France. The eighteenth century was crowning its gray hairs with the wreath of progress.

On every hand science was bearing testimony against the church. Voltaire had filled Europe with light. D'Holbach was giving to the elite of Paris the principles contained in his "System of Nature." The encyclopaedists had attacked superstition with information for the masses. The foundation of things began to be examined. A few had the courage to keep their shoes on and let the bush burn. Miracles began to get scarce. Everywhere the people began to inquire. America had set an example to the world. The word liberty was in the mouths of men, and they began to wipe the dust from their superstitious knees. The dawn of a new day had appeared. Thomas Paine went to France. Into the new

movement he threw all his energies. His fame had gone before him, and he was welcomed as a friend of the human race and as a champion of free government.

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

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

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

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

Upon taking his place in the assembly, he was appointed as one of a committee to draft a constitution for France. Had the French people taken the advice of Thomas Paine, there would have been no "reign of terror." The streets of Paris would not have been filled with blood in that reign of terror. There were killed in the City of Paris not less, I think, than seventeen thousand people—and on one night, in the massacre of St. Bartholomew, there were killed, by assassination, over sixty thousand souls—men, women, and children. The revolution would have been the grandest success of the world. The truth is that Paine was too conservative to suit the leaders of the French revolution. They, to a great extent, were carried away by hatred and a desire to destroy. They had suffered so long, they had borne so much, that it was

impossible for them to be moderate in the hour of victory.

Besides all this, the French people had been so robbed by the government, so degraded by the church, that they were not fit material with which to construct a republic. Many of the leaders longed to establish a beneficent and just government, but the people asked for revenge. Paine was filled with a real love for mankind. His philanthropy was boundless. He wished to destroy monarchy—not the monarch. He voted for the destruction of tyranny, and against the death of the tyrant. He wished to establish a government on a new basis—one that would forget the past; one that would give privileges to none, and protection to all.

In the assembly, where all were demanding the execution of the king,—where to differ with the majority was to be suspected, and where to be suspected was almost certain death—Thomas Paine had the courage, the goodness, and the justice to vote against death. To vote against the execution of the king was a vote against his own life. This was the sublimity of devotion to principle. For this he was arrested, imprisoned, and doomed to death. There is not a theologian who has ever maligned Thomas Paine that has the courage to do this thing. When Louis Capet was on trial for his life before the French convention, Thomas Paine had the courage to speak and vote against the sentence of death. In his speech I find the following splendid sentiments:

”My contempt and hatred for monarchical governments are sufficiently well known, and my compassion for the unfortunate, friends or enemies, is equally profound.

I have voted to put Louis Capet upon trial, because it was necessary to prove to the world the perfidy, the corruption, and the horror of the monarchical system.

To follow the trade of a king destroys all morality, just as the trade of a jailer deadens all sensibility.

Make a man a king today and tomorrow he will be a brigand.

Had Louis Capet been a farmer, he might have been held in esteem by his neighbors, and his wickedness results from his position rather than from his nature.

Let the French nation purge its territory of kings without soiling itself with their impure blood.

Let the United States be the asylum of Louis Capet, where, in spite of the overshadowing miseries and crimes of a royal life, he will learn by the continual contemplation of the general prosperity that the true system of government is not that of kings, but of the people.

I am an enemy of kings, but I can not forget that they belong to the human race.

It is always delightful to pursue that course where policy and humanity are united.

As France has been the first of all the nations of Europe to destroy royalty, let it be the first to abolish the penalty of death.

As a true republican, I consider kings as more the objects of contempt than of vengeance.”

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

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

Had his enemies succeeded in bringing him to the block, he would have escaped the calumnies and the hatred of the Christian world. And let me tell you how neat they came getting him to the block. He was in prison, there was a door to his cell—it had two doors, a door that opened in and an iron door that opened out. It was a dark passage, and whenever they concluded to cut a man’s head off the next day, an agent went along and made a chalk mark upon the door where the poor prisoner was bound. Mr. Barlow, the American minister, happened to be with him and the outer door was shut, that is, open against the wall, and the inner door was shut, and when the man came along whose business it was to mark the door for death, he marked this door where Thomas Paine was, but he marked the door that was against the wall, so when it was shut the mark was inside, and the messenger of death passed by on the next day. If that had happened in favor of some Methodist preacher, they would have clearly seen, not simply the hand of God, but both hands. In this country, at least, he would have ranked with the proudest names. On the anniversary of the Declaration, his name would have been upon the lips of all orators, and his memory in the hearts of all the people.

Thomas Paine had not finished his career. He had spent his life thus far in destroying the power of kings, and now turned his attention to the priests. He knew that every abuse had been embalmed in scripture—that every outrage was in partnership with some holy text. He knew that

the throne skulked behind the altar, and both behind a pretended revelation of God. By this time he had found that it was of little use to free the body and leave the mind in chains. He had explored the foundations of despotism, and had found them infinitely rotten. He had dug under the throne, and it occurred to him that he would take a look behind the altar. The result of this investigation was given to the world in the "Age of Reason." From the moment of its publication he became infamous. He was calumniated beyond measure. To slander him was to secure the thanks of the church. All his services were instantly forgotten, disparaged, or denied. He was shunned as though he had been a pestilence. Most of his old friends forsook him. He was regarded as a moral plague, and at the bare mention of his name the bloody hands of the church were raised in horror. He was denounced as the most despicable of men.

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

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

This is enough to make one believe that nothing is more natural than for men to devour their benefactors. The people in all ages have crucified and glorified. Whoever lifts his voice against abuses, whoever arraigns the past at the bar of the present, whoever asks the king to show his commission, or question the authority of the priest, will be denounced as the enemy of man and God. In all ages reason has been regarded as the enemy of religion. Nothing has been considered so pleasing to the Deity as a total denial of the authority of your own mind. Self-reliance has been thought deadly sin; and the idea of living and dying without the aid and consolation of superstition has always horrified the church. By some unaccountable infatuation, belief has been and still is

considered of immense importance. All religions have been based upon the idea that God will forever reward the true believer, and eternally damn the man who doubts or denies. Belief is regarded as the one essential thing. To practice justice, to love mercy, is not enough; you must believe in some incomprehensible creed. You must say: "Once one is three, and three times one is one." The man who practiced every virtue, but failed to believe, was execrated. Nothing so outrages the feelings of the church as a moral unbeliever, nothing so horrible as a charitable atheist.

When Paine was born the world was religious, the pulpit was the real throne, and the churches were making every effort to crush out of the brain the idea that it had the right to think. He again made up his mind to sacrifice himself. He commenced with the assertion "That any system of religion that had anything in it that shocks the mind of a child can not be a true system." What a beautiful, what a tender sentiment! No wonder the church began to hate him. He believed in one God, and no more. After his life he hoped for happiness. He believed that true religion consisted in doing justice, loving mercy; in endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy, and in offering to God the fruit of the heart. He denied the inspiration of the scriptures. This was his crime.

He contended that it is a contradiction in terms to call anything a revelation that comes to us at secondhand, either verbally or in writing. He asserted that revelation is necessarily limited to the first communication, and that after that it is only an account of something which another person says was a revelation to him. We have only his word for it, as it was never made to us. This argument never had been, and probably never will be answered. He denied the divine origin of Christ and showed conclusively that the pretended prophecies of the Old Testament lead no reference to Him whatever. And yet he believed that Christ was a virtuous and amiable man; that the morality he taught and practiced was of the most benevolent and elevated character, and that it had not been exceeded by any. Upon this point he entertained the same sentiments now held by the Unitarians, and in fact by all the most enlightened Christians.

In his time the church believed and taught that every word in the Bible was absolutely true. Since his day it has been proven false in its cosmogony, false in its astronomy, false in its chronology and geology, false in its history, so far as the Old Testament is concerned, false in almost everything. There are but few, if any, scientific men, who apprehend that the Bible is literally true. Who on earth at this day would pretend to settle any scientific question by a text from the Bible? The old belief is confined to the ignorant and zealous. The church itself will before long be driven to occupy the position of Thomas Paine. The best minds of the orthodox world, today, are endeavoring to prove the existence of a personal Deity. All other questions occupy a minor place. You are no longer asked to swallow the

Bible whole, whale, Jonah and all; you are simply required to believe in God and pay your pew-rent.

There is not now an enlightened minister in the world who will seriously contend that Sampson's strength was in his hair, or that the necromancers of Egypt could turn water into blood, and pieces of wood into serpents. These follies have passed away, and the only reason that the religious world can now have for disliking Paine, is that they have been forced to adopt so many of his opinions.

Paine thought the barbarities of the Old Testament inconsistent with what he deemed the real character of God. He believed the murder, massacre, and indiscriminate slaughter had never been commanded by the Deity. He regarded much of the Bible as childish, unimportant and foolish. The scientific world entertains the same opinion. Paine attacked the Bible precisely in the same spirit in which he had attacked the pretensions of the kings. He used the same weapons. All the pomp in the world could not make him cower. His reason knew no "Holy of Holies," except the abode of truth. The sciences were then in their infancy. The attention of the really learned had not been directed to an impartial examination of our pretended revelation. It was accepted by most as a matter of course.

The church was all-powerful, and no one else, unless thoroughly imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice, thought for a moment of disputing the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. The infamous doctrine that salvation depends upon belief, upon a mere intellectual conviction, was then believed and preached. To doubt was to secure the damnation of your soul. This absurd and devilish doctrine shocked the common sense of Thomas Paine, and he denounced it with the fervor of honest indignation. This doctrine, although infinitely ridiculous, has been nearly universal, and has been as hurtful as senseless. For the overthrow of this infamous tenet, Paine exerted all his strength. He left few arguments to be used by those who should come after him, and he used none that have been refuted.

The combined wisdom and genius of all mankind can not possibly conceive of an argument against liberty of thought. Neither can they show why anyone should be punished, either in this world or another, for acting honestly in accordance with reason; and yet a doctrine with every possible argument against it has been, and still is, believed and defended by the entire orthodox world. Can it be possible that we have been endowed with reason simply that our souls may be caught in its toils and snares, that we may be led by its false and delusive glare out of the narrow path that leads to joy into the broad way of everlasting death? Is it possible that we have been given reason simply that we may through faith ignore its deductions and avoid its conclusions? Ought the sailor to throw away his compass and depend entirely upon the fog? If reason is not to be depended upon in matters of religion, that is to say, in respect to our duties to the Deity, why should it be relied upon

in matters respecting the rights of our fellows? Why should we throw away the law given to Moses by God Himself, and have the audacity to make some of our own? How dare we drown the thunders of Sinai by calling the ayes and naes in a petty legislature? If reason can determine what is merciful, what is just, the duties of man to man, what more do we want either in time or eternity?

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

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

So far as I am concerned, I most cheerfully admit that most Christians are honest and most ministers sincere. We do not attack them; we attack their creed. We accord to them the same rights that we ask for ourselves. We believe that their doctrines are hurtful, and I am going to do what I can against them. We believe that the frightful text, "He that believes shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned," has covered the earth with blood. You might as well say that all that have red hair shall be damned. It has filled the heart with arrogance, cruelty, and murder. It has caused the religious wars; bound hundreds of thousands to the stake; founded inquisitions; filled dungeons; invented instruments of torture; taught the mother to hate her child; imprisoned the mind; filled the world with ignorance; persecuted the lovers of wisdom; built the monasteries and convents; made happiness a crime, investigation a sin, and self-reliance a blasphemy. It has poisoned the springs of learning; misdirected the energies of the world; filled all countries with want; housed the people in hovels; fed them with famine; and but for the efforts of a few brave infidels, it would have taken the world back to the midnight of barbarism, and left the heavens without a star.

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

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

The Christianity of Paine's day is not the Christianity of our time. There has been a great improvement since then. It is better now because there is less of it. One hundred and fifty years ago the foremost preachers of our time—that gentleman who preaches in this magnificent hall—would have perished at the stake. Lord, Lord, how John Calvin would have liked to have roasted this man, and the perfume of his burning flesh would have filled heaven with joy. A Universalist would have been torn to pieces in England, Scotland, and America. Unitarians would have found themselves in the stocks, pelted by the rabble with dead cats, after which their ears would have been cut off, their tongues bored, and their foreheads branded. Less than one hundred and fifty years ago the following law was in force in Maryland:

”Be it enacted by the right honorable, the lord proprietor, by and with the advice and consent of his lordship's governor, and the upper and lower houses of the assembly, and the authority of the same: That if any person shall hereafter, within this province, willingly, maliciously, and advisedly, by writing or speaking, blaspheme or curse God, or deny our Savior, Jesus Christ, to be the son of God, or shall deny the Holy Trinity, the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, or the God-head of any of the three persons, or the unity of the God-head, or shall utter any profane words concerning the Holy Trinity, or the persons thereof and shall therefore be convicted by verdict, shall, for the first offense, be bored through the tongue, and fined L20, to be levied on his body. As for the second offense, the offender shall be stigmatized by burning in the forehead the letter B, and fined L40. And that for the third offense, the offender shall suffer death without the benefit of clergy.”

The strange thing about this law is, that it has never been repealed, and was in force in the District of Columbia up to 1875. Laws like this were in force in most of the colonies and in all countries where the church had power.

In the Old Testament the death penalty was attached hundreds of offenses. It has been the same in all Christian countries. Today, in civilized governments, the death penalty is attached only to murder and

treason; and in some it has been entirely abolished. What a commentary upon the divine systems of the World!

In the days of Thomas Paine the church was ignorant, bloody, and relentless. In Scotland the "kirk" was at the summit of its power. It was a full sister of the Spanish Inquisition. It waged war upon human nature. It was the enemy of happiness, the hater of joy, and the despiser of liberty. It taught parents to murder their children rather than to allow them to propagate error. If the mother held opinions of which the infamous "kirk" disapproved, her children were taken from her arms, her babe from her very bosom, and she was not allowed to see them, or write them a word. It would not allow ship-wrecked sailors to be rescued from drowning on Sunday.

Oh, you have no idea what a muss it kicks up in heaven to have anybody swim on Sunday. It fills all the wheeling worlds with sadness to see a boy in a boat, and the attention of the recording secretary is called to it. In a voice of thunder they say, "Upset him!" It sought to annihilate pleasure, to pollute the heart by filling it with religious cruelty and gloom, and to change mankind into a vast horde of pious, heartless fiends. One of the most famous Scotch divines said: "The kirk holds that religious toleration is not far from blasphemy." And this same Scotch kirk denounced, beyond measure, the man who had the moral grandeur to say, "The world is my country, and to do good my religion." And this same kirk abhorred the man who said, "Any system of religion that shocks the mind of a child can not be a true system."

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

About the beginning of the nineteenth century a boy by the name of Thomas Aikenhead was indicted and tried at Edinburgh for having denied the inspiration of the scriptures, and for having, on several occasions, when cold, wished himself in hell that he might get warm. Notwithstanding the poor boy recanted and begged for mercy, he was found guilty and hanged. His body was thrown in a hole at the foot of the scaffold and covered with stones, and though his mother came with her face covered with tears, begging for the corpse, she was denied and driven away in the name of charity. That is religion, and in the velvet of their politeness there lurks the claws of the tiger. Just give them the power and see how quick I would leave this part of the country. They know I am going to be burned forever; they know I am going to hell, but that don't satisfy them. They want to give me a little foretaste here.

Prosecutions and executions like these were common in every Christian country, and all of them based upon the belief that an intellectual conviction is a crime. No wonder the church hated and traduced the author of the "Age of Reason." England was filled with Puritan gloom

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

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

The nation was profoundly ignorant, and consequently extremely religious, so far as belief was concerned. In Europe liberty was lying chained up in the inquisition, her white bosom stained with blood. In the new world the Puritans had been hanging and burning in the name of God, and selling white Quaker children into slavery in the name of Christ, who said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me."

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

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

Progress is born of doubt and inquiry. The church never doubts—never inquires. To doubt is heresy—to inquire is to admit that you do not know—the church does neither.

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

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

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

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

The "Age of Reason" has liberalized us all. It put arguments in the mouths of the people; it put the church on the defensive, it enabled somebody in every village to corner the parson; it made the world wiser and the church better; it took power from the pulpit and divided it among the pews. Just in proportion that the human race has advanced, the church has lost its power. There is no exception to this rule. No nation ever materially advanced that held strictly to the religion of its founders. No nation ever gave itself wholly to the control of the church without losing its power, its honor, and existence.

Every church pretends to have found the exact truth. This is the end of progress. Why pursue that which you have? Why investigate when you know. Every creed is a rock in running water; humanity sweeps by it. Every creed cries to the universe, "Halt!" A creed is the ignorant past bullying the enlightened present.

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

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

not self-denial for the good of others, but for the salvation of your own sweet self.

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

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

The church has pursued Paine to deter others. The church used painting, music, and architecture simply to degrade mankind. But there are men that nothing can awe. There have been at all times brave spirits that dared even the gods. Some proud head has always been above the waves. Old Diogenes, with his mantle upon him, stiff and trembling with age, caught a small animal bred upon people, went into the Pantheon, the temple of the gods, and took the animal upon his thumb nail, and, pressing it with the other, "he sacrificed Diogenes to all the gods." Just as good as anything! In every age some Diogenes has sacrificed to all the gods. True genius never cowers, and there is always some Samson feeling for the pillars of authority.

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

The doubter, the investigator, the infidel, have been the saviors of

liberty. The truth is beginning to be realized, and the truly intellectual are honoring the brave thinker of the past. But the church is as unforgiving as ever, and still wonders why any infidel should be wicked enough to attempt to destroy her power. I will tell the church why I hate it.

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

Can you wonder that we hate your doctrines; that we despise your creeds; that we feel proud to know that we are beyond your power; that we are free in spite of you; that we can express our honest thought, and that the whole world is gradually rising into the blessed light? Can you wonder that we point with pride to the fact that infidelity has ever been found battling for the rights of man, for the liberty of conscience, and for the happiness of all? Can you wonder that we are proud to know that we have always been disciples of reason and soldiers of freedom; that we have denounced tyranny and superstition, and have kept our hands unstained with human blood?

I deny that religion is the end or object of this life. When it is so considered it becomes destructive of happiness. The real end of life is, happiness. It becomes a hydra-headed monster, reaching in terrible coils from the heavens, and thrusting its thousand fangs into the bleeding, quivering hearts of men. It devours their substance, builds palaces for God (who dwells not in temples made with hands), and allows His children to die in huts and hovels. It fills the earth with mourning, heaven with hatred, the present with fear, and all the future with fear and despair. Virtue is a subordination of the passion of the intellect. It is to act in accordance with your highest convictions. It does not consist in believing, but in doing. This is the sublime truth that the infidels in all ages have uttered. They have handed the torch from one to the other through all the years that have fled. Upon the altar of reason they have kept the sacred fire, and through the long midnight of faith they fed the divine flame. Infidelity is liberty; all superstition is slavery. In every creed man is the slave of God, woman is the slave of man, and the sweet children are the slaves of all. We do not want creeds; we want some knowledge. We want happiness. And yet we are told by the church that we have accomplished nothing; that we are simply destroyers; that we tear down without building again.

Is it nothing to free the mind? Is it nothing to civilize mankind? Is it nothing to fill the world with light, with discovery, with science? Is it nothing to dignify man and exalt the intellect. Is it nothing to grope your way into the dreary prisons, the damp and dropping dungeons, the dark and silent cells of superstition, where the souls of men are chained to floors of stone; to greet them like a ray of light, like the song of a bird, the murmur of a stream, to see the dull eyes open and grow slowly bright; to feel yourself grasped by the shrunken and unused hands, and hear yourself thanked by a strange and hollow voice? Is it nothing to conduct these souls gradually into the blessed light of day—to let them see again the happy fields, the sweet, green earth, and hear the everlasting music of the waves? Is it nothing to make men wipe the dust from their swollen knees, the tears from their blanched and furrowed cheeks? Is it a small thing to reave the heavens of an insatiate monster and write upon the eternal dome, glittering with stars, the grand word liberty? Is it a small thing to quench the thirst of hell with the holy tears of piety, break all the chains, put out the fires of civil war, stay the sword of the fanatic, and tear the bloody hands of the church from the white throat of progress? Is it a small thing to make men truly free, to destroy the dogmas of ignorance, prejudice, and power, the poisoned fables of superstition, and drive from the beautiful face of the earth the fiend of fear?

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

Nothing but education—scientific education—can benefit mankind. We must find out the laws of nature and conform to them. We need free bodies and free minds, free labor and free thought, chainless hands and fetterless brains. Free labor will give us wealth. Free thought will give us truth. We need men with moral courage to speak and write their real thoughts, and to stand by their convictions, even to the very death. We need have no fear of being too radical. The future will

verify all grand and brave predictions. Paine was splendidly in advance of his time, but he was orthodox compared to the infidels of today.

Science, the great iconoclast, has been very busy since 1809, and by the highway of progress are the broken images of the past. On every hand the people advance. The vicar of God has been pushed from the throne of the Caesars, and upon the roofs of the Eternal city falls once more the shadow of the eagle. All has been accomplished by the heroic few. The men of science have explored heaven and earth, and with infinite patience have furnished the facts. The brave thinkers have aided them. The gloomy caverns of superstition have been transformed into temples of thought, and the demons of the past are the angels of today.

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

Thomas Paine was one of the intellectual heroes, one of the men to whom we are indebted. His name is associated forever with the great republic. He lived a long, laborious, and useful life. The world is better for his having lived. For the sake of truth he accepted hatred and reproach for his portion. He ate the bitter bread of neglect and sorrow. His friends were untrue to him because he was true to himself and true to them. He lost the respect of what is called society, but kept his own. His life is what the world calls failure, and what history calls success.

If to love your fellow-men more than self is goodness, Thomas Paine was good. If to be in advance of your time, to be a pioneer in the direction of right, is greatness, Thomas Paine was great. If to avow your principles and discharge your duty in the presence of death is heroic, Thomas Paine was a hero.

At the age of 73, death touched his tired heart. He died in the land his genius defended, under the flag he gave to the skies. Slander can not touch him now; hatred can not reach him more. He sleeps in the sanctuary of the tomb, beneath the quiet of the stars. A few more years, a few more brave men, a few more rays of light, and mankind will venerate the memory of him who said:

”Any system of religion that shocks the mind of a child can not be a true system. The world is my country, and to do good my religion.”

The next question is: Did Thomas Paine recant? Mr. Paine had prophesied that fanatics would crawl and cringe around him during his last moments. He believed that they would put a lie in the mouth of death. When the shadow of the coming dissolution was upon him, two

clergymen, Messrs. Milledollar and Cunningham, called to annoy the dying man. Mr. Cunningham had the politeness to say: "You have now a full view of death; you can not live long; whoever does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, will assuredly be damned." Mr. Paine replied: "Let me have none of your popish stuff. Get away with you. Good morning." On another occasion a Methodist minister obtruded himself. Mr. Willet Hicks was present. The minister declared to Mr. Paine that "unless he repented of his unbelief he would be damned." Paine, although at the door of death, rose in his bed and indignantly requested the clergyman to leave the room. On another occasion, two brothers by the name of Pigott sought to convert him. He was displeased, and requested their departure. Afterward, Thomas Nixon and Capt. Daniel Pelton visited him for the express purpose of ascertaining whether he had, in any manner, changed his religious opinions. They were assured, by the dying man that he still held the principles he had expressed in his writings.

Afterward, these gentlemen, hearing that William Cobbet was about to write a life of Paine, sent him the following note: I must tell you now that it is of great importance to find out whether Paine recanted. If he recanted, then the Bible is true—you can rest assured that a spring of water gushed out of a dead dry bone. If Paine recanted, there is not the slightest doubt about that donkey making that speech to Mr. Baalam—not the slightest—and if Paine did not recant, then the whole thing is a mistake. I want to show that Thomas Paine died as he has lived, a friend of man and without superstition, and if you will stay here I will do it.

"New York, April 21, 1818.—Sir: Having been informed that you have a design to write a history of the life and writings of Thomas Paine, if you have been furnished with materials in respect to his religious opinions, or rather of his recantation of his former opinions before his death, all you have heard of his recanting is false. Being aware that such reports would be raised after his death by fanatics who infested his house at the time it was expected he would die, we, the subscribers, intimate acquaintances of Thomas Paine since the year 1776, went to his house. He was sitting up in a chair, and apparently in full vigor and use of all his mental faculties. We interrogated him upon his religious opinions, and if he had changed his mind, or repented of anything he had said or wrote on that subject. He answered, "Not at all," and appeared rather offended at our supposition that any change should take place in his mind. We took down in writing the questions put to him and his answers thereto, before a number of persons then in his room, among whom were his doctor, Mrs. Bonneville, etc. This paper is mislaid and can not be found at present, but the above is the substance, which can be attested by many living witnesses.—Thomas Nixon, Daniel Pelton"

Mr. Jarvis, the artist, saw Mr. Paine one or two days before his death. To Mr. Jarvis he expressed his belief in his written opinions upon the subject of religion. B.F. Haskin, an attorney of the City of New York, also visited him, and inquired as to his religious opinions. Paine was

then upon the threshold of death, but he did not tremble, he was not a coward. He expressed his firm and unshaken belief in the religious ideas he had given to the world.

Dr. Manly was with him when he spoke his last words. Dr. Manly asked the dying man, and Dr. Manly was a Christian, if he did not wish to believe that Jesus was the Son of God, and the dying philosopher answered: "I have no wish to believe on that subject." Amasa Woodsworth sat up with Thomas Paine the night before his death. In 1839 Gilbert Vale, hearing that Woodsworth was living in or near Boston, visited him for the purpose of getting his statement, and the statement was published in *The Beacon* of June 5, 1830, and here it is:

"We have just returned from Boston. One object of our visit to that city was to see Mr. Amasa Woodsworth, an engineer, now retired in a handsome cottage and garden at East Cambridge, Boston. This gentleman owned the house occupied by Paine at his death, while he lived next door. As an act of kindness, Mr. Woodsworth visited Mr. Paine every day for six weeks before his death. He frequently sat up with him and did so on the last two nights of his life. He was always there with Dr. Manly, the physician, and assisted in removing Mr. Paine while his bed was prepared. He was present when Dr. Manly asked Mr. Paine if he wished to believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. He said that lying on his back he used some action and with much emphasis replied: 'I have no wish to believe on that subject.' He lived some time after this, but was not known to speak, for he died tranquilly. He accounts for the insinuating style of Dr. Manly's letter by stating that that gentleman, just after its publication, joined a church. He informs us that he has openly proved the doctor for the falsity contained in the spirit of that letter, boldly declaring before Dr. Manly, who is still living, that nothing which he saw justified the insinuations. Mr. Woodsworth assures us that he neither heard nor saw anything to justify the belief of any mental change in the opinions of Mr. Paine previous to his death; but that being very ill and in pain, chiefly arising from the skin being removed in some parts by long lying, he was generally too uneasy to enjoy conversation on abstract subjects. This, then, is the best evidence that can be procured on this subject, and we publish it while the contravening parties are yet alive, and with the authority of Mr. Woodsworth.—Gilbert Vale"

A few weeks ago I received the following letter, which confirms the statement of Mr. Vale:

"Near Stockton, Cal., Greenwood Cottage, July 9. 1877.—Col. Ingersoll: In 1812 I talked with a gentleman in Boston. I have forgotten his name; but he was then an engineer of the Charleston navy yard. I am thus particular so that you can find his name on the books. He told me that he nursed Thomas Paine in his last illness and closed his eyes when dead. I asked him if he recanted and called upon God to save him. He replied: No; he died as he had taught. He had a sore upon his side,

and when we turned him it was very painful, and he would cry out, 'O God!' or something like that. 'But,' said the narrator, 'that was nothing, for he believed in a God.' I told him that I had often heard it asserted from the pulpit that Mr. Paine had recanted in his last moment. The gentleman said that it was not true, and he appeared to be an intelligent, truthful man. With respect, I remain, etc., Philip Graves, M.D."

The next witness is Willet Hicks, a Quaker preacher. He says that during the last illness of Mr. Paine he visited him almost daily, and that Paine died firmly convinced of the truth of the religious opinions that he had given to his fellow-men. It was to this same Willet Hicks that Paine applied for permission to be buried in the cemetery of the Quakers. Permission was refused. This refusal settles the question of recantation. If he had recanted, of course there would have been no objection to his body being buried by the side of the best hypocrites in the earth. If Paine recanted, why should he denied "a little earth for charity?" Had he recanted, it would have been regarded as a vast and splendid triumph for the gospel. It would, with much noise and pomp and ostentation, have been heralded about the world.

Here is another letter:

"Peoria, Ill., Oct. 8, 1877.—Robert G. Ingersoll—Esteemed Friend: My parents were Friends (Quakers). My father died when I was very young. The elderly and middle-aged Friends visited at my mother's house. We lived in the City of New York. Among the number I distinctly remember Elias Hicks, Willet Hicks, and a Mr. — Day, who was a bookseller in Pearl St. There were many others whose names I do not now remember. The subject of the recantation of Thomas Paine of his views about the Bible in his last illness, or any other time, was discussed by them in my presence at different times. I learned from them that some of them had attended upon Thomas Paine in his last sickness, and ministered to his wants up to the time of his death. And upon the question of whether he did recant there was but one expression. They all said that he did not recant in any manner. I often heard them say they wished he had recanted. In fact, according to them, the nearer he approached death the more positive he appeared to be in his convictions. These conversations were from 1820 to 1822. I was at that time from ten to twelve years old, but these conversations impressed themselves upon me because many thoughtless people then blamed the society of Friends for their kindness to that "arch-infidel," Thomas Paine. Truly yours, A.C. Hankenson"

A few days ago I received the following:

"Albany, N.Y., Sept. 27, 1877.—Dear Sir: It is over twenty years ago that, professionally, I made the acquaintance of John Hogeboom, a justice of the peace of the County Rensselaer, New York. He was then over seventy years of age, and had the reputation of being a man of

candor and integrity. He was a great admirer of Paine. He told me he was personally acquainted with him, and used to see him frequently during the last years of his life in the City of New York, where Hogeboom then resided. I asked him if there was any truth in the charge that Paine was in the habit of getting drunk. He said that it was utterly false; that he never heard of such a thing during the lifetime of Mr. Paine, and did not believe anyone else did. I asked him about the recantation of his religious opinions on his deathbed, and the revolting deathbed scenes that the world heard so much about. He said there was no truth in them; that he had received his information from persons who attended Paine in his last illness, and that he passed peacefully, as we may say, in the sunshine of a great soul. Yours truly, W.J. Hilton”

The witnesses by whom I substantiate the fact that Thomas Paine did not recant, and that he died holding the religious opinions he had published are:

1. Thomas Nixon, Capt. Daniel Pelton, B.F. Haskin. These gentlemen visited him during his last illness for the purpose of ascertaining whether he had, in any respect, changed his views upon religion. He told them that he had not.

2. James Cheetham. This man was the most malicious enemy Mr. Paine had, and yet he admits that "Thomas Paine died placidly, and almost without a struggle."—Life of Thomas Paine, by James Cheetham.

3. The ministers, Milledollar and Cunningham. These gentleman told Mr. Paine that if he died without believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, he would be damned, and Paine replied: "Let me have none of your popish stuff. Good morning."—Sherwin's Life of Paine, page 220.

4. Mrs. Hedden. She told these same preachers, when they attempted to obtrude themselves upon Mr. Paine again, that the attempt to convert Mr. Paine was useless; "that if God did not change his mind, no human power could."

5. Andrew A. Dean. This man lived upon Paine's farm, at New Rochelle, and corresponded with him upon religious subjects.—Paine's Theological Works, page 308.

6. Mr. Jarvis, the artist with whom Paine lived. He gives an account of an old lady coming to Paine, and telling him that God Almighty had sent her to tell him that unless he repented and believed in the blessed savior he would be damned. Paine replied that God would not send such a foolish old woman with such an impertinent message.—Clio Rickman's Life of Paine.

7. William Carver, with whom Paine boarded. Mr. Carver said again and again that Paine did not recant. He knew him well, and had every

opportunity of knowing.—Life of Paine, by Vale.

8. Dr. Manly, who attended him in his last sickness, and to whom Paine spoke his last words. Dr. Manly asked him if he did not wish to believe in Jesus Christ. and he replied: "I have no wish to believe on that subject."

9. Willet Hicks and Elias Hicks, who were with him frequently during his last sickness, and both of whom tried to persuade him to recant. According to their testimony Mr. Paine died as he lived—a believer in God and a friend to man. Willet Hicks was offered money to say something false against Paine. He was even offered money to remain silent, and allow others to slander the dead. Mr. Hicks, speaking of Thomas Paine, said: "He was a good man. Thomas Paine was an honest man."

10. Amasa Woodsworth, who was with him every day for some six weeks immediately preceding his death, and sat up with him the last two nights of his life. This man declares that Paine did not recant, and that he died tranquilly. The evidence of Mr. Woodsworth is conclusive.

11. Thomas Paine himself. The will of Mr. Paine, written by himself, commences as follows: "The last will and testament of me, the subscriber, Thomas Paine, reposing confidence in my Creator, God, and in no other being, for I know of no other, nor believe in any other," and closes with these words: "I have lived an honest and useful life to mankind. My time has been spent in doing good, and I die in perfect composure and resignation to the will of my Creator, God."

12. If Thomas Paine recanted, why do you pursue him? If he recanted he died in your belief. For what reason, then, do you denounce his death as cowardly? If upon his death-bed he renounced the opinions he had published, the business of defaming him should be done by infidels, not by Christians. I ask Christians if it is honest to throw away the testimony of his friends, the evidence of fair and honorable men, and take the putrid words of avowed and malignant enemies? When Thomas Paine was dying he was infested by fanatics, by the snaky spies of bigotry. In the shadows of death were the unclean birds of prey waiting to tear, with beak and claw, the corpse of him who wrote the "Rights of Man," and there lurking and crouching in the darkness, were the jackals and hyenas of superstition, ready to violate his grave. These birds of prey—these unclean beasts—are the witnesses produced and relied upon to malign the memory of Thomas Paine. One by one the instruments of torture have been wrenched from the cruel clutch of the church, until within the armory of orthodoxy there remains but one weapon—Slander.

Against the witnesses that I have produced there can be brought just two—Mary Roscoe and Mary Hinsdale. The first is referred to in the memoir of Stephen Grellet. She had once been a servant in his house. Grellet tells what happened between this girl and Paine. According to

this account, Paine asked her if she had ever read any of his writings, and on being told that she had read very little of them, he inquired what she thought of them, adding that from such an one as she he expected a correct answer.

Let us examine this falsehood. Why would Paine expect a correct answer about his writings from one who read very little of them? Does not such a statement devour itself? This young lady further said that the "Age of Reason" was put in her hands, and that the more she read in it, the more dark and distressed she felt, and that she threw the book into the fire. Whereupon Mr. Paine remarked: "I wish all had done as you did, for if the devil ever had any agency in any work, he had in my writing that book."

The next is Mary Hinsdale. She was a servant in the family of Willet Hicks. The church is always proving something by a nurse. She, like Mary Roscoe, was sent to carry some delicacy to Mr. Paine. To this young lady Paine, according to his account, said precisely the same that he did to Mary Roscoe, and she said the same thing to Mr. Paine.

My own opinion is that Mary Roscoe and Mary Hinsdale are one and the same person, or the same story has been, by mistake, put in the mouths of both. It is not possible that the identical conversation should have taken place between Paine and Mary Roscoe and between him and Mary Hinsdale. Mary Hinsdale lived with Willet Hicks, and he pronounced her story a pious fraud and fabrication.

Another thing about this witness. A woman by the name of Mary Lockwood, a Hicksite Quaker, died. Mary Hinsdale met her brother about that time and told him that his sister had recanted, and wanted her to say so at her funeral. This turned out to be a lie.

It has been claimed that Mary Hinsdale made her statement to Charles Collins. Long after the alleged occurrence Gilbert Vale, one of the biographers of Paine, had a conversation with Collins concerning Mary Hinsdale. Vale asked him what he thought of her. He replied that some of the Friends believed that she used opiates, and that they did not give credit to her statements. He also said that he believed what the Friends said, but thought that when a young Roman she might have told the truth.

In 1818 William Cobbett came to New York. He began collecting material for a life of Thomas Paine. In this way he became acquainted with Mary Hinsdale and Charles Collins. Mr. Cobbett gave a full account of what happened in a letter addressed to *The Norwich Mercury* in 1819. From this account it seems that Charles Collins told Cobbett that Paine had recanted. Cobbett called for the testimony, and told Mr. Collins that he must give time, place, and circumstances. He finally brought a statement that he stated had been made by Mary Hinsdale. Armed with

this document, Cobbett, in October of that year, called upon the said Mary Hinsdale, at No. 10 Anthony Street, New York, and showed her the statement. Upon being questioned by Mr. Cobbett she said that it was so long ago that she could not speak positively to any part of the matter; that she would not say that any part of the paper was true; that she had never seen the paper, and that she had never given Charles Collins authority to say anything about the matter in her name. And so in the month of October, in the year of grace 1818, in the mist of fog and forgetfulness, disappeared forever one Mary Hinsdale, the last and only witness against the intellectual honesty of Thomas Paine.

A letter was written to the editor of The New York World by the Rev. A.W. Cornell, in which he says:

"Sir: I see by your paper that Bob Ingersoll discredits Mary Hinsdale's story of the scenes which occurred at the death bed of Thomas Paine. No one who knew that good old lady would for one moment doubt her veracity, or question her testimony. Both she and her husband were Quaker preachers, and well known and respected inhabitants of New York City.

"Ingersoll is right in his conjecture that Mary Roscoe and Mary Hinsdale were the same person. Her maiden name was Roscoe and she married Henry Hinsdale. My mother was a Roscoe, a niece of Mary Roscoe, and lived with her for some time.—Rev. A.W. Cornell, Harpersville, N.Y."

The editor of the New York Observer took up the challenge that I had thrown down. I offered \$1000 in gold to any minister who would prove, or to any person who would prove that Thomas Paine recanted in his last hours. The New York Observer accepted the wager, and then told a falsehood about it. But I kept after the gentlemen until I forced them, in their paper, published on the 1st of November, 1877; to print these words:

"We have never stated in any form, nor have we ever supposed, that Paine actually renounced his infidelity. The accounts agree in stating that he died a blaspheming infidel."

This, I hope, for all coming time will refute the slanders of the churches yet to be.

The next charge they make is that Thomas Paine died in destitution and want. That, of course, would show that he was wrong. They boast that the founder of their religion had not whereon to lay his head, but when they found a man who stood for the rights of man, when they say that he did, that is an evidence that this doctrine was a lie. Won't do! Did Thomas Paine die in destitution and want? The charge has been made over and over again that Thomas Paine died in want and destitution; that he was an abandoned pauper—an outcast, without friends and without money. This charge is just as false as the rest. Upon his return to this country, in 1802, he was worth \$30,000, according to his own statement,

made at that time in the following letter, and addressed to Clio Rickman:

"My dear friend, Mr. Monroe, who is appointed minister extraordinary to France, takes charge of this, to be delivered to Mr. Este, banker, in Paris, to be forwarded to you.

"I arrived in Baltimore, 30th of October, and you can have no idea of the agitation which my arrival occasioned. From New Hampshire to Georgia (an extent of 1,500 miles), every newspaper was filled with applause or abuse.

"My property in this country has been taken care of by my friends, and is now worth six thousand pounds sterling, which, put in the funds, will bring about L400 sterling a year.

"Remember me in affection and friendship to your wife and family, and in the circle of your friends.—Thomas Paine"

A man in those days worth \$30,000 was not a pauper. That amount would bring an income of at least \$2,000. Two thousand dollars then would be fully equal to \$5,000 now. On the 12th of July, 1809, the year in which he died, Mr. Paine made his will. From this instrument we learn that he was the owner of a valuable farm within twenty miles of New York. He was also owner of thirty shares in the New York Phoenix Insurance Company, worth upward of \$1,500. Besides this, some personal property and ready money. By his will he gave to Walter Morton and Thomas Addis Emmet, a brother of Robert Emmet, \$200 each, and \$100 to the widow of Elihu Palmer. Is it possible that this will was made by a pauper, by a destitute outcast, by a man who suffered for the ordinary necessities of life?

But suppose, for the sake of argument, that he was poor, and that he died a beggar, does that tend to show that the Bible is an inspired book, and that Calvin did not burn Servetus? Do you really regard poverty as a crime? If Paine had died a millionaire, would Christians have accepted his religious opinions? If Paine had drank nothing but cold water, would Christians have repudiated the five cardinal points of Calvinism? Does an argument depend for its force upon the pecuniary condition of the person making it? As a matter of fact, most reformers—most men and women of genius—have been acquainted with poverty. Beneath a covering of rags have been found some of the tenderest and bravest hearts. Owing to the attitude of the churches for the last fifteen hundred years, truth telling has not been a very lucrative business. As a rule, hypocrisy has worn the robes, and honesty the rags. That day is passing away. You can not now answer a man by pointing at the holes in his coat. Thomas Paine attacked the church when it was powerful; when it had what is called honors to bestow; when it was the keeper of the public conscience; when it was strong and cruel. The church waited till he was dead, and then attacked his

reputation and his clothes. Once upon a time a donkey kicked a lion. The lion was dead. You just don't know how happy I am tonight that justice so long delayed at last is going to be done, and to see so many splendid looking people come here out of deference to the memory of Thomas Paine. I am glad to be here.

The next thing is: Did Thomas Paine live the life of a drunken beast, and did he die a drunken, cowardly, and beastly death? Well, we will see. Upon you rests the burden of substantiating these infamous charges. The Christians have, I suppose, produced the best evidence in their possession, and that evidence I will now proceed to examine. Their first witness is Grant Thorburn. He made three charges against Thomas Paine:

1. That his wife obtained a divorce from him in England for cruelty and neglect.
2. That he was a defaulter and fled from England to America.
3. That he was a drunkard.

These three charges stand upon the same evidence—the word of Grant Thorburn. If they are not all true, Mr. Thorburn stands impeached. The charge that Mrs. Paine obtained a divorce on account of the cruelty and neglect of her husband is utterly false. There is no such record in the world, and never was. Paine and his wife separated by mutual consent. Each respected the other. They remained friends. This charge is without any foundation. In fact, I challenge the Christian world to produce the record of this decree of divorce. According to Mr. Thorburn, it was granted in England. In that country public records are kept of all such decrees. I will give \$1,000 if they will produce a decree, showing that it was given on account of cruelty, or admit that Mr. Thorburn was mistaken.

Thomas Paine was a just man. Although separated from his wife, he always spoke of her with tenderness and respect, and frequently lent her money without letting her know the source from whence it came. Was this the conduct of a drunken beast?

The next is that he was a defaulter, and fled from England to America. As I told you in the first place, he was an exciseman; if he was a defaulter, that fact is upon the records of Great Britain. I will give \$1,000 in gold to any man who will show, by the records of England, that he was a defaulter of a single, solitary cent. Let us bring these gentlemen to Limerick.

And they charge that he was a drunkard. That is another falsehood. He drank liquor in his day, as did the preachers. It was no unusual thing for a preacher going home to stop in a tavern and take a drink of hot rum with a deacon, and it was no unusual thing for the deacon to help

the preacher home. You have no idea how they loved the sacrament in those days. They had communion pretty much all the time.

Thorburn says that in 1802 Paine was an "old remnant of mortality, drunk, bloated, and half asleep." Can anyone believe this to be a true account of the personal appearance of Mr. Paine in 1802? He had just returned from France. He had been welcomed home by Thomas Jefferson, who had said that he was entitled to the hospitality of every American. In 1802 Mr. Paine was honored with a public dinner in the City of New York. He was called upon and treated with kindness and respect by such men as De Witt Clinton. In 1806 Mr. Paine wrote a letter to Andrew A. Dean upon the subject of religion. Read that letter and then say that the writer of it was an old remnant of mortality, drunk, bloated, and half asleep. Search the files of Christian papers, from the first issue to the last, and you will find nothing superior to this letter. In 1803 Mr. Paine wrote a letter of considerable length, and of great force to his friend Samuel Adams. Such letters are not written by drunken beasts, nor by remnants of old mortality, nor by drunkards. It was about the same time that he wrote his "Remarks on Robert Hall's Sermons." These "Remarks" were not written by a drunken beast, but by a clear-headed and thoughtful man.

In 1804 he published an essay on the invasion of England and a treatise on gun-boats, full of valuable maritime information; in 1805 a treatise on yellow fever, suggesting modes of prevention. In short, he was an industrious and thoughtful man. He sympathized with the poor and oppressed of all lands. He looked upon monarchy as a species of physical slavery. He had the goodness to attack that form of government. He regarded the religion of his day as a kind of mental slavery. He had the courage to give his reasons for his opinion. His reasons filled the churches with hatred. Instead of answering his arguments they attacked him. Men who were not fit to blacken his shoes blackened his character. There is too much religious cant in the statement of Mr. Thorburn. He exhibits too much anxiety to tell what Grant Thorburn said to Thomas Paine. He names Thomas Jefferson as one of the disreputable men who welcomed Paine with open arms. The testimony of a man who regarded Thomas Jefferson as a disreputable person, as to the character of anybody, is utterly without value.

Now, Grant Thorburn—this gentleman who was "four feet and a half high, and who weighed ninety-eight pounds three and one-half ounces"—says that he used to sit nights at Carver's, in New York, with Thomas Paine. Mrs. Ferguson, the daughter of William Carver, says that she knew Thorburn when she saw him, but that she never saw him in her father's house. The denial of Mrs. Ferguson enraged Thorburn, and he at once wrote a few falsehoods about her. Thereupon a suit was commenced by Mrs. Ferguson and her husband against Thorburn, the writer, and Fanshaw, the publisher, of the libel. Thorburn ran away to Connecticut. Fanshaw wrote him for evidence of what he had written. Thorburn replied that what he had written about Mrs. Ferguson could not be proved. Fanshaw

then settled with the Fergusons, paying them the amount demanded.

In 1859 the Fergusons lived at 148 Duane Street, New York. In The Commercial Advertiser of New York, in 1830, appeared the written acknowledgement of this same little Grant Thorburn that he did, on the 22d of August, 1830, at half-past 6 in the morning, take four bottles of cider from the cellar of Mr. Comstock.

Mr. Comstock says that Thorburn was arrested, and that when brought before him he pleaded guilty and threw himself upon his (Comstock's) mercy.

The Philadelphia Tract Society gave Thorburn \$100 to write his recollections of Thomas Paine.

Let us dispose of this four feet and a half of wretch. In October, 1877, I received the following letter from James Parton:

"Newburyport, Mass., Oct 27, 1877.—My dear Sir: Touching Grant Thorburn, I personally knew him to have been a liar. At the age of 92 he copied with trembling hand a piece from a newspaper and brought it to the office of The Rome Journal as his own. It was I who received it and detected the deliberate forgery..... James Parton"

So much for Grant Thorburn. In my judgment, the testimony of Mr. Thorburn should be thrown aside as utterly unworthy of belief.

The next witness is the Rev. J.D. Wickham, D.D., who tells what an elder in his church said. This elder said that Paine passed his last days on his farm at New Rochelle, with a solitary female attendant. This is not true. He did not pass his last days at New Rochelle, consequently, this pious elder did not see him during his last days at that place. Upon this elder we prove an alibi. Mr. Paine passed his last days in the City of New York, in a house upon Columbia Street. The story of the Rev. J.D. Wickham, D.D., is simply false.

The next competent false witness was the Rev. Charles Hawley, D.D., who proceeds to state that the story of the Rev. J.D. Wickham, D. D., is corroborated by older citizens of New Rochelle. The names of these ancient residents are withheld. According to these unknown witnesses, the account given by the deceased elder was entirely correct. But as the particulars of Mr. Paine's conduct "were too loathsome to be described in print," we are left entirely in the dark as to what he really did.

While at New Rochelle, Mr. Paine lived with Mr. Purdy, Mr. Dean, with Capt. Pelton, and with Mr. Staple. It is worthy of note that all of these gentlemen give the lie direct to the statements of "older residents" and ancient citizens spoken of by the Rev. Charles Hawley, D.D., and leave him with the "loathsome particulars" existing only in

his own mind.

The next gentleman brought upon the stand is W.H. Ladd, who quotes from the memoirs of Stephen Grellett. This gentleman also has the misfortune to be dead. According to his account, Mr. Paige made his recantation to a servant girl of his by the name of Mary Roscoe. Mr. Paine uttered the wish that all who read his book had burned it. I believe there is a mistake in the name of this girl. Her name was probably Mary Hinsdale, as it was once claimed that Paine made the same remark to her.

These are the witnesses of the church, and the only ones you bring forward to support your charge that Thomas Paine lived a drunken and beastly life, and died a drunken, cowardly, and beastly death. All these calumnies are found in a life of Paine by James Cheetham, the convicted libeler already referred to. Mr. Cheetham was an enemy of the man whose life he pretended to write. In order to show you the estimation in which this libeler was held by Mr. Paine, I will give you a copy of a letter that throws light upon this point:

"Oct. 27, 1807.—Mr. Cheetham: Unless you make a public apology for the abuse and falsehood in your paper of Tuesday, Oct. 27, respecting me, I will prosecute you for lying.—Thomas Paine"

In another letter, speaking of this same man, Mr. Paine says: "If an unprincipled bully can not be reformed, he can be punished." Cheetham has been so long in the habit of giving false information, that truth is to him like a foreign language. Mr. Cheetham wrote the life of Mr. Paine to gratify his malice and to support religion. He was prosecuted for libel—was convicted and fined. Yet the life of Paine, written by this liar, is referred to by the Christian world as the highest authority.

As to the personal habits of Mr. Paine, we have the testimony of William Carver; with whom he lived; of Mr. Jarvis, the artist, with whom he lived; of Mr. Purdy, who was a tenant of Paine's; of Mr. Buyer, with whom he was intimate; of Thomas Nixon and Capt. Daniel Pelton, both of whom knew him well; of Amasa Woodsworth, who was with him when he died; of John Fellows, who boarded at the same house; of James Wilburn, with whom he boarded; of B.F. Haskins, a lawyer, who was well acquainted with him, and called upon him during his last illness; of Walter Morton, President of the Phoenix Insurance Company; of Clio Rickman, who had known him for many years; of Willet and Elias Hicks, Quakers, who knew him intimately and well; of Judge Hertell, H. Margary, Elihu Palmer and many others. All these testified to the fact that Mr. Paige was a temperate man. In those days nearly everybody used spirituous liquors. Paine was not an exception, but he did not drink to excess. Mr. Lovett, who kept the City Hotel, where Paine stopped, in a note to Caleb Bingham declared that Paine drank less than any boarder he had.

Against all this evidence Christians produce the story of Grant Thorburn, the story of the Rev. J.D. Wickham, that an elder in his

church told him that Paine was a drunkard, corroborated by the Rev. Charles Hawley, and an extract from Lossing's history to the same effect. The evidence is overwhelmingly against them. Will you have the fairness to admit it? Their witnesses are merely the repeaters of the falsehoods of James Cheetham, the convicted libeler.

After all, drinking is not as bad as lying. An honest drunkard is better than a calumniator of the dead. "A remnant of old mortality drunk, bloated, and half-asleep," is better than a perfectly sober defender of human slavery. To become drunk is a virtue compared with stealing a babe from the breast of its mother. Drunkenness is one of the beatitudes, compared with editing a religious paper devoted to the defense of slavery upon the ground that it is a divine institution. Do you think that Paine was a drunken beast when he wrote "Common Sense," a pamphlet that aroused three millions of people, as people were never aroused by words before? Was he a drunken beast when he wrote the "Crisis?" Was it to a drunken beast that the following letter was addressed:

"Rocky Hill, September 10, 1783.—I have learned, since I have been at this place, that you are at Bordentown. Whether for the sake of retirement or economy, I know not. Be it for either, or both, or whatever it may, if you will come to this place and partake with me, I shall be exceedingly happy to see you at it. Your presence may remind Congress of your past services to this country; and if it is in my power to impress them, command my best exertions with freedom, as they will be rendered cheerfully by one who entertains a lively sense of the importance of your works, and who, with much pleasure, subscribes himself your sincere friend.—George Washington"

Do you think that Paine was a drunken beast when the following letters were received by him:

"You express a wish in your letter to return to America in a national ship. Mr. Dawson, who brings over the treaty, and who will present you with this letter, is charged with orders to the Captain of the Maryland to receive and accommodate you back, if you can be ready to depart at such a short warning. You will, in general, find us returned to sentiments worthy of former times; in these it will be your glory to have steadily labored, and with as much effect as any man living. That you may live long to continue your useful labors, and reap the reward in the thankfulness of nations, is my sincere prayer. Accept the assurances of my high esteem and affectionate attachment.—Thomas Jefferson"

"It has been very generally propagated through the continent that I wrote the pamphlet "Common Sense." I could not have written anything in so manly and striking a style.—John Adams"

"A few more such flaming arguments as were exhibited at Falmouth and

Norfolk, added to the sound doctrine and unanswerable reasoning contained in the pamphlet "Common Sense," will not leave numbers at a loss to decide on the propriety of a separation.—George Washington"

"It is not necessary for me to tell you how much all your countrymen—I speak of the great mass of the people—are interested in your welfare. They have not forgotten the history of their own revolution, and the difficult scenes through which they passed; nor do they review its several stages without reviving in their bosoms a due sensibility of the merits of those who served them in that great and arduous conflict. The crime of ingratitude has not yet stained, and I trust never will stain, our national character. You are considered by them as not only having rendered important services in our revolution, but as being on a more extensive scale the friend of human right and a distinguished and able advocate in favor of public liberty. To the welfare of Thomas Paine, the Americans are not, nor can they be, indifferent.—James Monroe"

"No writer has exceeded Paine in ease and familiarity of style, in perspicuity of expression, happiness of elucidation, and in simple and unassuming language.—Thomas Jefferson"

Was it in consideration of the services of a drunken beast that the Legislature of Pennsylvania presented Thomas Paine with L500 sterling? Did the State of New York feel indebted to a drunken beast, and confer upon Thomas Paine an estate of several hundred acres? Did the Congress of the United States thank him for his services because he had lived a drunken and beastly life? Was he elected a member of the French convention because he was a drunken beast? Was it the act of a drunken beast to put his own life in jeopardy by voting against the death of the King? Was it because he was a drunken beast that he opposed the "Reign of Terror"—that he endeavored to stop the shedding of blood, and did all in his power to protect even his own enemies? Do the following extracts sound like the words of a drunken beast:

"I believe in the equality of man, and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow creatures happy.

"My own mind is my own church.

"It is necessary to the happiness of man that he be mentally faithful to himself.

"Any system of religion that shocks the mind of a child can not be a true system.

"The work of God is the creation which we behold.

"The age of ignorance commenced with the Christian system.

"It is with a pious fraud as with a bad action—it begets a calamitous necessity of going on.

"To read the Bible without horror, we must undo everything that is tender, sympathizing, and benevolent in the heart of man.

"The man does not exist who can say I have persecuted him, or that I have, in any case, returned evil for evil.

"Of all the tyrants that afflict mankind, tyranny in religion is the worst.

"The belief in a cruel God makes a cruel man.

"My own opinion is, that those whose lives have been spent in doing good, and endeavoring to make their fellow-mortals happy, will be happy hereafter.

"The intellectual part of religion is a private affair between every man and his Maker, and in which no third party has any right to interfere. The practical part consists in our doing good to each other.

"No man ought to make a living by religion. One person can not act religion for another—every person must act for himself.

"One good school-master is of more use than a hundred priests. Let us propagate morality, unfettered by superstition.

"God is the power, or first cause; nature is the law, and matter is the subject acted upon.

"I believe in one God and no more, and I hope for happiness beyond this life.

"The key of happiness is not in the keeping of any sect, nor ought the road to it to be obstructed by any.

"My religion, and the whole of it, is the fear and love of the Deity, and universal philanthropy.

"I have yet, I believe, some years in store, for I have a good state of health and a happy mind. I take care of both, by nourishing the first with temperance and the latter with abundance.

"He lives immured within the Bastille of a word."

How perfectly that sentence describes the orthodox. The Bastille in which they are immured is the word "Calvinism."

”Man has no property in man.”

”The world is my country, to do good my religion.”

I ask again whether these splendid utterances came from the lips of a drunken beast?

”Man has no property in man.”

What a splendid motto that would make for the religious newspapers of this country thirty years ago. I ask, again, whether these splendid utterances came from the lips of a drunken beast?

Only a little while ago—two or three days—I read a report of an address made by Bishop Doane, an Episcopal Bishop in apostolic succession—regular line from Jesus Christ down to Bishop Doane. The Bishop was making a speech to young preachers—the sprouts, the theological buds. He took it upon him to advise them all against early marriages. Let us look at it. Do you believe there is any duty that man owes to God that will prevent a man marrying the woman he loves? Is there some duty that I owe to the clouds that will prevent me from marrying some good, sweet woman? Now, just think of that! I tell you, young man, you marry as soon as you can find her and support her. I had rather have one woman that I know than any amount of gods that I am not acquainted with. If there is any revelation from God to man, a good woman is the best revelation he has ever made; and I will admit that that revelation was inspired.

Now, on the subject of marriage, let me offset the speech of Bishop Doane by a word from this ”wretched infidel:”

”Though I appear a sorry wanderer, the marriage state has not a sincerer friend than I. It is the harbor of human life, and is, with respect to the things of this world, what the next world is to this. It is home, and that one word conveys more than any other word can express. For a few years we may glide along the tide of a single life, but it is a tide that flows but once, and, what is still worse, it ebbs faster than it flows, and leaves many a hapless voyager aground. I am one, you see, that has experienced the fall I am describing. I have lost my tide; it passed by while every throb of my heart was on the wing for the salvation of America, and I have now, as contentedly as I can, made myself a little tower of walls on that shore that has the solitary resemblance of home.”

I just want you to know what this dreadful infidel thought of home. I just wanted you to know what Thomas Paine thought of home. Then here is another letter that Thomas Paine wrote to congress on the 21st day of January, 1808, and I wanted you to know those two.

It is only a short one:

”To the Honorable Senate of the United States: The purport of this address is to state a claim I feel myself entitled to make on the United States, leaving it to their representatives in congress to decide on its worth and its merits. The case is as follows:

”Toward the latter end of the year 1780 the continental money had become depreciated—the paper dollar being then not more than a cent—that it seemed next to impossible to continue the war. As the United States was then in alliance with France it became necessary to make France acquainted with our real situation. I therefore drew up a letter to the Count De Vergennes, stating undisguisedly the whole case, and concluding with a request whether France could not, either as a subsidy of a loan, supply the United States with a million pounds sterling, and continue that supply, annually, during the war. ”I showed this letter to Mr. Morbois, secretary of the French minister. His remark upon it was that a million sent out of the nation exhausted it more than ten millions spent in it. I then showed it to Mr. Ralph Izard, member of congress from South Carolina. He borrowed the letter of me and said: ’We will endeavor to do something about it in congress.’ Accordingly, congress then appointed John A. Laurens to go to France and make representation for the purpose of obtaining assistance. Col. Laurens wished to decline the mission, and asked that congress would appoint Col. Hamilton, who did not choose to do it. Col. Laurens then came and stated the case to me, and said that he was well enough acquainted with the military difficulties of the army, but he was not acquainted with political affairs, or with the resources of the country, to undertake such a mission. Said he, ’If you will go with me I will accept the mission.’ This I agreed to do, and did do. We sailed from Boston in the Alliance frigate February, 1781, and arrived in France in the beginning of March. The aid obtained from France was six millions of liyres, as at present, and ten millions as a loan, borrowed in Holland on the security of France. We sailed from Brest in the French frigate Resolue the 1st of June, and arrived at Boston on the 25th of August, bringing with us two millions and a half in silver, and conveying a chip and a brig laden with clothing and military stores.

”The money was transported with sixteen ox teams to the National bank at Philadelphia, which enabled our army to move to Yorktown to attack in conjunction with the French army under Rochambeau, the British army under Cornwallis.

”As I never had a single cent for these services, I felt myself entitled, as the country is now in a state of prosperity, to state the case to congress.

”As to my political works, beginning with the pamphlet ’Common Sense,’ published the beginning of January 1776, which awakened America to a declaration of independence as the president and vice-president both know, as they were works done from principle I can not dishonor that

principle by ever asking any reward for them. The country has been benefited by them, and I make myself happy in the knowledge of that benefit. It is, however, proper for me to add that the mere independence of America, were it to have been followed by a system of government modeled after the corrupt system of the English government, would not have interested me with the unabated ardor it did. It was to bring forward and establish a representative system of government. As the work itself will show, that was the leading principle with me in writing that work, and all my other works during the progress of the revolution, and I followed the same principle in writing in English the 'Rights of Man.'

"After the failure of the 5 percent duty recommended by congress to pay the interest of the loan to be borrowed in Holland, I wrote to Chancellor Livingston, then minister for foreign affairs, and Robert Morris, minister of finance, and proposed a method for getting over the difficulty at once, which was by adding a continental legislature which should be empowered to make laws for the whole union instead of recommending them. So the method proposed met with their future probation. I held myself in reserve to take a step up whenever a direct occasion occurred.

"In a conversation afterward with Gov. Clinton, of New York, now vice-president, it was judged that for the purpose of my going fully into the subject, and to prevent any misconstruction of my motive or object, it would be best that I received nothing from congress, but to leave it to the states individually to make the what acknowledgement they pleased. The State of New York presented me with a farm which since my return to America, I have found it necessary to sell, and the State of Pennsylvania voted me L500 of their currency, but none of the states to the east of New York, or the south of Pennsylvania, have made me the least acknowledgment. They had received benefits from me which they accepted, and there the matter ended. This story will not tell well in history. All the civilized world knows I have been of great service to the United States, and have generously given away that which would easily have made me a fortune. I much question if an instance is to be found in ancient or modern times of a man who had no personal interest in the case to take up that of the establishment of a representative government and who sought neither place nor office after it was established; that pursued the same undeviating principles that I had for more than thirty years, and that in spite of dangers, difficulties, and inconveniences of which I have had my share.—Thomas Paine"

An old man in Pennsylvania told me once that his father hired a old revolutionary soldier by the name of Thomas Martin to work for him. Martin was then quite an old man; and there was an old Presbyterian preacher used to come there, by the name of Crawford, and he sat down by the fire and he got to talking one night, among other things about Thomas Paine—what a wretched, infamous dog he was; and while he was in the midst of this conversation the old soldier rose from the fireplace,

and he walked over to the preacher, and he said to him "Did you ever see Thomas Paine?" "No." "Well," he says, "I have; I saw him at Valley Forge. I heard read at the head of every regiment and company the letters of Thomas Paine. I heard them read the 'Crisis,' and I saw Thomas Paine writing on the head of a drum, sitting at the bivouac fire, those simple words that inspired every patriot's bosom, and I want to tell you Mr. Preacher, that Thomas Paine did more for liberty than any priest that ever lived in this world."

"And yet they say he was afraid to die! Afraid of what? Is there any God in heaven that hates a patriot? If there is Thomas Paine ought to be afraid to die. Is there any God that would damn a man for helping to free three millions of people? If Thomas Paine was in hell tonight, and could get God's attention long enough to point him to the old banner of the stars floating over America, God would have to let him out. What would he be afraid of? Had he ever burned anybody? No. Had he ever put anybody in the inquisition? No. Ever put the thumb-screw on anybody? No. Ever put anybody in prison so that some poor wife and mother would come and hold her little babe up at the grated window that the man bound to the floor might get one glimpse of his blue-eyed babe? Did he ever do that?"

"Did he ever light a fagot? Did he ever tear human flesh? Why, what had he to be afraid of? He had helped to make the world free. He had helped create the only republic then on the earth. What was he afraid of? Was God a tory? It won't do."

One would think from the persistence with which the orthodox have charged for the last seventy years that Thomas Paine recanted, that there must be some evidence of some kind to support these charges. Even with my ideas of the average honor of the believers in superstition, the average truthfulness of the disciples of fear, I did not believe that all those infamies rested solely upon poorly-attested falsehoods. I had charity enough to suppose that something had been said or done by Thomas Paine capable of being tortured into a foundation of all these calumnies. What crime had Thomas Paine committed that he should have feared to die? The only answer you can give is that he denied the inspiration of the scriptures. If that is crime, the civilized world is filled with criminals. The pioneers of human thought, the intellectual leaders of this world, the foremost men in every science, the kings of literature and art, those who stand in the front of investigation, the men who are civilizing and elevating and refining mankind, are all unbelievers in the ignorant dogma of inspiration.

Why should we think Thomas Paine was afraid to die? and why should the American people malign the memory of that great man? He was the first to advocate the separation from the mother country. He was the first to write these words: "The United States of America." Think of maligning that man! He was the first to lift his voice against human slavery, and while hundreds and thousands of ministers all over the United States not

only believed in slavery, but bought and sold women and babes in the name of Jesus Christ, this infidel, this wretch who is now burning in the flames of hell, lifted his voice against human slavery and said: "It is robbery, and a slaveholder is a thief; the whipper of women is a barbarian; the seller of a child is a savage." No wonder that the thieving hypocrite of his day hated him! I have no love for any man who ever pretended to own a human being. I have no love for a man that would sell a babe from the mother's throbbing, heaving, agonized breast. I have no respect for a man who considered a lash on the naked back as a legal tender for labor performed. So write it down, Thomas Paine was the first great abolitionist of America.

Now let me tell you another thing. He was the first man to raise his voice for the abolition of the death penalty in the French convention. What more did he do? He was the first to suggest a federal constitution for the United States. He saw that the old articles of confederation were nothing; that they were ropes of water and chains of mist, and he said, "We want a federal constitution so that when you pass a law raising 5 percent you can make the states pay it." Let us give him his due. What were all these preachers doing at that time?

He hated superstition; he loved the truth. He hated tyranny; he loved liberty. He was the friend of the human race. He lived a brave and thoughtful life. He was a good and true and generous man, and "he died as he lived." Like a great and peaceful river with green and shaded banks, without a murmur, without a ripple, he flowed into the waveless ocean of eternal peace. I love him; I love every man who gave me, or helped to give me the liberty I enjoy tonight; I love every man who helped me put our flag in heaven. I love every man who has lifted his voice in any age for liberty, for a chainless body and a fetterless brain. I love everyman who has given to every other human being every right that he claimed for himself. I love every man who has thought more of principle than he has of position. I love the men who have trampled crowns beneath their feet that they might do something for mankind, and for that reason I love Thomas Paine.

I thank you all, ladies and gentlemen, every one—every one, for the attention you have given me this evening.

Ingersoll's Lecture on Liberty of Man, Woman and Child

Ladies and Gentlemen: In my judgment slavery is the child of ignorance. Liberty is born of intelligence. Only a few years ago there was a great awakening in the human mind. Men began to inquire, By what right does a crowned robber make me work for him? The man who asked this question was called a traitor. Others said, by what right does a robed priest rob me? That man was called an infidel. And whenever he asked a question of that kind, the clergy protested. When they found that the earth was round, the clergy protested; when they found that the stars were not made out of the scraps that were left over on the sixth day of creation,

but were really great, shining, wheeling worlds, the clergy protested and said: "When is this spirit of investigation to stop?" They said then, and they say now, that it is dangerous for the mind of man to be free. I deny it. Out on the intellectual sea there is room for every sail. In the intellectual air, there is space enough for every wing. And the man who does not do his own thinking is a slave, and does not do his duty to his fellow men. For one, I expect to do my own thinking. And I will take my own oath this minute that I will express what thoughts I have, honestly and sincerely. I am the slave of no man and of no organization. I stand under the blue sky and the stars, under the infinite flag of nature, the peer of every human being. Standing as I do in the presence of the Unknown, I have the same right to guess as though I had been through five theological seminary. I have as much interest in the great absorbing questions of origin and destiny as though I had D.D., L. L. D. at the end of my name.

All I claim, all I plead is simple liberty of thought. That is all. I do not pretend to tell what is true and all the truth. I do not claim that I have floated level with the heights of thought, or that I have descended to the depths of things; I simply claim that what idea I have I have a right to express, and any man that denies it to me is an intellectual thief and robber. That is all. I say, take those chains off from the human soul; I say, break these orthodox fetters, and if there are wings to the spirit let them be spread. That is all I say. And I ask you if I have not the same right to think that any other human has? If I have no right to think, why have I such a thing as a thinker. Why have I a brain? And if I have no right to think, who has? If I have lost my right, Mr. Smith, where did you find yours? If I have no right, have three or four men or 300 or 400, who get together and sign a card and build a house and put a steeple on it with a bell in it—have they any more right to think than they had before? That is the question. And I am sick of the whip and lash in the region of mind and intellect. And I say to these men, "Let us alone. Do your own thinking; express your own thoughts." And I want to say tonight that I claim no right that I am not willing to give to every other human being beneath the stars—none whatever. And I will fight tonight for the right of those who disagree with me to express their thoughts just as soon as I will fight for my own right to express mine.

In the good old times, our fathers had an idea that they could make people believe to suit them. Our ancestors in the ages that are gone really believed that by force you could convince a man. You cannot change the conclusion of the brain by force, but I will tell you what you can do by force, and what you have done by force. You can make hypocrites by the million. You can make a man say that he has changed his mind, but he remains of the same opinion still. Put fetters all over him; crush his feet in iron boots; lash him to the stock; burn him if you please, but his ashes are of the same opinion still. I say our fathers, in the good old times—and the best thing I can say about them is, they are dead—they had an idea they could force men to think

their way, and do you know that idea is still prevalent even in this country? Do you know they think they can make a man think their way if they say, "We will not trade with that man; we won't vote for that man; we won't hire him, if he is a lawyer; we will die before we take his medicine, if he is a doctor, we won't invite him; we will socially ostracize him; he must come to our church; he must think our way or he is not a gentleman." There is much of that even in this blessed country—not excepting the city of Albany itself.

Now in the old times of which I have spoken, they said, "We can make all men think alike." All the mechanical ingenuity of this earth cannot make two clocks run alike, and how are you going to make millions of people of different quantities and qualities and amount of brain, clad in this living robe of passionate flesh—how are you going to make millions of them think alike? If the infinite God, if there is one, who made us, wished us to think alike, why did he give a spoonful of brains to one man, and a bushel to another? Why is it that we have all degrees of humanity, from the idiot to the genius, if it was intended that all should think alike? I say our fathers concluded they would do this by force, and I used to read in books how they persecuted mankind, and do you know I never appreciated it; I did not. I read it, but it did not burn itself, as it were, into my very soul what infamies had been committed in the name of religion, and I never fully appreciated it until a little while ago I saw the iron arguments our fathers used to use. I tell you the reason we are through that, is because we have better brains than our fathers had. Since that day we have become intellectually developed, and there is more real brain and real good sense in the world today than in any other period of its history, and that is the reason we have more liberty, that is the reason we have more kindness. But I say I saw these iron arguments our fathers used to use. I saw here the thumb-screw—two little innocent looking pieces of iron, armed on the inner surface with protuberances to prevent their slipping—and when some man denied the efficacy of baptism, or maybe said, "I do not believe that the whale ever swallowed a man to keep him from drowning," then they put these pieces of iron upon his thumb, and there was a screw at each end, and then, in the name of love and forgiveness, they began screwing these pieces of iron together. A great many men, when they commenced, would say, "I recant." I expect I would have been one of them. I would have said, "Now you just stop that; I will admit anything on earth that you want. I will admit there is one god or a million, one hell or a billion; suit yourselves, but stop that." But I want to say, the thumbscrew having got out of the way, I am going to have my say.

There was now and then some man who wouldn't turn Judas Iscariot to his own soul; there was now and then a man willing to die for his conviction, and if it were not for such men we would be savages tonight. Had it not been for a few brave and heroic souls in every age, we would have been naked savages this moment, with pictures of wild beasts tattooed upon our naked breasts, dancing around a dried snake fetish;

and I tonight thank every good and noble man who stood up in the face of opposition, and hatred, and death for what he believed to be right. And then they screwed this thumbscrew down as far as they could and threw him into some dungeon, where, in throbbing misery and the darkness of night, he dreams of the damned; but that was done in the name of universal love.

I saw there at the same time what they called the "collar of torture." Imagine a circle of iron, and on the inside of that more than a hundred points as sharp as needles. This being fastened upon the throat, the sufferer could not sit down, he could not walk, he could not stir without being punctured by those needles, and in a little while the throat would begin to swell, and finally suffocation would end the agonies of that man, when may be the only crime he had committed was to say, with tears upon his sublime cheeks, "I do not believe that God, the father of us all, will damn to eternal punishment any of the children of men." Think of it! And I saw there at the same time another instrument, called "the scavenger's daughter," which resembles a pair of shears, with handles where handles ought to be, but at the points as well. And just above the pivot that fastens the blades, a circle of iron through which the hands would be placed, into the lower circles the feet, and into the center circle the head would be pushed, and in that position he would be thrown prone upon the earth, and kept there until the strain upon the muscles produced such agony that insanity and death would end his pain. And that was done in the name of "Whosoever smiteth thee upon one cheek, turn him the other also." Think of it!

And I saw also the rack, with the windlass and chains, upon which the sufferer was laid. About his ankles were fastened chains, and about his wrists also, and then priests began turning this windlass, and they kept turning until the ankles, the shoulders and the wrists were all dislocated, and the sufferer was wet with the sweat of agony. And they had standing by a physician to feel his pulse. What for? To save his life? Yes. What for? In mercy? No. Simply that they might preserve his life, that they might rack him once again. And this was done—recollect it—it was done in the name of civilization, it was done in the name of law and order, it was done in the name of morality, it was done in the name of religion, it was done in the name of God.

Sometimes when I get to reading about it, and when I get to thinking about it, it seems to me that I have suffered all these horrors myself, as though I had stood upon the shore of exile and gazed with a tear-filled eye toward home and native land; as though my nails had been torn from my hands, and into my throat the sharp needles had been thrust; as though my feet had been crushed in iron boots; as though I had been chained in the cells of the Inquisition, and had watched and waited in the interminable darkness to hear the words of release; as though I had been taken from my fireside, from my wife and children, and taken to the public square, chained, and fagots had been piled around me; as though the flames had played around my limbs, and scorched the

sight from my eyes; as though my ashes had been scattered to the four winds by the hands of hatred; as though I had stood upon the scaffold and felt the glittering ax fall upon me. And while I feel and see all this, I swear that while I live I will do what little I can to augment the liberty of man, woman and child.

My friends, it is all a question of sense; it is all a question of honesty. If there is a man in this house who is not willing to give to everybody else what he claims for himself he is just so much nearer to the barbarian than I am. It is a simple question of honesty; and the man who is not willing to give to every other human being the same intellectual rights he claims himself is a rascal, and you know it. It is a simple question, I say, of intellectual development and of honesty. And I want to say it now, so you will see it. You show me the narrow, contracted man; you show me the man who claims everything for himself and leaves nothing for others, and that man has got a distorted and deformed brain. That is the matter with him. He has no sense; not a bit. Let me show you.

A little while ago I saw models of everything man has made for his use and for his convenience. I saw all the models of all the watercraft, from the dug-out, in which floated a naked savage—one of our ancestors—a naked savage, with teeth two inches long, with a spoonful of brains in the back of his head; I saw the watercraft of the world, from that dug-out up to a man-of-war that carries a hundred guns and miles of canvas; from that dug-out to the steamship that turns its brave prow from the port of New York through 3,000 miles of billows, with a compass like a conscience, that does not miss throb or beat of its mighty iron heart from one shore to the other. I saw at the same time the weapons that man has made, from a rude club, such as was grasped by that savage when he crawled from his den, from his hole in the ground, and hunted a snake for his dinner—from that club to the boomerang, to the sword, to the cross-bow, to the blunderbuss, to the flint-lock, to the cap-lock, to the needle-gun, up to the cannon cast by Krupp, capable of hurling a ball of 2,000 pounds through eighteen inches of solid steel. I saw, too, the armor from the turtle-shell that our ancestor lashed upon his skin when he went out to fight for his country, to the skin of the porcupine, with the quills all bristling, which he pulled over his orthodox head to defend himself from his enemies—I mean, of course, the orthodox head of that day—up to the shirts of mail that were worn in the middle ages, capable of resisting the edge of the sword and the point of the spear; up to the iron-clad, to the monitor completely clad in steel, capable only a few years ago of defying the navies of the globe.

I saw at the same time the musical instruments, from the tomtom, which is a hoop with a couple of strings of rawhide drawn across it—from that tomtom up to the instruments we have today, which make the common air blossom with melody. I saw, too, the paintings, from the daub of yellow mud up to the pieces which adorn the galleries of the world. And the

sculpture, from the rude gods, with six legs and a half dozen arms, and the rows of ears, up to the sculpture of now, wherein the marble is clad with such loveliness that it seems almost a sacrilege to touch it; and in addition I saw there ideas of books—books written upon skins of wild beasts, books written upon shoulder-blades of sheep; books written upon leaves, upon bark, up to the splendid volumes that adorn the libraries of our time. When I think of libraries, I think of the remark of Plato, "The house that has a library in it has a soul."

I saw there all these things, and also the implements of agriculture, from a crooked stick up to the plow which makes it possible for a man to cultivate the soil without being an ignoramus. I saw at the same time a row of skulls, from the lowest skull that has ever been found; skulls from the central portion of Africa, skulls from the bushmen of Australia, up to the best skulls of the last generation.

And I notice that there was the same difference between those skulls that there is between the products of those skulls. And I said to myself: "It is all a question of intellectual development. It is a question of brain and sinew." I noticed that there was the same difference between those skulls that there was between that dug-out, and that man-of-war and that steamship. That skull was low. It had not a forehead a quarter of an inch high. But shortly after, the skulls became doming and crowning, and getting higher and grander. That skull was a den in which crawled the base and meaner instincts of mankind, and this skull was a temple in which dwelt joy, liberty and love. So said I: "This is all a question of brain, and anything that tends to develop, intellectually, mankind, is the gospel we want."

Now I want to be honest with you. Honor bright! Nothing like it in the world! No matter what I believe. Now, let us be honest. Suppose a king, if there was a king at the time this gentleman floated in the dugout and charmed his ears with the music of the tomtom; suppose the king at that time, if there was one, and the priest, if there was one, had said: "That dug-out is the best boat that ever can be built. The pattern of that came from on high, and any man who says he can improve it, by putting a log or a stick in the bottom of it, with a rag on the end, is an infidel." Honor bright, what, in your judgment, would have been the effect upon the circumnavigation of the globe? That is the question. Suppose the king, if there was one, and the priest, if there was one—and I presume there was, because it was a very ignorant age—suppose they had said: "That tomtom is the most miraculous instrument of music that any man can conceive of; that is the kind of music they have in heaven. An angel, sitting upon the golden edge of a fleecy cloud, playing upon that tomtom became so enraptured, so entranced with her own music, that she dropped it, and that is how we got it—and any man that says that it can be improved by putting a back and front to it, and four strings and a bridge on it, and getting some horsehair and resin, is no better than one of the weak and unregenerate."

I ask you what effect would that have had upon music? I ask you, honor bright, if that course had been pursued, would the human ears ever have been enriched with the divine symphonies of Beethoven? That is the question. And suppose the king, if there was one, and the priest had said: "That crooked stick is the best plow we can ever have invented. The pattern of that plow was given to a pious farmer in a holy dream, and that twisted straw is the ne plus ultra of all twisted things; and any man who says he can make an improvement, we will twist him." Honor bright, what, in your judgment, would have been the effect upon the agricultural world?

Now, you see, the people said, "We want better weapons with which to kill our enemies;" so the people said, "we want better plows;" the people said, "we want better music;" the people said, "we want better paintings;" and they said, "whoever will give us better plows, and better arms, and better paintings, and better music, we will give him honor; we will crown him with glory; we will robe him in the garments of wealth;" and every incentive has been held out to every human being to improve something in every direction. And that is the reason the club is a cannon; that the reason the dugout is a steamship; that the reason the daub is a painting, and that is the reason that that piece of stone has finally become a glorified statue.

Now, then, this fellow in the dug-out had a religion. That fellow was orthodox. He had no doubt; he was settled in his mind. He did not wish to be insulted. He wanted the bark of his soul to lie at the wharf of orthodoxy, and rot in the sun. He wanted to hear the sails of old opinions flap against the mast of old creeds. He wanted to see the joints in the sides open and gape, as though thirsty for water, and he said: "Now don't disturb my opinions; you'll get my mind unsettled; I have got it all made up, and I don't want to hear any infidelity, either." As far as I am concerned, I want to be out on the high sea; I want to take my chance with wind and wave and star; and I had rather go down in the glory and grandeur of the storm than to rot at any orthodox wharf. Of course I mean by orthodoxy all that don't agree with my doxy. Do you understand?

Now this man had a religion. That fellow believed in hell. Yes, sir; and he thought he would be happier in heaven if he could just lean over and see certain people that he disliked, broiled. That fellow has had a great many intellectual descendents. It is an unhappy fact in nature that the ignorant multiply much faster than the intellectual. This fellow believed in the devil, and his devil had a cloven hoof. (Many people think I have the same kind of footing.) He had a long tail, armed with a fiery dart, and he breathed brimstone. And do you know there has not been a patentable improvement made on that devil for 4,000 years? That fellow believed that God was a tyrant. That fellow believed that the earth was flat. That fellow believed, as I told you, in a literal burning, seething lake of fire and brimstone. That is what he believed in. That fellow, too, had his idea of politics, and his

idea was, "Might makes right." And it will take thousands of years before the world will believably say, "Right makes might." Now all I ask is the same privilege of improving on that gentleman's theology as upon his musical instrument; the same right to improve upon his politics as upon his dug-out. That is all. I ask for the human soul the same liberty in every direction. And that is all. That is the only crime that I have committed. That is all. I say, let us have a chance. Let us think, and let each one express his thoughts. Let us become investigators, not followers; not cringers and crawlers. If there is in heaven an infinite being, he never will be satisfied with the worship of cowards and hypocrites. Honest unbelief will be a perfume in heaven when hypocrisy, no matter however religious it may be outwardly, will be a stench. That is my doctrine. That is all there is to it; give every other human being all the chance you claim for yourself. To keep your mind open to the voices of nature, to new ideas, to new thoughts, and to improve upon your doctrine whenever you can; that is my doctrine.

Do you know we are improving all the time? Do you know that the most orthodox people in this town today, three hundred years ago would have been burned for heresy? Do you know some ministers who denounce me would have been in the Inquisition themselves two hundred years ago? Do you know where once burned and blazed the bivouac fires of the army of progress, the altars of the church glow today? Do you know that the church today occupies about the same ground that unbelievers did one hundred years ago? Do you know that while they have followed this army of progress, protesting and denouncing, they have had to keep within protesting and denouncing distance, but they have followed it? They have been the men, let me say, in the valley; the men in swamps, shouting to and cursing the pioneers on the hills; the men upon whose forehead was the light of the coming dawn, the coming day—but they have advanced. In spite of themselves, they have advanced! If they had not, I would not speak here to night. If they had not, not a solitary one of you could have expressed your real and honest thought. But we are advancing, and we are beginning to hold all kinds of slavery in utter contempt; do you know that? And we are beginning to question wealth and power; we are questioning all creeds and all dogmas; and we are not bowing down, as we used to, to a man simply because he is in the robe of a clergyman, and we are not bowing down to a man now simply because he is a king. No! We are not bowing down simply because he is rich. We used to worship the golden calves, but we do not now. The worst you can say of an American, is, he worships the gold of the calf, not the calf; and even the calves are beginning to see this distinction.

It no longer fills the ambition of a man to be emperor or king. The last Napoleon was not satisfied with being Emperor of the French; he was not satisfied with having a circlet of gold about his head; he wanted some evidence that he had something within his head, so he wrote the life of Julius Caesar, that he might become a member of the French Academy. Compare, for instance, in the German Empire, King William and Bismarck. King William is the one anointed of the most high, as they claim—the

one upon whose head has been poured the divine petroleum of authority. Compare him with Bismarck, who towers, an intellectual Colossus, above this man. Go into England and compare George Eliot with Queen Victoria—Queen Victoria, clothed in the garments given to her by blind fortune and by chance. George Elliot, robed in garments of glory, woven in the loom of her own genius. Which does the world pay respect to? I tell you we are advancing! The pulpit does not do all the thinking; the pews do it; nearly all of it. The world is advancing, and we question the authority of those men who simply say "it is so." Down upon your knees and admit it! When I think of how much this world has suffered, I am amazed. When I think of how long our fathers were slaves, I am amazed. Why, just think of it! This world has only been fit for a gentleman to live in fifty years. No, it has not. It was not until the year 1808 that Great Britain abolished the slave trade. Up to that time her judge, sitting upon the bench in the name of justice; her priests, occupying the pulpit in the name of universal love, owned stock in slave ships and luxuriated in the profits of piracy and murder. It was not until the year 1808 that the United States abolished the slave trade between this and other countries, but preserved it as between the States. It was not until the 28th day of August, 1833, that Great Britain abolished human slavery in her colonies; and it was not until the 1st day of January, 1863, that Abraham Lincoln wiped from our flag the stigma of disgrace. Abraham Lincoln—in my judgment, the grandest man ever president of the United States, and upon whose monument these words could truthfully be written: "Here lies the only man in the history of the world who, having been clothed with almost absolute power, never abused it except on the side of mercy."

Think, I say, how long we clung to the institution of human slavery; how long lashes upon the naked back were the legal tender for labor performed! Think of it! when the pulpit of this country deliberately and willfully changed the Cross of Christ into the whipping-post. Think of it! And tell me then if I am right when I say this world has only been fit for a gentleman to live in fifty years. I hate with every drop of my blood every form of tyranny. I hate every form of slavery. I hate dictation—I want something like liberty; and what do I mean by that? The right to do anything that does not interfere with the happiness of another, physically. Liberty of thought includes the right to think right and the right to think wrong. Why? Because that is the means by which we arrive at truth; for if we knew the truth before, we needn't think. Those men who mistake their ignorance for facts, never do think. You may say to me, "How far is it across this room?" I say 100 feet. Suppose it is 105; have I committed any crime? I made the best guess I could. You ask me about any thing; I examine it honestly, and when I get through, what should I tell you—what I think or what you think? What should I do?

There is a book put in my hands. They say "That is the Koran; that was written by inspiration; read it." I read it. Chapter VII, entitled "The Cow," chapter IX, entitled "The Bee," and so on. I read it. When

I get through with it, suppose I think in my heart and in my brain, "I don't believe a word of it;" and you ask me, "What do you think of it?" Now, admitting that I live in Turkey, and have a chance to get an office, what should I say? Now, honor bright, should I just make a clean breast of it and say "Upon my honor, I don't believe it?" Then is it right for you to say "That fellow will steal—that fellow is a dangerous man—he is a robber?" Now, suppose I read the book called the bible (and I read it, honor bright), and when I get through with it I make up my mind that book was written by men; and along comes the preacher of my church, and he says "Did you read that book?" "I did." "Do you think it is divinely inspired?" I say to myself, "Now if I say it is not, they will never send me to Congress from this district on earth." Now, honor bright, what ought I to do? Ought I to say, "I have read it. I have been honest about it; don't believe it?" Now, ought I to say that, if that is a real transcript of my mind, or ought I to commence hemming and hawing and pretend that I do believe it, and go away with the respect of that man, hating myself for a cringing coward? Now which? For my part I would rather a man would tell me what he honestly thinks, and he will preserve his manhood. I had rather be a manly unbeliever than an unmanly believer. I think I will stand higher at the judgment day, if there is one, and stand with as good a chance to get my case dismissed without costs as a man who sneaks through life pretending he believes what he does not. I tell you one thing; there is going to be one free fellow in this world. I am going to say my say, I tell you. I am going to do it kindly, I am going to do it distinctly, but I am going to do it.

Now, if men have been slaves, what about women? Women have been the slaves of slaves; and that's a pretty hard position to occupy for life. They have been the slaves of slaves; and in my judgment it took millions of ages for women to come from the condition of abject slavery up to the institution of marriage. Let me say right here, tonight, I regard marriage as the holiest institution among men. Without the fireside there is no human advancement; without the family relation, there is no life worth living. Every good government is made up of good families. The unit of government is family, and anything that tends to destroy the family is perfectly devilish and infamous. I believe in marriage, and I hold in utter contempt the opinions of long-haired men and short-haired women who denounce the institution of marriage. Let me say right here—and I have thought a good deal about it—let me say right here, the grandest ambition that any man can possibly have is to so live and so improve himself in heart and brain as to be worthy of the love of some splendid woman; and the grandest ambition of any girl is to make herself worthy of the love and adoration of some magnificent man. That is my idea, and there is no success in life without it. If you are the grand emperor of the world, you had better be the grand emperor of one loving and tender heart, and she the grand empress of yours. The man who has really won the love of one good woman in this world, I do not care if he dies in the ditch a beggar, his life has been a success.

I say it took millions of years to come from the condition of abject slavery up to the condition of marriage. Ladies, the ornaments you bear upon your person tonight are but the souvenirs of your mothers' bondage. The chains around your necks and the bracelets clasped upon your wrists by the thrilling hand of love, have been changed by the wand of civilization from iron to shining, glittering gold. But nearly every religion has accounted for the devilment in this world by the crime of woman. What a gallant thing that is! And if it is true, I had rather live with the woman I love in a world full of trouble, than to live in heaven with nobody but men.

I say that nearly every religion has accounted for all the trouble in this world by the crime of woman. I read in a book—and I will say now that I cannot give the exact language; my memory does not retain the words—but I can give the substance. I read in a book that the supreme being concluded to make a world and one man; that he took some nothing and made a world and one man, and put this man in a garden: but he noticed that he got lonesome; he wandered around as if he was waiting for a train; there was nothing to interest him; no news; no papers; no politics; no policy; and as the devil had not yet made his appearance, there was no chance for reconciliation; not even for civil service reform. Well, he would wander about this garden in this condition until finally the supreme being made up his mind to make him a companion; and having used up all the nothing he originally took in making the world and one man, he had to take a part of the man to start a woman with, and so he caused a deep sleep to fall upon this man—now, understand me. I didn't say this story is true. After the sleep fell upon this man, he took a rib, or, as the French would call it, a cutlet out of this man, and from that he made a woman; and considering the raw material, I look upon it as the most successful job ever performed. Well, after He got the woman done, she was brought to the man; not to see how she liked him, but to see how he liked her. He liked her, and they started housekeeping; and they were told of certain things they might do, and one thing they could not do—and of course they did it. I would have done it in fifteen minutes, and I know it. There wouldn't have been an apple on that tree half an hour from date, and the limbs could have been full of clubs. And then they were turned out of the park, and an extra force was put on to keep them from getting back. Then devilment commenced. The mumps, and the measles, and the whooping cough and the scarlet fever started in their race for man, and they began to have the toothache, the roses began to have thorns, and snakes began to have poisoned teeth, and people began to divide about religion and politics; and the world has been full of trouble from that day to this. Now, nearly all of the religions of this world account for the existence of evil by such a story as that.

I read in another book what appeared to be an account of the same transaction. It was written about 4,000 years before the other; but all commentators agree that the one that was written last was the original,

and that the one that was written first was copied from the one that was written last; but I would advise you all not to allow your creed to be disturbed by a little matter of four or five thousand years. In this other story the Supreme Brahma made up his mind to make the world and man and woman; and he made the world, and he made the man and he made the woman, and he put them on the island of Ceylon; and according to the account, it was the most beautiful island of which man can conceive. Such birds, such songs, such flowers and such verdure! And the branches of the trees were so arranged that when the wind swept through them every tree was a thousand aeolian harps. The Supreme Brahma when he put them there said, "Let them have a period of courtship, for it is my desire and will that true love should forever precede marriage." When I read that, it was so much more beautiful and lofty than the other, that I said to myself, "If either one of these stories ever turns out to be true, I hope it will be this one."

Then they had their courtship, with the nightingales singing and the stars shining and the flowers blooming, and they fell in love. Imagine the courtship! No prospective fathers or mothers in law; no prying and gossiping neighbors, nobody to say, "Young man, how do you expect to support her?" Nothing of that kind. They were married by the Supreme Brahma, and he said to them: "Remain here; you must never leave this island." Well, after a little while the man—and his name was Amend, and the woman's name was Heva—and the man said to Heva: "I believe I'll look about a little;" and he went to the northern extremity of the island, where there was a little, narrow neck of land connecting it with the mainland; and the devil, who is always playing pranks with us, got up a mirage, and when he looked over to the mainland, such hills and dells, vales and dales; such mountains, crowned with silver; such cataracts, clad in robes of beauty, did he see there, that he went back and told Heva: "The country over there is a thousand times better than this; let us migrate." She, like every other woman that ever lived, said: "Let well enough alone; we have all we want; let us stay here." But he said, "No, let us go;" so she followed him, and when they came to this narrow neck of land he took her on his back like a gentleman and carried her over. But the moment they got over they heard a crash, and, looking back, discovered that this narrow neck of land had fallen into the sea, with the exception of now and then a rock, and the mirage had disappeared and there was naught but rocks and sand; and then a voice called out, cursing them. Then it was that the man spoke up—and I have liked him ever since for it—"Curse me, but curse not her; it was not her fault, it was mine." That's the kind of man to start a world with. The Supreme Brahma said, "I will save her but not thee." She spoke up out of her feelings of love, out of a heart in which there was love enough to make all of her daughters rich in holy affection, and said, "If thou wilt not spare him, spare neither me; I do not wish to live without him; I love him." Then the Supreme Brahma said—and I have liked him first-rate ever since I read it—"I will spare you both and watch over you."

Honor bright, isn't that the better story?

And from that same book I want to show you what ideas some of these miserable heathen had—the heathen we are trying to convert. We send missionaries over yonder to convert heathen there, and we send soldiers out on the plains to kill heathen there. If we can convert the heathen, why not convert those nearest home? Why not convert those we can get at? Why not convert those who have the immense advantage of the example of the average pioneer? But to show you the men we are trying to convert—in this book it says: "Man is strength, woman is beauty; man is courage, woman is love. When the one man loves the one woman and the one woman loves the one man, the very angels leave heaven and come and sit in that house and sing for joy." They are the men we are converting. Think of it! I tell you when I read these things I begin to say, "Love is not of any country; nobility does not belong exclusively here;" and through all the ages there have been a few great and tender souls lifted far above their fellows.

Now, my friends, it seems to me that the woman is the equal of the man. She has all the rights I have, and one more, and that is the right to be protected. That's my doctrine. You are married; try and make the woman you love happy; try and make the man you love happy. Whoever marries simply for himself will make a mistake; but whoever loves a woman so well that he says "I will make her happy," makes no mistake; and so with the woman who says "I will make him happy." There is only one way to be happy, and that is to make somebody else so, and you can't be happy cross-lots; you have got to go the regular turnpike road.

If there is any man I detest, it is the man who thinks he is the head of the family—the man who thinks he is "boss". That fellow in the dug-out used that word "boss;" that was one of his favorite expressions—that he was "boss". Imagine a young man and a young woman courting, walking out in the moonlight, and the nightingale singing a song of pain and love, as though the thorn touched her heart—imagine them stopping there in the moonlight and starlight and song, and saying "Now here, let's settle who's boss!" I tell you it is an infamous word, and an infamous feeling—a man who is "boss," who is going to govern his family, and when he speaks let all the rest of them be still—some mighty idea is about to be launched from his mouth. Do you know I dislike this man unspeakably; and a cross man I hate above all things.

What right has he to murder the sunshine of the day? What right has he to assassinate the joy of life? Where you go home you ought to feel the light there is in the house; if it is in the night it will burst out of doors and windows and illuminate the darkness. It is just as well to go home a ray of sunshine as an old sour, cross curmudgeon, who thinks he is the head of the family. Wise men think their mighty brains have been in a turmoil; they have been thinking about who will be alderman from the fifth ward; they have been thinking about politics; great and mighty questions have been engaging their minds; they have bought

calico at 8 cents, or 6, and want to sell it for 7. Think of the intellectual strain that must have been upon a man, and when he gets home everybody else in the house must look out for his comfort. A woman who has only taken care of five or six children, and one or two of them may be sick; has been nursing them and singing to them, and taking care of them, and trying to make one yard of cloth do the work of two—she, of course, is fresh and fine, and ready to wait upon this great gentleman—the head of the family I don't like him a bit!

Do you know another thing? I despise a stingy man. I don't see how it is possible for a man to die worth fifty millions of dollars, or ten millions of dollars, in a city full of want, when he meets almost every day the withered hand of beggary and the white lips of famine. How a man can withstand all that, and hold in the clutch of his greed twenty or thirty millions of dollars, is past my comprehension. I do not see how he can do it. I should not think he could do it any more than he could keep a pile of lumber where hundreds and thousands of men were drowning in the sea. I should not think he could do it.

Do you know I have known men who would trust their wives with their hearts and their honor, but not with their pocketbook; not with a dollar. When I see a man of that kind I always think he knows which of these articles is the most valuable. Think of making your wife a beggar! Think of her having to ask you every day for a dollar, or for two dollars, or for fifty cents! "What did you do with that dollar I gave you last week?" Think of having a wife that was afraid of you! What kind of children do you expect to have with a beggar and a coward for their mother? Oh, I tell you, if you have but a dollar in the world, and you have got to spend it, spend it like a king; spend it as though it were a dry leaf and you the owner of unbounded forests! That's the way to spend it! I had rather be a beggar and spend my last dollar like a king, than be a king and spend my money like a beggar. If it's got to go, let it go.

Get the best you can for your family—try to look as well as you can yourself. When you used to go courting, how nice you looked! Ah, your eye was bright, your step was light, and you just put on the very best look you could. Do you know that it is insufferable egotism in you to suppose that a woman is going to love you always looking as bad as you can? Think of it! Any woman on earth will be true to you forever when you do your level best. Some people tell me, "Your doctrine about loving, and wives, and all that is splendid for the rich, but it won't do for the poor." I tell you tonight there is on the average more love in the homes of the poor than in the palaces of the rich; and the meanest but with love in it is fit for the gods, and a palace without love is a den only fit for wild beasts. That's my doctrine!

You can't be so poor but that you can help somebody. Good nature is the cheapest commodity in the world; and love is the only thing that will pay 10 percent to borrower and lender both. Don't tell me that you have

got to be rich! We have all a false standard of greatness in the United States. We think here that a man to be great, must be notorious; must be extremely wealthy, or his name must be between the lips of rumor. It is all nonsense! It is not necessary to be rich to be great, or to be powerful to be happy; and the happy man is the successful man. Happiness is the legal tender of the soul. Joy is wealth.

A little while ago I stood by the grave of the old Napoleon, a magnificent tomb, fit for a dead deity almost, and gazed into the great circle at the bottom of it. In the sarcophagus, of black Egyptian marble, at last rest the ashes of that restless man. I looked over the balustrade, and I thought about the career of Napoleon. I could see him walking upon the banks of the Seine contemplating suicide. I saw him at Toulon. I saw him putting down the mob in the streets of Paris. I saw him at the head of the army of Italy. I saw him crossing the bridge at Lodi. I saw him in Egypt, fighting the battle of the pyramids. I saw him cross the Alps, and mingle the eagles of France with the eagles of the crags. I saw him at Austerlitz. I saw him with his army scattered and dispersed before the blast. I saw him at Leipsic when his army was defeated and he was taken captive. I saw him escape. I saw him land again upon French soil, and retake an empire by the force of his own genius. I saw him captured once more, and again at St. Helena, with his arms behind him, gazing out upon the sad and solemn sea; and I thought of the orphans and Widows he had made.

I thought of the tears that had been shed for his glory. I thought of the only woman who ever loved him, who had been pushed from his heart by the cold hand of ambition; and as I looked at the sarcophagus, I said, "I would rather have been a French peasant and worn wooden shoes; I would rather have lived in a hut, with a vine growing over the door, and the grapes growing and ripening in the autumn sun; I would rather have been that peasant, with my wife by my side and my children upon my knees, twining their arms of affection about me; I would rather have been that poor French peasant, and gone down at last to the eternal promiscuity of the dust, followed by those who loved me; I would a thousand times rather have been that French peasant than that imperial personative of force and murder." And so I would, ten thousand times.

It is not necessary to be great to be happy; it is not necessary to be rich to be just and generous, and to have a heart filled with divine affection. No matter whether you are rich or poor, use your wife as though she were a splendid creation, and she will fill your life with perfume and joy. And do you know, it is a splendid thing for me to think that the woman you really love will never grow old to you? Through the wrinkles of time, through the music of years, if you really love her, you will always see the face you loved and won. And a woman who really loves a man, does not see that he grows older; he is not decrepit; he does not tremble; he is not old; she always sees the same gallant gentleman who won her hand and heart. I like to think of it in that way. I like to think of all passions; love is eternal, and,

as Shakespeare says, "Although Time, with his sickle, can rob ruby lips and sparkling eyes, let him reach as far as he can, he cannot quite touch love; that reaches even to the end of the tomb." And to love in that way, and then go down the hill of life together, and as you go down hear, perhaps, the laughter of grandchildren—the birds of joy and love sing once more in the leafless branches of age. I believe in the fireside. I believe in the democracy of home. I believe in the republicanism of the family. I believe in liberty and equality with those we love.

If women have been slaves, what shall I say of children; of the little children in the alleys and sub-cellars; the little children who turn pale when they hear their father's footsteps; little children who run away when they only hear their names called by the lips of another; little children—the children of poverty, the children of crime, the children of brutality wherever you are—flotsam and jetsam upon the wild, mad sea of life, my heart goes out to you, one and all. I tell you the children have the same rights that we have, and we ought to treat them as though they were human beings; and they should be reared by love, by kindness, by tenderness, and not by brutality. That is my idea of children. When your little child tells a lie, don't rush at him as though the world were about to go into bankruptcy. Be honest with him. A tyrant father will have liars for children; do you know that? A lie is born of tyranny upon the one hand and weakness upon the other, and when you rush at a poor little boy with a club in your hand, of course he lies. I thank Mother Nature that she has put ingenuity enough in the breast of a child, when attacked by a brutal parent, to throw up a little breastwork in the shape of a lie. When one of your children tells a lie, be honest with him; tell him you have told hundreds of them yourself. Tell him it is not the best way; you have tried it. Tell him, as the man did in Maine when his boy left home: "John, honesty is the best policy; I have tried both." Just be honest with him. Imagine now; you are about to whip a child five years of age. What is the child to do? Suppose a man, as much larger than you are larger than a child five years old, should come at you with liberty-pole in hand, and in a voice of thunder shout, "Who broke the plate?" There is not a solitary one of you who wouldn't swear you never saw it, or that it was cracked when you found it. Why not be honest with these children? Just imagine a man who deals in stocks putting false rumors afloat!

Think of a lawyer beating his own flesh and blood for evading the truth, when he makes half of his own living that way! Think of a minister punishing his child for not telling all he thinks! Just think of it! When your child commits a wrong, take it in your arms; let it feel your heart beat against its heart; let the child know that you really and truly and sincerely love it. Yet some Christians, good Christians, when a child commits a fault, drive it from the door, and say, "Never do you darken this house again." Think of that! And then these same people will get down on their knees and ask God to take care of the child they

have driven from home. I will never ask God to take care of my children unless I am doing my level best in that same direction. But I will tell you what I say to my children: "Go where you will; commit what crime you may; fall to what depth of degradation you may; you can never commit any crime that will shut my door, my arms, my heart to you; as long as I live you shall have no more sincere friend."

Do you know, I have seen some people who acted as though they thought when the Savior said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, for such is the Kingdom of Heaven," that he had a rawhide under his mantle and made that remark to get the children within striking distance. I don't believe in the government of the lash. If any one of you ever expect to whip your children again after you hear me, I want you to have a photograph taken of yourself when you are in the act, with your face red with vulgar anger; and then the face of the little child, with eyes swimming in tears, and the little chin dimpled with fear, like a piece of water struck by a sudden, cold wind. Have the picture taken. If that little child should die, I cannot find a sweeter way to spend an autumn afternoon than to go out to the cemetery, when the maples are clad in bright colors, and little scarlet runners are coming, like poems of regret, from the sad heart of the earth—than to go out to the cemetery and sit down upon the grave and look at this photograph, and think of the flesh, now dust, that you beat.

I tell you it is wrong; it is no way to raise children! Make your home happy. Be honest with them, divide fairly with them in everything. Give them a little liberty, and you cannot drive them out of the house. They will want to stay there. Make home pleasant. Let them play any game they want to. Don't be so foolish as to say: "You may roll balls on the ground, but you must not roll them on green cloth. You may knock them with a mallet, but you must not push them with a cue. You may play with little pieces of paper which have 'Authors' written on them, but you must not have 'keerds.'" Think of it! "You may go to a minstrel show, where people blacken themselves up and degrade themselves, and imitate humanity below themselves, but you must not go to the theater and see the characters of immortal genius put upon the stage." Why? Well, I can't think of any reason in the world except "minstrel" is a word of two syllables and theater has three. Let children have some daylight at home if you want to keep them there, and don't commence at the cradle and yell, "Don't!" "Don't!" "Stop!" That is nearly all that is said to a young one from the cradle until he is twenty one years old, and when he comes of age other people begin saying "Don't!" And the church says "Don't!" And the party that he belongs to says "Don't!" I despise that way of going through this world. Let us have a little liberty—just a little bit. There is another thing. In old times, you know, they thought some days were too good for a child to enjoy himself in. When I was a boy Sunday was considered altogether too good to be happy in; and Sunday used to commence then when the sun went down Saturday night. That was to get good ready—a kind of running jump; and when the sun went down, a darkness ten thousand times deeper than

that of night fell on that house. Nobody said a word then; nobody laughed; and the child that looked the sickest was regarded the most pious. You couldn't crack hickory nuts; you couldn't chew gum; and if you laughed, it was only another evidence of the total depravity of man. That was a solemn night; and the next morning everybody looked sad, mournful, dyspeptic—and thousands of people think they have religion when they have only got dyspepsia—thousands! But there is nothing in this world that would break up the old orthodox churches as quick as some specific for dyspepsia—some sure cure.

Then we went to church, and the minister was up in a pulpit about twenty feet high, with a little sounding-board over him, and he commenced with Firstly and went on to about twenty-thirdly, and then around by way of application, and then divided it off again once or twice, and after having put in about two hours, he got to Revelations. We were not allowed to have any fire, even if it was in the winter. It was thought to be outrageous to be comfortable while you are thanking the Lord, and the first church that ever had a stove put in it in New England was broken up on that account. Then we went a-nooning, and then came the catechism, the chief end of man. We went through that; and then this same sermon was preached, commencing at the other end, and going back. After that was over we started for home, solemn and sad—"not a soldier discharged his farewell shot;" not a word was said—and when we got home, if we had been good boys, they would take us up to the graveyard to cheer us up a little.

It did cheer me! When I looked at those tombs the comforting reflection came to my mind that this kind of thing couldn't last always. Then we had some certain books that we read just by way of cheerfulness. There was Milner's "History of the Wilderness," Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted," and Jenkins' "On the Atonement." I used to read Jenkins' "On the Atonement;" and I have often thought the atonement would have to be very broad in its provisions to cover the case of a man who would write a book like that for a boy to read. Well, you know, the Sunday had to go at last; and the moment the sun went down Sunday night we were free. About 4 or 5 o'clock we would go to see how the sun was coming out. Sometimes it seemed to me that it was just stopping from pure cussedness; but finally it had to go down, and when the last rim of light sank below the horizon, out would come our traps, and we would give three cheers for liberty once more. In those times it was thought wrong for a child to laugh on Sunday. Think of that! A little child—a little boy—could go out in the garden, and there would be a tree laden with blossoms, and this little fellow would lean up against the tree, and there would be a bird singing and swinging, and thinking about four little speckled eggs, warmed by the breast of its mate—singing and swinging, and the music coming rippling out of its throat, and the flowers blossoming and the air full of perfume, and the great white clouds floating in the sky; and that little boy would lean up against that trunk, and think of hell.

That's true! I have heard them preach when I sat in the pew, and my feet didn't come within eighteen inches of the floor, about that hell. And they said, "Suppose that once in a million years a bird would come from some far distant planet, and carry in its bill a grain of sand, the time would finally come when the last atom composing this earth would be carried away;" and the old preacher said, in order to impress upon the boys the length of time they would have to stay, "it wouldn't be sun-up in hell yet."

Think of that to preach to children! I tell you, my friends, no day can be so sacred but that the laugh of a little child will make it holier still—no day! And yet, at that time, the minds of children were polluted by this infamous doctrine of eternal punishment; and I denounce it today as an infamous doctrine beyond the power of language to express. Where did that doctrine of eternal punishment for the children of men come from? It came from that wretch in the dug-out. Where did he get it? It was a souvenir from the animals, and the doctrine of eternal punishment was born in the eyes of snakes when they hung in fearful coils watching for their prey. It was a doctrine born of the howling and barking and growling of wild beasts; it was born in the grin of the hyenas, and of the depraved chatter of the baboons; and I despise it with every drop of my blood. Tell me there is a God in the serene heaven that will damn his children for the expression of an honest belief!

There have been more men who died in their sins, according to your orthodox religion, than there are leaves on all the forests of this world ten thousand times over. Tell me they are in hell! Tell me they are to be punished for ever and ever! I denounce it as an infamous lie!

And when the great ship containing the hope and aspiration of the world, when the great ship freighted with mankind goes down in the night of death and disaster, I will go down with the ship. I don't want to paddle off in any orthodox canoe. I will go down with the ship; and if there is a God who will damn his children forever I had rather go to hell than to go to heaven and keep the society of such an infamous Deity. I make my choice now. I despise that doctrine, and I'll tell you why. It has covered the cheeks of this world with tears. It has polluted the heart of children. It has been a pain and terror to every man that ever believed it. It has filled the good with horror and fear, but it has had no effect upon the infamous and base. I tell you it is a bad doctrine. I read in the papers today what Henry Ward Beecher, whom I regard as the most intellectual preacher in the pulpit of the United States—I will read from the paper what he said yesterday, and you will see an abstract of it in the New York Times of today. He has had the courage, and he has had the magnificent manhood, to say:

"I say to you, and I swear to you, by the wounds in the hands of Christ—I swear to you by the wounds in the body and feet of Christ, that this doctrine of eternal hell is a most infamous nightmare of theology! It

never should be preached again.”

What right have you, sir; you, minister, as you are, to stand at the portal of eternity, or the portal of the tomb, and fill the future with horror and with fear? You have no right to do it. I don't believe it, and neither do you. You would not sleep one night. Any man who believes it, who has got a decent heart in his bosom, will go insane. Yes, sir, a man that really believes that doctrine and does not go insane, has got the conscience of a snake and the intellect of a hyena. O! I thank my stars that you do not believe it. You cannot believe it, and you never will believe it. Old Jonathan Edwards, the dear old soul, he is in heaven I suppose, said: "Can the believing husband in heaven be happy with his unbelieving wife in hell? Can the believing father in heaven be happy with his unbelieving children in hell? Can the loving wife in heaven be happy with her unbelieving husband in hell? I tell you yea. Such will be their sense of justice that it will increase rather than diminish their happiness.”

Think of these infamous doctrines that have been taught in the name of religion! Do not stuff these things into the minds of your children. Give them a chance. Let them read. Let them think. Do not treat your children like posts, to be set in the orthodox road, but like trees, that need light and sun and air. Be honest with them. Be fair with them. In old times they used to make all children go to bed when they were not sleepy, and all of them got up when they were sleepy. I say let them go to bed—when they are sleepy and get up when they are not. But they say that will do for the rich, but not for the poor. Well, if the poor have to wake their children early in the morning, it is as easy to wake them with a kiss as with a club. I believe in letting children commence at which end of the dinner they want to.

Let them eat what they want. It is their business. They know what they want to eat. And if they have had their liberty from the first, they can beat any doctor in the world. All the improvement that has ever been made in medicine has been made by the recklessness of patients. Yes, sir. Thousands and thousands of years the doctors wouldn't let a man have water in fever. Every now and then some fellow got reckless and said: "I will die, I am so thirsty," and drank two or three quarts of water and got well. And they kept that up until finally the doctors said, "that is the best thing for a fever you can do.”

I have more confidence to agree with nature about these things than any of the conclusions of the schools. Just let your children have freedom, and they will fall right into your ways and do just as you do. But you try to make them, and there is some magnificent, splendid thing in the human heart that will not be driven. And do you know it is the luckiest thing for this world that ever happened that people are so. What would we have been if the people in any age of the world had done just as the doctors told them? They would have been all dead. What would we have done if, at any age of the world, we had followed implicitly the

direction of the church? We would have been all idiots, every one.

It is a splendid thing that there is always some fellow who won't mind, and will think for himself. And I believe in letting children think for themselves. I believe in having a family like a democracy. If there is anything splendid in this world it is a home of that kind. They used to tell us, "Let your victuals close your mouth." We used to eat as though it was a religious performance. I like to see the children about, and every one telling what he has seen and heard. I like to hear the clatter of the knives and spoons mingling with the laughter of their voices. I had rather hear it than any opera that has ever been put upon the boards. Let them have liberty; let them have freedom, and I tell you your children will love you to death.

Now, I have some excuses to offer for the race to which I belong. I have two. My first excuse is that this is not a very good world to raise folks in anyway. It is not very well adapted to raising magnificent people. There's only a quarter of it land to start with. It is three times better fitted for raising fish than folks, and in that one quarter of land there is not a tenth part fit to raise people on. You can't raise people without a good climate. You have got to have the right kind of climate, and you have got to have certain elements in the soil, or you can't raise good people. Do you know that there is only a little zig-zag strip around the world within which have been produced all men of genius?

The southern hemisphere has never produced a man of genius, never; and never will until civilization, fighting the heat that way and the cold this, widens this portion of the earth until it is capable of producing great men and great women. It is the same with men that it is with vegetation; you go into a garden, and find there flowers growing. And as you go up the mountain, the birch and the hemlock and the spruce are to be found. And as you go toward the top, you find little, stunted trees getting a miserable subsistence out of the crevices of the rocks, and you go on up and up and up, until finally you find at the top little moss-like freckles. You might as well try to raise flowers where those freckles grow as to raise great men and women where you haven't got the soil.

I don't believe man ever came to any high station without woman. There has got to be some restraint, something to make you prudent, something to make you industrious. And in a country where you don't need any bed quilt but a cloud, revolution is the normal condition of the people. You have got to have the fireside; you have got to have the home, and there by the fireside will grow and bloom the fruits of the human race. I recollect a while ago I was in Washington when they were trying to annex Santo Domingo. They said: "We want to take in Santo Domingo." Said I: "We don't want it." "Why," said they, "it is the best climate the earth can produce. There is everything you want." "Yes," said I, "but it won't produce men. We don't want it. We have got soil enough

now. Take 5,000 ministers from New England, 5,000 presidents of colleges, and 5,000 solid business men, and their families, and take them to Santo Domingo; and then you will see the effect of climate. The second generation, you will see barefooted boys riding bareback on a mule, with their hair sticking out of the top of their sombreros, with a rooster under each arm, going to a cock-fight on Sunday.”

You have got to have the soil; you have got to have the climate, and you have got to have another thing—you have got to have the fireside. That is one excuse I have for us.

The next excuse is that I think we came up from the lower animals. Else how can you account for all this snake and hyena and jackal in man? Now, when I first heard that doctrine, I didn't like it. I felt sorry for people who had nothing but ancestors to be proud of. It touched my heart to think that they would have to go back to the Duke Orangutan or the Duchess Chimpanzee. I was sorry, and I hated to believe it. I don't know that it is the truth now. I am not satisfied upon that question; I stand about eight to seven. I thought it over. I read about it. I read about these rudimentary bones and muscles. I didn't like that. I read that everybody had rudimentary muscles coming from the ear right down here (indicating); that the most intellectual people in the world have got them. I say, "What are they?" "Rudimentary muscles." "What kind of muscles?" "Muscles that your ancestors used to have fully developed." "What for?" "To flap their ears with."

Well, whether we ever had them or not, I know of lots of men who ought to have them yet. And finally I said, "Well, I guess we came up from the lower animals." I thought it all over; the best I could, and I said, "I guess we did." And after a while I began to like it, and I like it better now than I did before.

Do you know that I would rather belong to a race that started with skull-less vertebrae in the dim Laurentian seas, wiggling without knowing why they wiggled, swimming without knowing where they were going; but kept developing and getting a little further up and a little further up, all through the animal world, and finally striking this chap in the dug-out. A getting a little bigger, and this fellow calling that fellow a heretic, and that fellow calling the other an infidel, and so on. For in the history of the world, the man who has been ahead has always been called a heretic. Recollect this! I would rather come from a race that started from that skull-less vertebrae, and came up and up and up, and finally produced Shakespeare, who found the human intellect wallowing in a hut, and touched it with a wand of his genius, and it became a palace—dome and pinnacle. I would rather belong to a race that commenced then, and produced Shakespeare, with the eternal hope of an infinite future for the children of progress leading from the far horizon, beckoning men forward—forward and onward forever. I had rather belong to this race, and commence there, with that hope, than to have sprung from a perfect pair on which the Lord has lost money every

day since.

These are the excuses I have for my race.

Now, my friends, let me say another thing. I do not pretend to have floated even with the heights of thought; I do not pretend to have fathomed the abyss. All I pretend is to give simply my honest thought. Every creed that we have today has upon it the mark of whip and chain and fagot. I do not want it. Free labor will give us wealth, and has given us wealth, and why? Because a free brain goes into partnership with a free hand. That is why. And when a man works for his wife and children, the problem of liberty is, how to do the most work in the shortest space of time; but the problem of slavery is, how to do the least work in the longest space of time. Slavery is poverty; liberty is wealth.

It is the same in thought. Free thought will give us truth; and the man who is not in favor of free thought occupies the same relation to those he can govern that the slaveholder occupied to his slaves, exactly. Free thought will give us wealth. There has not been a generation of free thought yet.

It will be time to write a creed when there have been a few generations of free-brained men and splendid women in this world. I don't know what the future may bring forth; I don't know what inventions are in the brain of the future; I don't know what garments may be woven, with the years to come; but I do know, coming from the infinite sea of the future, there will never touch this "bank and shoal of time" a greater blessing, a grander glory, than liberty for man, woman and child.

Oh, liberty! Float not forever in the far horizon! Remain not forever in the dream of the enthusiast and the poet and the philanthropist! But come and take up thine abode with the children of men forever!

Ingersoll's Lecture on "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 don't 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 tonight goes far toward justifying the accusation.

It gives me immense pleasure to say to this immense audience that orthodox religion is dying out of the civilized world. It is a sick man. It has been attacked with two diseases—softening of the brain and ossification of the heart. It is a religion that no longer satisfies the intelligence of this county; 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.

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 stands youth and joy; and, when an old religion dies, a better one is born. When we find out that an assertion is a falsehood, a shining truth takes its place, and we need not fear the destruction of the false. The more false we destroy the more room there will be for the true. There was a time when the astrologer sought to read in the stars the fate of men and nations. The astrologer has faded from the world, but the astronomer has taken his place. There was a time when the poor alchemist, bent and wrinkled and old, over his crucible, endeavored to find some secret by which he could change the baser metals into purest gold. The alchemist is gone; the chemist took his place; and, although he finds nothing to change metals into gold, he finds something that covers the earth with wealth. There was a time when the soothsayer and auger flourished, and after them came the parson and the priest; and the parson and priest must go. 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 was 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. The church, however, dies a little hard. 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. 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 stagecoach and the locomotive. But the stage-coach had to go. It had its day of glory and power, but it is gone. It went West. In a little while it will be driven into the Pacific, with the last Indian aboard. 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 demonstrated truth is liable to die. That is the order of nature. Words die. Every language has a cemetery. Every now and then a word dies and a tombstone is erected, and across it is written 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 alopathists reigned supreme. If there was anything the matter with a man, they let out his blood. Called to the bedside, they took him to the edge of eternity with medicine, and then practiced all their art to bring him back to life. One can hardly imagine how perfect a constitution it took a few years ago to stand the assault of a doctor. 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 couldn't 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. Think of the amount of money that has been invested in superstition! Think of the schools that have been founded for the more general diffusion of useless knowledge! Think of the colleges wherein men are taught that it is dangerous to think, and that they must never use their brains except in 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! Think of those who grow rich on credulity and who fatten on faith! Do you suppose they are going to die without a struggle? They will die if they don't struggle. What are they to do? From the bottom of my heart I sympathize with the poor clergyman that has had all his common sense educated out of him, and is now to be thrown 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 criticize the pulpit. What is the man to do? If he suddenly change, he is gone. If he preaches what he really believes, he will get notice to quit. And yet if he and the congregation would come together and be

perfectly honest, they would all admit they didn't believe anything of it.

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 don't believe in the bible." The other replied: "Neither do I." I have often thought how splendid it would be if the ministers could but come together and say: "Now let us be honest. Let us tell each other, honor bright—like Dr. Currie did in the meeting here the other day—let us tell just what we believe." They tell a story that in the old time a lot of people, about twenty, were in Texas in a little hotel, and one fellow got up before the fire, put his hands behind him, and says he: "Boys, let us all tell our real names." If the ministers and the congregations would only tell their real thoughts they would find that they are nearly as bad as I am, and that they believe just about as little.

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 don't tell it as we believe it." "Well, but I tell it as you have it written in your creed." "Oh, well," he says, "we don't mind that any more." "Well, why don't you 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 don't 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 doesn't 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. When he changes his views, he should step down and out like a man, and say: "I don't believe your doctrine, and I will not preach it. You must hire some bigger fool than I am."

But I find that I get the creed very nearly right. Today 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 tonight, 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. They say, now, that there is this 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 doesn’t 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 that you don’t 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. 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. 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 absolutely 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 doesn’t 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, dying by famine, if there is above us a ruler who is infinitely good and infinitely powerful?

I don’t say there is none. I don’t know. As I have said before, this is the only planet I was ever on. I live in one of the rural districts of the universe. I know not about these things as much as the clergy. And if they know no more about the other world than they do about this, it is not worth mentioning. How do they answer all this? They say that God ”permits it.” What would you say to me if I stood by and saw a ruffian beat out the brains of a child, when I had full and perfect power to prevent it? You would say truthfully that I was as bad as the

murderer. That is what you would say. Is it possible for this God to prevent it? Then, if He doesn't, 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. Didn't He 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. Why not? And if God made a man whom He knew would commit murder, then God is guilty of that murder. If God made a man, knowing 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. 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.

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 for ever." I don't 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 cannot by any possibility love the unknown. We can love truth, because truth adds to human happiness. We can love justice, because it preserves human joy. We can love charity. We can love every form of goodness that we know, or of which we can conceive, but we cannot love the infinitely unknown. And how can we be made in the image of something that has neither body and parts nor passions?

"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. 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 middle of it? Wasn't there room outside of the garden to put His tree, if He didn't want people to eat His apple? If I didn't want a man to eat my fruit I would not put him in my orchard.

Does anybody now believe in the snake story? 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? What did He make him for? Why didn't He tell Adam and Eve

about this fellow? Why didn't he watch the devil instead of watching Adam and Eve? Instead of turning them out, why didn't He keep him from getting in? Why didn't He have His flood first and drown the devil, before He made man and woman?

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, knowing all the while what would happen, made them on purpose so it would happen; and then what does he do? Holds all of us responsible; and we were not there. Here is a representative before the constituency had been born. Before I am bound by a representative, I want a chance to vote for or against him; and if I had been there, and known all the circumstances, I should have voted against him. And yet, I am held responsible.

What did Adam do? I cannot 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. 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.

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. 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. Leave out the history of the church, and there is nothing in this world to prove the depravity of man left.

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!" 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 cannot make a soul that is not totally depraved, I respectfully suggest, should retire from the business. And if a god has made us, knowing that we would be totally depraved, why should we go to the same being for repairs?

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 fellowman, 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. He must admit that he ought to be damned, and that of the two he prefers it, before God will consent to save him. I 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."

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.

The church tells us that men, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, upheld the institution of polygamy—I deny it; that under the guidance 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 he 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. I want—if there he a God—I want Him to write in the book of his eternal remembrance that I denied these lies for Him.

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

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 afterward took upon Himself flesh and came to Jerusalem, and taught a different religion, and the Jews killed Him—did it ever occur to you that He reaped exactly what he had sown? Did it ever occur to you that He fell a victim to His own tyranny, and was destroyed by His own 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.

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. When He saw him quietly in his grave He was satisfied. The muscles relaxed, and a smile broke over the Divine face. But in the new testament the trouble commences just at death. In the new testament God

is to wreak His revenge forever and ever. It was reserved for one who said, "Love your enemies," to tear asunder the veil between time and eternity and fix the horrified gaze of men upon the gulfs of eternal fire. The new testament is just as much worse than the old, as hell is worse than sleep; just as much worse as infinite cruelty is worse than 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.

"We believe that Jesus Christ came to establish among men the Kingdom of God, the reign of truth and love, of righteousness and peace."

Well, that may have been the object of Jesus Christ. I do not deny it. But what was the result? The Christian world has caused more war than all the rest of the world 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: "I came not to bring peace, but a sword." And the sword was brought. What are the Christian nations doing today in Europe? Is there a solitary Christian nation that will trust any other? How many millions of Christians are in the uniform of everlasting forgiveness, loving their enemies? 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."

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 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. This is the religion of peace—the religion that invented the Krupp gun, that will hurl a bullet weighing 2,000 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.

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. 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!"

What do they teach today? Every murderer goes to heaven; there is only one step from the gallows to God; only one jerk between the halter and heaven. That is taught by this 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; let it be understood that he can have no forgiveness through the church; and let the Protestant understand that when he has committed that crime, the community will not pray him into heaven. Let him go with his victim. The victim, you know, dying in his sins, goes to hell, and the murderer has the happiness of seeing him there. 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. And yet that is the religion of universal peace to everybody.

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? How many people are being born a year? About fifty millions. How many are you converting a year; really, truthfully? Five or six thousand. I think I have overestimated the number. Is orthodox Christianity on the increase? No. There are a hundred times as many unbelievers in orthodox Christianity as there were ten years ago. What are you doing in the missionary World? How long is it since you converted a Chinaman? A fine missionary religion, to send missionaries, with their bibles and tracts, to China, but if a Chinaman comes here, mob him, simply to show him the difference between the practical and theoretical workings of the Christian religion. How long since you have had a convert in India? In my judgment, never; there never has been an intelligent Hindoo 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. They get money from poor old ladies, trembling on the edge of the grave, and

go and tell them stories how hungry the average Chinaman is for a copy of the new testament, and paint the sad condition of a gentleman in the interior of Africa, without the work of Dr. McCosh, longing for a copy of the Princeton Review. In my judgment, it is a book that would suit a savage. Thus money is scared from the dying and frightened from the old and feeble. About how long is it before this kingdom is to be established?

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 thought? Here is a man, for instance, that weighs 200 pounds, and gets sick and dies weighing 120; how much will he weigh in the morning of the resurrection? Here is a cannibal, who eats another man; and we know that the atoms that 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 in an action of replevin brought by the missionary against the cannibal? 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, who tell us that they believe in the resurrection of the body.

They know better. There is not one so ignorant but what 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, 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. Does anybody believe in that now that has got the slightest sense?—one who knows enough to chew gum without a string?"

"The issues of which are everlasting punishment for the wicked and everlasting life for the redeemed. "That is the doctrine today 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 sepulchre of Christ. That commenced in the eleventh century and ended in 1291. Europe was almost depopulated. For every man owed a debt, the debt was discharged if he put a cross upon his breast and joined the Crusades. No matter what crime he had committed the doors of the prison were open for him to join the 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 today in the orthodox world. Until 1291 they endeavored to get that sepulchre, 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.

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 today. 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 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, 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 the 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, 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 are increased. 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. You will go off the edge." 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." 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. 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 simply 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 his great work. In 1616 the system of Copernicus was condemned by the pope, by the infallible Catholic church, and the church is about as near right upon that subject as upon any other. The system of Copernicus was denounced. And how long do you suppose the church fought that? Let me tell you. It was revoked by Pius VII. in the year of grace 1821. For 205 years after the death of Copernicus 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. Then came Kepler in 1609, and you may almost date the birth of science from the night that Kepler discovered his first law. That was the 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. I have not time to speak of the others—of Galileo, of Leonardo da Vinci, 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, circumstances, and facts were ever active. And now you will see the man who depends entirely upon special providence gets his life insured. He has more confidence even in one of these companies than he has in the whole Trinity. We found by statistics that there were just so many crimes on an average committed; just so many crimes of one kind and so many of another; just so many

suicides, so many deaths by drowning; 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 tonight statistics utterly demolish the idea of special providence. Only the other day a gentleman was telling me of a case of special providence. He knew it. He had been the subject of it. Yes, sir! A few years ago he was about to go on a ship when he was detained; he didn't 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?" Think of the infinite egotism of such a doctrine. Here is a man that fails to go upon a ship with 500 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 didn't happen to go! And he thinks that God, the infinite being, interfered in his poor little withered behalf and let the rest all go. That is special providence!

You know we have a custom every year of issuing a proclamation of thanksgiving. We say to God, "Although You have afflicted all the other countries, although You have sent war, and desolation, and famine on everybody else, we have been such good children that you have been kind to us, and we hope you will keep on." It don't make a bit of difference whether we have good times or not—not a bit; the thanksgiving is always exactly the same. I remember a few years ago a governor of Iowa got out a proclamation of that kind. He went on to tell how thankful the people were, how prosperous the State had been; and there was a young fellow in the State who got out another proclamation, saying: "Fearing that the Lord might be misled by official correspondence," 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.

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. This century will be called Darwin's century, one of the greatest men who ever touched this globe. He has explained more of the phenomena of life than all of the religious teachers. Write the name of Charles Darwin 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. His doctrine of evolution, his doctrine of the survival of the fittest, his doctrine of the origin of species, has removed in every thinking mind the last vestige of orthodox Christianity. He has not only stated, but he has demonstrated, that the inspired writer knew

nothing of this world, nothing of the origin of man, nothing of geology, nothing of astronomy, nothing of nature; that the bible is a book written by ignorance—by the instigation of fear! Think of the man 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. 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.

Charles Darwin conquered the intellectual world, and the doctrine of evolution is now an accepted fact. His light has broken in on some of the early clergy, and the greatest man who today occupies the pulpit is a believer in the evolution theory of Charles Darwin—and that is Henry Ward Beecher—a man of more brains than the entire clergy of that entire church put together. And yet we are told in this little creed that orthodox religion is about to conquer the world. It will be driven to the wilds of Africa. It must go to some savage country; it has lost its hold upon civilization, and I tell you it is unfortunate to have a religion that cannot be accepted by the intellect of a nation. It is unfortunate to have a religion against which every good and noble heart protests. Let us have a good one or none. O! 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"—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. Then which day will you keep? Suppose you could get to the north pole, you could prevent Sunday from ever overtaking you. You could walk around the other way faster than the world could revolve. How would you keep Sunday then? Suppose we ever invent any thing that can go 1,000 miles an hour? We can just chase Sunday clear around the globe. Is there anything that can be more perfectly absurd than that a space of time can be holy! You might as well talk about a pious vacuum. 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 chapter of Corinthians 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." 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 don't think it reads that way." He says, "Who is reading this?" "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."

I keep going back to this book; I keep going back to the miracles, to the prophecies, to the 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? What are we going to do if we have no bible to quarrel about? What are we to do without hell? What are we going to do with our enemies? What are we going to do with the people we love but don't like? They tell me that there never would have been any civilization if it had not been for this bible. Um! 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. 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 Lucretius to get along without the bible? How did the great and glorious of that empire? And what shall we say of Greece? No bible. Compare Athens with Jerusalem. From Athens 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. The Hindoos had no bible; they had been forsaken by the creator, and yet they became the greatest metaphysicians of the world. Egypt had no bible. Compare 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 cannot believe. I cannot—I cannot believe in the miraculous origin of Jesus Christ. I believe He was the son of Joseph and Mary; that Joseph and Mary had been duly and legally married; that He was the legitimate offspring of that marriage, and nobody ever believed the contrary until He had been dead 150 years. Neither Matthew, Mark nor Luke ever dreamed that He was of divine origin. He did not say to either Matthew, Mark or Luke, or to any one in their hearing, that He was the son of God, or that He was miraculously conceived. He did not say it. 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. I would not believe it now! I cannot believe it then. I would not believe people I know, much less would I believe people I don't know. 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? 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 interpolated the words "as was supposed." Why, then, do they give a supposed genealogy. It will not do. And that is a thing that cannot in any way, by any human testimony, be established; and if it is important for us to know that He was the Son of God, I say then that it devolves upon God to give us evidence. Let Him write it across the face of the heavens, in every language of mankind. If it is necessary for us to believe it, let it grow on every leaf next year. No man should be damned for not believing unless the evidence is overwhelming. And he ought not to be made to depend upon say-so. He should have it directly for himself. A man says God told him so and so, and he tells me, and I haven't 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 4,000 or 5,000 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 don't they send missionaries there with copies of the old testament? 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.

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 miracle was ever performed, and if there was, you can't 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 veins. They say that happened. I don't know. There is one wonderful thing about the dead people that were raised—we don't hear of them any more. 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 tonight. 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?" But nobody ever paid the slightest attention to them there. They didn't even excite interest when they died the second time. Nobody said, "Why, that man isn't afraid. He has been there." Not a

word. They pass away quietly. You see I don't believe it. There is something wrong somewhere about that business. And then there is another trouble in my mind. Now, you know I may suffer eternal punishment for all this.

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, oh grave, give up thy dead," and the husband should rise and in a moment after have his lips upon his wife's, and the little children with their arms around his neck. Suppose that it is so. Do you think that the people of Chicago would kill him? Do you think any one would wish to crucify him? Do you not rather believe that every one who had a loved one out in that cemetery would go to him, even upon their knees, and beg him 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 tonight if there shall ever appear on 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. It was never dreamed that he did a miracle until 100 years after he was dead.

There is another miracle I do not believe, I cannot 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 didn't He 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 didn't He? Simply because the thing never happened. I cannot 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 every one believed in miracles. Nobody had any standing as a teacher, a philosopher, a governor, or a king, about whom there was not a 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 cannot 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. If He left in the night He went exactly the opposite way from what He would in the day. 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 doesn't speak of it at all. On the contrary, he says that the last words of Christ were: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." 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 meagre 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? Did he see Him after He had sat down? 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. 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 here gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus that was taken up into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go up into Heaven." Matthew didn't see that; Mark forgot it; Luke didn't think it was worth mentioning, and John didn't believe it; and yet upon that evidence we are led to believe that the most miraculous of all miracles actually occurred. I cannot 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 didn't cast out devils; these men had fits." 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, and the fits at that time were in a crazy man. And the fits made a contract that they would go out of the man provided they would be permitted to go into swine. How can fits that attack a man take up a residence in swine? The church must not give up the devil. He is the right bower. No devil, no hell; no hell, no preacher; no fire, no insurance. I read another miracle—that this devil took Christ and put him on the pinnacle of a temple. Was that fits, too? 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. 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—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. 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. 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? God cannot forgive me for that. They say when He was in Jerusalem, He forgave His murderers. Now He won't forgive an honest man for differing with Him on the subject of the Trinity. 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 cannot hurt Him. He certainly ought to be as generous as He asks us to be. And I want no God to forgive me unless I 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 today 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. The question was whether in these revivals, when they were trying to rescue souls from eternal torture, they would allow colored people to occupy seats with white people, and that revivalist, preaching the unsearchable richness 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, swap harps with them, 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 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. 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 cannot help Him. You had better do what you can than to be always pretending to do what you cannot.

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 establish 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 jailor, 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—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. That doctrine came from the fanged mouths of wild beasts, and yet it is the "glad tidings of great joy."

"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 tonight. It don't appear to make much difference, however, with this church. They go right on enjoying themselves as well as ever. If their doctrine is true, Benjamin Franklin, one of the wisest, and best of men, who did so much to give us here a free government, is suffering the tyranny of God tonight, while he endeavored to establish freedom among men. If the churches were honest, their preachers would tell their hearts, "Benjamin Franklin is in hell, and we warn any and all the youth not to imitate Benjamin Franklin. Thomas Jefferson, 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 in the bottomless pit. As long as the ashes are warm, I shall denounce this infamous doctrine.

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. 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, who shed light, and who added to the intellectual wealth of mankind, Goethe, and Schiller, and Lessing, who almost created the German language—all gone! All suffering the wrath of God tonight, and every time an angel thinks of one of those men he gives his harp an extra twang.

La Place, who read the heaven like an open book—he is there. Robert Burns, 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 a lingering crucifixion. And yet that man added to the tenderness of human heart. Dickens, who put a shield of pity before the flesh of childhood God is getting even with him. Our own Ralph Waldo Emerson, although he had a thousand opportunities to hear Methodist clergymen, scorned the means of grace, and the Holy Ghost is delighted that he is in hell tonight.

Longfellow 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. He loved his fellow-men; he did what he could to free the slaves; he did what he could to make mankind happy; but God was just waiting for him. He had His constable right there. Thomas Paine, 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. Comte, 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, who abolished torture in France; who did more for human liberty than any other man, living or dead; who was the assassin of superstition, and whose dagger still rusts in the heart of Catholicism—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. Geordani Bruno, Benedict Spinoza, Diderot, 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. 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, the philosopher, he is there with the rest.

Beethoven, the Shakespeare of music, he has been lost, and Wagner, the master of melody, and who has made the air of this world rich forever, he is there, and they have better music in hell than in heaven.

Shelley, whose soul, like his own skylark, was a winged joy—he has been damned for many, many years; and Shakespeare, the greatest of the human race, who has done more to elevate mankind than all the priests who ever lived and died—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 tonight. 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 prophesy 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, 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 had with this Christian religion—its infinite heartlessness; and I cannot tell them too often that during our last war Christians who knew that if they were shot they would go right to heaven, went and hired wicked men to take their places, perfectly willing 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 every one who hears me tonight, I beg, I implore, I beseech you never give another dollar to build a church in which that lie is preached. Never give another cent to send a missionary with his mouth stuffed with that falsehood to a foreign land. Why, they say, the heathen will go to heaven 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 won't believe it. Don't 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 alone with the angels. I don't know whether I would like the angels. I don't 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. 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. I will stay with the folks. 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 any one 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.

Such a religion is demoralizing; and how are you to get there? On the efforts of another. You are to be perpetually a heavenly pauper, and you will have to admit through all eternity that you never would have got here if you hadn't got frightened. "I am here," you will say, "I have these wings, I have this musical instrument, because I was scared." 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—he 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 the 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 no 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, 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 tomorrow, won't it? And just as appropriate then as today, and if appropriate at any time, appropriate through all eternity. What I say is this: There is no world—there can be no world—in which every human being will not have an opportunity of doing right. That is my objection to this Christian religion, and if the love of earth is not the love of heaven, if those 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, don't blow! Let me alone! 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 tried, I would like to see the fabric of our civilization crumble and fall to 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.

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. I believe in the religion of the family. I believe that the roof-tree is sacred from the smallest fibre 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. 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 cannot afford to damn a man in the next world who has made a happy family in this. God cannot afford to cast over the battlements of heaven the man who has built a happy home here. God cannot afford to be un pitying to a human heart capable of pity. God cannot clothe with fire the man who has clothed the naked here; and God cannot send to eternal pain a man who has done something toward improving the condition of his fellow-man. If he can, I had rather go to hell than to heaven and keep the company of such a God.

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 it; therefore we wish to love. 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. 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 that 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 in Malachi. 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 them 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. As though some would be counted unworthy to obtain the resurrection of the dead. And, in another place: "Seek for honor, glory, immortality." If you have got it, why seek for it? And in another place: "God, who alone hath immortality;" and yet they tell us that we get our ideas of immortality from the bible. I deny it. If Christ was in fact God, why didn't He plainly say there was another life? Why didn't He tell us something about it? Why didn't He 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 didn't know. 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. 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 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. 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 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 didn't 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 cannot say. We cannot say whether death is a wall or a door; the beginning or end of a day; the spreading of pinions too soar or the folding forever of wings; whether it is the rising or the setting of sun, or an endless life that brings rapture and love to every one—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 Danaidae 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 churches 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.

Ingersoll's Lecture on "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.”

I am going to talk mostly outside that circle tonight.

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. 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 entrenched 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 fetishism. 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. What a warning to baggage smashers of the present day.

We find also that God concocted a hair oil and threatened death to any one 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 this is carrying protection too far. 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. 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 a 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, "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 were unknown. Now we all know that there is 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 specified. 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? Calling for the aid of a mob to enforce His will here, compare that God with a man, even with Henry Bergh. 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.

It is 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.

Let us take another step; let us examine the Presbyterian confession of faith. If it be possible 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 don't like Him. Now it occurred to God that the light of nature was somewhat weak, and He thought He'd light another burner. 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's the word of God? You're 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. 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. You have only to believe it. You see that by the decree of God some men and 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 'em 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.

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 didn't He stop right there? Why didn't He kill Adam and Eve and make another pair who didn't 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 didn't He have His flood first, and then drown the devil? 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't man help himself? No, I'll show you, God's got him. Listen to this. [Reads extracts.] So that a natural man is not only dead in sin and unable to accomplish salvation, but he is also incapable of preparing himself therefore. Absolutely incapable of taking a trick. He is saved, if at all, completely by the mercy of God. If that's the case, then why doesn't He convert us all? Oh, He doesn't. He wishes to send the most of us to hell—to show His justice. 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 dead wood on God. 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? Something wrong about that. I am inclined to think that the Presbyterian church is wrong. 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. An infinite God, by practicing a reasonable economy, can get along without 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. God, you see, loves us. 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, 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.

The next great doctrine is on the preservation of the saints. Now, there are peculiarities about saints. They are saints without their own knowledge or free will; they may even be down on saints, but its no good. God has got a rolling hitch on them, and they have to come into the kingdom sooner or later. 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. 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. I thank them for that; but now let's see what these tender Presbyterians say of other churches. Here it is:

This confession of faith calls the pope of Rome anti-Christ 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 entrust 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.

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. 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. To whom will these atoms belong on the morning of the resurrection?

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 cannot 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 God: "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 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."

Last night there was a fire in Philadelphia, and at a window fifty feet above the ground 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 mad house.

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? 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? 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, Kepler, Copernicus, wherever a ray of light appeared in the ecclesiastical darkness. But I want to tell this minister tonight, and all others like him, that that day is passed. All the churches in the United States can not even crush me. 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.

I'll 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, to persecute for opinion's sake, to abuse your wife and children, to increase in any manner the sum of human misery.

I'll tell you what is sacred. Our bodies are sacred, our rights are sacred, justice and liberty are sacred. I'll 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.

Ingersoll's Lecture entitled "Some Reasons Why"

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 1,500 years of persecution, of 6,000 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. 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 being can not walk, cannot receive, and a finite being cannot 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. 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 cannot by any possibility help the infinite, or the infinite be indebted to the finite; that the finite cannot 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. 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. Not 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. If 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. 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 cannot 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, 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 "Isn't that beautiful!" And he looked and said: "I'll bet you can dig clams right there."

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!"

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 couldn't 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 don't know exactly how Smith will understand my words; but if I were infinite I would be bound to use the words that I know Smith would get my exact idea from. If God intended to make a revelation to me He has to make it to me through my brain and my reasoning. He cannot make a revelation to another man for me. That other man will have God's word for it but I will only have that man's word for it. As that man has been dead for several thousand years, and as I don't know what his reputation was for truth and veracity in the neighborhood in which he lived, 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?

The inspiration of the bible depends upon the ignorance of the gentleman who reads it. 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. 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. 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 didn't pay much attention to them. He wrought thousands of miracles to convince them that He was God.

Isn't it perfectly wonderful that the priest of one religion never believes the miracles told by the priest of another? Is it possible that they know each other? 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 didn't appear to take a vivid interest in the story, so one said to him, "You don't 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 today are called savage, and with the exception of the Feejee islanders, some tribes in Central Africa, and a few citizens of Delaware, no human being can be found degraded enough to agree upon those subjects with Jehovah.

Today, 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 highest 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 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.

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 4,000 years ago; yet they tell me God is just as good now as he was then, and the devil just as bad now as God 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 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?

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. If 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. 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. After you get them to eat cooked missionaries, you will then, without their knowing it, occasionally slip in a little mutton. We will go on gradually decreasing missionaries and increasing mutton until finally the last will be so cultivated that they will prefer the sheep to the priest, I think the missionaries would object to that mode, of course.

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

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 the very fact that the witnesses disagree in minor matters 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? If you want to spread it, send copies. 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? One is enough, and if anybody has got any use for it he can copy that one. The very fact that 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; a murder has been committed, and we have got to have a hanging—we don't care who." Under the Mosaic dispensation there was no remission of sins without the shedding of blood. If a man committed a 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. 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.

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

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.

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 won't 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 the 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. 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." I have a right to think; I cannot control my belief; my brain is my castle, and if I don't defend it, my soul becomes a slave and a serf.

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. I am told in this testament to love my enemies. I cannot; I will not. I don't hate enemies; I don't wish to injure enemies, but I don't care about seeing them. I don't like them. I love my friends, and the man who loves enemies and friends loves me. 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. While the church said, "love your enemies," in her sacred vestments gleamed the daggers of assassination. With her cunning hand, she wore the purple for hypocrisy, and placed the crown upon the brow of crime.

For more than one thousand years larceny held the scales of justice, and hypocrisy wore the mitre, and the tiara of 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. If Christ was God, why did He not tell His disciples, and through them, the world, "Man shall not persecute his fellow-man?" Why didn't He say, "I am God?" Why didn't He explain the doctrine of the Trinity? Why didn't He tell what manner of baptism was pleasing to Him? Why didn't He say the old testament is true? Why didn't He write His testament himself? Why did He leave His words to accident, to ignorance, to malice, and to chance? Why didn't He 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? 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 compared 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 who is to be eternally damned is not a conspicuous success. Infinite Wisdom has no right to make an instrument 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.

A few days ago the bark Tiger was found upon the wide sea 126 days from Liverpool. For nine days not a mouthful of food or a drop of water was to be had. There was on board the captain, mate, and eleven men. When they had been out 117 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't 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 tonight 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? It won't 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 Saint Paul for steamships and locomotives, to the four Gospels for telegraphs and sewing-machines, to the Apocalypse; for looms, saw-mills, and telephones; and that to the sermon on the mount we are indebted for mortars and Krupp guns. 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 couldn't have done much worse without a bible.

God must have known 6,000 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 didn't He give a few leaves to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden? Take from the bible the miracles, and I admit that the good passages are true. If they are true they don't 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. Reason must be the final arbiter. An inspired book cannot 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—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 cannot interpolate it; you cannot 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.

Ingersoll's Lecture on Intellectual Development

Ladies and Gentlemen: In the first place I want to admit that there are a great many good people, quite pious people, who don't agree with me and all that proves in the world is, that I don't agree with them. I am not endeavoring to force my ideas or notions upon other people, but I am saying what little I can to induce everybody in the world to grant to every other person every right he claims for himself. I claim, standing

under the flag of nature, under the blue and the stars, that I am the peer of any other man, and have the right to think and express my thoughts. I claim that in the presence of the unknown, and upon a subject that nobody knows anything about, and never did, I have as good a right to guess as anybody else. The gentlemen who hold views against mine, if they had any evidence, would have no fears—not the slightest.

If a man has a diamond that has been examined by the lapidaries of the world, and some ignorant stonecutter tells him that it is nothing but an ordinary rock, he laughs at him; but if it has not been examined by lapidaries, and he is a little suspicious himself that it is not genuine, it makes him mad. Any doctrine that will not bear investigation is not a fit tenant for the mind of an honest man. Any man who is afraid to have his doctrine investigated is not only a coward but a hypocrite. Now, all I ask is simply an opportunity to say my say. I will give that right to everybody else in the world. I understand that owing to my success in the lecture field several clergymen have taken it into their heads to lecture—some of them, I believe, this evening. I say all that I claim is the right I give to others, and any man who will not give that right is a dishonest man, no matter what church he may belong to or not belong to—if he does not freely accord to all others the right to think, he is not an honest man. I said some time ago that if there was any being who would eternally damn one of his children for the expression of an honest opinion that he was not a God, but that he was a demon; and from that they have said first, that I did not believe in any God, and, secondly, that I called Him a demon. If I did not believe in Him how could I call Him anything? These things hardly hang together. But that makes no difference; I expect to be maligned; I expect to be slandered; I expect to have my reputation blackened by gentlemen who are not fit to blacken my shoes.

But letting that pass—I simply believe in liberty; that is my religion; that is the altar where I worship; that is my shrine—that every human being shall have every right that I have—that is my religion. I am going to live up to it and going to say what little I can to make the American people brave enough and generous enough and kind enough to give everybody else the rights they have themselves. Can there ever be any progress in this world to amount to anything until we have liberty? The thoughts of a man who is not free are not worth much. A man who thinks with the club of a creed above his head—a man who thinks casting his eye askance at the flames of hell, is not apt to have very good thoughts. And for my part, I would not care to have any status or social position even in heaven if I had to admit that I never would have been there only I got scared. When we are frightened we do not think very well. If you want to get at the honest thoughts of a man he must be free. If he is not free you will not get his honest thought. You won't trade with a merchant, if he is free; you won't employ him if he is a lawyer, if he is free; you won't call him if he is a doctor, if he is free; and what are you going to get out of him but hypocrisy. Force will not make thinkers, but hypocrites. A minister told me awhile

ago, "Ingersoll," he says, "if you do not believe the bible you ought not to say so." Says I, "Do you believe the bible?" He says, "I do." I says, "I don't know whether you do or not; maybe you are following the advice you gave me; how shall I know whether you believe it or not?" Now, I shall die without knowing whether that man believed the bible or not. There is no way that I can possibly find out, because he said that even if he did not believe it he would not say so. Now, I read, for instance, a book. Now, let us be honest. Suppose that a clergyman and I were on an island—nobody but us two—and I were to read a book, and I honestly believed it untrue, and he asked me about it—what ought I to say? Ought I to say I believed it, and be lying, or ought I to say I did not?—that is the question; and the church can take its choice between honest men, who differ, and hypocrites, who differ, but say they do not—you can have your choice, all of you.

["These black-coats are the only persons of my acquaintance who resemble the chameleon, in being able to keep one eye directed upwards to heaven, and the other downwards to the good things of this world."—Alex. von Humboldt]

If you give to us liberty, you will have in this country a splendid diversity of individuality; but if on the contrary you say men shall think so and so, you will have the sameness of stupid nonsense. In my judgment, it is the duty of every man to think and express his thoughts; but at the same time do not make martyrs of yourselves.

Those people that are not willing you should be honest, are not worth dying for; they are not worth being a martyr for; and if you are afraid you cannot support your wife and children in this town and express your honest thought, why keep it to yourself, but if there is such a man here he is a living certificate of the meanness of the community in which he lives. Go right along, if you are afraid it will take food from the mouths of your dear babes—if you are afraid you cannot clothe your wife and children, go along with them to church, say amen in as near the right place as you can, if you happen to be awake, and I will do your talking for you.

I will say my say, and the time will come when every man in the country will be astonished that there ever was a time that everybody had not the right to speak his honest thoughts. If there is a man here or in this town, preacher or otherwise, who is not willing that I should think and speak, he is just so much nearer a barbarian than I am. Civilization is liberty, slavery is barbarism; civilization is intelligence, slavery is ignorance; and if we are any nearer free than were our fathers, it is because we have got better heads and more brains in them—that is the reason. Every man who has invented anything for the use and convenience of man has helped raise his fellow-man, and all we have found out of the laws and forces of nature so that we are finally enabled to bring these forces of nature into subjection, to give us better houses, better food, better clothes—these are the real civilizers of our race; and the men

who stand up as prophets and predict hell to their fellow-man, they are not the civilizers of our race; the men who cut each other's throats because they fell out about baptism—they are not the civilizers of my race; the men who built the inquisitions and put into dungeons all the grand and honest men they could find—they are not the civilizers of my race.

The men who have corrupted the imaginations and hearts of men by their infamous dogma of hell—they are not the civilizers of my race. The men who have been predicting good for mankind, the men who have found some way to get us better homes and better houses and better education, the men who have allowed us to make slaves of the blind forces of nature—they have made this world fit to live in.

I want to prove to you if I can that this is all a question of intellectual development, a question of sense, and the more a man knows the more liberal he is; the less a man knows the more bigoted he is. The less a man knows the more certain he is that he knows it, and the more a man knows the better satisfied he is that he is entirely ignorant. Great knowledge is philosophic, and little, narrow, contemptible knowledge is bigoted and hateful. I want to prove it to you. I saw a little while ago models of nearly everything man has made for his use—nearly everything. I saw models of all the watercraft; from the rude dug-out, in which paddled the naked savage, with his forehead about half as high as his teeth were long—all the water craft from that dug-out up to a man of war that carries a hundred guns and miles of canvas; from that rude dug-out to a steamship that turns its brave prow from the port of New York, with three thousand miles of foaming billows before it, not missing a throb or beat of its mighty iron heart from one shore to the other. I saw their ideas of weapons, from the rude club, such as was seized by that same barbarian as he emerged from his den in the morning, hunting a snake for his dinner; from that club to the boomerang, to the dagger, to the sword, to the blunderbuss, to the old flintlock, to the cap-lock, to the needle-gun, to the cannon invented by Krupp, capable of hurling a ball weighing two thousand pounds through eighteen inches of solid steel.

I saw their ideas of defensive armor, from the turtle shell which one of these gentlemen lashed upon his breast preparatory to going to war, or the skin of a porcupine, dried with the quills on, that he pulled on his orthodox head before he sallied forth. By "orthodox" I mean man who has quit growing; not simply in religion, but in everything; whenever a man is done, he is orthodox whenever he thinks he has found out all, he is orthodox whenever he becomes a drag on the swift car of progress, he is orthodox. I saw their defensive armor, from the turtle-shell and the porcupine skin to the shirts of mail of the middle ages, that defied the edge of the sword and the point of the spear. I saw their ideas of agricultural implements, from the crooked stick that was attached to the horn of an ox by some twisted straw, to the agricultural implements of today, that make it possible for a man to cultivate the soil without

being an ignoramus. When they had none of these agricultural implements—when they depended upon one crop—they were superstitious, for if the frosts struck one crop they thought the gods were angry with them.

Now, with the implements, machinery and knowledge of mechanics of today, people have found out that no man can be good enough nor bad enough to cause a frost. After having found out these things are contrary to the laws of nature, they began to raise more than one kind of crop. If the frost strikes one they have the other; if it happens to strike all in that locality there is a surplus somewhere else, and that surplus is distributed by railways and steamers and by the thousand ways that we have to distribute these things; and as a consequence the agriculturist begins to think and reason, and now for the first time in the history of the world the agriculturist begins to stand upon a level with the mechanic and with the man who has confidence in the laws and facts of nature.

I saw there their musical instruments, from the tomtom (that is a hoop with two strings of rawhide drawn across it) to the instruments we have that make the common air blossom with melody. I saw their ideas on ornaments, from a string of the claws of a wild beast that once ornamented the dusky bosom of some savage belle, to the rubies and sapphires and diamonds with which civilization today is familiar. I saw the books, written upon the shoulder-blades of sheep, upon the bark of trees, down to the illustrated volumes that are now in the libraries of the world. I saw their ideas of paintings, from the rude daubs of yellow mud, to the grand pictures we see in the art galleries of today. I saw their ideas of sculpture, from a monster god with several legs, a good many noses, a great many eyes, and one little, contemptible, brainless head, to the sculpture that we have, where the marble is clothed with such personality that it seems almost impudence to touch it without an introduction. I saw all these things, and how men had gradually improved through the generations that are dead. And I saw at the same time a row of men's skulls—skulls from the Bushmen of Australia, skulls from the center of Africa, skulls from the farthest islands of the Pacific, skulls from this country—from the aborigines of America, skulls of the Aztecs, up to the best skulls, or many of the best of the last generation; and I noticed there was the same difference between the skulls as between the products of the skulls, the same between that skull and that, as between the dugout and the man-of-war, as between the dugout and the steamship, as between the tomtom and an opera of Verdi, as between those ancient agricultural implements and ours, as between that yellow daub and that landscape, as between that stone god and a statue of today; and I said to myself, "This is a question of intellectual development; this is a question of brain." The man has advanced just in proportion as he has mingled his thoughts with his labor, and just in proportion that his brain has gotten into partnership with his hand. Man has advanced just as he has developed intellectually, and no other way. That skull was a low den in which

crawled and groped the meaner and baser instincts of mankind, and this was a temple in which dwelt love, liberty and joy.

Why is it that we have advanced in the arts? It is because every incentive has been held out to the world; because we want better clubs or better cannons with which to kill our fellow Christians; we want better music, we want better houses, and any man who will invent them, and any man who will give them to us we will clothe him in gold and glory; we will crown him with honor. That gentleman in his dugout not only had his ideas of mechanics, but he was a politician. His idea of politics was, "Might makes right;" and it will take thousands of years before the world will be willing to say that, "Right makes might." That was his idea of politics, and he had another idea—that all power came from the clouds, and that every armed thief that lived upon the honest labor of mankind had had poured out upon his head the divine oil of authority. He didn't believe the power to govern came from the people; he did not believe that the great mass of people had any right whatever, or that the great mass of people could be allowed the liberty of thought—and we have thousands of such today.

They say thought is dangerous—don't investigate; don't inquire; just believe; shut your eyes, and then you are safe. You trust not hear this man or that man or some other man, or our dear doctrines will be overturned, and we have nobody on our side except a large majority; we have nobody on our side except the wealth and respectability of the world; we have nobody on our side except the infinite God, and we are afraid that one man, in one or two hours, will beat the whole party.

[There is no method of reasoning more common, or more blamable, than in philosophical disputes, to endeavor the refutation of any hypothesis, by a pretense of its dangerous consequences to religion and morality."
—David Hume]

This man in the dugout also had his ideas of religion—that fellow was orthodox, and any man who differed with him he called an infidel, an atheist, an outcast, and warned everybody against him. He had his religion—he believed in hell; he was glad of it; he enjoyed it; it was a great source of comfort to him to think when he didn't like people that he would have the pleasure of looking over and seeing them squirm upon the gridiron. When any man said he didn't believe there was a hell this gentleman got up in his pulpit and called him a hyena. That fellow believed in a devil too; that lowest skull was a devil factory—he believed in him. He believed he had a long tail adorned with a fiery dart; he believed he had wings like a bat, and had a pleasant habit of breathing sulphur; and he believed he had a cloven foot—such as most of your clergymen think I am blessed with myself. They are shepherds of the sheep. The people are the sheep—that is all they are, they have to be watched and guarded by these shepherds and protected from the wolf who wants to reason with them. That is the doctrine. Now, all I claim is the same right to improve on that gentleman's politics, as on the

dug-out, and the same right to improve upon his religion as upon his plough, or the musical instrument known as the tomtom—that is all.

Now, suppose the king and priest, if there was one, and there probably was one, as the farther you go back the more ignorant you find mankind and the thicker you find these gentlemen—suppose the king and priest had said: "That boat is the best boat that ever can be built; we got the model of that from Neptune, the god of the seas, and I guess the god of the water knows how to build a boat, and any man that says he can improve it by putting a stick in the middle with a rag on the end of it, and has any talk about the wind blowing this way, and that, he is a heretic—he is a blasphemer." Honor bright, what, in your judgment, would have been the effect upon the circumnavigation of the globe? I think we would have been on the other side yet. Suppose the king and priests had said: "That plow is the best that ever can be invented; the model of that was given to a pious farmer in a holy dream, and that twisted straw is the ne plus ultra of all twisted things, and any man who says he can out-twist it, we will twist him." Suppose the king and priests had said: "That tomtom is the finest instrument of music in the world—that is the kind of music found in heaven. An angel sat upon the edge of a glorified cloud playing upon that tomtom and became so entranced with the music that in a kind of ecstasy she dropped it and that is how we got it, and any man who talks about putting any improvement on that, he is not fit to live." Let me ask you—do you believe if that had been done that the human ears ever would have been enriched with the divine symphonies of Beethoven?

All I claim is the same right to improve upon this barbarian's ideas of politics and religion as upon everything else, and whether it is an improvement or not, I have a right to suggest it—that is my doctrine. They say to me, "God will punish you forever, if you do these things." Very well. I will settle with Him. I had rather settle with Him than any one of His agents. I do not like them very well. In theology I am a granger—I do not believe in middle-men, what little business I have with heaven I will attend to thyself. Our fathers thought, just as many now think, that you could force men to think your way and if they failed to do it by reason, they tried it another way. I used to read about it when I was a boy—it did not seem to me that these things were true; it did not seem to me that there ever was such heartless bigotry in the heart of man, but there was and is tonight. I used to read about it—I did not appreciate it. I never appreciated it until I saw the arguments of those gentlemen. They used to use just such arguments as that man in the dug-out would have used to the next man ahead of him. This low, miserable skull—this next man was a little higher, and this fellow behind called him a heretic, and the next was still a little higher, and he was called an infidel. And, so it went on through the whole row—always calling the man who was ahead an infidel and a heretic. No man was ever called so who was behind the army of progress. It has always been the man ahead that has been called the heretic. Heresy is the last and best thought always. Heresy extends the

hospitality of the brain to a new idea; that is what the rotting says to the growing; that is what the dweller in the swamp says to the man on the sun-lit hill; that is what the man in the darkness cries out to the grand man upon whose forehead is shining the dawn of a grander day; that is what the coffin says to the cradle. Orthodoxy is a kind of shroud, and heresy is a banner—orthodoxy is a frog and heresy a star shining forever above the cradle of truth. I do not mean simply in religion, I mean in everything, and the idea I wish to impress upon you is that you should keep your minds open to all the influences of nature; you should keep your minds open to reason. Hear what a man has to say, and do not let the turtle-shell of bigotry grow above your brain. Give everybody a chance and an opportunity; that is all.

I saw the arguments that those gentlemen have used on each other through all the ages. I saw a little bit of thumbscrew not more than so long (illustrating), and attached to each end was a screw, and the inner surface was trimmed with little protuberances to prevent their slipping; and when some man doubted—when a man had an idea—then those that did not have an idea put the thumbscrew upon him who did. He had doubted something. For instance, they told him, "Christ says you must love your enemies;" he says, "I do not know about that;" then they said, "We will show you!" "Do unto others as you would be done by," they said is the doctrine. He doubted. "We will show you that it is!" So they put this screw on; and in the name of universal love and universal forgiveness—"pray for those who despitefully use you"—they began screwing these pieces of iron into him—always done in the name of religion—always. It never was done in the name of reason, never was done in the name of science—never. No man was ever persecuted in defense of a truth—never. No man was ever persecuted except in defense of a lie—never.

This man had fallen out with them about something; he did not understand it as they did. For instance he said, "I do not believe there ever was a man whose strength was in his hair." They said: "You don't? We'll show you!" "I do not believe," he says, "that a fish ever swallowed a man to save his life." "You don't? Well, we'll show you!" And so they put this on, and generally the man would recant and say, "Well, I'll take it back." Well I think I should. Such men are not worth dying for. The idea of dying for a man that would tear the flesh of another on account of an honest difference of opinion—such a man is not worth dying for; he is not worth living for, and if I was in a position that I could not send a bullet through his brain, I would recant. I would say: "You write it down and I will sign it—I will admit that there is one God, or a million—suit yourself; one hell or a billion; you just write it—only stop this screw. You are not worth suffering for, you are not worth dying for and I am never going to take the part of any Lord that won't take my part—you just write it down and I'll sign it."

But there was now and then a man who would not do that. He said, "No, I believe I am right, and I will die for it," and I suppose we owe what

little progress we have made to a few men in all ages of the world who really stood by their convictions. The men who stood by the truth and the men who stood by a fact, they are the men that have helped raise this world, and in every age there has been some sublime and tender soul who was true to his convictions, and who really lived to make men better. In every age some men carried the torch of progress and handed it to some other, and it has been carried through all the dark ages of barbarism, and had it not been for such men we would have been naked and uncivilized tonight, with pictures of wild beasts tattooed on our skins, dancing around some dried snake fetish.

When a man would not recant, these men, in the name of the love of the Lord, screwed them down to the last thread of agony and threw them into some dungeon, where, in the throbbing silence of darkness, they suffered the pangs of the fabled damned; and this was done in the name of civilization, love and order, and in the name of the most merciful Christ. There are no thumbscrews now; they are rusting away; but every man in this town who is not willing that another shall do his own thinking and will try to prevent it, has in him the same hellish spirit that made and used that very instrument of torture, and the only reason he does not use it today is because he cannot. The reason that I speak here tonight is because they cannot help it.

I saw at the same time a beautiful little instrument for the propagation of kindness, called "The Scavenger's Daughter." (The lecturer here described and illustrated construction of the instrument.) The victim would be thrown upon that instrument and the strain upon the muscles was such that insanity would sometimes come to his relief. See what we owe to the civilizing influence of the gentlemen who have made a certain idea in metaphysics necessary to salvation—see what we owe to them.

I saw a collar of torture which they put about the neck of their victim, and inside of that there were a hundred points; so that the victim could not stir without the skin being punctured with these points, and after a little while the throat would swell and suffocation would end the agony, and they would have that done in the presence of his wife and weeping children. That was all done so that finally everybody would love everybody else as his brother. I saw a rack. Imagine a wagon with a windlass on each end, and each windlass armed with leather bands, and a ratchet that prevented slipping. The victim was placed upon this.

Maybe he had denied something that some idiot said was true; maybe he had a discussion—a division of opinion with a man, like John Calvin. John Calvin said Christ was the Eternal Son of God and Michael Servetus said that Christ was the son of the Eternal God. That was the only difference of opinion. Think of it! What an important thing it was! How it would have affected the price of food! "Christ is the Eternal Son of God," said one; "No," said the other, "Christ is the Son of Eternal God"—that was all, and for that difference of opinion Michael Servetus was burned at a slow fire of green wood, and the wind happening

to blow the flames from him instead of towards him; he was in the most terrible agony, writhing for minutes and minutes, and hours and hours, and finally he begged and implored those wretches to move him so that the wind would blow the flames against him and destroy him without such hellish agony, but they were so filled with the doctrine of "love your enemies" that they would not do it. I never will, for my part, depend upon any religion that has ever shed a drop of human blood.

[Speaking of the Inquisition, Prof. Draper says: "With such savage alacrity did it carry out its object of protecting the interests of religion, that between 1480 and 1808 it had punished 340,000 persons, and of these nearly 32,000 had been burnt!"—Conflict between Religion and Science]

Upon this rack I have described, this victim was placed, and those chains were attached to his ankles and then to his waist, and clergymen—good men! pious men! men that were shocked at the immorality of their day! They talked about playing cards and the horrible crime of dancing! Oh, how such things shocked them; men going to theaters and seeing a play written by the grandest genius the world ever has produced. How it shocked their sublime and tender souls! But then commenced turning this machine, and they kept on turning until the ankles, knees, hips, elbows, shoulders and wrists were all dislocated and the victim was red with the sweat of agony, and they had standing by a physician to feel the pulse, so that the last faint flutter of life would not leave his veins. Did they wish to save his life? Yes. In mercy? No! Simply that they might have the pleasure of racking him once again. That is the spirit, and it is a spirit born of the doctrine that there is upon the throne of the universe a being who will eternally damn his children, and they said: "If God is going to have the supreme happiness of burning them forever, certainly he ought not to begrudge to us the joy of burning them for an hour or two." That was their doctrine, and when I read these things it seems to me that I have suffered them myself. When I look upon those instruments I look upon them as though I had suffered all these tortures myself. It seems to me as though I had stood upon the shore an exile and looking with tear-filled eyes toward home and native land. It seems as though my nails had been plucked out and into bleeding flesh needles had been thrust; as though my eyelids had been torn away and I had been set out in the ardent rays of the sun; as though I had been set out upon the sands of the sea and drowned by the inexorable tide; as though I had been in the dungeon waiting for the coming footsteps of relief; as though I had been upon the scaffold and seen the glittering axe falling upon me; and seen bending above me the white faces of hypocrite priests; as though I had been taken from my wife and children to the public square, where faggots had been piled around me and the flames had climbed around my limbs and scorched my eyes to blindness; as though my ashes had been scattered by all the hands of hatred; and I feel like saying, that while I live I will do what little I can to preserve and augment the rights of men, women and children; while I live I will do a little something so that they who

come after me shall have the right to think and express that thought. The trouble is those who oppose us pretend they are better than we are. They are more mortal, they are kinder, they are more generous. I deny it. They are not. And if they are the ones that are to be saved in another world, and if those who simply think they are honest, and express that honest thought, are to be damned, there will be but little originality, to say the least of it, in heaven. They say they are better than we are—and to show you how much better they are I have got at home copies of some letters that passed between gentlemen high in the church several hundred years ago, and the question was this: "Ought we to cut out the tongues of blasphemers before we burn them?" And they finally decided that they ought to do so, and I will tell you the reason they gave: They said if they were not cut out that while they were being burned, they might, by their heresies, scandalize the gentleman who would bring the wood; they were too good to hear these things and they might be injured; and the same idea appears to prevail in this world now that they are too good and they must not be shocked.

They say to us: "You must not shock us, and when you say there is no hell we are shocked. You must not say that." When I go to church and they tell me there is a hell I must not get shocked; and if they tell me that there is not only a hell, but that I am going to it, I must not be shocked. Even if they take the next step and act as though they would be glad to see me there, still I must not be shocked. I will agree to keep from being shocked as long as anybody in the world—they can say what they please; I will not get shocked, but let me say it. You send missionaries to Turkey and tell them that the Koran is a lie. You shock them. You tell them that Mahomet was not a prophet. You shock them. It is too bad to shock them. You go to India and you tell them that Vishnu was nothing, Puranas was nothing, that Buddha was nobody, and your Brahma, he is nothing. Why do you shock these people? You should not do that; you ought not to hurt their feelings. I tell you no man on earth has a right to be shocked at the expression of an honest opinion when it is kindly done, and I don't believe there is any God in the universe who has put a curtain over the fact and made it a crime for the honest hand of investigation to endeavor to draw that curtain.

This world has not been fit to live in fifty years. There is no liberty in it—very little. Why, it is only a few years ago that all the Christian nations were engaged in the slave trade. It was not until 1808, that England abolished the slave trade, and up to that time her priests in her churches, and her judges on her benches, owned stock in slave ships, and luxuriated on the profits of piracy and murder; and when a man stood up and denounced it, they mobbed him as though he had been a common burglar or a horse thief. Think of it! It was not until the 28th day of August, 1833, that England abolished slavery in her colonies; and it was not until the first day of January, 1863, that Abraham Lincoln, by direction of the entire North, wiped that infamy out of this country; and I never speak of Abraham Lincoln but I want to say that he was, in my judgment, in many respects the grandest man ever

president of the United States. I say that upon his tomb there ought to be this line—and I know of no other man deserving it so well as he: "Here lies one who, having been clothed with almost absolute power, never abused it except on the side of mercy."

Just think of it! Our churches and best people, as they call themselves, defending the institution of slavery. When I was a little boy I used to see steamers go down the Mississippi river with hundreds of men and women chained hand to hand, and even children, and men standing about them with whips in their hands and pistols in their pockets in the name of liberty, in the name of civilization and in the name of religion! I used to hear them preach to these slaves in the South and the only text they ever took was "Servants, be obedient unto your masters." That was the salutation of the most merciful God to a man whose back was bleeding, that was the salutation of the most merciful God to the slave mother bending over an empty cradle, to the woman from whose breast a child had been stolen—"Servants, be obedient unto you masters." That was what they said to a man running for his life and for his liberty through tangled swamps and listening to the baying of bloodhounds, and when he listened for them the voice came from heaven: "Servants, be obedient unto your masters."

That is civilization. Think what slaves we have been! Think how we have crouched and cringed before wealth even! How they used to cringe in old times before a man who was rich—there are so many of them gone into bankruptcy lately that we are losing a little of our fear.

We used to worship the golden calf, and the worst you can say of us now, is, we worship the gold of the calf, and even the calves are beginning to see this distinction. We used to go down on our knees to every man that held office; now he must fill it if he wishes any respect. We care nothing for the rich, except what will they do with their money? Do they benefit mankind? That is the question. You say this man holds an office. How does he fill it?—that is the question. And there is rapidly growing up in the world an aristocracy of heart and brain—the only aristocracy that has a right to exist. We are getting free. We are thinking in every direction. We are investigating with the microscope and the telescope. We are digging into the earth and finding souvenirs of all the ages. We are finding out something about the laws of health and disease. We are adding years to the span of human life and we are making the world fit to live in. That is what we are doing, and every man that has an honest thought and expresses it, helps, and every man that tries to keep honest thought from being expressed is an obstruction and a hindrance.

Now if men have been slaves what shall we say of women? They have been the slaves of slaves. The meaner a man is, the better he thinks he is than a woman. As a rule, you take an ignorant, brutal man—don't talk to him about a woman governing him, he don't believe it—not he; and nearly every religion of this world has been gallant enough to account

for all the trouble and misfortune we have had by the crime of woman.

Even if it is true, I do not care; I had rather live in a world full of trouble with the woman I love than in heaven with nobody but men. Nearly every religion accounts for all the trouble we have ever had by the crime of woman. I recollect one book where I read an account of what is called the creation—I am not giving the exact words, I will give the substance of it. The supreme being thought best to make a world and one man—never thought about making a woman at that time; making a woman was a second thought, and I am free to admit that second thoughts as a rule are best. He made this world and one man, and put this man in a park, or garden, or public square, or whatever you might call it, to dress and keep it. The man had nothing to do. He moped around there as though he was waiting for a train. And the supreme being noticed that he got lonesome—I am glad He did! It occurred to Him that he would make a companion, and having made the world and one man out of nothing, and having used up all the nothing, He had to take a part of the man to start the woman with—I am not giving the exact language, neither do I say this story is true. I do not know. I would not want to deceive anybody.

So sleep fell upon this man, and they took from his side a rib—the French would call it a cutlet. And out of that they made a woman, and taking into consideration the amount and quality of the raw material used, I look upon it as the most successful job ever accomplished in this world. I am giving just a rough outline of this story. After He got the woman done she was brought to the man—not to see how she liked him, but to see how he liked her. He liked her and they went to keeping house. Before she was made there was really nothing to do; there was no news, no politics, no religion, not even civil service reform. And as the devil had not yet put in an appearance, there was no chance to conciliate him. They started in the housekeeping business, and they were told they could do anything they liked except eat an apple. Of course they ate it. I would have done it myself I know. I am satisfied I would have had an apple off that tree, if I had been there, in fifteen minutes. They were caught at it, and they were turned out, and there was an extra police force put on to keep them from coming in again. And then measles, and whooping-cough, mumps, etc., started in the race of man, roses began to have thorns and snakes began to have teeth, and people began to fight about religion and politics, and they have been fighting and scratching each other's eyes out from that day to this.

I read in another book an account of the same transaction. They tell us the Supreme Brahma made up his mind to make a man, a woman, and a world; and that he put this man and woman in the island of Ceylon. According to the description, it was the most beautiful isle that ever existed; it beggared the description of a Chicago land agent completely. It was delightful; the branches of the trees were so arranged that when the wind swept through them they seemed like a thousand aeolian harps, and the man was named Adami, and the Woman's name was Heva. This book was

written about three or four thousand years before the other one, and all the commentators in this country agree that the story that was written first was copied from the one that was written last. I hope you will not let a matter of three or four thousand years interfere with your ideas on the subject. The Supreme Brahma said: "Let them have a period of courtship, because it is my desire that true love always should precede marriage"—and that was so much better than lugging her up to him and saying, "Do you like her?" that upon my word I said when I read it, "If either one of these stories turn out to be true, I hope it will be this one."

They had a courtship in the starlight and moonlight, and perfume-laden air, with the nightingale singing his song of joy, and they got in love. There was nobody to bother them, no prospective fathers or mothers-in-law, no gossiping neighbors, nobody to say "Young man, how do you propose to support her"—they got in love and they were married, and they started keeping house, and the Supreme Brahma said to them: "You must not leave this island." After awhile the man got uneasy—wanted to go west. He went to the western extremity of the island, and there the devil got up, and when he looked over on the mainland he saw such hills and valleys and torrents, and such mountains crowned with snow; such cataracts, robed in glory, that he went right back to Heva. Says he: "Come over here; it is a thousand times better;" says he: "let us emigrate." She said, like another woman: "No, let well enough alone; we have no rent to pay, and no taxes; we are doing very well now, let us stay where we are." But he insisted, and so she went with him, and when he got to this western extremity, where there was a little neck of land leading to this better land, he took her on his back and walked over, and the moment he got over he heard a crash, and he looked back and this narrow neck of land had sunk into the sea, leaving here and there a rock (and those rocks are called even unto this day the footsteps of Adami), and when he looked back this beautiful mirage had disappeared.

Instead of verdure and flowers there was naught but rocks and sand, and then he heard the voice of the Supreme Brahma crying out cursing them both to the lowest hell, and then it was that Adami said: "Curse me, if you choose, but not her; it was not her fault, it was mine; curse me." That is the kind of a man to start a world with. And the Supreme Brahma said "I will spare her, but I will not spare you." Then she spoke, out of a breast so full of affection that she has left a legacy of love to all her daughters: "If thou wilt not spare him, spare neither me, because I love him." Then the Supreme Brahma said—and I have liked him ever since—"I will spare both, and watch over you and your children forever." Now, really this story appears to me better than the other one. It is loftier; there is more in it than I can admire. In order to show you that humanity does not belong to any particular nation, and that there are great and tender souls everywhere, let me tell you a little more that is in this book. "Blessed is that man, and beloved of all the gods who is afraid of no man, and of whom no man is afraid."

Think of that kind of character! Another: "Man is strength, woman is beauty; man is courage, woman is love; and where the one man loves the one woman the very angels leave heaven and come and sit in that house and sing for joy." I think that is nearly equal to this: "If you do not want your wife, give her a writing of divorcement," and make the mother of your children a houseless wanderer and a vagrant—nearly as good as that.

I believe that marriage should be a perfect partnership; that woman should have all the rights that man has, and one more—the right to be protected. I believe in marriage. It took hundreds and thousands of years for woman to get from a state of abject slavery up to the height even of marriage. I have not the slightest respect for the ideas of those short-haired women and long-haired men who denounce the institution of the family, who denounce the institution of marriage; but I hold in greater contempt the husband who would enslave his wife. I hold in greater contempt the man who is anything in his family love and tenderness, and kindness. I say it took except hundreds of years for woman to come from a state of slavery to marriage; and ladies, the chains that are upon your necks and the bracelets that are put upon your arms were iron, and they have been changed by the touch of the wand of civilization to shining, glittering gold. Woman came from a condition of abject slavery and thousands and thousands of them are in that condition now. I believe marriage should be a perfect and equal partnership. I do not like a man who thinks he is boss. That fellow in the dug-out was always talking about being boss. I do not like a man who thinks he is the head of the family. I do not like a man who thinks he has got authority and that the woman belongs to him—that wants for his wife a slave. I would not have a slave for my wife. I would not want the love of a woman that is not great enough, grand enough, and splendid enough to be free. I will never give to any woman my heart upon whom I afterwards would put chains.

Do you know sometimes I think generosity is about the only virtue there is. How I do hate a man that has to be begged and importuned every minute for a few cents by his wife. "Give me a dollar?" "What did you do with that fifty cents I gave you last Christmas?" If you make your wife a perpetual beggar, what kind of children do you expect to raise with a beggar for their mother? If you want great children, if you want to people this world with great and grand men and women they must be born of love and liberty. I have known men that would trust a woman with their heart—if you call that thing which pushes their blood around a heart; and with their honor—if you call that fear, of getting into the penitentiary, honor; I have known men that would trust that heart and that honor with a woman, but not their pocket-book—not a dollar bill. When I see a man of that kind, I think they know better than I do which of these three articles is the most valuable. I believe if you have got a dollar in the world and you have got to spend it, spend it like a man; spend it like a king, like a prince. If you have to spend it, spend it as though it was a dried leaf, and you were the owner of

unbounded forests. I had rather be a beggar and spend my last dollar like a king than be a king and spend my money like a beggar. What is it worth compared with the love of a splendid woman?

People tell me that is very good doctrine for rich folks, but it won't do for poor folks. I tell you that there is more love in the huts and homes of the poor, than in the mansions of the rich, and the meanest but with love in it is a palace fit for the gods, and a palace without that, is a den only fit for wild beasts. The man who has the love of one splendid woman is a rich man. Joy is wealth, and love is the legal tender of the soul! Love is the only thing that will pay ten percent to borrower and lender both; and if some men were as ashamed of appearing cross in public as they are of appearing tender at home, this world would be infinitely better. I think you can make your home a heaven if you want to—you can make up your minds to that. When a man comes home let him come home like a ray of light in the night bursting through the doors and illuminating the darkness. What right has a man to assassinate joy, and murder happiness in the sanctuary of love—to be a cross man, a peevish man—is that the way he courted? Was there always something ailing him? Was he too nervous to hear her speak? When I see a man of that kind I am always sorry that doctors know so much about preserving life as they do.

It is not necessary to be rich, nor powerful, nor great to be a success; and neither is it necessary to have your name between the putrid lips of rumor to be great. We have had a false standard of success. In the years when I was a little boy we read in our books that no fellow was a success that did not make a fortune or get a big office, and he generally was a man that slept about three hours a night. They never put down in the books the names of those gentlemen that succeeded in life that slept all they wanted to; and we all thought that we could not sleep to exceed three or four hours if we ever expected to be anything in this world. We have had a wrong standard. The happy man is the successful man; and the man who makes somebody else happy, is a happy man. The man that has gained the love of one good, splendid, pure woman, his life has been a success, no matter if he dies in the ditch; and if he gets to be a crowned monarch of the world, and never had the love of one splendid heart, his life has been an ashen vapor.

A little while ago I stood by the tomb of the first Napoleon, a magnificent tomb of gilt and gold, fit almost for a dead deity, and here was a great circle, and in the bottom there, in a sarcophagus, rested at last the ashes of that restless man. I looked at that tomb, and I thought about the career of the greatest soldier of the modern world. As I looked, in imagination I could see him walking up and down the banks of the Seine contemplating suicide. I could see him at Toulon; I could see him at Paris, putting down the mob; I could see him at the head of the army of Italy; I could see him crossing the bridge of Lodi, with the tri-color in his hand; I saw him in Egypt, fighting battles under the shadow of the Pyramids; I saw him returning; I saw him

conquer the Alps, and mingle the eagles of France with the eagles of Italy; I saw him at Marengo, I saw him at Austerlitz; I saw him in Russia, where the infantry of the snow and the blast smote his legions, when death rode the icy winds of winter. I saw him at Leipsic; hurled back upon Paris, banished; and I saw him escape from Elba and retake an empire by the force of his genius. I saw him at the field of Waterloo, where fate and chance combined to wreck the fortune of their former king. I saw him at St. Helena, with his hands behind his back, gazing out upon the sad and solemn sea, and I thought of all the widows he had made, of all the orphans, of all the tears that had been shed for his glory; and I thought of the woman, the only woman who ever loved him, pushed from his heart by the cold hand of ambition and I said to myself, as I gazed, "I would rather have been a French peasant and worn wooden shoes, and lived in a little hut but with a vine running over the door and the purple grapes growing red in the amorous kisses of the autumn sun—I would rather have been that poor French peasant, to sit in my door, with my wife knitting by my side and my children upon my knees with their arms around my neck—I would rather have lived and died unnoticed and unknown except by those who loved me, and gone down to the voiceless silence of the dreamless dust—I would rather have been that French peasant than to have been that imperial impersonation of force and murder who covered Europe with blood and tears."

I tell you I had rather make somebody happy, I would rather have the love of somebody; I would rather go to the forest, far away, and build me a little cabin—build it myself and daub it with mud, and live there with my wife and children; I had rather go there and live by myself—our little family—and have a little path that led down to the spring, where the water bubbled out day and night like a little poem from the heart of the earth; a little hut with some hollyhocks at the corner, with their bannered bosoms open to the sun, and with the thrush in the air, like a song of joy in the morning; I would rather live there and have some lattice work across the window, so that the sunlight would fall checkered on the baby in the cradle; I would rather live there and have my soul erect and free, than to live in a palace of gold and wear the crown of imperial power and know that my soul was slimy with hypocrisy. It is not necessary to be rich and great and powerful in order to be happy. If you will treat your wife like a splendid flower, she will fill your life with a perfume and with joy.

I believe in the democracy of the fireside, I believe in the republicanism of home, in the equality of man and woman, in the equality of husband and wife, and for this I am denounced by the sentinels upon the walls of Zion.

They say there must be a head to the family. I say no—equal rights for man and wife, and where there is really love there is liberty, and where the idea of authority comes in you will find that love has spread its pinions and flown forever. It is a splendid thing for me to think that when a woman really loves a man he never grows old in her eyes; she

always sees the gallant gentleman that won her hand and heart; and when a man really and truly loves a woman she does not grow old to him; through the wrinkles of years he sees the face he loved and won. That is all there is in this world—all the rest amounts to nothing—it is a tale told by an idiot signifying nothing. You take from the family love, and nothing is left. There must be equality; there must be no master; there must be no servant. There must be equality and kindness. The man should be infinitely tender towards the woman—and why?—because she cannot go at hard work, she cannot make her own living. She has squandered her wealth of beauty and youth upon him.

Now, if women have been slaves, what do you say about children? Children have been the slaves of the slaves. I know children that turn pale with fright when they hear their mother's voice; children of property; children of crime, children of sub-cellars; children of the narrow streets, the flotsam and jetsam upon the wild, rude sea of life—my heart goes out to them one and all; I say they have all the rights we have and one more—the right to be protected. I believe in governing children by kindness, by love, by tenderness. If a child commits a fault take it in your arms, let your heart beat against its heart; don't go and talk to it about hell and the bankruptcy of the universe. If your child tells a lie—what of it? Be honest with the child, tell him you have told hundreds of them yourself. Then your child will not be afraid to tell you when it commits a fault; it will not regard you as old perfection, until it gets a few years older, and finds you are an old hypocrite—and you cannot put a thick enough veil upon you but what the eyes of childhood will peep through it; they will see; they will find out; and when your child tells a lie, examine yourself, and in all probability you will find you have been a tyrant. A tyrant father will have liars for his children. A liar is born of tyranny on the one hand and fear on the other. Truth comes from the lips of courage. It is born in confidence and honor. If you want a child to tell you the truth you want to be a faithful man yourself. You go at your little child, five or six years old, with a stick in your hand—what is he to do? Tell the truth? Then he will get whipped. What is he to do? I thank Mother Nature for putting ingenuity in the mind of a little child so that when it is attacked by a brutal parent it throws up a little breastwork in the shape of a lie. That being done by nations it is called strategy, and many a general wears his honors for having practiced it; and will you deny it to little children to protect themselves from brutal parents. Supposing a man as much larger than we are, larger than child would come at us with a liberty-pole in his hand and would shout in tones of thunder, "Who broke that plate?" Every one of us—including myself—would just stand right up and swear either that we never saw that plate, or that it was cracked when we got it. Give a child a chance; there is no other way to have children tell the truth—tell the truth to them—keep your contracts with your children the same as you would to your banker.

I was up at Grand Rapids, Michigan, the other day. There was a

gentleman there, and his wife, who had promised to take their little boy for a ride every night for ten days, or every day for ten days, but they did not do it. They slipped out to the barn and they went without him. The day before I was there they played the same game on him again. He is a nice little boy, an American boy, a boy with brains, one of those boys that don't take the hatchet-story as a fact; he had his own ideas. They fooled him again, and they came around the corner as big as life, man and wife. The little fellow was standing on the door step with his nurse, and he looked at them, and he made this remark: "There go the two damndest liars in Grand Rapids." I merely tell you this story to show you that children have level heads; they understand this business.

Teach your children to tell you the truth—tell them the truth. If there is one here that ever intends to whip his child I have a favor to ask. Have your photograph taken when you are in the act, with your red and vulgar face, your brow corrugated, pretending you would rather be whipped yourself. Have the child's photograph taken too, with his eyes streaming with tears, and his chin dimpled with fear, as a little sheet of water struck by a sudden cold wind; and if your child should die I cannot think of a sweeter way to spend an afternoon than to go to the graveyard in the autumn, when the maples are clad in pink and gold, when the little scarlet runners come like poems out of the breast of the earth—go there and sit down and look at that photograph and think of the flesh, now dust, and how you caned it to writhe in pain and agony.

I will tell you what I am doing; I am doing what little I can to save the flesh of children. You have no right to whip them. It is not the way; and yet some Christians drive their children from their doors if they do wrong, especially if it is a sweet, tender girl—I believe there is no instance on record of any veal being given for the return of a girl—some Christians drive them from their doors and then go down upon their knees and ask God to take care of their children! I will never ask God to take care of my children unless I am doing my level best in that same direction. Some Christians act as though they thought when the Lord said, "Suffer little children to come unto me" that he had a raw-hide under His mantle—they act as if they thought so. That is all wrong. I tell you my children this: Go where you may, commit what crime you may, fall to what depths of degradation you may, I can never shut my arms, my heart or my door to you. As long as I live you shall have one sincere friend; do not be afraid to tell anything wrong you have done; ten to one if I have not done the same thing. I am not perfection, and if it is necessary to sin in order to have sympathy, I am glad I have committed sin enough to have sympathy. The sternness of perfection I do not want. I am going to live so that my children can come to my grave and truthfully say, "He who sleeps here never gave us one moment of pain." Whether you call that religion or infidelity, suit yourselves; that is the way I intend to do it.

When I was a little fellow most everybody thought that some days were too sacred for the young ones to enjoy themselves in. That was the

general idea. Sunday used to commence Saturday night at sundown, under the old text, "The evening and the morning were the first day." They commenced then, I think, to get a good ready. When the sun went down Saturday night, darkness ten thousand times deeper than ordinary night fell upon the house. The boy that looked the sickest was regarded as the most pious. You could not crack hickory nuts that night, and if you were caught chewing gum it was another evidence of the total depravity of the human heart. It was a very solemn evening. We would sometimes sing "Another Day has Passed." Everybody looked as though they had the dyspepsia—you know lots of people think they are pious, just because they are bilious, as Mr. Hood says. It was a solemn night, and the next morning the solemnity had increased. Then we went to church, and the minister was in a pulpit about twenty feet high. If it was in the winter there was no fire; it was not thought proper to be comfortable while you were thanking the Lord. The minister commenced at firstly and ran up to about twenty-fourthly, and then he divided it up again; and then he made some concluding remarks, and then he said lastly, and when he said lastly he was about half through. Then we had what we called the catechism—the chief end of man. I think that has a tendency to make a boy kind of bubble up cheerfully.

We sat along on a bench with our feet about eight inches from the floor. The minister said, "Boys, do you know what becomes of the wicked?" We all answered as cheerfully as grasshoppers sing in Minnesota, "Yes, sir." "Do you know, boys, that you all ought to go to hell?" "Yes, sir." As a final test: "Boys, would you be willing to go to hell if it was God's will?" And every little liar said, "Yes, sir." The dear old minister used to try to impress upon our minds about how long we would stay there after we got there, and he used to say in an awful tone of voice—do you know I think that is what gives them the bronchitis—that tone—you never heard of an auctioneer having it—"Suppose that once in a billion of years a bird were to come from some far, distant clime and carry off in its bill a grain of sand, when the time came when the last animal matter of which this mundane sphere is composed would be carried away," said he, "boys, by that time in hell it would not be sun up." We had this sermon in the morning and the same one in the afternoon, only he commenced at the other end. Then we started home full of doctrine—we went sadly and sole solemnly back. If it was in the summer and the weather was good and we had been good boys, they used to take us down to the graveyard, and to cheer us up we had a little conversation about coffins, and shrouds, and worms, and bones, and dust, and I must admit that it did cheer me up when I looked at those sunken graves those stones, those names half effaced with the decay of years. I felt cheered, for I said, "This thing can't last always." Then we had to read a good deal. We were not allowed to read joke books or anything of that kind. We read Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted;" Fox's "Book of Martyrs;" Milton's "History of the Waldenses," and "Jenkins on the Atonement." I generally read Jenkins; and I have often thought that the atonement ought to be pretty broad in its provisions to cover the case of a man that would write a book like that for a boy.

Then we used to go and see how the sun was getting on—when the sun was down the thing was over. I would sit three or four hours reading Jenkins, and then go out and the sun would not have gone down perceptibly. I used to think it stuck there out of simple, pure cussedness. But it went down at last, it had to; that was a part of the plan, and as the last rim of light would sink below the horizon, off would go our hats and we would give three cheers for liberty once again. I do not believe in making Sunday hateful for children. I believe in allowing them to be happy, and no day can be so sacred but that the laugh of a child will make it holier still. There is no God in the heavens that is pleased at the sadness of childhood. You cannot make me believe that. You fill their poor, little, sweet hearts with the fearful doctrine of hell. A little child goes out into the garden; there is a tree covered with a glory of blossoms and the child leans against it, and there is a little bird on the bough singing and swinging, and the waves of melody run out of its tiny throat, thinking about four little speckled eggs in the nest, warmed by the breast of its mate, and the air is filled with perfume, and that little child leans against that tree and thinks about hell and the worm that never dies; think of filling the mind of a child with that infamous dogma!

Where was that doctrine of hell born? Where did it come from? It came from that gentleman in the dug-out; it was a souvenir from the lower animal. I honestly believe that the doctrine of hell was born in the glittering eyes of snakes that run in frightful coils watching for their prey. I believe it was born in the yelping and howling and growling and snarling of wild beasts, I believe it was born in the grin of hyenas and in the malicious chatter of depraved apes, I despise it, I defy it and hate it; and when the great ship freighted with the world goes down in the night of death, chaos and disaster, I will not be guilty of the ineffable meanness of pushing from my breast my wife and children and padding off in some orthodox canoe. I will go down with those I love and with those who love me. I will go down with the ship and with my race. I will go where there is sympathy. I will go with those I love. Nothing can make me believe that there is any being that is going to burn and torment and damn his children forever. No, sir! You will never make me believe you can divide the world up into saints and sinners, and that the saints are all going to heaven and the others to hell. I don't believe that you can draw the line.

You are sometimes in the presence of a great disaster; there is a fire; at the fourth story window you see the white face of a woman with a child in her arms, and humanity calls out for somebody to go to the rescue through that smoke and flame, maybe death. They don't call for a Baptist, nor a Presbyterian, nor a Methodist, but humanity calls for a man. And all at once, out steps somebody that nobody ever did think was much, not a very good man, and yet he springs up the ladder and is lost in the smoke, and a moment afterward he emerges, and the cruel serpents of fire climb and hiss around his brave form, but he goes on and you see

that woman and child in his arms, and you see them come down and they are handed to the bystanders, and he has fainted, maybe, and the crowd stand hushed, as they always do, in the presence of a grand action, and a moment after the air is rent with a cheer. Tell me that that man is going to hell, who is willing to lose his life merely to keep a woman and child from the torment of a moment's flame—tell me that he is going to hell; I tell you that it is a falsehood, and if anybody says so he is mistaken.

I have seen upon the battlefield a boy sixteen years of age struck by the fragment of a shell and life oozing slowly from the ragged lips of his death-wound, and I have heard him and seen him die with a curse upon his lips, and he had the face of his mother in his heart. Do you tell me that that boy left that field where he died that the flag of his country might wave forever in the air—do you tell me that he went from that field, where he lost his life in defense of the liberties of men, to an eternal hell? I tell you it is infamous!—and such a doctrine as that would tarnish the reputation of a hyena and smirch the fair fame of an anaconda.

Let us see whether we are to believe it or not. We had a war a little while ago and there was a draft made, and there was many a good Christian hired another fellow to take his place, hired one that was wicked, hired a sinner to go to hell in his place for five hundred dollars! While if he was killed he would go to heaven. Think of that. Think of a man willing to do that for five hundred dollars! I tell you when you come right down to it they have got too much heart to believe it; they say they do, but they do not appreciate it. They do not believe it. They would go crazy if they did. They would go insane. If a woman believed it, looking upon her little dimpled darling in the cradle, and said, "Nineteen chances in twenty I am raising fuel for hell," she would go crazy. They don't believe it, and can't believe it. The old doctrine was that the angels in heaven would become happier as they looked upon those in hell. That is not the doctrine now; we have civilized it. That is not the doctrine. What is the doctrine now? The doctrine is that those in heaven can look upon the agonies of those in hell, whether it is a fire or whatever it is, without having the happiness of those in heaven decreased—that is the doctrine.

That is preached today in every orthodox pulpit in Harrisburg. Let me put one case and I will be through with this branch of the subject. A husband and wife love each other. The husband is a good fellow and the wife a splendid woman. They live and love each other and all at once he is taken sick, and they watch day after day and night after night around his bedside until their property is wasted and finally she has to go to work, and she works through eyes blinded with tears, and the sentinel of love watches at the bedside of her prince, and at the least breath or the least motion she is awake; and she attends him night after night and day after day for years, and finally he dies, and she has him in her arms and covers his wasted face with the tears of agony and love. He is

a believer and she is not. He dies, and she buries him and puts flowers above his grave, and she goes there in the twilight of evening and she takes her children, and tells her little boys and girls through her tears how brave and how true and how tender their father was, and finally she dies and she goes to hell, because she was not a believer; and he goes to the battlements of heaven and looks over and sees the woman who loved him with all the wealth of her love, and whose tears made his dead face holy and sacred, and he looks upon her in the agonies of hell without having his happiness diminished in the least.

With all due respect to everybody, I say, damn any such doctrine as that. It is infamous! It never ought to be preached; it never ought to be believed. We ought to be true to our hearts, and the best revelation of the infinite is the human heart.

Now, I come back to where I started from. They used to think that a certain day was too good for a child to be happy in, so they filled the imagination of this child with these horrors of hell. I said, and I say again, no day can be so sacred but that the laugh of a child will make the holiest day more sacred still. Strike with hand of fire, oh, weird musician, thy harp, strung with Apollo's golden hair; fill the vast cathedral aisles with symphonies sweet and dim, deft toucher of the organ keys; blow bugler, blow, until thy silver notes do touch the skies, with moonlit waves, and charm the lovers wandering on the vine-clad hills; but know, your sweetest strains are discords all, compared with childhood's happy laugh, the laugh that fills the eyes with light and every heart with joy; oh, rippling river of life, thou art the blessed boundary-line between the beasts and man, and every wayward wave of thine doth drown some fiend of care; oh, laughter, divine daughter of joy, make dimples enough in the cheeks of the world to catch and hold and glorify all the tears of grief.

I am opposed to any religion that makes them melancholy, that makes children sad, and that fills the human heart with shadow.

Give a child a chance. When I was a boy we always went to bed when we were not sleepy, and we always got up when we were sleepy. Let a child commence at which end of the day they please, that is their business; they know more about it than all the doctors in the world. The voice of nature when a man is free, is the voice of right, but when his passions have been damned up by custom, the moment that is withdrawn, he rushes to some excess. Let him be free from the first. Let your children grow in the free air and they will fill your house with perfume. Do not create a child to be a post set in an orthodox row; raise investigators and thinkers, not disciples and followers; cultivate reason, not faith; cultivate investigation, not superstition; and if you have any doubt yourself about a thing being so, tell them about it; don't tell them the world was made in six days—if you think six days means six good whiles, tell them six good whiles. If you have any doubts about anybody being in a furnace and not being burnt, or even getting uncomfortably

warm, tell them so—be honest about it. If you look upon the jaw-bone of a donkey as not a good weapon, say so. Give a child a chance. If you think a man never went to sea in a fish, tell them so, it won't make them any worse. Be honest—that is all; don't cram their heads with things that will take them years and years to unlearn; tell them facts—it is just as easy. It is as easy to find out botany, and astronomy, and geology, and history—it is as easy to find out all these things as to cram their minds with things you know nothing about, and where a child knows what the name of a flower is when it sees it, the name of a bird and all those things, the world becomes interesting everywhere, and they do not pass by the flowers—they are not deaf to all the songs of birds, simply because they are walking along thinking about hell.

["We know of no difference between matter and spirit, because we know nothing with certainty about either. Why trouble ourselves about matters of which, however important they may be we do know nothing and can know nothing?"—Huxley]

I tell you, this is a pretty good world if we only love somebody in it, if we only make somebody happy, if we are only honor-bright in it, if we have no fear. That is my doctrine. I like to hear children at the table telling what big things they have seen during the day; I like to hear their merry voices mingling with the clatter of knives and forks. I had rather hear that than any opera that was ever put on the stage. I hate this idea of authority. I hate dignity. I never saw a dignified man that was not after all an old idiot. Dignity is a mask; a dignified man is afraid that you will know he does not know everything. A man of sense and argument is always willing to admit what he don't know—why?—because there is so much that he does know; and that is the first step towards learning anything—willingness to admit what you don't know and when you don't understand a thing, ask—no matter how small and silly it may look to other people—ask, and after that you know. A man never is in a state of mind that he can learn until he gets that dignified nonsense out of him, and so, I say let us treat our children with perfect kindness and tenderness.

Now, then, I believe in absolute intellectual liberty; that a man has a right to think, and think wrong, provided he does the best he can to think right—that is all. I have no right to say that Mr. Smith shall not think; Mr. Smith has no right to say I shall not think; I have no right to go and pull a clergyman out of his pulpit and say: "You shall not preach that doctrine," but I have just as much right as he has to say my say. I have no right to lie about a clergyman, and with great modesty I claim—and with some timidity—that he has no right to slander me—that is all.

I claim that every man and wife are equal, except that she has a right to be protected; that there is nothing like the democracy of the home and the republicanism of the fire-side, and that a man should study to make his wife's life one perpetual poem of joy; that there should be

nothing but kindness and goodness; and then I say that children should be governed by love, by kindness, by tenderness, and by the sympathy of love, kindness and tenderness. That is the religion I have got, and it is good enough for me whether it suits anybody else in the world or not. I think it is altogether more important to believe in my wife than it is to believe in the master; I think it is altogether more important to love my children than the twelve apostles—that is my doctrine. I may be wrong, but that is it. I think more of the living than I do of the dead. This world is for the living. The grave is not a throne, and a corpse is not a king. The living have a right to control this world. I think a good deal more of today than I do of yesterday, and I think more of tomorrow than I do of this day; because it is nearly gone—that is the way I feel, and this my creed. The time to be happy is now; the way to be happy is to make somebody else happy; and the place to be happy is here. I never will consent to drink skim milk here with the promise of cream somewhere else.

Now, my friends, I have some excuses to offer for the race to which I belong. In the first place, this world is not very well adapted to raising good people; there is but one-quarter of it land to start with; it is three times as well adapted to fish-culture as it is to man, and of that one-quarter there is but a small belt where they raise men of genius. There is one strip from which all the men and women of genius come. When you go too far north you find no brain; when you go too far south you find no genius, and there never has been a high degree of civilization except where there is winter. I say that winter is the father and mother of the fireside, the family of nations; and around that fireside blossom the fruits of our race. In a country where they don't need any bed-clothes except the clouds, revolution is the normal condition not much civilization there. When in the winter I go by a house where the curtain is a little bit drawn, and I look in there and see children poking the fire and wishing they had as many dollars or knives or something else as there are sparks; when I see the old man smoking and the smoke curling above his head like incense from the altar of domestic peace, the other children reading or doing something, and the old lady with her needle and shears—I never pass such a scene that I do not feel a little ache of joy in my heart.

Awhile ago they were talking about annexing San Domingo. They said it was the finest soil in the world, and so on. Says I, "It don't raise the right kind of folks; you take five thousand of the best people in the world and let them settle there and you will see the second generation barefooted, with the hair sticking out of the top of their sombreros; you will see them riding barebacked, with a rooster under each arm, going to a cockfight on Sunday." That is one excuse I have.

Another is, I think we came from the lower animals, I am not dead sure of it. On that question I stand about eight to seven. If there is nothing of the snake, or hyena, or jackal in man, why would he cut his brother's throat for a difference of belief? Why would he build dungeons

and burn the flesh of his brother man with red hot irons? I think we came from the lower animals. When I first heard that doctrine I did not like it. I felt sorry for our English friends, who would have to trace their pedigree back to the Duke of Orangutan, or the Earl of Chimpanzee. But I have read so much about rudimentary bones and rudimentary muscles that I began to doubt about it. Says I: "What do you mean by rudimentary muscles?" They say: "A muscle that has gone into bankruptcy—" "Was it a large muscle?" "Yes." "What did our forefathers use it for?" They say: "To flap their ears with." After I found that out I was astonished to find that they had become rudimentary; I know so many people for whom it would be handy today, so many people where that would have been on an exact level with their intellectual development. So after while I began to like it, and says I to myself: "You have got to come to it." I thought after all I had rather belong to a race of people that came from skull-less vertebrae in the dim Laurentian period, that wiggled without knowing they were wiggling, that began to develop and came up by a gradual development until they struck this gentleman in the dug-out; coming up slowly—up—up—until, for instance, they produced such a man as Shakespeare—he who harvested all the fields of dramatic thought, and after whom all others have been only gleaners of straw, he who found the human intellect dwelling in a hut, touched it with the wand of his genius and it became a palace—producing him and hundreds of others I might mention—with the angels of progress leaning over the far horizon beckoning this race of work and thought—I had rather belong to a race commencing at the skull-less vertebrae producing the gentleman in the dug-out and so on up, than to have descended from a perfect pair upon which the Lord has lost money from that day to this. I had rather belong to a race that is going up than to one that is going down. I would rather belong to one that commenced at the skull-less vertebrae and started for perfection, than to belong to one, that started from perfection and started for the skull-less vertebrae.

These are the excuses I have for my race, and taking everything into consideration, I think we have done extremely well.

Let us have more liberty and free thought. Free thought will give us truth. It is too early in the history of the world to write a creed. Our fathers were intellectual slaves; our fathers were intellectual serfs. There never has been a free generation on the globe. Every creed you have got bears the mark of whip, and chain, and fagot. There has been no creed written by a free brain. Wait until we have had two or three generations of liberty and it will then be time enough to seize the swift horse of progress by the bridle and say—thus far and no farther; and in the meantime let us be kind to each other; let us be decent towards each other. We are all travelers on the great plain we call life and there is nobody quite sure, what road to take—not just dead sure, you know. There are lots of guide-boards on the plain and you find thousands of people swearing today that their guide-board is the only board that shows the right direction. I go and talk to them

and they say: "You go that way, or you will be damned." I go to another and they say: "You go this way, or you will be damned." I find them all fighting and quarreling and beating each other, and then I say: "Let us cut down all these guide-boards." "What," they say, "leave us without any guide-boards?" I say: "Yes. Let every man take the road he thinks is right; and let everybody else wish him a happy journey; let us part friends."

I say to you tonight, my friends, that I have no malice upon this subject—not a particle; I simply wish to express my thoughts. The world has grown better just in proportion as it is happier; the world has grown better just in proportion as it has lost superstition; the world has grown better just in the proportion that the sacerdotal class has lost influence—just exactly; the world has grown better just in proportion that secular ideas have taken possession of the world. The world has grown better just in proportion that it has ceased talking about the visions of the clouds, and talked about the realities of the earth. The world has grown better just in the proportion that it has grown free, and I want to do what little I can in my feeble way to add another flame to the torch of progress. I do not know, of course, what will come, but if I have said anything tonight that will make a husband love his wife better, I am satisfied; if I have said anything, that will make a wife love her husband better, I am satisfied; if I have said anything that will add one more ray of joy to life, I am satisfied; if I have said anything that will save the tender flesh of a child from a blow, I am satisfied; if I have said anything that will make us more willing to extend to others the right we claim for ourselves, I am satisfied.

I do not know what inventions are in the brain of the future; I do not know what garments of glory may be woven for the world in the loom of the years to be; we are just on the edge of the great ocean of discovery. I do not know what is to be discovered; I do not know what science will do for us. I do know that science did just take a handful of sand and make the telescope, and with it read all the starry leaves of heaven; I know that science took the thunderbolts from the hands of Jupiter, and now the electric spark, freighted with thought and love, flashes under waves of the sea. I know that science stole a tear from the cheek of unpaid labor, converted it into steam, and created a giant that turns with tireless arms the countless wheels of toil; I know that science broke the chains from human limbs and gave us instead the forces of nature for our slaves; I know that we have made the attraction of gravitation work for us; we have made the lightnings our messengers; we have taken advantage of fire and flames and wind and sea; these slaves have no backs to be whipped; they have no hearts to be lacerated; they have no children to be stolen, no cradles to be violated. I know that science has given us better houses; I know it has given us better pictures and better books; I know it has given us better wives and better husbands, and more beautiful children. I know it has enriched a thousand-fold our lives; and for that reason I am in favor of

intellectual liberty.

I know not, I say, what discoveries may lead the world to glory; but I do know that from the infinite sea of the future never a greater or grander blessing will strike this bank and shoal of time than liberty for man, woman and child.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have delivered this lecture a great many times; clergymen have attended, and editors of religious newspapers, and they have gone away and written in their papers and declared in their pulpits that in this lecture I advocated universal adultery; they have gone away and said it was obscene and disgusting. Between me and my clerical maligners, between me and my religious slanderers, I leave you, ladies and gentlemen, to judge.

[[File 2–Lectures of Col. R.G. Ingersoll–Latest:]]

Ingersoll's Lecture on Human Rights

Ladies and Gentlemen: I suppose that man, from the most grotesque savage up to Hecke, 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 a 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 cannot make more than a man, though it may make infinite powers and attributes out of the powers and attributes of man. You can't build a God unless you start with a human being. The savage said, when there was a storm, "Somebody is angry." When lightning leaped from the lurid cloud, he thought, "What have I been doing?" and when he couldn't think of any wrong he had been doing, he tried to think of some wrong his neighbor 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 it, and until I do I cannot 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, came the necessity for some one 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 don't pray for assistance if our cause is just, but they pray, "Lord help us!" I can't 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, 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 all the credit of doing all the good things, and must give some one credit for the bad things, and so they created a devil. At one time it was as disreputable 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 today. Now what does this prove? Simply that our religion is founded on fear, and when you are afraid you cannot 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't do it. You can't 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 the 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 stand 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't 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?"

Continuing, he said: "Now, my friends, there's 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 are 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 don't 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've 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 themselves. Let us see what the laws are now, by which they guard their bible and their God.

[Here the speaker read extracts from the 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 don't think much of religion; 'tis 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 today 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'll find it out. See, then, what we've got by looking a little to the affairs of the world! The bible can't stand today 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 have got to thinking they ain't 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 standing of civil justice in this country! The bible is not the standard of right and wrong or of decency in this country.

You can't 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't 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. Don't 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 don't 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 inquire where the deacon of a Presbyterian church lived? Has not the church opposed every science from the first ray of light until now? Didn't they damn into eternal flames the man who discovered the world was round? Didn't they damn into eternal flames the man who discovered the movement of the earth in its orbit? Didn't they persecute the astronomers? Didn't they 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's another life we'll 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 its just to everybody. If I was an Israelite I wouldn't 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 shouldn't 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'll 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'll 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'll 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'll 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'll 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 an unending, eternal pain and agony. We'll 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 today than what somebody said happened 3,000 years ago. This is all I want: To do what little I can to clutch one-seventh of our time from superstition, to give our Sundays to rest and recreation. I want a day of enjoyment, a day to read old books, to meet old friends, and 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'll 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'd 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 choice in the affairs of the nation.

Do this, and we'll 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 don't believe the wail of want shall be heard forever; that the prison and 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.

Ingersoll's Lecture on Talmagian Theology (Second Lecture)

Col. Ingersoll began, "Only a few years ago the pulpit was almost supreme. The palace was almost in the shadow of the cathedral, and the power behind every throne was a priest. Man was held in physical slavery by kings, and in a mental prison by the church. He was allowed to hold no opinions as to where he came from, nor as to where he was going. It was sufficient for him to do the labor and believe the kings would do the governing and the priests the thinking—and, my God, what thinking! If the world had obeyed the priests we would all be idiots tonight. The eagle of intellect would have given way to the blind bat of faith. They were the rack, the faggot, the thumbscrew in this world, and hell in the next. Only a few years ago no man could express an honest thought unless he agreed with the church. The church has been a perpetual beggar. It has never plowed, it never sowed, it never spun, yet Solomon in all his glory was not so arrayed. Thanks to modern thought, the brain of the nineteenth century, to Voltaire, Paine, Hume, to all the free men, that beggar—the church—is no longer upon horseback; and it fills me with joy to state that even its walking is not now good. Only a little while ago a priest was thought more than human. Nobody dared contradict the minister. Now there are other learned professions. There are doctors, lawyers, writers, books,

newspapers, and the priest has hundreds of rivals.

The priest grew jealous, hateful; he was always thankful for an epidemic or pestilence, so that people would turn to him in despair. In our country all the men of intellect were in the pulpit once. Now there are so many avenues to distinction the men of brain, heart and red blood have left the pulpit and gone to useful things. I do not say all. There are still some men of mind in the pulpit, but they are nearer infidels than any others. Where do we get our ministers? A young man, without constitution enough to be wicked, without health enough to enjoy the things of this world, naturally, fixes his gaze on high. He is educated, sent to a university where he is taught that it is criminal to think. Stuffed with a creed, he comes out a shepherd. Most of them are intellectual shreds and patches, mental ravelings, selvage. Every pulpit is a pillory in which stands a convict; every member of the church stands over him with a club, called a creed. He is an intellectual slave, and dare not preach his honest thought. There are thousands of good men in the pulpit, honest men. I am simply describing the average shepherd; they tell me "they've been called," that Almighty God selected them. He looked all over the world and said: "Now, there's a man I want!" And what selections! Shakespeare was not called. Yet he has done more for this world than all the ministers who have ever lived in it. Beethoven! He was not called. Raphael was not called. He was all an accident. All the inventors, discoverers, poets—God never called one of them; he turned his attention to popes, cardinals, priests, exhorters; and what selections he has made! It's astonishing.

In the United States a great many ministers have been good enough to take me for a text. Among others the Rev. Mr. Talmage, of Brooklyn. I have nothing to say about his reputation. It has nothing to do with the question. Some ministers think he has more gesticulation than grace. Some call him a pious pantaloon, a Christian clown; but such remarks, I think, are born of envy. He is the only Presbyterian minister in the United States who can draw an audience. He stands at the head of the denomination, and I answer him. He's a strange man. I believe he's orthodox, or intellectual pride would prevent his saying these things. He believes in a literal resurrection of the dead; that we shall see countless bones flying through the air. He has some charges against me, and he has denied some of my statements. He has produced what he calls arguments, and I am going to answer some of the charges. Next Sunday afternoon, at 2 o'clock; in this place, I shall have a matinee, and answer his arguments. He says I am the champion blasphemer. What is blasphemy? To contradict a priest? to have a mind of your own? Whoever takes a step in advance is a blasphemer. Blasphemy is what a last year's leaf says to a this year's bud. To deny that Mohammed is the prophet of God is not blasphemy in New York. It is in Constantinople. It is a question, then, largely of Geography. It depends on where you are. The missionary who laughs at a modern God is a blasphemer. In a Catholic country whoever says Mary is not the mother of God is a blasphemer. In a Protestant country to say she is the

mother of God is blasphemy. Everything has been blasphemy. My doctrine is this: He is a blasphemer who refuses to tell his honest thought; who is not true to himself; who enslaves his fellow man; who charges that God was once in favor of slavery. If there is any God, that man is a blasphemer. They're afraid we'll injure God. How? Is infinite goodness and mercy to become livid with wrath because a finite being expresses an opinion? I cannot help the infinite. That man only is the good man who helps his fellow man. I know then who would do anything for God, who doesn't need it, but nothing for men, who do need it. Why should God be so particular about my believing his book? It's no more his work than the stars of gravitation. Yet I may declare that the earth is flat, and he'll not damn me for that. But if I make a mistake about that book I'm gone. I can blaspheme the multiplication table and deity the power of the wedge—in fact, the less I know the better my chance will be. I say that book is not inspired, and there is no infinitely good God who will damn one human soul. At the judgment, if I am mistaken I own up—I am here, I do not know where I came from, nor where I am going—I'll be honest about it. I am on a ship and not on speaking terms with the captain, but I propose to have a happy voyage, and the best way is to do what you can to make your fellow passengers happy. If we run into a good port, I'll be as happy an angel as you'll meet that day. Blasphemy is the cry of a defeated priest—the black flag of theology—it shows where argument stops and slander and persecution begin. I am told by Mr. Talmage that whoever contradicts this word is a fool, a howling wolf, one of the assassins of God. I presume the gentleman is honest. Take Mr. Talmage, now, he is a good man. Mr. Humboldt, he was another good man. What Humboldt knew and what Talmage didn't know would make a library.

The next charge is that I have said the universe was made of nothing, according to the bible. False in one thing, false in all, he says. Think of that rule. Let us apply that to man. If the world was created, what was it made of? and who made that? If the Lord created it, what did He make it of? Nothing. That's all He had. No sides, no top, nothing. Yet God had lived there forever. What did He think about? What did He do? Nothing. Nothing had ever happened. All at once He made something. What did He make it of? Mr. Talmage explains.

He says if I knew anything I would know that God made this world out of His omnipotence. He might just as well made it out of His memory. What is omnipotence? Is it a raw material? The weakest man in the world can lift as much nothing as God. Yet He made this world out of His omnipotence. It is so stated by a doctor of divinity, and I should think such divinity would need a doctor! I don't believe this. I believe this universe has existed throughout all eternity—everything. All that is, is God. I do not give to that universe a personality that wants man to get his knees into dust and his fingers in holy water; that wants some body to ring a bell or eat a wafer. I am a part of this universe, and I believe all there is, is all the God there is. I may be mistaken; I don't know. I just give my best opinion. If there's any

heaven, I'll give it there. But there'll be no discussion in heaven. Hell is the only place where mental improvement will be possible.

I have said, it is charged, that the bible says the world was made in six days. He says I don't understand Hebrew. The bible says the world was made in six days. God didn't work nights—evening and morning were the first day. God rested on the seventh day, and sanctified it. That, they say, didn't mean days; it meant good whiles. He made the world in six good whiles. Adam was made, I think along about Saturday. If the account is correct, it's only 6,000 years since man made his appearance. We know that to be false. A few years ago a gentleman who was going to California in the cars met a minister. They came to the place called the Sink of the Humboldt, the most desolate place in the world. Just imagine perdition with the fire out. The traveler asked the minister whether God made the earth in six days, and the minister said he did. Then don't you think, said he, He could have put in another day's work to great advantage right here? I am charged, too, with saying that the sun was not made till the fourth day, whereas, according to the bible, vegetation began on the third day, before there was any light. But Mr. Talmage says there was light without the sun. They got light, he says, from the crystallization of rocks. A nice thing to raise a crop of corn by. There may have been volcanoes, he says. How'd you like to farm it, and depend on volcanic glare to raise a crop? That's what they call religious science. God won't damn a man for things like that. What else? The aurora borealis! A great cucumber country! It's strange He never thought of glow worms! Imagine it! a Presbyterian divine gravely saying vegetation could grow by the light of the crystallization of rocks—by the light of volcanoes in other worlds, probably now extinct.

He says of me, too in his pulpit, that I was in favor of the circulation of immoral literature. Let me tell you the truth. Several gentlemen, so-called, were trying to exclude from the mails, books called infidel. I said the law should be modified. It is impossible for anybody to reach the depth of one who will print or circulate obscene books. One of my objections to the bible is that it contains obscene stories. Any book, couched in decent language, should have the liberty of the United States mails. Where books are immoral and obscene, I say, burn them, and have always said it. Mr. Talmage said what he knew to be untrue. He said it out of hatred, and because he cannot answer the arguments I have urged. I believe in pure books and pure literature. But when a God writes there is no excuse for Him. In Shakespeare we say obscene things are impure—we do not say they are inspired. That I have falsified the records of the bible showing the period of Jewish slavery, is another of the charges against me. That slavery extended over a period of 215 years; and he proceeded to substantiate this statement by being through a long and somewhat complicated genealogical table. If I made any misstatement I was misled by the new testament. Mr. Talmage may settle with St. Paul. If you can depend on what my friend Paul says, the Jews, in 215 years, increased from seventy persons till they had 600,000 men of war. I know it isn't so, and so does any man who knows anything.

For such an increase as this each woman must have borne somewhat over fifty-seven children, and every child lived.

The next charge is that I have laughed at holy things. Holy things! The priest always says: "Now don't laugh; look solemn; this is no laughing matter." There's nothing a priest hates like mirthfulness. He despises a smile. I read in the bible that God gave a recipe to Aaron for making hair-oil and said if anybody made any like it, kill him. Well, I don't believe it. The penalty for infringing on that patent was death. Do you believe an infinite God gave a recipe for hair-oil? Is it possible for absurdity to go beyond that? That's what they call a holy thing. And water for baptism! Do you believe God will look for this water-mark on the soul?

The next charge is that I misquote the scriptures. That's because I don't know Hebrew. Why didn't He write to me in English? If He wishes to hold a gentleman responsible, why doesn't He address him in his native tongue? Why write His word in such a way that hundreds of thousands make their living explaining it? If I'd only understood Hebrew I would have known God didn't make Eve out of a rib. He made her out of Adam's side. How did He get it out? Well, I suppose He cut it out with a kind of a splinter of His omnipotence! Then our mother was made from a rib. When you consider the material used it was the most successful job ever done. There's even a serpent in the bible that knows a language. It won't do. Sin, how did it come into the world? Where did the serpent come from? He was wicked. Adam's sin did not make him bad. Then there was sin in the world before Adam. There's no sense in it—not a particle. Then Talmage touches me upon the flood. His flood didn't come to America, because America was not discovered then. He says it was a partial flood. Then why did they have to take any birds in the ark? How did Noah get the animals in the ark? Talmage says it was through the instinct to get out of the rain. According to the bible they went in before the rain began. Dr. Scott says the angels helped carry them in. Imagine an angel with an animal under each wing. It must have rained 800 feet a day for forty days. Why does Talmage try to explain a miracle? The beauty of a miracle is it cannot be explained. The moment the church begins to explain the church is gone. All it's got to do is swear it is so. The ark landed on Ararat, which is 17,000 feet high. There was only one window, twenty-two inches square. Talmage says the window ran clear around the ark. The bible doesn't say so. That's Brooklyn; that's no bible.

If the bible account is true the ark must have struck bottom on the top of a mountain. Would any but a God of mercy and kindness people a world, and then drown them all? A God cruel enough to drown His own children ought not to have the impudence to tell me how to bring up mine. Why did He save eight of the same kind of people to take a fresh start? Why didn't He make a fresh lot, kill His snake, and give His children a fair show? It won't do.

Talmage says the bible does not favor polygamy and slavery. There was room enough on the table of stone for saying man should only have one wife and no slaves. If not, God might have written it on the other side. David and Solomon were pursued of God, but they had a pretty good time of it. Most anybody would be willing to be pursued that way. There is not a word in the old testament against slavery or polygamy. Frederick Douglas, a slave in Maryland, is the greatest man that state ever produced. He was enslaved by Christians. Why did God pay so much attention to blasphemers, and so little to slaveholders and robbers? I am opposed to any God that was ever in favor of slavery. The bible upholds polygamy, and that's the reason I don't uphold the bible. The most glorious temple ever erected is the home—that's my church. I've misquoted the story of Jonah, Talmage says. When somebody had been guilty of blasphemy the winds rose; they tried to get Jonah ashore, but couldn't do it. The sea waxed. He was swallowed by a whale. The people of Minerva wrapped all their cattle up in sack-cloth, and if anything would have pleased God I should think that would. Jonah sat under a gourd, and God made a worm out of some omnipotence he had left over, and set it work on the gourd. Talmage doesn't think Jonah was in the whale's belly—he said in his mouth. Well, judging from the doctor's photograph, that explanation would be quite natural to him. He says he might have been in the whale's stomach, and avoided the action of the gastric juice by walking up and down. Imagine Jonah, sitting on a back tooth, leaning against the upper jaw, longingly looking through the open mouth for signs of land! But that's scripture and you've got to believe it or be damned. Let me say his brother preachers will not thank Talmage for his explanations. I don't believe it, and if I am to be damned for it, I'll accept it cheerfully.

They say I was defeated for Governor of Illinois because I was an infidel, and that I am an infidel because I was defeated. That's logic. Now I'll tell you. They asked me whether I was an infidel, and I said I was! I was defeated. I preserved my manhood and lost an office. If everybody were as frank as I was, some men now in office would be private citizens. I would rather be what I am than hold any office in the world and be a slimy hypocrite.

Next they say I slandered my parents because I do not believe what they believed. My father at one time believed the bible to be the inspired word of God. He was an honorable man, and told me to read the bible for myself and be honest. He lived long enough to believe that the old testament was not the word of God. He had not in his life as much happiness as I have in one year. I hope my children will dishonor me by being nearer right than I am. If I have made a mistake, I want my children to correct it. My mother died when I was 2 years old. Were she living tonight, or if she does live, she would say, be absolutely true to yourself and preserve your manhood. If Talmage had been born in Constantinople he would have been a dervish. He is what he is because he can't help it. His head is just that shape. I am taking away the hope and consolation of the world, he says. His consolation is that

ninety-nine out of every hundred are going to hell. His church was founded by John Calvin, a murderer. Better have no heaven than a hell. I would rather God would commit suicide this minute than that a single soul should go to hell. I want no Presbyterian consolation, I want no fore-ordination, no consolation, no damnation.

[Col. Ingersoll concluded with a few remarks about the bible women, saying that women today are as true to the gallows as Mary Magdalene was to the cross.]

Wherever there are women there are heroines. Shakespeare's women are vastly superior to the bible women. I am accused of putting out the light-houses on the shores of the other world. The Christians are trimming invisible wicks and pouring in allegorical oil. The Christian is willing wife, children and parents shall burn if only he can sing and have a harp. Mr. Talmage can see countless millions burn in hell without decreasing the length of his orthodox smile.

Ingersoll's Lecture on Talmagian Theology (Third lecture)

We must judge people somewhat by their creeds. Mr. Talmage is a Calvinist, and he therefore regards every human being who has been born only once as totally depraved. He thinks that God never made a single creature that didn't deserve to be damned the minute He finished him. So every one who opposes Mr. Talmage is infamous. The generosity of an agnostic is meanness, his honesty is larceny and his love is hate. Talmage is a consistent follower of Calvin and Knox, . . . and a consistent worshiper of the Jehovah of the ancient Jews. I oppose not him, but his creed, because it tends to crush out the natural tendencies in men to joyousness and goodness. There is something good in every human being, and there is something bad. There are no perfect saints and no totally bad persons. There is the seed of goodness in every human heart and the capacity for improvement in every human soul. Isn't it possible for a man who acts like Christ to be saved, whatever be his belief? Cannot a soul be infinitely generous? And can any God damn such a soul? If Mr. Talmage's creed be true, nearly all the great and glorious men of the past are burning today. If it be true, the greatest man England has produced in 100 years is in hell. The world is poorer since I spoke here last, for Darwin has passed away. He was a true child of nature—one who knew more about his mother than any other child she had. Yet he was not a Calvinist. He did not get his inspiration from any book, but from every star in the heavens, from the insect in the sunbeam, from the flowers in the meadows, and from the everlasting rocks.

If the doctrine of the Calvinists is true, what right had any one to ask an unbeliever to fight for his country in the civil war? What right has a believer to buy an unbelieving substitute, when some day he will look over the edge of heaven, and pointing downward, would say to a friend, "that is my substitute blistering there"?

Mr. Talmage says that my mind is poisoned, and that the reason why all infidels' minds are poisoned is that they don't believe the Jew bible. Let us see whether it is worth believing. I deny that an infinitely merciful God would protect slavery or would uphold polygamy, which pollutes the sweetest words in language. I will not believe that God told men to exterminate their fellow-men, to plunge the sword into women's breasts and into the hearts of tender babes. I am opposed to the Jew bible because it is bad. I don't deny that there are many good passages in it, nor that among all the thorns there are some roses. I admit that many Christians are doing all they can to idealize the frightful things in the old testament. It is the protest of human nature. Now, they tell me that this book is inspired. Let us see what inspired means. If it means anything, it is that the thoughts of God, through the instrumentality of men, constitute this Jew bible, and that these thoughts were written. Now just suppose that some voice whispered in your ear, how would you know it was God's? How did these gentlemen of old know it was God who was talking to them? If anyone now told you that God whispered in his ear, you wouldn't believe him. Why? Because you know him. Why are we asked to believe those ancient gentlemen? Because we don't know them. Another reason, according to Mr. Talmage, why the Jew bible is inspired, is that prophecies in it have been fulfilled. How do we know that the prophecies were not fulfilled before they were written? They are so vague that you can't tell what was prophesied. If you will read the Jew bible carefully, you will see that there was not a line, not a word, prophesying the coming of Christ. Catholics were right in saying that if the Jew bible was to be kept in awe it must be kept from the people. Protestants are wrong in letting the people read it.

Another argument of Mr. Talmage for the inspiration of the bible is that the Jews have been kept as a wandering, persecuted race to fulfill the prophecies of the old testament. I don't believe an infinitely merciful God would persecute a race for thousands of years to use them as witnesses. Christian hate has not allowed the Jews to earn a [living?] or at least to practice a profession, and now, by a kind of poetic justice, the Jews control the money of the world. Emperors go to their bankers with hats in hand and beg them to discount their notes. This is because God has cursed the Jews. Only a little while ago Christians have robbed Hebrews, stripped them naked, turned them into the streets, and pointed to them as a fulfillment of divine prophecy. If you want to know the difference between some Jews and some Christians compare the address of Felix Adler with the sermon of the Rev. Dr. Talmage. Mr. Talmage thinks that the light of every burning Jewish home in Russia throws light upon the gospel. Every wound in a Jewish breast is to him a mouth to proclaim the divine inspiration of the bible. Every Jewish maiden violated is another fulfillment of God's holy word. What do these horrid persecutions prove, except the barbarity of Christians? Next it is said that martyrs prove the truth of the bible. Mr. Talmage affirms that no man ever died cheerfully for a lie. Why, men have gone cheerfully to their death for believing that a wafer was God's flesh.

Thousands have died for their belief in Mohammed. Men have died because they believed in immersion. Either Mr. Talmage is a Catholic, a Mohammedan, a Baptist, or else he believes that these thousands died for lies. Every religion has had its martyrs, and every religion cannot be true. Then it is said that miracles prove the inspiration of the bible. But it is impossible by the human senses to establish a violation of nature's laws. When the Hebrews threw down sticks before Pharaoh, and they became snakes, did he believe? No; because he was there. After the Jews had been lead through the desert and had been fed with bread rained from heaven, had been clothed in indestructible pantaloons, and had quenched their thirst with water that followed them over mountains and through sands; when they saw Jehovah wrapped in the smoke of Sinai they still had more faith in a calf that they could make than anything Jehovah could give them. It was so with the miracles of Christ. Not twenty people were converted by one of them. In fact, human testimony cannot substantiate a miracle. Take the miracle about the bears which ate the children who laughed at the bald-headed old prophet. What do you suppose Mr. Talmage would say that meant? Why, first, that children ought to respect preachers, and second, that God is kind to animals. Nearly every miracle in the old testament is wrought in the interest of slavery, polygamy, creed or lust. I wish by denying them to rescue the reputation of Jehovah from the assaults of the bible.

Who are the witnesses to the truth of the narratives of the Jews' bible? Eusebius was one. He lived in the reign of Constantine, and said that the tracks of Pharaoh's chariots could be seen—perfectly preserved in the sands of the Red sea. He was the man who forged the passage in Josephus which speaks about the coming of Christ. Good witness, isn't he. Another one was Polycarp. We don't know much about him. He suffered martyrdom in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, and when the fire wouldn't burn and he looked like gold through it, a heathen was so mad about it that he ran his sword through Polycarp. The blood gushed out and quenched the fire, while the martyr's soul flew up to heaven in the form of a dove. And that's all we know about Polycarp. To know how much reliance should be placed upon the judgment of such trustworthy witnesses, we should look at what some of their beliefs were. They thought that the world was flat; that the phoenix story was true; that the stars had souls and sinned; and one said there were four gospels because there were four winds and four corners of the earth. He might have added that it was also because a donkey has four legs.

So far as the argument drawn from the sufferings of the martyrs is concerned, the speaker said that thousands upon thousands of men had died as cheerfully in defense of the koran as Christians had died in defense of the bible. Their heroic suffering simply proved that they were sinners in their beliefs, not that those beliefs were true. This argument, as advanced by Mr. Talmage, proves too much. Every religion on the face of the globe has had its martyrs, but all religions cannot be true. Men do die cheerfully for falsehoods when they believe them to be true.

[The question of miracles was discussed at some length, and Col. Ingersoll declared it was impossible to establish by any human evidence that a miracle had ever been performed.]

Pharaoh was not convinced by the alleged miracle performed by Aaron, of turning a stick into a serpent. Why? Because he was there, and no such miracle was ever done. No twenty people were convinced by the reported miracles of Christ, and yet people of the nineteenth century were coolly asked to be convinced on hearsay by miracles which those who are supposed to have seen them refuse to credit. It won't do. The laws of nature never have been interrupted, and they never will be. All the books in the universe will never convince a thinking man that miracles have been performed.

[The lecture was sprinkled throughout with the satirical wit for which Col. Ingersoll is famous, and concluded by the enumeration of a long list of "unscientific" facts and events recorded in the bible.]

Ingersoll's Lecture on Religious Intolerance

"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 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 wishes. 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 Pittsburgh will lend a dollar to the man who belongs to the church, without security, quicker than to the man who don't go to church. Now, I believe that all laws upon the statute-book 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 don't preach that doctrine they will be turned out. I have no objection to that. But I want the same privilege to express my views, and what is the difference whether the 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 tonight? It would elevate us more than to hear ten thousand sermons on the world that never dies. 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 they thought the more miserable you feel the better God feels. 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.

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 won't 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. 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 says somebody has been wicked. Somebody has been lecturing on Sunday. Then the tribe hunted out the wicked man. They said you've got to stop. We cannot allow you to continue your wickedness, which brings punishment upon the whole of us. What is the reason they allow me to speak tonight. Because the Christians are not as firm in their belief now as they were a thousand years ago. The luke warmness and hypocrisy of Christians now permit me to speak tonight. 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 cannot add to his wisdom; infinitely happy—I cannot add to his happiness. What can I do? Maybe he wants me to make prayers that won't be answered. I cannot 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 them 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 which 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 sufferings upon others. Utility, then, is the basis of the idea of right and wrong.

The church tells us that 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 school-master who would kill half his pupils the first day?

Now, I read the bible, and I find that God so loved this world that He made up His mind to damn the most of us. I have read this book, and what shall I say of it? I believe it is generally better to be honest. Now, I don't 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 don't 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 your father object to your inventing a better plow than he had. They say to one, 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 wouldn't make a decent thief. When I read a book and don't believe it, I ought to say so. I will do so and take the consequence like a man. And so I object to paying for the support of another 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. If we exempt anything, let us exempt the home of the widow and orphan.

[A voice here interrupted the speaker.

Col. Ingersoll—What did the gentleman say? A voice—O, he's drunk.

Col. Ingersoll—I didn't think any Christian ought to get drunk and come here to disturb us.

The speaker resumed:]

The church has today \$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 don't do more good with it than four times as many churches I'll resign. Let them make the churches attractive and they'll get more hearers. They will have less empty pews if they have less empty heads in the pulpit. 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.

Col. 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 mentioned at all than to having another religious belief than their own recognized.

"In 1876," said the speaker, "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.

The lecture was attentively listened to by the immense audience from beginning to the end, and the speaker's most blasphemous flights were the most loudly applauded.

Ingersoll's Lecture on Hereafter

My Friends: I tell you tonight, as I have probably told many of you dozens of times, that the orthodox doctrine of eternal punishment in the hereafter is an infamous one! I have no respect for the man who preaches it, or pretends to you he believes it. Neither have I any respect for the man who will pollute the imagination of innocent childhood with that infamous lie! And I have no respect for the man who will deliberately add to the sorrows of this world with this terrible dogma; no respect for the man who endeavors to put that infinite cloud and shadow over the heart of humanity. I will be frank with you and say, I hate the doctrine; I despise it, I defy it; I loathe it—and what man of sense does not. The idea of a hell was born of revenge and brutality on the one side, and arrant cowardice on the other. In my judgment the American people are too brave, too generous, too magnanimous, too humane to believe in that outrageous doctrine of eternal damnation.

For a great many years the learned intellects of Christendom have been examining into the religions of other countries and other ages, in the world—the religions of the myriads who have passed away. They examined into the religions of Egypt, the religion of Greece, that of Rome and the Scandinavian countries. In the presence of the ruins of those religions, the learned men of Christendom insisted that those religions

were baseless, false and fraudulent. But they have all passed away.

Now, while this examination was being made, the Christianity of our day applauded, and when the learned men got through with the religion of other countries, they turned their attention to our religion, and by the same methods, by the same mode of reasoning and the same arrangements that they used with the old religions they were overturning the religion of our day. How is that? Because every religion in this world is the work of man. Every book that was ever written was written by man. Man existed before books. If otherwise, we might reasonably admit that there was such a thing as a sacred bible.

I wish to call your attention to another thing. Man never had an original idea, and he never will have one, except it be supplied to him by his surroundings. Nature gave man every idea that he ever had in the world; and nature will continue to give man his ideas so long as he exists. No man can conceive of anything, the hint of which he has not received from the surroundings. And there is nothing on this earth, coming from any other sphere whatever.

As I have before said, man has produced every religion in the world. Why is this? Because each generation sends forth the knowledge and belief of the people at the time it was made, and in no book is there any knowledge formed, except just at the time it was written. Barbarians have produced barbarian religions, and always will produce them. They have produced, and always will produce, ideas and belief in harmony with their surroundings, and all the religions of the past were produced by barbarians. We are making religions every day; that is to say, we are constantly changing them, adapting them to our purposes, and the religion of today is not the religion of a few months or a year ago. Well, what changes these religions? Science does it, education does it; the growing heart of man does it. Some men have nothing else to do but produce religions; science is constantly changing them. If we are cursed with such barbarian religions today—for our religions are really barbarous—what will they be an hundred or a thousand years hence?

But, friends, we are making inroads upon orthodoxy that orthodox Christians are painfully aware of, and what think you will be left of their fearful doctrines fifty or a hundred years from tonight? What will become of their endless hell—their doctrine of the future anguish of the soul; their doctrine of the eternal burning and never-ending gnashing of teeth. Man will discard the idea of such a future—because there is now a growing belief in the justice of a Supreme Being.

Do you not know that every religion in the world has declared every other religion a fraud? Yes, we all know it. That is the time all religions tell the truth—each of the other.

Now, do you want to know why this is: Suppose Mr. Johnson should tell Mr. Jones that he saw a corpse rise from the grave, and that when he

first saw it, it was covered with loathsome worms, and that while he was looking at it, it suddenly was re-clothed in healthy, beautiful flesh. And then, suppose Jones should say to Johnson, "Well, now, I saw that same thing myself. I was in a graveyard once, and I saw a dead man rise and walk away as if nothing had ever happened to him!" Johnson opens wide his eyes and says to Jones, "Jones, you are a confounded liar!" And Jones says to Johnson, "You are an unmitigated liar!" "No, I'm not; you lie yourself." "No! I say you lie!" Each knew the other lied, because each man knew he lied himself. Thus when a man says: "I was upon Mount Sinai for the benefit of my health, and there I met God, who said to me, "Stand aside, you, and let me drown these people;" and the other man says to him, "I was upon a mountain, and there I met the Supreme Brahma." And Moses steps in and says, "That is not true!" and contends that the other man never did see Brahma, and the other man swears that Moses never saw God; and each man utters a deliberate falsehood, and immediately after speaks truth.

Therefore, each religion has charged every other religion with having been an unmitigated fraud. Still, if any man had ever seen a miracle himself, he would be prepared to believe that another man had seen the same or a similar thing. Whenever a man claims to have been cognizant of, or to have seen a miracle, he either utters a falsehood, or he is an idiot. Truth relies upon the unerring course of the laws of nature, and upon reason. Observe, we have a religion—that is, many people have. I make no pretensions to having a religion myself—possibly you do not. I believe in living for this beautiful world—in living for the present, today; living for this very hour, and while I do live to make everybody happy that I can. I cannot afford to squander my short life—and what little talent I am blessed with in studying up and projecting schemes to avoid that seething lake of fire and brimstone. Let the future take care of itself, and when I am required to pass over "on the other side," I am ready and willing to stand my chances with you howling Christians.

We have in this country a religion which men have preached for about eighteen hundred years, and men have grown wicked just in proportion as their belief in that religion has grown strong; and just in proportion as they have ceased to believe in it, men have become just, humane and charitable. And if they believed in it tonight as they believed, for instance, at the time of the immaculate Puritan fathers, I would not be permitted to talk here in the city of New York. It is from the coldness and infidelity of the churches that I get my right to preach; and I thank them for it, and I say it to their credit.

As I have said, we have a religion. What is it? In the first place, they say this vast universe was created by a God. I don't know, and you don't know, whether it was or not. Also, if it had not been for the first sin of Adam, they say there would never have been any Devil, in this world, and if there had been no Devil, there would have been no sin, and if no sin, no death. As for myself I am glad there is death in the world, for that gives me a chance. Somebody has to die to give me

room, and when my turn comes I am willing to let some one else take my place. But if there is a Being who gave me this life, I thank Him from the bottom of my heart—because this life has been a joy and a pleasure to me. Further, because of this first sin of Adam, they say, all men are consigned to eternal perdition! But, in order to save man from that frightful hell of the hereafter, Christ came to this world and took upon himself flesh, and in order that we might know the road to eternal salvation. He gave us a book called the bible, and wherever that bible has been read men have immediately commenced throttling each other; and wherever that bible has been circulated they have invented inquisitions and instruments of torture, and commenced hating each other with all their hearts. Then we are told that this bible is the foundation of civilization, but I say it is the foundation of hell and damnation!, and we never shall get rid of that dogma until we get rid of the idea that the book is inspired. Now, what does the bible teach? I am not going to ask this preacher or that preacher what the bible teaches; but the question is, "Ought a man be sent to an eternal hell for not believing this bible to be the work of a merciful God?" A very few people read it now; perhaps they should read it, and perhaps not; if I wanted to believe it, I should never read a word of it—never look upon its pages, I would let it lie on its shelf, until it rotted! Still, perhaps, we ought to read it in order to see what is read in schools that our children might become charitable and good; to be read to our children that they may get ideas of mercy, charity humanity and justice! Oh, yes! Now read:

"I will make mine arrows drunk with blood and my sword shall devour flesh."—Deut. xxxii, 42.

Very good for a merciful God!

"That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of the dogs in the same."—Psalms lxviii, 24.

Merciful Being! I will quote several more choice bits from this inspired book, although I have several times made use of them.

"But the Lord thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed.

"And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven; there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them."—Deut. vii, 23, 24.

"And Joshua did unto them as the Lord bade him; he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire. And Joshua at that time turned back, and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword; for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms.

"And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did

Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and he utterly destroyed them, as Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded.

”And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them; there was not any left to breathe; and he burnt Hazor with fire.”

(Do not forget that these things were done by the command of God!)

”But as for the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burnt none of them, save Hazor only, that did Joshua burn.

”And all the spoil of those cities and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe.” (As the moral and just God had commanded them.)

”As the Lord commanded Moses His servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord had commanded Joshua.

”So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain and mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same;

”Even from the Mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon under Mount Hermon; and all their kings he took, and smote them and slew them.

”Joshua made war a long time on all those kings. There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon; all the others they took in battle.

”So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel, according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.”—Josh. xi, 7-23.

”When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it.

”And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee.

”And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it.

”And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword.

”But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee.

”Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of those nations.

”But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth.

”But thou shalt utterly destroy them.”

(Neither the old man nor the woman, nor the beautiful maiden, nor the sweet dimpled babe, smiling upon the lap of its mother.)

”And He said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel (a merciful God, indeed), put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his neighbor.”—Es. xxxii, 29.

(Now recollect, these instructions were given to an army of invasion, and the people who were slayed were guilty of the crime of fighting for their homes and their firesides. Oh, most merciful God! The old testament is full of curses, vengeance, jealousy and hatred, and of barbarity and brutality. Now, do you for one moment believe that these words were written by the most merciful God? Don't pluck from the heart the sweet flower of piety and crush it by superstition. Do not believe that God ever ordered the murder of innocent women and helpless babes. Do not let this superstition turn our heart into stone. When anything is said to have been written by the most merciful God, and the thing is not merciful, that I deny it, and say He never wrote it. I will live by the standard of reason, and if thinking in accordance with reason takes me to perdition, then I will go to hell with my reason, rather than to heaven without it.)

Now, does this bible teach political freedom; or does it teach political tyranny? Does it teach a man to resist oppression? Does it teach a man to tear from the throne of tyranny the crowned thing and robber called king. Let us see.

”Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; For there is no power but God: the powers that be are ordained of God.”—Rom. xiii, I.

”Therefore to must needs be subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.”—Rom. viii, 4, 4.

(I deny this wretched doctrine. Wherever the sword of rebellion is drawn to protect the rights of man, I am a rebel. Wherever the sword of

rebellion is drawn to give men liberty, to clothe him in all his just rights, I am on the side of that rebellion.)

Does the bible give woman her rights? Does it treat woman as she ought to be treated, or is it barbarian? We will see:

”Let woman learn in silence with all subjection.”—I Tim. ii, 11

(If a woman should know anything let her ask her husband. Imagine the ignorance of a lady who had only that source of information.)

”But suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. (Indeed!)

”And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression.” (Poor woman!)

Here is something from the old testament:

”When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the Lord thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captives;

”And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldst have her to be thy wife;

”Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails.”—Deut. xxi, 10, 11, 12.

(That is self-defense, I suppose!)

I need not go further in bible quotations to show that woman, throughout the old testament, is a degraded being, having no rights which her husband, father, brother, or uncle is bound to respect. Still, that is bible doctrine, and that bible is the word of a just and omniscient God!

Does the bible teach the existence of devils? Of course it does. Yes, it teaches not only the existence of a good being, but a bad being. This good being has to have a home; that home was heaven. This bad being had to have a home; and that home was hell. This hell is supposed to be nearer to earth than I would care to have it, and to be peopled with spirits, spooks, hobgoblins, and all the fiery shapes with which the imagination of ignorance and fear could people that horrible place; and the bible teaches the existence of hell and this big devil and all these little devils. The bible teaches the doctrine of witchcraft and makes us believe that there are sorcerers and witches, and that the dead could be raised by the power of sorcery. Does anybody believe it now?

"Then said Saul unto his servants, seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor."

In another place he declares that witchcraft is an abomination unto the Lord. He wants no rivals in this business. Now what does the new testament teach:

"Then was Jesus lead up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

"And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward a-hungred.

"And when the tempter came to him, he said if thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread.

"But He answered and said it is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

"Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple;

"And saith unto him. If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

"Jesus said unto him, it is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord, thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."—Matt. iv, 1-7.

(Is it possible that anyone can believe that the devil absolutely took God Almighty, and put him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and endeavored to persuade him to jump down? Is it possible?)

"Again, the devil taketh him into an exceedingly high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

"And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

"Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."—Matthew iv, 8-11.

(Now only the devil must have known at that time that He was God, and God at that time must have known that the other was the devil, who had the impudence to promise God a world in which he did not have a tax-title to an inch of land.)

Now, what of the Sabbath—the Lord’s day? Why is Sunday the Lord’s day? If Sunday alone is the Lord’s day, whose day is Monday, Tuesday, Friday, etc.? No matter! The idea, that God hates to hear your children laugh on Sunday! On Sunday let your children play games. I see a poor man who hasn’t money enough to go to a big church, and he has too much independence to go to the little church which the big church built for charity. If he enters the portals of the big church with poor clothes on, the usher approaches him with a severe face, and ”Brother, I’m sorry, but only high-toned servants of the living God congregate in this church for worship, and with that seedy suit on they cannot admit you. All the seats in this magnificent edifice are owned and represented by ’solid’ men, by men of capital. We pay our pastor \$5,000 a year—the annual eight weeks vacation thrown in—and it would not be profitable for us to seriously encourage the attendance of so insignificant a person as yourself. Just around the corner there is a little cheap church with a little cheap pastor, where they can dish up hell to you in an approved style—in a style more suitable to your needs and condition; and the dish will not be as expensive to you, either!”

If I had chanced to be that poor man in the seedy garments, and had been endeavoring to serve my Maker for even half a century, I would have felt like muttering audibly, ”You go to hell!” (I am not much given to profanity, but when I am sorely aggravated and vexed in spirit, I declare to you that it is such a relief to me, such a solace to my troubled soul, and gives me such heavenly peace, to now and then allow a word or phrase to escape my lips which can serve the no other earthly purpose, seemingly, than to render emphatic my otherwise mildly expressed ideas. I make this confession parenthetically, and in a whisper, my friends, trusting you will not allow it to go further.)

Now, I tell you, if you don’t want to go to church, go to the woods and take your wife and children and a lunch with you, and sit down upon the old log and let the children gather flowers, and hear the leaves whispering poems like memories of long ago! and when the sun is about going down, kissing the summits of the distant hills, go home with your hearts filled with throbs of joy and gladness, and the cheeks of your little ones covered with the rose-blushes of health! There is more recreation and solid enjoyment in that than putting on your Sunday clothes and going to a canal-boat with a steeple on top of it and listening to a man tell you that your chances are about ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine to one for being eternally damned!

Oh, strike with a hand of fire, weird musician, thy harp, strung with Apollo’s golden hair! Fill the vast cathedral aisles with symphonies sweet and dim, deft toucher of the organ’s keys! Blow, bugler, blow, until thy silver notes do touch and kiss the moonlit waves, and charm the lovers wandering mid the vine-clad hills!—but know your sweetest strains are but discord compared with childhood’s happy laugh—the laugh that fills the eyes with light and every heart with joy! O, rippling river of laughter; thou art the blessed boundary line between beasts and

men, and every wayward wave of thine doth drown some fretful fiend of care. O, Laughter, rose-lipped daughter of joy, there are dimples enough in thy cheek to catch and hold and glorify all the tears of grief!

Do not make slaves of your children on Sunday. Don't place them in long, straight rows, like fence-posts, and "Sh! children, it's Sunday!" when by chance you hear a sound or rustle. Let winsome Johnny have light and air, and let him grow beautiful; let him laugh until his little sides ache, if he feels like it; let him pinch the cat's tail until the house is in an uproar with his yells—let him do anything that will make him happy. When I was a little boy, children went to bed when they were not sleepy, and always got up when they were? I would like to see that changed—we may see it some day. It is really easier to wake a child with a kiss than a blow; with kind words than with harshness and a curse. Another thing: let the children eat what they want to. Let them commence at whichever end of the dinner they please. They know what they want much better than you do. Nature knows perfectly well what she is about, and if you go a-fooling with her you may get into trouble. The crime charged to me is this: I insist that the bible is not the word of God; that we should not whip our children; that we should treat our wives as loving equals; that God never upheld polygamy and slavery; deny that God ever commanded his generals to slaughter innocent babes and tear and rip open women with the sword of war; that God ever turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt (although she might have deserved that fate); that God ever made a woman out of a man's, or any other animal's rib! And I emphatically deny that God ever signed or sealed a commission appointing his satanic majesty governor-general over an extensive territory popularly styled hell, with absolute power to torture, burn, maim, boil, or roast at his pleasure the victims of his master's displeasure! I deny these things, and for that I am assailed by the clergy throughout the united States. Now, you have read the bible romance of the fall of Adam? Yes, well, you know that nearly or quite all the religions of this world account for the existence of evil by such a story as that! Adam, the miserable coward, informed God that his wife was at the bottom of the whole business! "She did tempt me and I did eat!" And then commenced a row, and we have been engaged in it ever since! You know what happened to Adam and his wife for her transgressions?

In another account of what is said to have been the same transaction—which is the most sensible account of the two—the Supreme Brahma concluded, as he had a little leisure, that he would make a world, and a man and woman. He made the world, the man, and then the woman, and then placed the pair on the Island of Ceylon. (Bear in mind, there were no ribs used in this affair.) This island is said to be the most beautiful that the mind of man can conceive of. Such birds you never saw, such songs you never heard! and then such flowers, such verdure! The branches of the trees were so arranged that when the winds swept through, there floated out from every tree melodious strains of music

from a thousand! Aeolian harps! After Brahma put them there, he said: "Let them have a period of courtship, for it is my desire and will that true love should forever precede marriage." And with the nightingale singing, and the stars twinkling, and the little brooklets murmuring, and the flowers blooming, and the gentle breezes fanning their brows, they courted, and loved! What a sweet courtship. Then Brahma married the happy pair, and remarked: "Remain here; you can be happy on this island, and it is my will that you never leave it." Well, after a little while the man became uneasy, and said to the wife of his youth, "I believe I'll look about a little." He determined to seek greener pastures. He proceeded to the western extremity of the island, and discovered a little narrow neck of land connecting the island with the mainland, and the devil—they had a genuine devil in those days, too, it seems, who is always "playing the devil" with us—produced a mirage, and over on the mainland were such hills and vales, such dells and dales, such lofty mountains crowned with perpetual snow, such cataracts clad in bows of glory, that he rushed breathlessly back to his wife, exclaiming:—O, Heva! the country over there is a thousand times better and lovelier than this; let us migrate." She, woman-like, said "Adami, we must let well enough alone; we have all we want; let us stay here." But he said: "No, we will go." She followed him, and when they came to this narrow neck of land, he took her upon his back and carried her across. But at the instant he put her down there was a crash, and looking back they discovered that this narrow neck of land had fallen into the sea. The mirage had disappeared, and there was nothing but rocks and sand, and the Supreme Brahma cursed them to the lowest hell. Then Adami spoke—and it showed him to be every inch a man—"Curse me, but curse not her; it was not her fault, it was mine." (Our Adam says, with a pusillanimous whine,—Curse her, for it is her fault: she tempted me and I did eat!" The world, today, is teeming with just such cowards!) Then said Brahma, "I will save her, but not thee." And then spoke his wife, out of the fullness of the love of a heart in which there was enough to make all her daughters rich in holy affection, "If thou wilt not spare him, spare neither me; I do not wish to live without him. I love him." Then magnanimously said the Supreme Brahma, "I will spare you both, and watch over you and your children forever!"

Now, tell me truly, which is the grander story? The book containing this story is full of good things; and yet Christians style as heathens those who have adopted this book as their guide, and spend thousands of dollars annually in sending missionaries to convert them!

It has been too often conceded that because the new testament contains, in many passages, a lofty and terse expression of love as the highest duty of man, Christianity must have a tendency to ennoble his nature. But Christianity is like sweetened whisky and water—it perverts and destroys that which it should nourish and strengthen.

Christianity makes an often fatal attack on a man's morality—if he

happens to be blessed with any—by substituting for the sentiments of love and duty to our neighbors, a sense of obligation of blind obedience to an infinite, mysterious, revengeful, tyrannical God! The real principle of Christian morality, is servile obedience to a dangerous Power! Dispute the assertions of even your priest as to the requirements, dislikes, desires and wishes of the Almighty, and you might as well count yourself as lost, sulphurically lost! If you are one of God's chosen, or in other words, have been saved, and are even so fortunate as to attain to the glories and joys of the gold-paved streets of heaven, you are expected, in looking over the banisters of heaven down into the abyss of eternal torture, to view with complacency the agonized features of your mother, sister, brother, or infant child—who are writhing in hell—and laugh at their calamity! You are not allowed to carry them a drop of water to cool their parched tongue! And if you are a Christian, you at this moment believe you will enjoy the situation!

If a man in a quarrel cuts down his neighbor in his sins, the poor, miserable victim goes directly to hell! The murderer may reasonably count on a lease of a few weeks of life, interviews his pastor, confesses the crime, repents, accepts the grace of God, is forgiven, and then smoothly and gently slides from the rudely-constructed scaffold into a haven of joy and bliss, there to sing the praises of the Lamb of God forever and forever! Poor, unfortunate victim! Happy murderer!

Ah, what a beautiful religion humanitarianism and charity might become!

[The following incident, showing Col. Ingersoll's disposition to practice what he preaches whenever the opportunity presents itself, we have never before seen in print. One day, during the winter of 1863-4, when the colonel had a law office in Peoria. Ill.—and before the close of the late war of the rebellion—a thinly clad, middle-aged, lady-like woman came into his office and asked assistance, "My good woman, why do you ask it?" "Sir, my husband is a private in the —th Illinois infantry, and stationed somewhere in Virginia, but I do not know where as I have not heard from him for nearly six months, although previous to that time I seldom failed to get a letter from him as often as once a week, and whenever he received his pay the most of his money came to me. To tell the truth, I do not know whether he is living or not. But one thing I do know, I do not hear from him. I have seven children to provide for, but no money in the house, not a particle of bread in the pantry, nor a lump of coal in the shed, and the landlord threatening to turn us out in the storm. This city pledged itself to give wives a certain sum monthly, providing they consented to their husband's responding to the call of the President for troops, but, disregarding these pledges, we and our children are left to starve and freeze, and to be turned out of our houses and homes by relentless landlords. Now, sir, can you tell me what I am to do?

The Colonel drew his bandanna from his great coat pocket, lightly touched his eyes with it, and rising to his feet, pointed to a chair—"Sit down, madame, and remain till I return. I will be back in a few minutes." He picked up a half-sheet of legal-cap and a pencil, and departed for the law and other offices of the building—of which there were several. Entering the first that appeared, "Good morning, Smith, give me half-a-dollar." "Well, now, colonel, you are—" "Never mind if I am—I must have it!" It came. He entered another. "Hello! colonel, what's new?" "I want a half-dollar from you!" "What for?" "None of your business—I want the money." He got it. He entered a third. "Hello, Bob! Anything new on eter—" "Never mind, I must have fifty cents!" "But—" "But nothing, Jones, give me what I ask for." Of course he got what he asked for. So on through fourteen offices, from which he obtained \$7. Returning to his office, he put his hand in his own pocket and drew forth a \$5 note, and handed the woman \$12. "Take this, my good woman, and make it go as far as you can. If you obtain relief from no other source, call on me again and I will do the best I can for you!" And still Col. Ingersoll is styled by hell-fire advocates an infidel, atheist, dog!]

To do so sweet a thing as to love our neighbors as we love ourselves; to strive to attain to as perfect a spirit as a Golden Rule would bring us into; to make virtue lovely by living it, grandly and nobly and patiently the outgrowth of a brotherhood not possible in this world where men are living away from themselves, and trampling justice and mercy and forgiveness under their feet!

Speaking of the different religions, of course they are represented by the different churches; and the best hold of the churches, and the surest way of giving totally depraved humanity a realizing sense of their utterly lost condition, is to talk and preach hell with all its horrible, terrible concomitants. True, the different priests advocate the doctrine, only when they see that it is the only thing to rouse the sinners from their lethargy; for where is the man who will not accept the grace of Jesus Christ, if he becomes convinced that his state in the hereafter is a terrible one! The ministers of the different churches know full well which side of their bread is buttered. A priest is a divinity among his people—a man around whom his parishioners throw a glamour of sanctity, and one who can do no wrong; albeit, his chief and growing characteristics are tyranny, arrogancy, self-conceit, deception, bigotry and superstition! Tyrannical do I call them? Most assuredly! Suppose, for example, the Methodist, or Presbyterian church had the power to decide whether you, or I, or any other man, should be a Methodist or Presbyterian, and we should decline to follow the path pointed out to us, or either of us, what I solemnly and candidly ask you, would be the result? Our fate would be more terrible than their endless hell! The inquisition would rise again in all its horrid blackness! Instruments of torture would darken our vision on every hand! But, thank God—not that terrible being whom Christians would have us believe is our Maker—this is a free land—free as the air we

breathe; and you and I can partake of the orthodox waters of life freely, or we can let them alone! When I see a man perched upon a pedestal called a "pulpit" a man who is one of nature's noblemen, physically, and fully able to breast the storms of life and earn his honest living—telling his hearers with perspiring brow and all his might and main of the terrors of the seething cauldron of hell, and how certain it is that they are to be unceremoniously dumped therein to be boiled through all ages, yet never boiled done—unless they seek salvation—when I look upon that man, honor bright, I pity him, for I cannot help comparing him with the lower animals! Then there is a reaction, and I feel an utter contempt for him, for he may know, when he declares hell is a reality, that he is lying!

Now, of the deception of the preacher. At the close of a sermon in an orthodox church, Rev. Mr. Solemnface steps to the side of Bro. Everbright, who has been absent from the brimstone-mill for several months:

"Ah, Bro. Everbright, how do you do? Long time since I have seen you; how's your family? Quite well? Is it well with thee today? Rather lukewarm, eh? Sorry, sorry. Well, brother, can you do something for us financially, today? Our people think my pulpit is too common, and say a couple hundred will put it in good shape, and make it desirable and attractive. Can you contribute a few dollars to the fund?"

"Well, Bro. Solemnface, for four long months I have been ill; not a day's work have I done, and not a cent of money have I that I can call my own. Next year I trust I can do something for the cause of my Maker."

"Ah-h-h-h-h-h!" and Bro. S.'s face assumes a terrible look of disappointment, and he is gone in a moment. Out upon such a fraud! The pulpits of the land are full of them. The world is cursed with them! They possess all the elements of vagabonds, dead-beats, falsifiers, beggars, vultures, hyenas and jackals!

In past ages the cross has been in partnership with the sword, and the religion of Christ was established by murderers, tyrants and hypocrites. I want you to know that the church carried the black flag, and I ask you what must have been the civilizing influence of such a religion? Of all the selfish things in this world, it is one man wanting to get to heaven, caring nothing what becomes of the rest of mankind, saying: "If I can only get my little soul in!" I have always noticed that the people who have the smallest souls make the most fuss about getting them saved. Here is what we are taught by the church of today. We are taught by them that fathers and mothers can all be happy in heaven, no matter who may be in hell; that the husband could be happy there, with the wife that would have died for him at any moment of his life, in hell. But they say, "Hell, we don't believe in fire. I don't think you understand me. What we believe in now is remorse." What will you have

remorse for? For the mean things you have done when you are in hell? Will you have any remorse for the mean things you have done when you are in heaven? Or will you be so good then that you won't care how you used to be? I tell you today, that no matter in what heaven you may be, no matter in what star you are spending the summer; if you meet another man whom you have wronged, you will drop a little behind in the tune. And, no matter in what part of hell you are, you will meet some one who has suffered, whose nakedness you have clothed, and the fire will cool up a little. According to this Christian doctrine, you won't care how mean you were once. Is it a compliment to an infinite God to say that every being He ever made deserved to be damned the minute He had got him done, and that He will damn everybody He has not had a chance to make over? Is it possible that somebody else can be good for me, and that this doctrine of the atonement is the only anchor for the human soul?

We sit by the fireside and see the flames and sparks fly up the chimney—everybody happy, and the cold wind and sleet beating on the window, and out on the doorstep a mother with a child on her breast freezing. How happy it makes a fire, that beautiful contrast. And we say God is good, and there we sit, and there she sits and moans, not one night, but forever. Or we are sitting at the table with our wives and children, everybody eating, happy and delighted, and Famine comes and pushes out its shriveled palms, and, with hungry eyes, implores us for a crust; how that would increase the appetite! And that is the Christian heaven. Don't you see that these infamous doctrines petrify the human heart? And I would have every one who hears me swear that he will never contribute another dollar to build another church, in which is taught such infamous lies. Let every man try to make every day a joy, and God cannot afford to damn such a man. Consequently humanity is the only real religion.

”Man's inhumanity to man Makes countless millions mourn.”

Ingersoll's Lecture on the Review of His Reviewers

Ladies and Gentlemen: ”What have I said?” ”What has been my offense? I have been spoken of as if I were a wolf endeavoring to devour the entire fold of sheep in the absence of the shepherd.” I believe in the trinity of observation, reason and science; the trinity of man, woman and child; the trinity of love, joy and hope; and thought that every man has a right to think for himself, and no other man has the right to debar him of this privilege by torture, by social ostracism, or any of the numerous other expedients resorted to by the enemies of advancement. I ask: ”Does God wish the lip-worship of a slave? a sneak? of the man that dares not reason? If I were the infinite God, I would rather have the worship of one good man of brains than a world of such men. I am told that I am in danger of everlasting fire, and that I shall burn forever in hell: I tell you, my friends, if I were going to hell tonight I would take an overcoat with me. Do not tell me that the eternal future of a man may depend upon his belief, I deny it. That a

man should be punished for having come to an honest conclusion, the honest production of his brain; that an honest conclusion should be deemed a crime and so declared, it is an infamous, monstrous assertion, and I would rather go to hell than to keep the company of a God who would damn his child for an honest belief.

"Next, I 'preached' that a woman was the equal of man, entitled to everything that he is entitled to, to be his partner, and to be cherished and respected because she is the weaker, to be treated as a splendid flower. I said that man should not be cross to her, but fill the house that she is in with such joy that it would burst out at the window. I have said that matrimony is the holiest of sacraments, and I have said that the bible took woman up thousands of years ago and handed her down to man as a slave, and I have said that the bible is a barbarous book for teaching that she is a slave, and I repeat it, and will prove later what I have said. I have pleaded for the right of man, of wife, and of the little child; I have said we can govern children by love and affection; I have asked for tender treatment for the child of crime; I have asked mothers to cease beating their children and take them to their hearts; and for this I am denounced by the religious press and men in the pulpits as a demon and a monster of heresy, who should be driven out from among you as an unclean thing.

"But I should not complain. Only a few years ago I should have been compelled to look at my denouncers through flame and smoke; but they dare not treat me so now or they would. One hundred years ago I should have been burned for claiming the right of reason; fifty years ago I should have been imprisoned and my wife and children would have been torn away from me, and twenty-five years ago I could not have made a living in the United States in my profession—the law. But I live now and can see through it all, and all is light. I delivered another lecture, on "Ghosts," in which I sought to show that man had been controlled in the past by phantoms created by his own imagination; in which the pencil of fear had drawn pictures for him on the canvass of superstition, and that men had groveled in they dirt before their own superstitious creations. I endeavored to show that man had received nothing from these ghosts but hatred, blood, ignorance and unhappiness, and that they had filled our world with woe and tears. This is what I endeavored to show—no more. Now, every one has as much right to differ with me as I with them, but it does not make the slightest difference for the purpose of argument whether I am a good man or a bad, whether I am ugly or handsome—although I would not object to resting my case on that issue; the only thing to be considered and discussed is, is what I have said true, or is it untrue?

"Now, I said that the bible came from the ghosts, and that they gave us the doctrine of immortality of the soul, which I deny. Now, the immortality of the soul, if there is such a thing, is a fact, and therefore no book could make it. If I am immortal, I am; if not, no book can make me so. The doctrine of immortality is based in the hope

of the human heart, and is not derived from any book or creed. It has its origin in the ebb and flow of the human affections, and will continue as long as affection, and is the rainbow in the sky of hope. It does not depend on a book, on ghosts, superstition of any kind; it is a flower of the human heart. I did say that these ghosts, or the book, taught that human slavery was right, that most monstrous of all crimes, that makes miserable the victim and debases the master, for a slave can have all the virtues while the master can not. I did say that it riveted the chains upon the oppressed, and that it counseled the robbing of that most precious of all boons—Liberty. I add that the book upheld all this, that it sustained and sanctified the institution of human slavery. I did also assert that this same book, which my critics claim was inspired by God, inculcated the doctrine of witchcraft, for which people, through its teaching were hanged and burned for bringing disease upon the regal persons of kings, and for souring beer. I did say that this book upheld that most of all infamies, polygamy, and that it did not teach political liberty or religious toleration, but political slavery and the most wretched intolerance. I did try to prove that these ghosts knew less than nothing about medicine, politics, legislation, astronomy, geology and astrology, but I am also aware that in saying these things I have done what my censors think I ought not to have done. But the victor ought not to feel malice, and I shall have none. As soon as I had said all these things, some gentlemen felt called upon to answer them, which they had a right to do. Now, I like fairness, am enamored with it, probably because I get so little of it. I can say a great many mean things, for I have read all the religious papers, and I ought to be able to account for every motive in a mean manner after.

”The first gentleman whom I shall call your attention to is the Rev. Dr. Woodbridge. It seems that when I delivered my lectures the conclusion had come to ”that man does not believe in anything but matter and force—that man does not believe in spirit.” Why not? If by spirit you mean that which thinks, I am one of them myself. If you mean by spirit that which hopes and reasons and loves and aspires, why, then, I am a believer in spirits; but whatever spirit there is in this universe I will take my oath is a natural product and not superimposed upon this world. All I will say is that whatever is, is natural, and there is as much goodness in my judgment, as much spirit here in this world as in any other, and you are just as near the heart of the universe here as you ever can be.

But, they say, ”there is matter and force, and there is force and there is spirit.” Well, what of it? There is no matter without force. What would keep it together unless there was force? Can you imagine matter without force? Honor bright, can you conceive of force without matter? And what is spirit? They say spirit is the first thing that ever was. It seems to me sometimes as though spirit was the blossom and fruit of all, and not the commencement. But they say spirit was first. What would that spirit do? No force—no matter—a spirit living in an

infinite vacuum without side, edge or bottom. This spirit created the world; and if this spirit did, there must have been a time when it commenced to create, and back of that an eternity spent in absolute idleness. Can a spirit exist without matter or without force? I honestly say I do not know what matter is, what force is, what spirit is; but if you mean by matter anything that I can touch, or by force anything that we can overcome then I believe in them. If you mean by spirit anything that can think and love, I believe in spirits.

"The next critic who assailed me was the Rev. Mr. Kalloch. I am not going to show you what I can withstand. I am not going to say a word about the reputation of this man, although he took some liberties with mine. This gentleman says negation is a poor thing to die by. I would just as lief die by that as the opposite. He spoke of the last hours of Paine and Voltaire and the terrors of their death-beds; but the question arises, is there a word of truth in all he said? I have observed that the murderer dies with courage and firmness in many instances, but that does not make me think that it sanctified his crime; in fact, it makes no impression upon me one way or the other. When a man through old age or infirmity approaches death the intellectual faculties are dimmed, his senses become less and less, and as he loses these he goes back to his old superstition. Old age brings back the memories of childhood. And the great bard gave in the corrupt and besotted Falstaff—who prattled of babbling brooks and green fields—an instance of the retracing steps taken by the memory at the last gasp. It has been said that the bible was sanctified by our mothers. Every superstition in the world, from the beginning of all time, has had such a sanctification. The Turk dying on the Russian battlefield, pressing the Koran to his bosom, breathes his last thinking of the loving adjuration of his mother to guard it. Every superstition has been rendered sacred by the love of a mother. I know what it has cost the noble and the brave to throw to the winds these superstitions. Since the death of Voltaire, who was innocent of all else than a desire to shake off the superstitions of the past, the curse of Rome has pursued him, and ignorant protestants have echoed that curse. I like Voltaire. Whenever I think of him it is as a plumed knight coming from the fray with victory shining upon his brow. He was once in the Bastille, and while there he changed his name from Francis Marie Aloysius to Voltaire; and when the Bastille was torn down "Voltaire" was the battle cry of those who did it. He did more to bring about religious toleration than any man in the galaxy of those who strove for the privilege of free thought. He was always on the side of justice. He was full of faults and had many virtues. His doctrines have never brought unhappiness to any country. He died as serenely as anyone could. Speaking to his servant, he said, "Farewell my faithful friend." Could he have done a more noble act than to recognize him who had served him faithfully as a man? What more could he wished? And now let me say here, I will give a \$1,000 in gold to any clergyman who can substantiate that the death of Voltaire was not as peaceful as the dawn. And of Thomas Paine, whom they assert died in fear and agony, frightened by the clanking chains of

devils, in fact, frightened to death by God—I will give \$1,000 likewise to anyone who can substantiate this absurd story—a story without a word of truth in it. And let me ask, who dies in the most fear, the man who, like the saint, exclaims: "My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" or Voltaire, who peacefully and quietly bade his servant farewell? The question is not who died right, but who lived right. I look upon death as the most unimportant moment of life, and believe that not half the responsibility is attached to dying that is to living properly. This Rev. Mr. Kalloch is a baptist. He has a right to be a baptist. The first baptist, though was a heretic; but it is among the wonders that when a heretic gets fifteen or twenty to join him he suddenly begins to be orthodox. Roger Williams was a baptist, but how he, or anyone not destitute of good sense, could be one, passes my comprehension. Let me illustrate:

Suppose it was the Day of Judgment tonight and we were all assembled, as the ghosts, say we will be, to be judged, and God should ask a man:

"Have you been a good man?"

"Yes."

"Have you loved your wife and children?"

"Yes."

"Have you taken good care of them and made them happy?"

"Yes."

"Have you tried to do right by your neighbors?"

"Yes."

"Paid all your debts?"

"Yes."

And then cap the climax by asking:

"Were you ever baptized?"

"Could a solitary being hear that question without laughing? I think not. I once happened to be in the company of six or seven baptist elders (I never have been able to understand since how I got into such bad company), and they wanted to know what I thought of baptism. I answered that I had not given the matter any attention, in fact I had no special opinion upon the subject. But they pressed me and finally I told them that I thought, with soap baptism was a good thing.

The Rev. Mr. Guard has attacked me, and has described me, among other things, as a dog barking at a train. Of course he was the train. He said, first, the bible is not an immoral book, because I swore upon it when I joined the Free and Accepted Masons. That settles the question. Secondly, he says that Solomon had softening of the brain and fatty degeneration of the heart; thirdly, that the Hebrews had the right to slay all the inhabitants of Canaan according to the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. He says that the destruction of these Canaanites, the ripping open by the bloody sword of women with child was an act of sublime mercy. Think of that! He says that the Canaanites should have been driven from their homes, and not only driven, but that the men who simply were guilty of the crime of fighting for their native land—the old men with gray hairs; the old mothers, the young mothers, the little dimpled, prattling child—that it was an act of sublime mercy to plunge the sword of religious persecution into old and young. If that is mercy, let us have injustice. If there is that kind of a God I am sorry that I exist. Fourthly, Mr. Guard said God has the right to do as he pleases with the beings he has created; and, fifthly, that God, by choosing the Jews and governing them personally, spoiled them to that degree that they crucified Him the first opportunity they had. That shows what a good administration will do. Sixthly, He says polygamy is not a bad thing when compared with the picture of Anthony and Cleopatra, now on exhibition in this city. I will just say one word about art. I think this is one of the most beautiful words in our language, and do you know, it never seemed to me necessary for art to go into partnership with a rag? I like the paintings of Angelo, of Raphael—I like those splendid souls that are put upon canvas—all there is of human beauty. There are brave souls in every land who worship nature grand and nude, and who, with swift, indignant hand, tear off the fig leaves of the prude. Seventhly, it may be said that the bible sanctions slavery, but that it is not an immoral book if it does. Mr. Guard playfully says that he is a puppy nine days old; that he was only eight days old when I came here. I'm inclined to think he has over stated his age. I account for his argument precisely as he did for the sin of Solomon, softening of the brain, or fatty degeneration of the heart. It does seem to me that if I were a good Christian and knew that another man was going down to the bottomless pit to be miserable and in agony forever, I would try to stop him, and instead of filling my mouth with epithet and invective, and drawing the lips of malice back from the teeth of hatred, my eyes would be filled with tears, and I would do what I could to reclaim him and take him up in the arms of my affection.

The next gentleman is the Rev. Mr. Robinson, who delivered a sermon entitled 'Ghost against God, or Ingersoll against Honesty.' Of course he was honest. He apologized for attending an infidel lecture upon the ground that he hated to contribute to the support of a materialistic showman. I am willing to trade fagots for epithets, and the rack for anything that may be said in his sermon. I am willing to trade the instrument of torture with which they could pull the nails from my fingers for anything which the ingenuity of orthodoxy can invent. When

I saw that report—although I do not know that I ought to tell it—I felt bad. I knew that man’s conscience must be rankling like a snake in his bosom, that he had contributed a dollar to the support of a man as bad as I. I wrote him a letter, in which I said: “The Rev. Samuel Robinson, My Dear Sir. In order to relieve your conscience of the stigma of having contributed to the support of an unbeliever in Ghosts, I herewith enclose the dollar you paid to attend my lecture.” I then gave him a little good advice to be charitable, and regretted exceedingly that any man could listen to me for an hour and a half and not go away satisfied that other men had the same right to think that he had.

The speaker went on to answer the argument of Mr. Robinson with regard to persecution, contending that protestants had been guilty of it no less than catholics; and showing that the first people to pass an act of toleration in the new world were the catholics in Maryland. The reverend gentleman has stated also that infidelity has done nothing for the world in the development of art and science. Has he ever heard of Darwin, of Tyndall, of Huxley, of John W. Draper, of Auguste Comte, of Descartes, Laplace, Spinoza, or any man who has taken a step in advance of his time? Orthodoxy never advances, when it does advance, it ceases to be orthodoxy.

A reply to certain strictures in the Occident led the lecturer up to another ministerial critic, namely, the Rev. W.E. Ijams.

I want to say that, so far as I can see, in his argument this gentleman has treated me in a kind and considerate spirit. He makes two or three mistakes, but I suppose they are the fault of the report from which he quoted. I am made to say in his sermon that there is no sacred place in the universe. What I did say was: There is no sacred place in all the universe of thought; there is nothing too holy to be investigated, nothing too sacred to be understood, and I said that the fields of thought were fenceless, that they should be without a wall. I say so tonight. He further said that I said that a man had not only the right to do right, but to do wrong. What I did say, was: “Liberty is the right to do right, and the right to think right, and the right to think wrong,” not the right to do wrong. That is all I have to say in regard to that gentleman, except that, so far as I could see, he was perfectly fair, and treated me as though I was a human being as well as he.

The speaker sarcastically referred to the slurs thrown upon him by his reviewers, who have claimed that his theories have no foundation, his arguments no reason, and that his utterances are vapid, blasphemous, and unworthy a reply. He said that their statements and their actions were sadly at variance, for, while declaring him a senseless idiot, they spent hours in striving to prove themselves not idiots; in other words, in one breath they declare that his views were absolutely without point, and needed no explaining away; while in direct rebuttal of this declaration, they devoted time and labor in attempts to disprove the

very things they called self-evident absurdities.

Turning from this subject, Mr. Ingersoll read numerous extracts from the bible, with interpolated comments. He claimed that the bible authorized slavery, and that many devoted believers in that book had turned the cross of Christ into a whipping post. He did not wish it understood that he could find no good in believers in creeds; far from it, for some of his dearest friends were most orthodox in their religious ideas, and there had been hundreds of thousands of good men among both clergy and laymen. History has shown no people more nobly self-sacrificing than the Jesuit Fathers who first visited this country to proselyte among the Indians. But these men and their like were better than their creeds; better than the book in which their faith was centered. The bible tells us distinctly that the world was made in six days—not periods, but actual, bona fide days—a statement which it iterates and reiterates. It also tells us that God lengthened the day for the benefit of a gentleman named Joshua, in other words, that he stopped the rotary motion of the earth. Motion is changed into heat by stoppage, and the world turns with such velocity that its sudden stoppage would create a heat of intensity beyond the wildest flight of our imagination, and yet this impossible feat was performed that Joshua might have longer time to expend in slaying a handful of Amorites. The bible also upholds the doctrines of witchcraft and spiritualism, for Saul visited the witch of Endor, and she, after preparing the cabinet, trotted out the spirit of Samuel, said spirit kindly joining in conversation with Saul, without requiring the aid of a trance medium. The speaker then quoted at length from Leviticus concerning wizards and evil spirits, described the temptation of Christ by Satan, and the driving of devils from man into swine. He sneered at the rights of children as biblically described, citing the law which sentenced them to be stoned to death for disobedience to parents, the almost sacrifice of Isaac by his father, and the actual murder of Jephthah's daughter, asking if a God who could demand such worship was worthy the love of man. He next referred to the conversation between God and Satan concerning the man Job, and of the reward given to the latter for his long continued patience. His three daughters and his seven sons had been taken from him merely to test his patience, and the merciful God gave him in exchange three other daughters and seven sons, but they were not the children whom he had loved and lost. The bible represents woman as vastly inferior to man, while he believed, with Robbie Burns, that God made man with a prentice-hand, and woman after He had learned the trade. Polygamy, also, was a doctrine supported by this pure and pious work; a doctrine so foul that language is not strong enough to express its infamy. The bible taught, as a religious creed, that if your wife, your sister, your brother, your dearest friend, tempted you to change from the religion of your fathers, your duty to God demanded that you should at once strike a blow at the life of your tempter. Let us suppose, then, that in truth God went to Palestine and selected the scanty tribes of Israel as his chosen people, and supposing that he afterward came to Jerusalem in the shape of a man and taught a different doctrine from the one prescribed by their book

and their clergy, and that the chosen people, in obedience to the education he had prepared for them, struck at the life of him who tempted them. Were they to be cursed by God and man because the former had reaped the harvest of his own sowing?

Ingersoll's Lecture on "How the Gods Grow"

Ladies and Gentlemen: Priests have invented a crime called blasphemy. That crime is the breastwork behind which ignorance, superstition and hypocrisy have crouched for thousands of years, and shot their poisoned arrows at the pioneers of human thought. Priests tell us that there is a God somewhere in heaven who objects to a human being, thinking and expressing his thought. Priests tell us that there is a God somewhere who takes care of the people of this world; a God somewhere who watches over the widow and the orphan; a God somewhere who releases the slave; a God somewhere who visits the innocent man in prison; the same God that has allowed men for thousands of years to burn to ashes human beings simply for loving that God. We have been taught that it is dangerous to reason upon these subjects—extremely dangerous—and that of all crimes in the world, the greatest is to deny the existence of that God.

Redden your hands in innocent blood; steal the bread of the orphan, deceive, ruin and desert the beautiful girl who has loved and trusted you, and for all this you may be forgiven; for all this you can have the clear writ of that bankrupt court of the gospel. But deny the existence of one of these gods, and the tearful face of mercy becomes lurid with eternal hate; the gates of heaven are shut against you, and you, with an infinite curse ringing in your ears, commence your wanderings as an immortal vagrant, as a deathless convict, as an eternal outcast. And we have been taught that the infinite has become enraged at the finite simply when the finite said: "I don't know!" Why, imagine it. Suppose Mr. Smith should hear a couple of small bugs in his front yard discussing the question as to the existence of Smith; and suppose one little red bug swore on the honor of a bug that, in his judgment, no such man as Smith lived. What would you think of Mr. Smith if he fell into a rage, and brought his heel down on this little atheist bug and said: "I will teach you that Smith is a diabolical fact!" And yet if there is an infinite God, there is infinitely a greater difference between that God and a human being than between Shakespeare and the smallest bug that ever crawled. It cannot be; there is something wrong in this thing somewhere.

I am told, also, that this being watches over us, takes care of us. And the other day I read a sermon (you will hardly believe it, but I did); I had nothing else to. I had read everything in that paper, including the advertisements; so I read the sermon. It was a sermon by Rev. Mr. Moody on prayer, in which he took the ground that our prayer should be "Thy will be done;" and he seemed to believe that if we prayed that prayer often enough we could induce God to have his own way. He gives an instance of a woman in Illinois who had a sick child, and she prayed

that God would not take from her arms that babe. She did not pray "Thy will be done," but she prayed, according to Mr. Moody, almost a prayer of rebellion, and said: "I cannot give up my babe." God heard her prayer, and the child got well; and Mr. Moody says it was an idiot when it got well. For fifteen years that woman watched over and took care of that idiotic child; and Mr. Moody says how much better would it have been if she had allowed God to have had his own way. Think of a God who would punish a mother for speaking to Him from an agonizing heart and saying, "I cannot give up my babe," and making the child an idiot. What would the devil have done under the same circumstances? That is the God we are expected to worship. I range myself with the opposition. The next day I read another sermon preached by the Rev. De Witt Talmage, a man of not much fancy, but of great judgment. He preached a sermon on dreams, and went on to say that God often visited us in dreams, and that He often convinces men of His existence in that way. So far as I am concerned I had rather see something in the light. And, according to that sermon, there was a poor woman in England, a pauper who had the rheumatism, and there was another pauper who had not the rheumatism; and the pauper who had not the rheumatism used to take food to the pauper that had. After a while the pauper without rheumatism died, and then the pauper with the rheumatism began to think in her own mind, who will bring me food? That night God appeared to her in a dream. He did not cure her rheumatism though. He appeared to her in a dream, and he took her out of the house and pointed on the right hand to an immense mountain of bread, and on the left hand to an immense mountain of butter. And when I read that I said to myself, my Lord, what a place that would be to start a political party. And he said to her: "These belong to your father; do you think that he will allow one of his children to starve? What a place would Ireland be with that mountain of bread and butter! Until I read these two sermons I hardly believed that in this day and generation anybody believed that God would make a child an idiot simply because the mother had prayed for its sweet dear life, or that God's visits are only in dreams. But so it is.

Orthodoxy has not advanced upon the religion of the Fiji Islander. It is the same yesterday, today and forever. Now we are told that there is a god; and nearly every nation has had a god; generally a good many of them. You see the raw material was so cheap, and Gods were manufactured so easily, that heaven has always been crammed with the phantoms of these monsters. But they say there is a god, and every savage tribe believes in a God. It is an argument made to me every day. I concede to you that fact; I concede to you that all savages agree with you. I admit it takes a certain amount of civilization, a certain amount of thought, to rise above the idea that some personal being, for his own ends, for his own glory, made and governs this universe. I admit that it takes some thought to see the universe is good and all that is good, and every star that shines is a part of God, and I am something, no matter how little, and that the infinite cannot exist without me, and that therefore I am a part of the infinite. I admit that it takes a little civilization to get to that point.

Now every nation has made a god, and every man that has made a god has used himself for a pattern; and men have put into the mouth of their god all their mistakes in astronomy, in geography, in philosophy, in morality, and the god is never wiser or better than his creators. If they believe in slavery, so did he; if they believe in eating human flesh, he wanted his share; if they were polygamous, so was he; if they were cruel, so was he. And just to the extent that man has become civilized, he has civilized his god. You can hardly imagine the progress that our God has made in four thousand years.

Four thousand years ago He was a barbarian; tonight He is quite an educated gentleman. Four thousand years ago He believed in killing and butchering little babes at the breasts of their mothers; He has reformed. Four thousand years ago He did not believe in taking prisoners of war. He said, kill the old men; mingle their blood with the white hair. Kill the women. But what shall we do, O God, with the maidens? Give them to satisfy the lust of the soldiers and of the priests! If there is anywhere in the serene heaven a real God. I want him to write in the book of His eternal remembrance, opposite my name, that I deny that lie for Him.

Four thousand years ago our God was in favor of slavery; four thousand years ago our God would have a man beaten to death with rugged rocks for expressing his honest thought; four thousand years ago our God told the husband to kill his wife if she disagreed with him upon the important subject of religion; four thousand years ago our God was a monster; and if He is any better now, it is simply because we have made Him so. I am talking about the God of the Christian world. There may be, for aught I know, upon the shore of the eternal vast, some being whose very thought is the constellation of those numberless stars. I do not know; but if there is he has never written a bible; he has never been in favor of slavery; he has never advocated polygamy, and he never told the murderer to sheathe his dagger in the dimpled breast of a babe. But they say to me, our God has written a book. I am glad he did, and it is by that book that I propose to judge them. I find in that book that it was a crime to eat of the tree of knowledge. I find that the church has always been the enemy of education, and I find that the church still carries the flaming sword of ignorance and bigotry over the tree of knowledge.

And if that story is true, ought we not after all to thank the devil? He was the first school master; he was the first to whisper liberty in our ears; he was the author of modesty. He was the author of ambition and progress. And as for me, give me the storm and tempest of thought and action rather than the dead calm of ignorance and faith. Punish me when and how you will, but first let me eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. And there is one peculiar thing I might as well speak of here. While the world has made gods, it has also made devils; and as a rule the devils have been better friends to man than the gods. It was

not a devil that drowned the world; it was not a devil that covered with the multitudinous waves of an infinite sea the corpses of men, women and children.

That was the good god. The devil never sent pestilence and famine; the devil never starved women and children; that was the good God. The meanest thing recorded of the devil is what happened concerning my servant Job. According to that book God met the devil and said: "Where have you been?" "Oh, been walking up and down." "Have you noticed my man Job; nobody like him!" "Well, who wouldn't be; you have given him everything; but take away what he has, and he will curse you to your face." And so the devil went to work and tried it. It was a mean thing. And that was all done to decide what you might call a wager on a difference of opinion between the serene highnesses. He took away his property, but Job didn't sin; and when God met the devil, he said: "Well, what did I tell you, smarty?" "Ah," he said, "that is all very well, but you touch his flesh and he will curse you; and he did, but Job didn't curse him. And then what did God do to help him! He gave him some other children better looking than the first ones. What kind of an idea is that for a God to kill our children and then give us better looking ones! If you have loved a child, I don't care if it is deformed if you have held it in your arms and covered its face with kisses, you want that child back and no other.

I find in this bible that there was an old gentleman a little short of the article of hair. And as he was going through the town a number of little children cried out to him "Go up, thou bald head!" And this man of God turned and cursed them. A real good-humored old fellow! And two bears came out of the woods and tore in pieces forty-two children! How did the bears get there? Elisha could not control the bears. Nobody but God could control the bears in that way. Now just think of an infinite God making a shining star, having his attention attracted by hearing some children saying to an old gentlemen, "Go up, thou bald head!" and then speaking to his secretary or somebody else, "Bring in a couple of bears now!" What a magnificent God! What would the devil have done under the same circumstances? And yet that is the God they want to put into the constitution in order to make our children gentle and kind and loving.

You hate a God like that. I do; I despise him. And yet little children in the Sabbath-school are taught that infamous lie. Why, I have very little respect for an old man that will get mad about such a thing, anyway. What would the Christian world say of me if I should have a few children torn to pieces if they should make that remark in my face? What would the devil have done under the same circumstances? I tell you, I cannot worship a God who is no better than the devil! I cannot do it. And if you will just read the old testament with the bandage off your eyes and the cloud of fear from your heart, you will come to the conclusion that it was written not only by men, but by barbarians, by savages, and that it is totally unworthy of a civilized age. I believe

in no God who believes in slavery. I will worship no God who ever said that one of His children should own another of His children. But they say to me, there must be a God somewhere! Well, I say I don't know. There may be. I hope there is more than one—one is so lonesome. Just think of an old bachelor, always alone! I want more than one. And they say, somebody must have made this! Well, I say I don't know. But it strikes me that the indestructible cannot be created. What would you make it of? "Oh, nothing!" Well, it strikes me that nothing, considered in the light of a raw material, is a decided failure. For my part, I cannot conceive of force apart from matter, and I cannot conceive of matter apart from force. I cannot conceive of force somewhere without acting upon something; because force must be active, or it is not force; and if it has no matter to act upon, it ceases to be force. I cannot conceive of the smallest atom of matter staying together without force. Beside, if some god made all this, there must have been some morning when he commenced! And if he has existed always, there is an eternity back of that when he never did anything; when he lived in an infinite hole, without side, top or bottom! He did not think, for there was nothing to think about. Certainly he did not remember, for nothing had ever happened. Now I cannot conceive of this! I do not say it is not so. I may be damned for my smartness, yet—I simply say I cannot conceive of it, that is all. But men tell me, you cannot conceive of eternity! That is just what I can conceive of. I cannot conceive of its stopping. They say I cannot conceive of infinite space! That is just what I can conceive of; because, let me imagine all I can, my imagination will stand upon the verge and see infinite space beyond. Infinite space is a necessity of the mind, because I cannot think of enough matter to fill it. Eternity is a necessity of the mind, because I cannot dream of the cessation of time. But they say there is a design in the world, consequently there must be a designer. Well, I don't know.

Paley says that the more wonderful a thing is, the greater the necessity for creation; that a watch is a wonderful thing, and that it must have had a creator; that the watchmaker is more wonderful than the watch, therefore he must have had a creator. Then we come to God; He is altogether more wonderful than the watchmaker, therefore He had no creator. There is a link out somewhere; I don't pretend to understand it. And so I say, that had the world been any other way, you would have seen the same evidence of design, precisely. We grow up with our conditions, and you cannot imagine of a first cause. Why? Every cause has an effect.

Strike your hands together; they feel warm. The effect becomes a cause instantly, and that cause produces another effect, and the effect another cause; and there could not have been a cause until there was an effect. Because until there was an effect, nothing had been caused; until something had been caused, I am positive there was no cause. Now you cannot conceive of a lost effect, because the lost effect of which you can think, will in turn become a cause and that cause produce

another effect. And as you cannot think of a lost effect, you cannot think of a first cause; it is not thinkable by the human mind.

They say God governs this world. Why does He not govern Russia as well as He does Massachusetts? Why clods He allow the Czar to send beautiful girls of sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, simply for saying a word in favor of human liberty, to mines in Siberia, where they draw carts with knees bruised and bleeding, with hands scarred and swollen? What is that God worth that allows such things in the world He governs? Did He govern this country when it had four millions of slaves?—when it turned the cross of Christ into a whipping-post—when the holy bible was an auction-block on which the mother stood while her babe was sold from her breast?—when bloodhounds were considered apostles? Was God governing the world when the prisoners were confined in the Bastille? It seems to me, if there is a God, and someone would repeat the word "Bastille." it would cover almost his face with the blood of shame. But they say heaven will balance all the ills of life. Let us see: A large majority of us are sinners—at least a large majority with whom I am acquainted; and a majority of the Christians with whom I am acquainted are worse than sinners. And if their doctrine is true, you will be astonished at the gentlemen you will see in hell that day. You will know by the cast of their countenance that they used to preach here. They say that it may be that the sinners here have a very good time, and that the Christians don't have a very good time; that it is awful hard work to serve the Lord, and that you carry a cross when you deny yourself the delights of murder and forgery, and all manner of rascality that fills life with delight. But they say that while the rascals are having a good time, they will catch it in the other world. But, according to their account, ninety-nine out of a hundred will be damned, and I think it will be a close call for the hundredth. Like that dear old Scotch woman, when she was talking about the Presbyterian faith, some one said to her: "My dear woman, if your doctrine is true, nobody but you and your husband will be saved." "Ah," said she, "I'm na' sae sure about John." About one in a hundred will be saved, and the other ninety-nine will be in misery. So that on the average there will not be half as much happiness in the next world as in this. So, instead of God's plan getting better, it gets worse; and throughout all the ages of eternity there will be less happiness than in this world. This world is a school; this world is where we develop moral muscle. It may be that we are here simply because men cannot advance only through agony and pain. If it is necessary to have pain and agony to advance morally, then nobody can advance in heaven. Hell will be the only place offering opportunities to any gentleman who wishes to increase his moral muscle.

A gentleman once asked me if I could suggest any improvement on the present order of things, if I had the power. Well, said I, in the first place, I would make good health catching instead of disease. There will be no humanity until we get the orthodox God out of our religion. I want to do what little I can to put another one in God's name, so that we will worship a supreme human god, so that we will worship mercy,

justice, love and truth, and not have the idea that we must sacrifice our brother upon the altar of fear to please some imaginary phantom. See what Christianity has done for the world! It has reduced Spain to a guitar, Italy to a hand organ and Ireland to exile. That is what religion has done. Take every country in the whole world, and the country that has got the least religion is the most prosperous, and the country that has got the most religion is in the worst condition.

In the vast cemetery, called the past, are most of the religions of men and there, too, are nearly all their gods.

The sacred temples of India were ruins long ago. Over column and cornice; over the painted and pictured walls, cling and creep the trailing vines. Brahma, the golden, with four heads and four arms; Vishnu, the sombre, the punisher of the wicked, with his three eyes, his crescent, and his necklace of skulls; Siva, the destroyer, red with seas of blood; Kali, the goddess; Draupadi, the white-armed, and Krishna, the Christ, all passed away and left the thrones of heaven desolate. Along the banks of the sacred Nile, Iris no longer wandering weeps, searching for the dead Osiris. The shadow of Typhon's scowl falls no more upon the waves. The sun rises as of yore, and his golden beams still smite the lips of Memnon, but Memnon is as voiceless as the Sphinx. The sacred fanes are lost in desert sands; the dusty mummies are still waiting for the resurrection promised by their priests, and the old beliefs wrought in curiously sculptured stone, sleep in the mystery of a language lost and dead Odin, the author of life and soul, Vili and Ve, and the mighty giant Ymir, strode long ago from the ice halls of the North; and Thor, with iron glove and glittering hammer, dashes mountains to the earth no more.

Broken are the circles and the cromlechs of the ancient Druids; fallen upon the summits of the hills, and covered with the centuries' moss are the sacred cairns. The divine fires of Persia and of the Aztecs have died out in the ashes of the past, and there is none to rekindle, and none to feed the holy flames. The harp of Orpheus is still; the drained cup of Bacchus has been thrown aside; Venus lies dead in stone, and her white bosom heaves no more with love. The streams still murmur, but no naiads bathe; the trees still wave, but in the forest aisles no dryads dance. The gods have flown from high Olympus. Not even the beautiful women can lure them back, and Danae lies unnoticed, naked to the stars. Hushed forever are the thunders of Sinai; lost are the voices of the prophets, and the lard once flowing with milk and honey is but a desert waste. One by one the myths have faded from the clouds; one by one the phantom host has disappeared, and, one by one, facts, truths and realities have taken their places. The supernatural has almost gone, but man is the natural remains. The gods have fled, but man is here. Nations, like individuals, have their periods of youth, of manhood and decay. Religions are the same. The same inexorable destiny awaits them all. The gods created with the nations must perish with their creators. They were created by men, and, like men, they must pass away. The

deities of one age are the by-words of the next. The religion of our day, and country, is no more exempt from the sneer of the future than others have been. When India was supreme, Brahma sat upon the world's throne. When the sceptre passed to Egypt, Isis and Osiris received the homage of mankind. Greece, with her fierce valor, swept to empire, and Zeus put on the purple of authority. The earth trembled with the tread of Rome's intrepid sons, and Jove grasped with mailed hand the thunderbolts of heaven. Rome fell, and Christians from her territory, with the red sword of war, carved out the ruling nations of the world, and now Jehovah sits upon the old throne. Who will be His successor?

Ingersoll's lecture on The Religion of Our Day

Ladies and Gentlemen:—I am glad that I have lived long enough to see one gentleman in the pulpit brave enough to say that God would not be offended at one who speaks according to the dictates of his conscience; who does not believe that God will give wings to a bird, and then damn the bird for flying. I thank the pastor and I thank the church for allowing its pastor to be so brave.

I admit that thousands and thousands of church people, with their pastors and the deacons, are today advocating religious principles that they deem right and good. I honor these men, but I do not believe that their method is a good one. I do not want these people to forgive me for the views I entertain, but I want them so to act that I will not have to forgive them. I am the friend of every one who preaches the gospel of absolute intellectual liberty, and that man is my friend.

Is there a God who says that if man does so and so He will damn him? Can there be such a fiend? I am not responsible to man unless I injure him; nor to God unless I injure Him, but one cannot injure God, for "He is infinite."

When I was young I was told that the bible was inspired, written by God, that even the lids of the book were inspired. They say He is a personal God; if so, He has not revealed Himself to me. There may be many gods. As I look around I see that justice does not prevail, that innocence is not always effectual and a perfect shield. If there be a God these things could not be. If God made us all, why did He not make us all equally well. He had the power of an infinite god. Why did God people the earth with so many idiots? I admit that orthodoxy could not exist without them, but why did God make them? If we believe the bible then He should have made us all idiots, for the orthodox Christian says the idiots will not be damned, simply transplanted, while the sensible man, who believeth not, will be sent to eternal damnation? If there is any God that made us, what right had He to make idiots? Is a man with a head like a pin under any obligation to thank God? Is the black man, born in slavery, under any obligation to thank God for his badge of servitude?

What kind of a God is it that will allow men and women to be put in dungeons and chains simply because they loved Him and prayed to Him? And what kind of a God is it that will allow such men and women to be burned at the stake? If God won't love such men and women, then under what circumstances will he love?

Famine stalks over the land and millions die, not only the bad but the good, and there in the heavens above sits an infinite God who can do anything, can change the rocks and the stones, and yet these millions die. I do not say there is no God, but I do ask, what is God doing? Look at the agony, and wretchedness and woe all over the land. Is there goodness, is there mercy in this? I do not say there is not, but I want to know, and I want to know if a man is to be damned for asking the question?

(He eloquently recited the agonies that clustered around the French Bastille, where great men and heroic women suffered and died for loving liberty, and said: If there is a God, I think that one word, Bastille, would bring the blush of shame to His face.)

I find that the men who have received revelation are the worst; and that where the bible goes there go the sword and the fagot. If an infinite God makes a revelation to me He knows how I will understand it. If God wrote the bible he knew that no two people would understand it alike.

When I read the bible I found that God in His infinite wisdom couldn't control the people He had created and that He had to drown them. If I had infinite power and couldn't make a people that I could control and had to drown them, why I'd resign.

Then I read in the bible such cruel things, and I do not believe that God can be cruel. Such cruelty may make one afraid, but cannot inspire love. I can't love a god that will inflict pain and sorrow, and I won't.

The preachers say all unbelievers will go to hell—tidings of great joy. When I confront them they say I'm taking away their consolation. The old bible does not mention hell or heaven. Now God should have notified Adam and Cain of hell, but He didn't. When He came to drown all those people He didn't tell a single one that He would drown him. He talked all about water—nothing about fire. When He came down on Mount Sinai, and told Moses how to cut out clothes for a priest, He never said one word on the subject. When God gave Moses the ten commandments, engraved on stone, there He said not one word about hell. There was plenty of room on the stone; why did He not add: "If you don't keep these commandments you will be damned." Through all these ages, when God was talking all the time, and when every howling prophet had His ear, not one word did He utter of hell or heaven. For 4,000 years God got along without mentioning those places or even hinting of them. It seems to me that we ought to have been notified by Him.

(Here the orator recalled many stories from the old bible and subjected them to keen irony and ridicule. Reciting the story wherein the she bears came out of the woods and tore to pieces the forty children who mocked the prophet, he asked: If God did that, what would the devil have done under the same circumstances? Why; he said, did not God give a sure cure for leprosy, unless He wanted to have His chosen people to have that frightful disease?)

Do you believe that God ever told a widow if her brother-in-law refused to marry her to spit in his face? Do you believe any such nonsense from a god? I call that courting under difficulties. (Then Colonel Ingersoll dwelt pathetically on the sweet, innocent babes eaten up by the lions in the den, after Daniel was rescued from their jaws, and asked the question, what kind of a god was it that allowed such horrible deeds?)

They say that I pick out all the bad things in the bible. Well, God ought not to have put bad things in the book. If you only read the bible you will not believe it. Why, it is such a bad book that it has to be supported by legislation. In Maine and elsewhere they will send you to jail for two years if you deny the bible or the judgment day.

No, we are told we must not only believe in the God we have been talking about, but must also believe in another one.

Let us look at the church today. The orthodox church—that is, all but the Universalist. He is trying to be orthodox, but he can't get in. The God of the Universalists, to say the least, is a gentleman.

Now, what is this religion? To believe certain things that we may be saved, that we won't be damned. What are they? First, that the old and new testament are inspired. No matter how kind, how just a man may be, unless he believes in the inspiration, he will be damned.

Second, he must believe in the trinity. That there are three in one. That father and son are precisely of the same age, the son, possibly, a little mite older; that three times one is one, and that once one is three. It is a mercy you don't know how to understand it, but you must believe it or be damned. Therein you see the mercy of the Lord. This trinity doctrine was announced several hundred years after Christ was born: Do you believe such a doctrine will make a man good or honest? Will it make him more just? Is the man that believes any better than the man who does not believe? How is it with nations? Look at Spain, the last slave-holder in the civilized world; she's christian, she believes in the trinity! And Italy, the beggar of the world. Under the rule of priestcraft money streamed in from every land and yet she did not advance. Today she is reduced to a hand-organ. Take poor Ireland, groaning under the heel of British oppression; could she cast off her priests she would soon be one with America in freedom.

Protestantism is better than Catholicism, because there is less of it. Both dread education. They say they brought the arts and sciences out of the dark ages; why, they made the dark ages and what did they preserve? Nothing of value, only an account of events that never happened. What did they teach the world! Slavery!

The best country the sun ever shown upon is the northern part of the United States, and there you will find less religion than anywhere else on the face of the earth. You will find here more people that don't believe the bible, and you will find better husbands, better wives, happier homes, where the women are most respected and where the children get less blows and more huggings and kissings. We have improved just as we lost this religion and this superstition.

Great Britain is the religious nation par excellence, and there you will find the most cant and most hypocrisy. They are always thanking God that they have killed somebody. Look at the opium war with China. They forced the Chinese to open their ports and receive the deadly drug, and then had the impudence to send a lot of driveling idiots of missionaries into China.

Go around the world, and where you find the least superstition, there you will find the best men, the best women, the best children. Two powerful levers are at work; love and intelligence. The true test of a man is generosity, that covers a multitude of sins.

They have got so now they damn a man on a technicality. You must be baptized by immersion, sprinkling or pouring. If you come to the day of judgment and can't show the watermark, you're damned!

What more: That a fellow named Adam, whom you don't know and never voted for, is your representative. You are charged with his sins. Equally abused is the doctrine of atonement, that you are created with the sacrifice of another. If Christ had more virtue than Adam had meanness, then you are ahead.

Atonement is the corner-stone of the Christian religion. But there is one great objection. It saves the wrong man, and it is not honest. (In holding up the atonement to ridicule the orator said: "If Judas had failed to betray Christ, the mother of Christ would be in hell today." Then he ridiculed the miracles recorded in the new testament, pronounced them absurdities. He said that the four apostolic writers were very contradictory in their statements, and did not even agree as to the last word of this great man.)

The ascension was the most striking, the grandest of the miracles, if true, yet the ascension is only recorded by two of these writers. If He was God, I know he will forgive somebody for not believing the miracles, unless convinced.

Another contradiction in the book: in one gospel the condition of salvation is "whosoever believeth shall not be damned," and in another we are promised that if we forgive our enemies God will forgive us—and there's sense in this last promise. The first I believe a lie—it was never spoken by God.

Christ said: Love your enemies. Nobody can do that. The doctrine of Confucius is sound—to love one's friends and to do justice to one's enemies without any mixture of revenge.

If Christ was God, did He not know on His cross what crimes would be done in His name? Why didn't He settle all disputes about the trinity and about baptism? Why didn't He post His disciples? Because He could no more see into the future than I can. Only in this way can you acquit him of the crimes committed in His name. The way to save our own souls is to save another soul. God can't turn into hell a man who makes on this earth a little heaven for himself, wife and babes.

Any minister who preaches the doctrine of hell ought to be ashamed. I want, if I can while I live, to put an end to all belief in this infamous doctrine. That doctrine has done incalculable harm, wrought incalculable injury. I despise it, and I defy it.

The orthodox church says that religion does good; that it restrains crime. It restrains a man from artificial, not from natural crimes. A man can be made so religious that he will not eat meat on Friday, yet he will steal.

Did you ever hear of a tramp coming to town and inquiring where the deacon of the Presbyterian church lived.

The bible says consider the lilies. What good would it do a naked man standing out in the bitter blasts of this night to consider the lilies.

What is the social position of a man in heaven who through all eternity remembers that if he had had a grain of courage he would never have been there.

The realization of our day does not satisfy the intelligence of the people—the people have outgrown it. It shocks us and we have got to have another religion. We must have a religion of charity; one that will do away with poverty, close the prisons and cover this world with homes.

Ingersoll's Lecture on 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 the earth, and the heretics who have died are supposed, at this moment, to be suffering the agonies of the damned. The church persecutes the living, and her God burns the dead.

It is claimed that God wrote a book called the bible, and it is generally admitted that this book is somewhat difficult to understand. As long as the church had all the copies of this book, and the people were not allowed to read it, there was comparatively little heresy in the world; but when it was printed and read, people began honestly to differ as to its meaning. A few were independent and brave enough to give the world their real thoughts, and for the extermination of these men the church used all her power. Protestants and Catholics vied with each other in the work of enslaving the human mind. For ages they were rivals in the infamous effort to rid the earth of honest people. They infested every country, every city, town, hamlet, and family. They appealed to the worst passions of the human heart. They sowed the seeds of discord and hatred in every land. Brother denounced brother, wives informed against their husbands, mothers accused their children, dungeons were crowded with the innocent; the flesh of the good and true rotted in the clasp of chains, the flames devoured the heroic, and in the name of the most merciful God, his children were exterminated with famine, sword and fire. Over the wild waves of battle rose and fell the banner of Jesus Christ. For sixteen hundred years the robes of the church were red with innocent blood. The ingenuity of Christians was exhausted in devising punishment severe enough to be inflicted upon other Christians who honestly and sincerely differed with them upon any point whatever.

Give any orthodox church the power, and today they would punish heresy with whip, and chain, and fire. As long as a church deemed 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.

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 propriety of tearing out the tongues of heretics before they were burned, and the general opinion was that this ought to be done, so that the heretics should not be able, by uttering blasphemies, to shock the christians who were burning them. With a mixture of ferocity and christianity, the priests insisted that heretics ought to be burned at a slow fire, giving as a reason, that more time was given them for repentance.

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

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

In 1208 the inquisition was established. Seven years afterward; the fourth council of the Lateran enjoined all kings and rulers to swear an oath that they would exterminate heretics from their dominions. The sword of the church was unsheathed, and the world was at the mercy of ignorant and infuriated priests, whose eyes feasted upon the agonies they inflicted. Acting as they believed, or pretended to believe under the command of God, stimulated by the hope of infinite reward in another world-hating heretics with every drop of their bastille 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 pinchers, 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 head downward, exposed them to wild beasts, burned them at the stake, mocked their cries and groans, ravished their wives, robbed their children, and then prayed God to finish the holy work in hell.

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

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

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

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

Third, that priests should not marry.

Fourth, that vows of chastity were of perpetual obligation.

Fifth, that private masses ought to be continued.

And sixth, that auricular confession to a priest must be maintained.

This creed was made by law, in order that all men might know just what to believe by simply reading the statute. The church hated to see the people wearing out their brains in thinking upon these subjects. It was

thought far better that a creed should be made by Parliament, so that 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.

Your attention is called to these six articles, established during the reign of Henry VIII, and by the Church of England, simply because not one of these articles is believed by that church today. 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 hardship 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 prompted men to exterminate each other for a difference of opinion concerning the baptism of infants. These crimes have been produced by religions filled with all that is illogical, cruel and hideous. These religions were produced for the most part by ignorance, tyranny, and hypocrisy. Under the impression that the infinite ruler and creator of the universe had commanded the destruction of heretics and infidels, the church perpetrated all these crimes.

Men and women have been burned for thinking that 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 barred 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 set to punish unbelief; for denying the authority of the bible; for having a bible in their possession; for attending mass, and for refusing to attend, for wearing a surplice; for carrying a cross, and for refusing; for being a Catholic, and for being a Protestant, for being an Episcopalian, a Presbyterian, a Baptist, and for being a Quaker. In short, every virtue has been a crime, and every crime a virtue. The church has burned honesty and rewarded hypocrisy, and all this 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 Lefranc, and still more unfortunately for the world, the fruit of this marriage was a son, called John 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 iron points. The presence of all these points on the collar is still the test of orthodoxy in the church he founded. This man, when in the flush of youth, was elected to the office of preacher in Geneva. He at once, in union with Farel, drew up a condensed statement of the Presbyterian doctrine, and all the citizens of Geneva, on pain of banishment, were compelled to take an oath that they, believed this statement. Of this proceeding Calvin very innocently remarked, that it produced great satisfaction. A man 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 prescribed 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 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. Servetus had forgotten that this book was written by Calvin when in the minority; that it was written in weakness to be forgotten in power; that it was produced by fear instead of principle. He did not know that Calvin had caused his arrest at Vienne, in France, and had sent a copy of his work, which was claimed to be blasphemous to the archbishop. He did not then know that the Protestant, Calvin, was acting as one of the detectives of the Catholic church, and had been instrumental in procuring his conviction for heresy. Ignorant of all this unspeakable infamy, he put himself in the power of this very Calvin. The maker of the Presbyterian creed caused the fugitive Servetus to be arrested for blasphemy. He was tried; Calvin was his accuser. He was convicted and condemned to death by fire. On the morning of the fatal day, Calvin saw him; and Servetus, the victim, asked forgiveness of Calvin, the murderer, 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 minister, raised his voice. The name of this man should never be forgotten. It was Castellio. 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, Castellio was in all things the opposite of Calvin. To plead for the right of individual judgment was considered as a crime, and Castellio 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 Castellio, Calvin heaved 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 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 from the church, or to even contradict a priest. Had Presbyterianism maintained its ascendancy, Scotland would have been peopled by savages today. 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 express doubts as to the damnation of infants, and the doctrine of total depravity. The fact is, the old ideas became a little monotonous to the people. The fall of man, the scheme of redemption and irresistible grace, began to have a familiar sound. The preachers told the old stories while the 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 throw 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 today.

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 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 Collyer and John Stuart Mill.

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

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

Can that tongue be palsied by a presbytery that praises a self-denying and heroic life? Is it a sin to speak a charitable word over the grave of John Stuart Mill? Is it heretical to pay a just and graceful tribute to departed worth? Must the true Presbyterian violate the sanctity of the tomb, dig open the grave, and ask his God to curse the silent dust? Is Presbyterianism so narrow that it conceives of no excellence, of no purity of intention, of no spiritual and moral grandeur 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 just as the doomed man was to suffer death, some one in the crowd should step forward and

say, "I am willing to die in the place of that murderer. He has a family, and I have none." And suppose further that the Governor should reply, "Come forward, young man, your offer is accepted. A murder has been committed, and somebody must be hung, and your death will satisfy the law just as well as the death of the murderer." What would you then think of the doctrine of vicarious sacrifice?"

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

Fifth. With having inculcated a phase of the doctrine commonly known as "Evolution" or "Development." The church believes and teaches the exact opposite of this doctrine. According to the philosophy of theology, man has continued to degenerate for six thousand years. To teach that there is that in Nature which impels to higher forms and grander ends, is heresy of course. The Deity will damn Spencer and his "Evolution," Darwin and his "Origin of Species," Bastin and his "Spontaneous Generation," Huxley and his "Protoplasm," Tyndall and his "Prayer Gauge," and will save those, and those only who declare that the universe has been cursed from the smallest atom to the grandest star; that 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 Socrates and Penelope at heaven's gate was, to say the least, a trifle more cordial than that of Catherine II.

Penelope waiting patiently and trustfully for her lord's return, delaying her suitors, while sadly weaving and un-weaving 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 today, in the estimation of every thoughtful man, at least the peer of Christ.

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

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

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

If this doctrine is true, God, to say the least of it, is an exceedingly poor judge of human nature. It is more than a century since a man of true genius has been found in an orthodox pulpit. Every minister is heretical just to the extent that 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 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 Motts and Coopers—the Mansfields and Marshalls—the Wilberforces and Sumners—the Angelos and Raphaels—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 Psalm which carries with it the clearest and most satisfactory evidences of inspiration, and which has afforded almost unspeakable consolation to the Presbyterian church, is as follows:

"Set thou a wicked man over him; and let Satan stand at his right hand.

"When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin.

"Let his days be few; and let another take his office.

"Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.

"Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.

"Let the extortioner catch all that he hated; and let the strangers spoil his labor.

"Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither let there be none to favor his fatherless children.

"Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out.

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

Think of a God wicked and malicious enough to inspire this prayer. Think of one infamous enough to answer it. Had this inspired Psalm been found in some temple erected for the worship of snakes, or in the possession of some cannibal king, written with blood upon the dried skins of babes, there would have been a perfect harmony between its surroundings and its sentiments.

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

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

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

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

Did Caesar take the city of Jericho "and utterly destroy all that was in the city, both 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?"

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 equally cruel creed, and such children as have been baptized, ought at this very moment to be dashed down to the lowest glowing gulf of 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 of sense in this doctrine; that it is abhorrent to all who have not been the recipients of a "new heart;" that only the perfectly good can justify the perfectly infamous.

It is contended that the saints do not persevere of their own free will—that they are entitled to no credit for persevering; but that God forces them to persevere; while on the other hand, every crime is committed in accordance with the secret will of God, who does all things for His own glory. Compared with this doctrine, there is no other idea, that has ever been believed by man, that can properly be called absurd.

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 Eliot to the execution of the last Modoc, not one Indian has been the subject of irresistible grace or particular redemption. The few red men who roam the Western wilderness have no thought or care concerning the five points of Calvin. They are utterly oblivious to the great and vital truths contained in the Thirty-nine articles, the Saybrook platform, and the resolutions of the Evangelical Alliance. No Indian has ever scalped another on account of his religious belief. This of itself shows conclusively that the missionaries have had no effect.

Why should we convert the heathen of China and kill our own? Why should we send missionaries across the seas, and soldiers over the plains? Why should we send bibles to the East and muskets to the West? If it is impossible to convert Indians who have no religion of their own; no prejudice for or against the "eternal procession of the Holy Ghost," how can we expect to convert a heathen who has a religion; who has plenty of gods and bibles and prophets and Christs, and who has a religious literature far grander than our own? Can we hope, with the story of Daniel in the 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 Hindoo, 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?" "Whosoever 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 the 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 ambition of man, Presbyterianism is the most hideous.

But what shall I say more? for the time would fail me to tell of Sabellianism, of a "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 faith must be! It reminds one of the dinner described by Sidney Smith, where everything was cold except the water, and everything sour except the vinegar.

Every member of a church promises to remain orthodox, that is to say—stationary. Growth is heresy. Orthodox ideas are the feathers that have been 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 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 fagot of the past.

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

The heretics have not thought and suffered and died in vain. Every heretic has been, and is, a ray of light. Not in vain did Voltaire, that great man, point from the foot of the Alps, the finger of scorn at every hypocrite in Europe. Not in vain were the splendid utterances of the infidels, while beyond all price are the discoveries of science. The church has impeded, but it has not and it cannot stop the onward march of the human race. Heresy can not be burned, nor imprisoned, nor starved. It laughs at presbyteries and synods, at Ecumenical councils and the impotent thunders of Sinai. Heresy is the eternal dawn, the morning star, the glittering herald of the day. Heresy is the last and best thought. It is the perpetual new world; the unknown sea, toward which the brave all sail. It is the eternal horizon of progress. Heresy extends the hospitalities of the brain to 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 a God delights in threatening and terrifying men? What glory, what honor and 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 firefly!

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 fear. It has no punishment for unbelief, and no reward for hypocrisy. It appears to men 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 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.

Ingersoll's Lecture on The Bible

The true bible appeals to man in the name of demonstration. It has nothing to conceal. It has no fear of being read, of being contradicted, of being investigated and understood. It does not pretend to be holy or sacred, it simply claims to be true. It challenges the scrutiny of all, and implores every reader to verify every line for himself. It is incapable of being blasphemed. This book appeals to all the surroundings of man. Each thing that exists testifies of its perfection. The earth, with its heart of fire and crowns of snow; with its forests and plains, its rocks and seas; with its every wave and cloud; with its every leaf and bud and flower, confirms its every word, and the solemn stars, shining in the infinite abysses, are the external witnesses of its truth.

I will tell you what I mean by inspiration. I go and look at the sea, and the sea says something to me; it makes an impression upon my mind. That impression depends, first, upon my experience; secondly, upon my intellectual capacity. Another looks upon the same sea. He has a different brain, he has had a different experience, he has different memories and different hopes. The sea may speak to him of joy and to me of grief and sorrow. The sea cannot tell the same thing to two beings, because no two human beings have had the same experience. So, when I look upon a flower, or a star, or a painting, or a statue, the more I know about sculpture the more that statue speaks to me. The more I have had of human experience, the more I have read, the greater brain I have, the more the star says to me. In other words, nature says to me all that I am capable of understanding.

Think of a God wicked and malicious enough to inspire this prayer in the 109th Psalm! 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.

Now, I read the bible, and I find that God so loved this world that he made up his mind to damn the most of us. I have read this book and what shall I say of it? I believe it is generally better to be honest. Now, I don't 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 don't tell their honest convictions about the bible.

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?

The believers in the bible are loud in their denunciation of what they are pleased to call the immoral literature of the world; and yet few books have been published containing more moral filth than this inspired word of God. These stories are not redeemed by a single flash of wit or humor. They never rise above the dull details of stupid vice. For one, I cannot afford to soil my pages with extracts from them; and all such portions of the scriptures I leave to be examined, written upon, and explained by the clergy. Clergymen may know some way by which they can extract honey from these flowers. Until these passages are expunged from the old testament, it is not a fit book to be read by either old or young. It contains pages that no minister in the United States would read to his congregation for any reward whatever. There are chapters that no gentleman would read in the presence of a lady. There are chapters that no father would read to his child. There are narratives utterly unfit to be told; and the time will come when mankind will wonder that such a book was ever called inspired.

But as long as the bible is considered as the work of God, it will be hard to make all men too good and pure to imitate it; and as long as it is imitated there will be vile and filthy books. The literature of our country will not be sweet and clean until the bible ceases to be regarded as the production of a god.

In the days of Thomas Paine the church believed and taught that every word in the bible was absolutely true. Since his day it has been proven false in its cosmogony, false in its astronomy, false in its chronology, false in its history, and so far as the old testament is concerned, false in almost everything. There are but few, if any, scientific men who apprehend that the bible is literally true. Who on earth at this day would pretend to settle any scientific question by a text from the bible? The old belief is confined to the ignorant and zealous. The church itself will before long be driven to occupy the position of Thomas Paine!

I love any man who gave me, or helped to give me, the liberty I enjoy tonight. I love every man who helped put our flag in heaven. I love every man who has lifted his voice in all the ages for liberty, for a chainless body, and a fetterless brain. I love every man who has given to every other human being every right that he claimed for himself. I love every man who thought more of principle than he did of position. I love the men who have trampled crowns beneath their feet that they might do something for mankind.

The best minds of the orthodox world, today, are endeavoring to prove

the existence of a personal Deity. All other questions occupy a minor place. You are no longer asked to swallow the bible whole, whale, Jonah and all; you are simply required to believe in God, and pay your pew-rent. There is not now an enlightened minister in the world who will seriously contend that Samson's strength was in his hair, or that the necromancers of Egypt could turn water into blood, and pieces of wood into serpents. These follies have passed away.

For my part, I would infinitely prefer to know all the results of scientific investigation than to be inspired as Moses was. Supposing the bible to be true; why is it any worse or more wicked for free-thinkers to deny it, than for priests to deny the doctrine of evolution, or the dynamic theory of heat? Why should we be damned for laughing at Samson and his foxes, while others, holding the nebular hypothesis in utter contempt, go straight to heaven?

Now when I come to a book, for instance, I read the writings of Shakespeare—Shakespeare, the greatest human being who ever existed upon this globe. What do I get out of him? All that I have sense enough to understand. I get my little cup full. Let another read him who knows nothing of the drama, who knows nothing of the impersonation of passion; what does he get from him? Very little. In other words, every man gets from a book, a flower, a star, or the sea, what he is able to get from his intellectual development and experience. Do you then believe that the bible is a different book to every human being that receives it? I do. Can God, then, through the bible, make the same revelation to two men? He cannot. Why? Because the man who reads is the man who inspires. Inspiration is in the man and not in the book.

The real oppressor, enslaver and corrupter of the people is the bible. That book is the chain that binds, the dungeon that holds the clergy. That book spreads the pall of superstition over the colleges and schools. That book puts out the eyes of science, and makes honest investigation a crime. That book unmans the politician and degrades the people. That book fills the world with bigotry, hypocrisy and fear.

Volumes might be written upon the infinite absurdity of this most incredible, wicked and foolish of all the fables contained in that repository of the impossible, called the bible. To me it is a matter of amazement, that it ever was for a moment believed by any intelligent human being.

Is it not infinitely more reasonable to say that this book is the work of man, that it is filled with mingled truth and error, with mistakes and facts, and reflects, too faithfully perhaps, the "very form and pressure of its time?" If there are mistakes in the bible, certainly they were made by man. If there is anything contrary to nature, it was written by man. If there is anything immoral, cruel, heartless or infamous, it certainly was never written by a being worthy of the adoration of mankind.

It strikes me that God might write a book that would not necessarily excite the laughter of his children. In fact, I think it would be safe to say that a real god could produce a work that would excite the admiration of mankind.

The man who now regards the old testament as, in any sense, a sacred or inspired book is, in my judgment, an intellectual and moral deformity. There is in it so much that is cruel, ignorant and ferocious that it is to me a matter of amazement that it was ever thought to be the work of a most merciful deity.

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.

Every sect is a certificate that God has not plainly revealed His will to man. To each reader the bible conveys a different meaning. About the meaning of this book, called a revelation, there have been ages of war and centuries of sword and flame. If written by an infinite God, He must have known that these results must follow; and thus knowing, He must be responsible for all.

Paine thought the barbarities of the old testament inconsistent with what he deemed the real character of God. He believed that murder, massacre and indiscriminate slaughter had never been commanded by the Deity. He regarded much of the bible as childish, unimportant and foolish. The scientific world entertains the same spirit in which he had attacked the pretensions of kings. He used the same weapons. All the pomp in the world could not make him cower. His reason knew no "Holy of Holies," except the abode of Truth.

Nothing can be clearer than that Moses received from the Egyptians the principal parts of his narrative, making such changes and additions as were necessary to satisfy the peculiar superstitions of his own people.

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 difficulties, these brothers began to cut out each other's hearts. In every land, where this letter from God has been read, the children to whom and for whom it was written have been filled with hatred and malice. They have imprisoned and murdered each other, and the wives and children of each other. In the name of God every possible crime has been committed, every conceivable outrage has been perpetrated. Brave men, tender and loving women, beautiful girls and prattling babes have been exterminated in the name of Jesus Christ.

The church has burned honesty and rewarded hypocrisy. And all this, because it was commanded by a book—a book that men had been taught implicitly to believe, long before they knew one word that was in it. They had been taught that to doubt the truth of this book—to examine it, even—was a crime of such enormity that it could not be forgiven, either in this world or in the next.

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

Whether the bible is false or true, is of no consequence in comparison with the mental freedom of the race. Salvation through slavery is worthless. Salvation from slavery is inestimable. As long as man believes the bible to be infallible, that book is his master. The civilization of this century is not the child of faith, but of unbelief—the result of free thought.

What man who ever thinks, can believe that blood can appease God? And yet our entire system of religion is based on that belief. The Jews pacified Jehovah with the blood of animals, and according to the christian system, the blood of Jesus softened the heart of God a little, and rendered possible the salvation of a fortunate few.

It is hard to conceive how any sane man can read the bible and still believe in the doctrine of inspiration.

The bible was originally written in the Hebrew language, and the Hebrew language at that time had no vowels in writing. It was written entirely with consonants, and without being divided into chapters and verses, and there was no system of punctuation whatever. After you go home to-night write an English sentence or two with only consonants close together, and you will find that it will take twice as much inspiration to read it as it did to write it.

The real bible is not the result of inspired men, nor prophets, nor evangelists, nor christ. The real bible has not been written, but is being written. Every man who finds a fact adds a word to this great book.

The bad passages in the bible are not inspired. No god ever ordered a soldier to sheathe his sword in the breast of a mother. No god ever ordered a warrior to butcher a smiling, prattling babe. No god ever

upheld tyranny. No god ever said, be subject to the powers that be. No god endeavored to make man a slave and woman a beast of burden. There are thousands of good passages in the bible. Many of them are true. There are in it wise laws, good customs, some lofty and splendid things. And I do not care whether they are inspired or not, so they are true. But what I do insist upon is that the bad is not inspired.

There is no hope for you. It is just as bad to deny hell as it is to deny heaven. Prof. Swing says the bible is a poem. Dr. Ryder says it is a picture. The Garden of Eden is pictorial; a pictorial snake and a pictorial woman, I suppose, and a pictorial man, and may be it was a pictorial sin. And only a pictorial atonement!

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

Ingersoll's Lecture on Voltaire

Ladies and Gentlemen: The infidels of one age have often been the aureoled saints of the next.

The destroyers of the old are the creators of the new. As time sweeps on the old passes away and the new in its turn becomes of old.

There is in the intellectual world, as in the physical, decay and growth, and ever by the grave of buried age stand youth and joy.

The history of intellectual progress is written in the lives of infidels.

Political rights have been preserved by traitors; the liberty of mind by heretics.

To attack the king was treason; to dispute the priest was blasphemy.

For many years the sword and cross were allies. Together they attacked the rights of man. They defended each other.

The throne and altar were twins—two vultures from the same egg.

James I said: "No bishop; no king." He might have added: No cross, no crown. The king owned the bodies of men; the priest, the souls. One lived on taxes collected by force, the other on alms collected by fear—both robbers, both beggars.

These robbers and these beggars controlled two worlds. The king made laws, the priest made creeds. Both obtained their authority from God,

both were the agents of the infinite. With bowed backs the people carried the burdens of one, and with wonder's open mouth received the dogmas of the other. If the people aspired to be free, they were crushed by the king, and every priest was a Herod, who slaughtered the children of the brain.

The king ruled by force, the priest by fear, and both by both. The king said to the people: "God made you peasants, and He made me king; He made you to labor, and me to enjoy; He made rags and hovels for you, robes and palaces for me. He made you to obey and me to command. Such is the justice of God," And the priest said: "God made you ignorant and vile; He made me holy and wise; you are the sheep, I am the shepherd; your fleeces belong to me. If you do not obey me here, God will punish you now and torment you forever in another world. Such is the mercy of God."

"You must not reason. Reason is a rebel. You must not contradict—contradiction is born of egotism; you must believe. He that has ears to hear let him hear. Heaven is a question of ears."

Fortunately for us, there have been traitors and there have been heretics, blasphemers, thinkers, investigators, lovers of liberty, men of genius, who have given their lives to better the condition of their fellow-men.

It may be well enough here to ask the question: "What is greatness?" A great man adds to the sum of knowledge, extends the horizon of thought, releases souls from the Bastille of fear, crosses unknown and mysterious seas, gives new islands and new continents to the domain of thought, new constellations to the firmament of mind. A great man does not seek applause or place; he seeks for truth; he seeks the road to happiness, and what he ascertains he gives to others. A great man throws pearls before swine, and the swine are sometimes changed to men. If the great had always kept their pearls, vast multitudes would be barbarians now.

A great man is a torch in the darkness, a beacon in superstition's night, an inspiration and a prophecy. Greatness is not the gift of majorities; it cannot be thrust upon any man; men cannot give it to another; they can give place and power, but not greatness. The place does not make the man, nor the sceptre the king. Greatness is from within.

The great men are the heroes who have freed the bodies of men; they are the philosophers and thinkers who have given liberty to the soul; they are the poets who have transfigured the common and filled the lives of many millions with love and song. They are the artists who have covered the bare walls of weary life with the triumphs of genius. They are the heroes who have slain the monsters of ignorance and fear, who have outgazed the Gorgon and driven the cruel gods from their thrones.

They are the inventors, the discoverers, the great mechanics, the kings of the useful who have civilized this world.

At the head of this heroic army, foremost of all, stands Voltaire, whose memory we are honoring tonight. Voltaire! a name that excites the admiration of men, the malignity of priests. Pronounce that name in the presence of a clergyman, and you will find that you have made a declaration of war. Pronounce that name, and from the face of the priest the mask of meekness will fall, and from the mouth of forgiveness will pour a Niagara of vituperation and calumny. And yet Voltaire was the greatest man of his century, and did more for the human race than ally other of the sons of men.

On Sunday, the 21st of November, 1694, a babe was born; a babe exceedingly frail, whose breath hesitated about remaining. This babe became the greatest man of the eighteenth century.

When Voltaire came to this "great stage of fools," his country had been christianized—not civilized—for about fourteen hundred years. For a thousand years the religion of peace and good will had been supreme. The laws had been given by christian kings, sanctioned by "wise and holy men."

Under the benign reign of universal love, every court had its chamber of torture, and every priest relied on the thumbscrew and rack. Such had been the success of the blessed gospel that every science was an outcast. To speak your honest thoughts, to teach your fellow men, to investigate for yourself, to seek the truth, these were crimes, and the "Holy Mother Church" pursued the criminals with sword and flame.

The believers in a God of love—an infinite father—punished hundreds of offenses with torture and death. Suspected persons were tortured to make them confess. Convicted persons were tortured to make them give the names of their accomplices. Under the leadership of the church cruelty had become the only reforming power. In this blessed year 1694 all authors were at the mercy of king and priest. The most of them were cast into prisons, impoverished by fines and costs, exiled or executed. The little time that hangmen could snatch from professional duties was occupied in burning books. The courts of justice were traps in which the innocent were caught. The judges were almost as malicious and cruel as though they had been bishops or saints. There was no trial by jury, and the rules of evidence allowed the conviction of the supposed criminal by the proof of suspicion or hearsay. The witnesses, being liable to torture, generally told what the judges wished to hear.

When Voltaire was born the church ruled and owned France. It was a period of almost universal corruption. The priests were mostly libertines, the judges cruel and venal. The royal palace was a house of prostitution. The nobles were heartless, proud, arrogant and cruel to

the last degree. The common people were treated as beasts. It took the church a thousand years to bring about this happy condition of things.

The seeds of the revolution unconsciously were being scattered by every noble and by every priest. They were germinating slowly in the hearts of the wretched; they were being watered by the tears of agony; blows began to bear interest. There was a faint longing for blood. Workmen, blackened by the sun, bowed by labor, deformed by want; looked at the white throats of scornful ladies and thought about cutting them. In those days the witnesses were cross-examined with instruments of torture; the church was the arsenal of superstition; miracles, relics, angels, and devils were as common as lies.

Voltaire was of the people. In the language of that day, he had no ancestors. His real name was Francois Marie Arouet. His mother was Marguerite d'Aumard. This mother died when he was seven years of age. He had an elder brother, Armand, who was a devotee, very religious and exceedingly disagreeable. This brother used to present offerings to the church, hoping to make amends for the unbelief of his brother. So far as we know none of his ancestors were literary people. The Arouets had never written a line. The Abbe le Chaulieu was his godfather, and, although an abbe, was a deist who cared nothing about his religion except in connection with his salary. Voltaire's father wanted to make a lawyer of him, but he had no taste for law. At the age of 10 he entered the college of Louis le Grand. This was a Jesuit school, and here he remained for seven years, leaving at 17, and never attending any other school. According to Voltaire he learned nothing at this school but a little Greek, a good deal of Latin, and a vast amount of nonsense.

In this college of Louis le Grand they did not teach geography, history, mathematics, or any science. This was a Catholic institution, controlled by the Jesuits. In that day the religion was defended, was protected, or supported by the state. Behind the entire creed were the bayonet, the ax, the wheel, the fagot, and the torture chamber. While Voltaire was attending the college of Louis le Grand the soldiers of the king were hunting Protestants in the mountains of Cevennes for magistrates to hang on gibbets, to put to torture, to break on the wheel or to burn at the stake.

There is but one use for law, but one excuse for government—the preservation of liberty—to give to each man his own, to secure to the farmer what he produces from the soil, the mechanic what he invents and makes, to the artist what he creates, to the thinker the right to express his thoughts. Liberty is the breath of progress. In France the people were the sport of a king's caprice. Everywhere was the shadow of the Bastille. It fell upon the sunniest field, upon the happiest home. With the king walked the headsman; back of the throne was the chamber of torture. The church appealed to the rack, and faith relied on the fagot. Science was an outcast, and philosophy, so-called, was the pander of superstition. Nobles and priests were sacred. Peasants were

vermin. Idleness sat at the banquet and industry gathered the crumbs and crusts.

At 17 Voltaire determined to devote his life to literature. The father said, speaking of his two sons, Armand and Francois: "I have a pair of fools for sons, one in verse and the other in prose." In 1713 Voltaire, in a small way, became a diplomat. He went to The Hague attached to the French minister, and there he fell in love. The girl's mother objected. Voltaire sent his clothes to the young lady that she might visit him. Everything was discovered and he was dismissed. To this girl he wrote a letter, and in it you will find the keynote of Voltaire: "Do not expose yourself to the fury of your mother. You know what she is capable of. You have experienced it too well. Dissemble; it is your only chance. Tell her that you have forgotten me, that you hate me; then after telling her, love me all the more." On account of this episode Voltaire was formally disinherited by his father. The father procured an order of arrest and gave his son the choice of going to prison or beyond the seas. He finally consented to become a lawyer, and says: "I have already been a week at work in the office of a solicitor learning the trade of a pettifogger." About this time he competed for a prize, writing a poem on the king's generosity in building the new choir in the cathedral Notre Dame. He did not win it. After being with the solicitor a little while, he hated the law, he began to write poetry and the outlines of tragedy. Great questions were then agitating the public mind, questions that throw a flood of light upon that epoch.

Louis XIV having died, the regent took possession; and then the prisons were opened. The regent called for a list of all persons then in the prisons sent there at the will of the king. He found that, as to many prisoners, nobody knew any cause why they had been in prison. They had been forgotten. Many of the prisoners did not know themselves, and could not guess why they had been arrested. One Italian had been in the Bastille thirty-three years without ever knowing why. On his arrival to Paris thirty-three years before he was arrested and sent to prison. He had grown old. He had survived his family and friends. When the rest were liberated he asked to remain where he was, and lived there the rest of his life.

The old prisoners were pardoned; but in a little while their places were taken by new ones. At this time Voltaire was not interested in the great world—knew very little of religion or of government. He was busy writing poetry, busy thinking of comedies and tragedies. He was full of life. All his fancies were winged, like moths. He was charged with having written some cutting epigrams. He was exiled to Tulle, three hundred miles away. From this place he wrote in the true vein: "I am at a chateau, a place that would be the most agreeable in the world if I had not been exiled to it, and where there is nothing wanting for my perfect happiness except the liberty of leaving. It would be delicious to remain if I only were allowed to go." At last the exile was allowed to return. Again he was arrested; this time sent to the Bastille,

where he remained for nearly a year. While in prison he changed his name from Francois Marie Arouet to Voltaire, and by that name he has since been known. Voltaire began to think, to doubt, to inquire. He studied the history of the church of the creed. He found that the religion of his time rested on the usurpation of the scriptures—the infallibility of the church—the dreams of insane hermits—the absurdities of the fathers—the mistakes and falsehoods of saints—the hysteria of nuns—the cunning of priests and the stupidity of the people. He found that the Emperor Constantine, who lifted christianity into power, murdered his wife Fansta and his eldest son Crispus the same year that he convened the council of Nice to decide whether Christ was a man or the son of God. The council decided, in the year 325, that Christ was consubstantial with the Father. He found that the church was indebted to a husband who assassinated his wife—a father who murdered his son—for settling the vexed question of the divinity of the Savior. He found that Theodosius called a council at Constantinople in 381 by which it was decided that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father—that Theodosius, the younger, assembled a council at Ephesus in 431 that declared the Virgin Mary to be the mother of God—that the Emperor Martian called another council at Chalcedon in 451 that decided that Christ had two wills—that Pognatius called another in 680 that declared that Christ had two natures to go with his two wills—and that in 1274, at the council of Lyons, the important fact was found that the Holy Ghost "proceeded" not only from the Father, but also from the Son at the same time.

So Voltaire has been called a mocker! What did he mock? He mocked kings that were unjust; kings who cared nothing for the sufferings of their subjects. He mocked the titled fools of his day. He mocked the corruption of courts; the meanness, the tyranny, and the brutality of judges. He mocked the absurd and cruel laws, the barbarous customs. He mocked popes and cardinals, bishops and priests, and all the hypocrites on the earth. He mocked historians who filled their books with lies, and philosophers who defended superstition. He mocked the haters of liberty, the persecutors of their fellow-men. He mocked the arrogance, the cruelty, the impudence and the unspeakable baseness of his time.

He has been blamed because he used the weapon of ridicule. Hypocrisy has always hated laughter, and always will. Absurdity detests humor and stupidity despises wit. Voltaire was the master of ridicule. He ridiculed the absurd, the impossible. He ridiculed the mythologies and the miracles, the stupid lives and lies of the saints. He found pretense and mendacity crowned by credulity. He found the ignorant many controlled by the cunning and cruel few. He found the historian, saturated with superstition, filling his volumes with the details of the impossible, and he found the scientists satisfied with "they say." Voltaire had the instinct of the probable. He knew the law of average; the sea level; he had the idea of proportion; and so he ridiculed the mental monstrosities and deformities—the non sequiturs—of his day. Aristotle said women had more teeth than men. This was repeated again

and again by the Catholic scientists of the eighteenth century. Voltaire counted the teeth. The rest were satisfied with "they say."

We may, however, get an idea of the condition of France from the fact that Voltaire regarded England as the land of liberty. While he was in England he saw the body of Sir Isaac Newton deposited in Westminster Abbey. He read the works of this great man and afterward gave to France the philosophy of the great Englishman. Voltaire was the apostle of common sense. He knew that there could have been no primitive or first language from which all other languages had been formed. He knew that every language had been influenced by the surroundings of the people. He knew that the language of snow and ice was not the language of palm and flower. He knew also that there had been no miracle in language. He knew it was impossible that the story of the Tower of Babel should be true. That everything in the whole world had been natural. He was the enemy of alchemy, not only in language, but in science. One passage from him is enough to show his philosophy in this regard. He says: "To transmute iron into gold two things are necessary. First, the annihilation of the iron; second, the creation of gold." Voltaire was a man of humor, of good nature, of cheerfulness. He despised with all his heart the philosophy of Calvin, the creed of the somber, of the severe, of the unnatural. He pitied those who needed the aid of religion to be honest, to be cheerful. He had the courage to enjoy the present and the philosophy to bear what the future might bring. And yet for more than a hundred and fifty years the Christian world has fought this man and has maligned his memory. In every christian pulpit his name has been pronounced with scorn, and every pulpit has been an arsenal of slander. He is one man of whom no orthodox minister has ever told the truth. He has been denounced equally by Catholics and Protestants.

Priests and ministers, bishops and exhorters, presiding elders and popes have filled the world with slanders, with calm calumnies about Voltaire. I am amazed that ministers will not or cannot tell the truth about an enemy of the church. As a matter of fact, for more than 1,000 years almost every pulpit has been a mint in which slanders were coined.

For many years this restless man filled Europe with the product of his brain. Essays, epigrams, epics, comedies, tragedies, histories, poems, novels, representing every phase and every faculty of the human mind. At the same time engrossed in business, full of speculation, making money like a millionaire, busy with the gossip of courts, and even with the scandals of priests. At the same time alive to all the discoveries of science and the theories of philosophers, and in this babel never forgetting for a moment to assail the monster of superstition. Sleeping and waking he hated the church. With the eyes of Argus he watched, and with the arms of Briarrius he struck. For sixty years he waged continuous and unrelenting war, sometimes in the open field, sometimes striking from the hedges of opportunity, taking care during all this time to remain independent of all men. He was in the highest sense

successful. He lived like a prince, became one of the powers of Europe, and in him, for the first time, literature was crowned. Voltaire, in spite of his surroundings, in spite of almost universal tyranny and oppression, was a believer in God and in what he was pleased to call the religion of nature. He attacked the creed of his time because it was dishonorable to his God. He thought of the Deity as a father, as the fountain of justice, intelligence and mercy, and the creed of the Catholic church made him a monster of cruelty and stupidity. He attacked the bible with all the weapons at his command. He assailed its geology, its astronomy, its idea of justice, its laws and customs, its absurd and useless miracles, its foolish wonders, its ignorance on all subjects, its insane prophecies, its cruel threats, and its extravagant promises. At the same time he praised the God of nature, the God who gives us rain and light, and food and flowers, and health and happiness—he who fills the world with youth and beauty.

In 1755 came the earthquake at Lisbon. This frightful disaster became an immense interrogation. The optimist was compelled to ask, "What was my God doing? Why did the Universal Father crush to shapelessness thousands of his poor children, even at the moment when they were upon their knees returning thanks to Him?" What could be done with this horror? If earthquake there must be, why did it not occur in some uninhabited desert on some wide waste of sea? This frightful fact changed the theology of Voltaire. He became convinced that this is not the best possible of all worlds. He became convinced that evil is evil here, now and forever.

Who can establish the existence of an infinite being? It is beyond the conception—the reason—the imagination of man—probably or possibly—where the zenith and nadir meet this God can be found.

Voltaire, attacked on every side, fought with every weapon that wit, logic, reason, scorn, contempt, laughter, pathos and indignation could sharpen, form, devise or use. He often apologized, and the apology was an insult. He often recanted, and the recantation was a thousand times worse than the thing recanted. He took it back by giving more. In the name of eulogy he flayed his victim. In his praise there was poison. He often advanced by retreating, and asserted by retraction. He did not intend to give priests the satisfaction of seeing him burn or suffer. Upon this very point of recanting, he wrote: "They say I must retract. Very willingly. I will declare the Pascal is always right. That if St. Luke and St. Mark contradict one another it is only another proof of the truth of religion to those who know how to understand such things; and that another lovely proof of religion is that it is unintelligible. I will even avow that all priests are gentle and disinterested; that Jesuits are honest people; that monks are neither proud nor given to intrigue, and that their odor is agreeable; that the Holy Inquisition is the triumph of humanity and tolerance. In a word, I will say all that may be desired of me, provided they leave me in repose, and will not prosecute a man who has done harm to none."

He gave the best years of his wondrous life to succor the oppressed, to shield the defenseless, to reverse infamous decrees, to rescue the innocent, to reform the laws of France, to do away with torture, to soften the hearts of priests, to enlighten judges, to instruct kings, to civilize the people, and to banish from the heart of man the love and lust of war. Voltaire was not a saint. He was educated by the Jesuits. He was never troubled about the salvation of his soul. All the theological disputes excited his laughter, the creeds his pity, and the conduct of bigots his contempt. He was much better than a saint. Most of the Christians in his day kept their religion not for everyday use but for disaster, as ships carry lifeboats to be used only in the stress of storm.

Voltaire believed in the religion of humanity—of good and generous deeds. For many centuries the church had painted virtue so ugly, sour and cold that vice was regarded as beautiful. Voltaire taught the beauty of the useful, the hatefulness and hideousness of superstition. He was not the greatest of poets, or of dramatists, but he was the greatest man of his time, the greatest friend of freedom, and the deadliest foe of superstition. He wrote the best French plays—but they were not wonderful. He wrote verses polished and perfect in their way. He filled the air with painted moths—but not with Shakespearean eagles.

You may think that I have said too much; that I have placed this man too high. Let me tell you what Goethe, the great German, said of this man: "If you wish depth, genius, imagination, taste, reason, sensibility, philosophy, elevation, originality, nature, intellect, fancy, rectitude, facility, flexibility, precision, art, abundance, variety, fertility, warmth, magic, charm, grace, force, an eagle sweep of vision, vast understanding, instruction rich, tone excellent, urbanity, suavety, delicacy, correctness, purity, cleanness, eloquence, harmony, brilliancy, rapidity, gayety, pathos, sublimity, and universality perfection, indeed, behold Voltaire."

Even Carlyle, the old Scotch terrier, with the growl of a grizzly bear, who attacked shams, as I have sometime thought, because he hated rivals, was forced to admit that Voltaire gave the death stab to modern superstition. It was the hand of Voltaire that sowed the seeds of liberty in the heart and brain of Franklin, of Jefferson, and of Thomas Paine.

Toulouse was a favored town. It was rich in relics. The people were as ignorant as wooden images, but they had in their possession the dried bodies of seven apostles—the bones of many of the infants slain by Herod—part of a dress of the Virgin Mary, and lots of skulls and skeletons of the infallible idiots known as saints.

In this city the people celebrated every year with great joy two holy events: The expulsion of the Huguenots and the blessed massacre of St.

Bartholomew. The citizens of Toulouse had been educated and civilized by the church. A few Protestants, mild because in the minority, lived among these jackals and tigers. One of these Protestants was Jean Calas—a small dealer in dry goods. For forty years he had been in this business, and his character was without a stain. He was honest, kind and agreeable. He had a wife and six children, four sons and two daughters. One of the sons became a Catholic. The eldest son, Marc Antoine, disliked his father's business and studied law. He could not be allowed to practice unless he became a Catholic. He tried to get his license by concealing that he was a Protestant. He was discovered—grew morose. Finally he became discouraged and committed suicide by hanging himself one evening in his father's store. The bigots of Toulouse started the story that his parents had killed him to prevent his becoming a Catholic. On this frightful charge the father, mother, one son, a servant, and one guest at their house were arrested. The dead son was considered a martyr, the church taking possession of the body. This happened in 1761. There was what was called a trial. There was no evidence, not the slightest, except hearsay. All the facts were in favor of the accused. The united strength of the defendants could not have done the deed.

Jean Calas was doomed to torture and to death upon the wheel. This was on the 9th of March, 1762, and the sentence was to be carried out the next day. On the morning of the 10th the father was taken to the torture room. The executioner and his assistants were sworn on the cross to administer the torture according to the judgment of the court. They bound him by the wrists to an iron ring in the stone wall four feet from the ground and his feet to another ring in the floor. Then they shortened the ropes and chains until every joint in his arms and legs were dislocated. Then he was questioned. He declared that he was innocent. Then the ropes were again shortened until life fluttered in the torn body; but he remained firm. This was called the question ordinaire. Again the magistrate exhorted the victim to confess, and again he refused, saying that there was nothing to confess. Then came the question extraordinaire. Into the mouth of the victim was placed a horn holding three pints of water. In this way thirty pints of water were forced into the body of the sufferer. The pain was beyond description, and yet Jean Calas remained firm. He was then carried to a scaffold in a tumbril. He was bound to a wooden cross that lay on the scaffold. The executioner then took a bar of iron, broke each leg and arm in two places, striking eleven blows in all. He was then left to die if he could. He lived for two hours, declaring his innocence to the last. He was slow to die and so the executioner strangled him. Then his poor lacerated, bleeding and broken body was chained to a stake and burned. All this was a spectacle—a festival for the savages of Toulouse. What would they have done if their hearts had not been softened by the glad tidings of great joy, peace on earth and good will to men?

But this was not all. The property of the family was confiscated; the

son was released on condition that he become a Catholic; the servant if she would enter a convent. The two daughters were consigned to a convent and the heart-broken widow was allowed to wander where she would.

Voltaire heard of this case. In a moment his soul was on fire. He took one of the sons under his roof. He wrote a history of the case. He corresponded with kings and queens, with chancellors and lawyers. If money was needed he advanced it. For years he filled Europe with the echoes of the groans of Jean Calas. He succeeded. The horrible judgment was annulled—the poor victim declared innocent and thousands of dollars raised to support the mother and family. This was the work of Voltaire.

Sirven, a Protestant, lived in Languedoc with his wife and three daughters. The housekeeper of the bishop wanted to make one of the daughters a Catholic. The law allowed the bishop to take the child of Protestants from its parents for the sake of its soul. The little girl was so taken and placed in a convent. She ran away and came back to her parents. Her poor little body was covered with the marks of the convent whip. "Suffer little children to come unto me." The child was out of her mind; suddenly she disappeared; and three days after her little body was found in a well, three miles from home. The cry was raised that her folks had murdered her to keep her from becoming a Catholic. This happened only a little way from the christian city of Toulouse while Jean Calas was in prison. The Sirvens knew that a trial would end in conviction. They fled. In their absence they were convicted, their property confiscated. The parents sentenced to die by the hangman, the daughters to be under the gallows during the execution of their mother and then to be exiled. The family fled in the midst of winter; the married daughter gave birth to a child in the snows of the Alps; the mother died, and at last the father, reaching Switzerland, found himself without the means of support. They went to Voltaire. He espoused their cause. He took care of them, gave them the means to live, and labored to annul the sentence that had been pronounced against them for nine long and weary years. He appealed to kings for money, to Catherine II of Russia, and to hundreds of others. He was successful. He said of this case:—The Sirvens were tried and condemned in two hours in January, 1762, and now in January, 1772, after ten years of effort, they have been restored to their rights."

This was the work of Voltaire. Why should the worshipers of God hate the lovers of men?

Espenasse was a Protestant, of good estate. In 1740 he received into his house a Protestant clergyman, to whom he gave supper and lodging. In a country where priests repeated the parable of the "Good Samaritan" this was a crime. For this crime Espenasse was tried, convicted and sentenced to the galleys for life. When he had been imprisoned for twenty-three years his case came to the knowledge of Voltaire, and he

was, through the efforts of Voltaire, released and restored to his family.

This was the work of Voltaire. There is not time to tell of the case of Gen. Lally, of the English Gen. Byng, of the niece of Corneille, of the Jesuit Adam, of the writers, dramatists, actors, widows and orphans for whose benefit he gave his influence, his money and his time.

But I will tell another case: In 1765 at the town of Abbeville an old wooden cross on a bridge had been mutilated—whittled with a knife—a terrible crime. Sticks, when crossing each other, were far more sacred than flesh and blood. Two young men were suspected—the Chevalier de la Barre and d’Ettallonde. D’Ettallonde fled to Prussia and enlisted as a common soldier. La Barre remained and stood his trial. He was convicted without the slightest evidence, and he and d’Ettallonde were both sentenced: First, to endure the torture, ordinary and extraordinary; second, to have their tongues torn out by the roots with pincers of iron; third, to have their right hands cut off at the door of the church; and fourth, to be bound to stakes by chains of iron and burned to death by a slow fire. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Remembering this, the judges mitigated the sentence by providing that their heads should be cut off before their bodies were given to the flames. The case was appealed to Paris; heard by a court composed of twenty-five judges learned in law, and the judgment was confirmed. The sentence was carried out on the 1st day of July, 1766.

Voltaire had fought with every weapon that genius could devise or use. He was the greatest of all caricaturists, and he used this wonderful gift without mercy. For pure crystallized wit he had no equal. The art of flattery was carried by him to the height of an exact science. He knew and practiced every subterfuge. He fought the army of hypocrisy and pretense, the army of faith and falsehood. Voltaire was annoyed by the meaner and baser spirits of his time, by the cringers and crawlers, by the fawners and pretenders, by those who wished to gain the favors of priests, the patronage of nobles. Sometimes he allowed himself to be annoyed by these scorpions; sometimes he attacked them. And, but for these attacks, long ago they would have been forgotten. In the amber of his genius Voltaire preserved these insects, these tarantulas, these scorpions.

It is fashionable to say that he was not profound. This is because he was not stupid. In the presence of absurdity he laughed, and was called irreverent. He thought God would not damn even a priest forever. This was regarded as blasphemy. He endeavored to prevent Christians from murdering each other, and did what he could to civilize the disciples of Christ. Had he founded a sect, obtained control of some country, and burned a few heretics at slow fires, he would have won the admiration, respect and love of the christian world. Had he only pretended to believe all the fables of antiquity, and had he mumbled Latin prayers,

counted beads, crossed himself, devoured now and then the flesh of God, and carried fagots to the feet of Philosophy in the name of Christ, he might have been in heaven this moment, enjoying a sight of the damned.

If he had only adopted the creed of his time—if he had asserted that a God of infinite power and mercy had created millions and billions of human beings to suffer eternal pain, and all for the sake of his glorious justice—that he had given his power of attorney to a cunning and cruel Italian pope, authorizing him to save the soul of his mistress and send honest wives to hell—if he had given to the nostrils of this God the odor of burning flesh—the incense of the fagot—if he had filled his ears with the shrieks of the tortured—the music of the rack, he would now be known as St. Voltaire.

Instead of doing these things he willfully closed his eyes to the light of the gospel, examined the bible for himself, advocated intellectual liberty, struck from the brain the fetters of an arrogant faith, assisted the weak, cried out against the torture of man, appealed to reason, endeavored to establish universal toleration, succored the indigent, and defended the oppressed. He demonstrated that the origin of all religions is the same, the same mysteries—the same miracles—the same impostures—the same temples and ceremonies—the same kind of founders, apostles and dupes—the same promises and threats—the same pretense of goodness and forgiveness and the practice of the same persecution and murder. He proved that religion made enemies—philosophy, friends—and that above the rites of gods were the rights of man. These were his crimes. Such a man God would not suffer to die in peace. If allowed to meet death with a smile, others might follow his example, until none would be left to light the holy fires of the *auto da fe*. It would not do for so great, so successful an enemy of the church to die without leaving some shriek of fear, some shudder of remorse, some ghastly prayer of chattered horror, uttered by lips covered with blood and foam. For many centuries the theologians have taught that an unbeliever—an infidel—one who spoke or wrote against their creed, could not meet death with composure; that in his last moments God would fill his conscience with the serpents of remorse. For a thousand years the clergy have manufactured the facts to fit this theory—this infamous conception of the duty of man and the justice of God. The theologians have insisted that crimes against men were, and are, as nothing compared with crimes against God. That, while kings and priests did nothing worse than to make their fellows wretched, that so long as they only butchered and burnt the innocent and helpless, God would maintain the strictest neutrality; but when some honest man, some great and tender soul, expressed a doubt as to the truth of the scriptures, or prayed to the wrong god, or to the right one by the wrong name, then the real God leaped like a wounded tiger upon his victim, and from his quivering flesh tore the wretched soul.

There is no recorded instance where the uplifted hand of murder has been paralyzed—no truthful account in all the literature of the world of the

innocent child being shielded by God. Thousands of crimes are being committed ever day—men are at this moment lying in wait for their human prey—wives are whipped and crushed, driven to insanity and death—little children begging for mercy, lifting imploring, tear-filled eyes to the brutal faces of fathers and mothers—sweet girls are deceived, lured and outraged, but God has no time to prevent these things—no time to defend the good and protect the pure. He is too busy numbering hairs and watching sparrows. He listens for blasphemy; looks for persons who laugh at priests; examines baptismal registers; watches professors in college who begin to doubt the geology of Moses and the astronomy of Joshua. He does not particularly object to stealing, if you don't swear. A great many persons have fallen dead in the act of taking God's name in vain, but millions of men, women and children have been stolen from their homes and used as beasts of burden, but no one engaged in this infamy has ever been touched by the wrathful hand of God. All kinds of criminals, except infidels, meet death with reasonable serenity. As a rule there is nothing in the death of a pirate to cast any discredit on his profession. The murderer upon the scaffold, with a priest on either side, smilingly exhorts the multitude to meet him in heaven. The man who has succeeded in making his home a hell meets death without a quiver, provided he has never expressed any doubt as to the divinity of Christ or the eternal "procession" of the Holy Ghost.

Now and then a man of genius, of sense, of intellectual honesty, has appeared. Such men have denounced the superstition of their day. They have pitied the multitude. To see priests devour the substance of the people—priests who made begging one of the learned professions—filled them with loathing and contempt. These men were honest enough to tell their thoughts, brave enough to speak the truth. Then they were denounced, tried, tortured, killed by rack or flame. But some escaped the fury of the fiends who loved their enemies and died naturally in their beds. It would not do for the church to admit that they died peacefully. That would show that religion was essentially at the last moment. Superstition gets its power from the terror of death. It would not do to have the common people understand that a man could deny the bible, refuse to kiss the cross; contend that humanity was greater than Christ, and then die as sweetly as Torquemada did after pouring molten lead into the ears of an honest man, or as calmly as Calvin after he had burned Servetus, or as peacefully as King David after advising with his last breath one son to assassinate another.

The church has taken great pains to show that the last moments of all infidels (that Christians did not succeed in burning) were infinitely wretched and despairing. It was alleged that words could not paint the horrors that were endured by a dying infidel. Every good Christian was expected to, and generally did, believe these accounts. They have been told and retold in every pulpit of the world. Protestant ministers have repeated the lies invented by Catholic priests, and Catholics, by a kind of theological comity, have sworn to the lies told by the Protestants. Upon this point they have always stood together, and will as long as the

same falsehood can be used by both. Upon the death-bed subject the clergy grew eloquent. When describing the shudderings and shrieks of the dying unbeliever their eyes glitter with delight. It is a festival. They are no longer men. They become hyenas. They dig open graves. They devour the dead. It is a banquet. Unsatisfied still, they paint the terrors of hell. They gaze at the souls of the infidels writhing in the coils of the worm that never dies. They see them in flames—in oceans of fire—in gulfs of pain—in abysses of despair. They shout with joy. They applaud.

It is an auto da fe, presided over by God. But let us come back to Voltaire—to the dying philosopher. He was an old man of 84. He had been surrounded with the comforts, the luxuries of life. He was a man of great wealth, the richest writer that the world had known. Among the literary men of the earth he stood first. He was an intellectual monarch—one who had built his own throne and had woven the purple of his own power. He was a man of genius. The Catholic God had allowed him the appearance of success. His last years were filled with the intoxication of flattery—of almost worship. He stood at the summit of his age. The priests became anxious. They began to fear that God would forget, in a multiplicity of business, to make a terrible example of Voltaire. Toward the last of May, 1778, it was whispered in Paris that Voltaire was dying. Upon the fences of expectation gathered the unclean birds of superstition, impatiently waiting for their prey. Two days before his death, his nephew went to seek the cure of Saint Surplice and the Abbe Gautier, and brought them to his uncle's sick chamber, who, being informed that they were there, said: "Ah, well, give them my compliments and my thanks." The abbe spoke some words to him, exhorting him to patience. The cure of Saint Surplice then came forward, having announced himself, and asked of Voltaire, elevating his voice, if he acknowledged the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sick man pushed one of his hands against the cure's coat, shoving him back, and cried, turning abruptly to the other side: "Let me die in peace." The cure seemingly considered his person soiled and his coat dishonored by the touch of a philosopher. He made the nurse give him a little brushing and went out with the Abbe Gautier. He expired, says Wagnierre, on the 30th of May, 1778, at about a quarter past 11 at night, with the most perfect tranquility. A few moments before his last breath he took the hand of Morand, his valet de chambre, who was watching by him, pressed it, and said: "Adieu, my dear Morand, I am gone." These were his last words. Like a peaceful river, with green and shaded banks, he flowed without a murmur into the waveless sea, where life is rest.

From this death, so simple and serene, so kind, so philosophic and tender; so natural and peaceful; from these words so utterly destitute of cant or dramatic touch, all the frightful pictures, all the despairing utterances have been drawn and made. From these materials, and from these alone, or rather, in spite of these facts, have been constructed by priests and clergymen and their dupes all the shameless lies about the death of this great and wonderful man. A man, compared

with whom all of his calumniators, dead and living, were, and are, but dust and vermin. Let us be honest. Did all the priests of Rome increase the mental wealth of man as much as Bruno? Did all the priests of France do as great a work for the civilization of the world as Voltaire or Diderot? Did all the ministers of Scotland add as much to the such of human knowledge as David Hume? Have all the clergymen, monks, friars, ministers, priests, bishops, cardinals and popes, from the day of Pentecost to the last election, done as much for human liberty as Thomas Paine? What would the world be if infidels had never been? The infidels have been the brave and thoughtful men; the flower of all the world; the pioneers and heralds of the blessed day of liberty and love; the generous spirits of the unworthy past; the seers and prophets of our race; the great chivalric souls, proud victors on the battlefields of thought, the creditors of all the years to be.

In those days the philosophers—that is to say, the thinkers—were not buried in holy ground. It was feared that their principles might contaminate the ashes of the just. And they also feared that on the morning of the resurrection they might, in a moment of confusion, slip into heaven. Some were burned and their ashes scattered; and the bodies of some were thrown naked to beasts, and others buried in unholy earth. Voltaire knew the history of Adrienne Le Couvreur, a beautiful actress, denied burial. After all, we do feel an interest in what is to become of our bodies. There is a modesty that belongs to death. Upon this subject Voltaire was infinitely sensitive. It was that he might be buried that he went through the farce of confession, of absolution, and of the last sacrament. The priests knew that he was not in earnest, and Voltaire knew that they would not allow him to be buried in any of the cemeteries of Paris. His death was kept a secret. The Abbe Mignot made arrangements for the burial at Romilli-on-the-Seine, more than 100 miles from Paris. Sunday evening, on the last day of May, 1778, the body of Voltaire, clad in a dressing gown, clothed to resemble an invalid, posed to simulate life, was placed in a carriage; at its side a servant, whose business it was to keep it in position. To this carriage were attached six horses, so that people might think a great lord was going to his estates. Another carriage followed in which were a grand-nephew and two cousins of Voltaire. All night they traveled, and on the following day arrived at the courtyard of the abbey. The necessary papers were shown, the mass was performed in the presence of the body, and Voltaire found burial. A few moments afterward the prior who "for charity had given a little earth" received from his bishop a menacing letter forbidding the burial of Voltaire. It was too late. He could not then be removed, and he was allowed to remain in peace until 1791.

Voltaire was dead. The foundations of State and throne had been sapped. The people were becoming acquainted with the real kings and with the actual priests. Unknown men born in misery and want, men whose fathers and mothers had been pavement for the rich, were rising towards the light and their shadowy faces were emerging from darkness. Labor and thought became friends. That is, the gutter and the attic fraternized.

The monsters of the night and the angels of dawn—the first thinking of revenge and the others dreaming of equality, liberty and fraternity. For 400 years the Bastille had been the outward symbol of oppression. Within its walls the noblest had perished. It was a perpetual threat. It was the last and often the first argument of king and priest. Its dungeons, damp and rayless, its massive towers, its secret cells, its instruments of torture, denied the existence of God. In 1789, on the 14th of July, the people, the multitude, frenzied by suffering, stormed and captured the Bastille. The battlecry was, "Vive le Voltaire!"

In 1791 permission was given to place in the Pantheon the ashes of Voltaire. He had been buried 110 miles from Paris. Buried by stealth he was to be removed by a nation. A funeral procession of a hundred miles; every village with its flags and arches in his honor; all the people anxious to honor the philosopher of France—the savior of Calas—the destroyer of superstition! On reaching Paris the great procession moved along the Rue St. Antoine. Here it paused, and for one night upon the ruins of the Bastille rested the body of Voltaire—rested in triumph, in glory—rested on fallen wall and broken arch, on crumbling stone still damp with tears, on rusting chain, and bar and useless bolt—above the dungeons dark and deep, where light had faded from the lives of men and hope had died in breaking hearts. The conqueror resting upon the conquered. Throned upon the Bastille, the fallen fortress of night, the body of Voltaire, from whose brain had issued the dawn.

For a moment his ashes must have felt the Promethean fire, and the old smile must have illumined once more the face of the dead.

While the vast multitude were trembling with love and awe, a priest was heard to cry, "God shall be avenged!"

The grave of Voltaire was violated. The cry of the priest, "God shall be avenged!" had borne its fruit. Priests, skulking in the shadows, with faces sinister as night-ghouls—in the name of the gospel, desecrated the gave. They carried away the body of Voltaire. The tomb was empty. God was avenged! The tomb was empty, but the world is filled with Voltaire's fame. Man has conquered!

What cardinal, what bishop, what priest raised his voice for the rights of men? What ecclesiastic, what nobleman, took the side of the oppressed—of the peasant? Who denounced the frightful criminal code the torture of suspected persons? What priest pleaded for the liberty of the citizen? What bishop pitied the victim of the rack? Is there the grave of a priest in France on which a lover of liberty would now drop a flower or a tear? Is there a tomb holding the ashes of a saint from which emerges one ray of light? If there be another life, a day of judgment, no God can afford to torture in another world a man who abolished torture in his. If God be the keeper of an eternal penitentiary, He should not imprison there those who broke the chain of slavery here. He cannot afford to make eternal convicts of Franklin, of

Jefferson, of Paine, of Voltaire.

Voltaire was perfectly equipped for his work. A perfect master of the French language, knowing all its moods, tenses, and declinations, in fact and in feeling, playing upon it as skillfully, as Paganini on his violin, finding expression for every thought and fancy, writing on the most serious subjects with the gayety of a harlequin, plucking jests from the mouth of death, graceful as the waving of willows, dealing in double meanings—that covered the asp with flowers and flattery, master of satire and compliment, mingling them often in the same line, always interested himself, therefore interesting others, handling thoughts, questions, subjects, as a juggler does balls, keeping them in the air with perfect ease, dressing old words in new meanings, charming, grotesque, pathetic, mingling mirth with tears, wit with wisdom, and sometimes wickedness, logic, and laughter. With a woman's instinct knowing the sensitive nerves—just where to touch—hating arrogance of place, the stupidity of the solemn, snatching masks from priest and king, knowing the springs of action and ambition's ends, perfectly familiar with the great world, the intimate of kings and their favorites, sympathizing with the oppressed and imprisoned, with the unfortunate and poor, hating tyranny, despising superstition, and loving liberty with all his heart. Such was Voltaire, writing "Edipus" at seventeen, "Irene" at eighty-three, and crowding between these two tragedies, the accomplishment of a thousand lives.

Ingersoll's Lecture on Myth and Miracles

Ladies and Gentlemen: What, after all, is the object of life? What is the highest possible aim? The highest aim is to accomplish the only good. Happiness is the only good of which man by any possibility can conceive. The object of life is to increase human joy, and that means intellectual and physical development. The question, then, is: Shall we rely upon superstition or upon growth? Is intellectual development the highway of progress or must we depend on the pit of credulity? Must we rely on belief or credulity, or upon manly virtues, courageous investigation, thought, and intellectual development? For thousands of years men have been talking about religious freedom. I am now contending for the freedom of religion, not religious freedom—for the freedom which is the only real religion. Only a few years ago our poor ancestors tried to account for what they saw. Noticing the running river, the shining star, or the painted flower, they put a spirit in the river, a spirit in the star, and another in the flower. Something makes this river run, something makes this star shine, something paints the blossom of that flower. They were all spirits. That was the first religion of mankind—fetichism—and in everything that lived, everything that produced an effect upon them, they said: "This is a spirit that lives within." That is called the lowest phase of religious thought, and yet it is quite the highest phase of religious thought. One by one these little spirits died. One by one nonentities took their places, and last of all we have one infinite fetich that takes the place of all

others. Now, what makes the river run? We say the attraction of gravitation, and we know no more about that than we do about this fetich. What makes the tree grow? The principle of life-vital forces. These are simply phrases, simply names of ignorance. Nobody knows what makes the river run, what makes the trees grow, why the flowers burst and bloom-nobody knows why the stars shine, and probably nobody ever will know.

There are two horizons that have never been passed by man-origin and destiny. All human knowledge is confined to the diameter of that circle. All religions rest on supposed facts beyond the circumference of the absolutely known. What next? The next thing that came in the world-the next man-was the mythmaker. He gave to these little spirits human passions; he clothed ghosts in flesh; he warmed that flesh with blood, and in that blood he put desire-motive. And the myths were born, and were only produced through the fact of the impressions that nature makes upon the brain of man. They were every one a natural production, and let me say here, tonight, that what men call monstrosities are only natural productions. Every religion has grown just as naturally as the grass; every one, as I said before, and it cannot be said too often, has been naturally produced. All the Christs, all the gods and goddesses, all the furies and fairies, all the mingling of the beastly and human, were all produced by the impressions of nature upon the brain of man-by the rise of the sun, the silver dawn, the golden sunset, the birth and death of day, the change of seasons, the lightning, the storm, the beautiful bow-all these produced within the brain of man all myths, and they are all natural productions.

There have been certain myths universal among men. Gardens of Eden have been absolutely universal-the golden age, which is absolutely the same thing. And what was the golden age born of? Any old man in Boston will tell you that fifty years ago all people were honest. Fifty years ago all people were sociable-there was no stuck-up aristocracy then. Neighbors were neighbors. Merchants gave full weight. Everything was full length; everything was a yard wide and all wool. Now everybody swindles everybody else, and calls it business. Go back fifty years and you will find an old man who will tell you that there was a time when all were honest. Go back another fifty years and you will find another sage who will tell you the same story. Every man looks back to his youth, to the golden age, and what is true of the individual is true of the whole human race. It has its infancy, its manhood, and, finally, will have an old age. The garden of Eden is not back of us. There are more honest men, good women, and obedient children in the world today than ever before.

The myth of the Elysian fields-universally born of sunsets. When the golden clouds in the west turned to amethyst, sapphire, and purple, the poor savage thought it a vision of another land-a land without care or grief-a world of perpetual joy. This myth was born of the setting of the sun. A universal myth, all nations have believed in floods.

Savages found everywhere evidences of the sea having been above the earth, and saw in the shells souvenirs of the ocean's visit. It had left its cards on the tops of mountains. The savage knew nothing of the slow rise and sinking of the crust of the earth. He did not dream of it. We now know that where the mountains lift their granite foreheads to the sun, the billows once held sway, and that where the waves dash into white caps of joy, the mountains will stand once more. Everywhere the land is, the ocean will be; and where the ocean is the land will be. The Hindoos believed in the flood myth. Their hero, who lived almost entirely on water, went to the Ganges to perform his ablutions, and, taking up a little water in his hand, he saw a small fish that prayed him to save it from the monster of the river, and it would save him in turn from his enemies. He did so, and put it into different receptacles until it grew so large that he let it loose in the sea; then it was large enough to take care of itself. The fish told him that there was going to be an immense flood, and told him to gather all kinds of seed and take two of each kind of animals of use to man, and he would come along with an ark and take them all in. He told him to pick out seven saints. And the fish towed the ark along tied to its horns, and took them in and carried them to the top of a mountain, where he hitched the ark to a tree. When the waters receded, they came out and followed them down until they reached the plain. There were the same number—eight—in this ark as there were with Noah.

I find that the myth of the virgin mother is universal. The virgin mother is the earth. I find also in countries the idea of a trinity. In Egypt I find Isis, Osiris, and Horus. This idea prevailed in Central America among the Aztecs. We find the myth of the judgment almost universal. I imagine men have seen so much injustice here that they naturally expect that there must be some day of final judgment somewhere. Nearly every theist is driven to the necessity of having another world in which his god may correct the mistakes he has made in this. We find on the walls of Egyptian temples pictures of the judgment; the righteous all go on the right hand, and those unworthy on the left. The myth of the sun god was universal. Agni was the sun god of the Hindoos. He was called the most generous of all gods, yet he ate his own father and mother. Baldur was another sun god; he was a sun myth. Hercules was a sun god, and so was Samson. Jonah, too, was a sun god, and was swallowed by a fish. So was Hercules, and a wonderful thing is that they were swallowed in about the same place, near Joppa. Where did the big fish go? When the sun went down under the earth, it was thought to be followed by the fish, which was said to swallow it, and carry it safely through the under world. The sun thus came to be represented as the body of a woman with the tail of a fish, and so the mermaid was born. Another strange thing is that all the sun gods were born near Christmas. The myth of Red Riding Hood, was known among the Aztecs. The myth of eucharist came from the story of Ceres and Bacchus. When the cakes made by the product of the field were eaten, it was the body of Ceres, and when the wine was drunk it was the blood of Bacchus. From this idea the eucharist was born. There is nothing original in

christianity. Holy water! Another myth. The Hindoos imagined that the water had its source in the throne of God. The Egyptians thought the Nile sacred. Greece was settled by Egyptian colonies, and they carried with them the water of the Nile, and when any one died the water was sprinkled on him. Finally Rome conquered Greece physically, but Greece conquered Rome intellectually. This is the myth of holy water, and with it grew up the idea of baptism, and I presume that that is as old as water and dirt. The cross is another universal symbol. There was once an ancient people in Italy before the Romans, before the Etruscans. They faded from the world, and history does not even know the name of that nation. We find where they buried the ashes of their dead, and we find chiseled, hundreds of years before Christ, the cross, a symbol of a hope of another life. We find the cross in Egypt, in the cylinders from Babylon, and, more than that, we find them in Central America. On the temples of the Aztecs we find the cross, and on it a bleeding, dying god. Our cross was built in the middle ages.

When Adam was very sick he sent Seth, his son, to the garden of Eden. He told him he would have no trouble in finding it; all he had to do was to follow the tracks made by his mother and father when they left it. He wanted a little balsam from the tree of life that he might not die. Seth found there a cherub, with flaming sword, who would not let him pass the door. He moved his wings so that he could see in, and he saw the tree of life, with its roots running down to hell, and among them Cain, the murderer. The angel gave Seth three seeds, and told him to put them in his father's mouth when he was buried and to watch the effect. The result was that these trees grew up—one pine, one cedar, and on cypress. Solomon cut down one of these trees to put in the temple, but it grew through the roof and he threw it into the pool of Bethesda. When the soldiers went for a beam on which to crucify Christ they took this tree and made a cross of it. Helen, the mother of Constantine, went to Jerusalem to find this cross. She found the two crosses, also, that the thieves were crucified on. They could not tell which was which, so they called a sick woman who touched them, and when she touched the right one she was immediately made whole.

Such is myth and fable. The history of one religion is substantially the history of all religions. In embryo man lives all lives. The man of genius knows within himself the history of the human race; he knows the history of all religions. The man of imagination, genius, having seen a leaf and a drop of water, can construct the forests, the rivers, and the seas. In his presence all the cataracts fall and foam, the mists rise, and the clouds form and float. To really know one fact is known its kindred and its neighbors. Shakespeare, looking at a coat of mail, instantly imagined the society, the conditions that produced it, and what it, in its turn, produced. He saw the castle, the moat, the drawbridge, the lady in the tower, and the knightly lover spurring over the plain. He saw the bold baron and the rude retainer, the trampled serfs, and all the glory and the grief of feudal life. The man of imagination has lived the life of all people, of all races. He has been

a citizen of Athens in the days of Pericles; listened to the eager eloquence of the great orator, and has sat upon the cliff, and with the tragic poet heard "the multitudinous laughter of the sea." He has seen Socrates thrust the spear of question through the shield and heart of falsehood—was present when the great man drank hemlock and met the night of death tranquil as a star meets morning. He has followed the peripatetic philosophers, and has been puzzled by the sophists. He has watched Phidias, as he chiseled shapeless stone to forms of love and awe. He has lived by the slow Nile, amid the vast and monstrous. He knows the very thought that wrought the form and features of the Sphinx. He has heard great Memnon's morning song, has laid him down with the embalmed dead, and felt within their dust the expectation of another life, mingled with cold and suffocating doubts—the children born of long delay. He has walked the ways of mighty Rome, has seen the great Caesar with his legions in the field, has stood with vast and motley throngs and watched the triumphs given to victorious men, followed by uncrowned kings, the captured hosts and all the spoils of ruthless war. He has heard the shout that shook the Coliseum's roofless walls when from the reeling gladiator's hand the short sword fell, while from his bosom gushed the stream of wasted life. He has lived the life of savage men—has trod the forest's silent depths, and in the desperate name of life or death has matched his thought against the instinct of the beast. He has sat beneath the botree's contemplative shade, rapt in Buddha's mighty thought, and he has dreamed all dreams that light, the alchemist, hath wrought from dust and dew and stored within the slumbrous poppy's subtle blood. He has knelt with awe and dread at every prayer; has felt the consolation and the shuddering fear; has seen all the devils; has mocked and worshiped all the gods; enjoyed all heavens, and felt the pangs of every hell. He has lived all lives, and through his blood and brain have crept the shadow and the chill of every death, and his soul, Mazeppa-like, has been lashed naked to the wild horse of every fear and love and hate. The imagination hath a stage within the brain, whereon he sets all scenes that lie between the morn of laughter and the night of tears, and where his players body forth the false and true, the joys and griefs, the careless shadows, and the tragic deeps of human life.

Through with the myth-makers, we now come to the wonder-worker. There is this difference between the miracle and the myth—a myth is an idealism of a fact, and a miracle is a counterfeit of a fact. There is some difference between a myth and a miracle. There is the difference that there is between fiction and falsehood and poetry and perjury. Miracles are probably only in the far past or the very remote future. The present is the property of the natural. You say to a man: "The dead were raised 4,000 years ago." He says, "Well, that's reasonable." You say to him, "In 4,000,000 years we shall all be raised." He says, "That is what I believe." Say to him, "A man was raised from the dead this morning," and he will say, "What are you giving us?" Miracles never convince at the time they were said to have been performed.

John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ. He was cast into prison. When Christ heard of it He "departed from that country." Afterward he returned and heard that John had been beheaded, and he again departed from that country. There is no possible relation between the miraculous and the moral. The miracles of the middle ages are the children of superstition. In the middle ages men told everything but the truth, and believed everything but the facts. The middle ages—a trinity of ignorance, mendacity and insanity. There is one thing about humanity. You see the faults of others, but not your own. A Catholic in India sees a Hindoo bowing before an idol and thinks it absurd. Why does he not get him a plaster of paris virgin and some beads and holy water? Why does the protestant shut his eyes when he prays? The idea is a souvenir of sun worship. It is the most natural worship in the world. Religious dogmas have become absurd. The doctrine of eternal torment today has become absurd, low, groveling, ignorant, barbaric, savage, devilish and no gentleman would preach it.

Science, thou art the great magician! Thou alone performest the true miracles. Thou alone workest the real wonders. Fire is thy servant, lightning thy messenger. The waves obey thee, and thou knowest the circuits of the wind. Thou art the great philanthropist. Thou hast freed the slave and civilized the master. Thou hast taught man to chain, not his fellow-man, but the forces of nature—forces that have no backs to be scarred, no limbs for chains to chill and eat—forces that never know fatigue, that shed no tears—forces that have no hearts to break. Thou gavest man the plow, the reaper and the loom—thou hast fed and clothed the world. Thou art the great physician. Thy touch hath given sight. Thou hast made the lame to leap, the dumb to speak, and in the pallid cheek thy hand hath set the rose of health. "Thou hast given thy beloved sleep"—a sleep that wraps in happy dreams the throbbing nerves of pain. Thou art the perpetual providence of man—preserver of life and love. Thou art the teacher of every virtue, and the enemy of every vice. Thou hast discovered the true basis of morals—the origin and office of conscience—and hast revealed the nature and measure of obligation. Thou hast taught that love is justice in its highest form, and that even self-love, guided by wisdom, embraces with loving arms the human race. Thou hast slain the monsters of the past. Thou hast discovered the one inspired book. Thou hast read the records of the rocks, written by wind and wave, by frost and flame—records that even priestcraft cannot change—and in thy wondrous scales thou hast weighed the atoms and the stars. Thou art the founder of the only true religion. Thou art the very Christ, the only savior of mankind!

Theology has always been in the way of the advance of the human race. There is this difference between science and theology—science is modest and merciful, while theology is arrogant and cruel. The hope of science is the perfection of the human race. The hope of theology is the salvation of a few and the damnation of almost everybody. As I told you in the first place, I believe in the religion of freedom. O liberty!

thou art the god of my idolatry. Thou art the only deity that hates the bended knee. In thy vast and unwall'd temple, beneath the roofless dome, star-gemmed and luminous with suns, thy worshipers stand erect. They do not bow or cringe or crawl or bend their foreheads to the earth. Thy dust hast never borne the impress of lips, upon thy sacred altars mothers do not sacrifice their babes, nor men their rights. Thou askest naught from man except the things that good men hate, the whip, the chain, the dungeon key. Thou hast no kings, no popes, no priests to stand between their fellow-men and thee. Thou hast no monks, no nuns, who, in the name of duty, murder joy. Thou carest not for forms nor mumbled prayers. At thy sacred shrine hypocrisy does not bow, fear does not crouch, virtue does not tremble, superstition's feeble tapers do not burn, but reason holds aloft her inextinguishable torch, while on the ever-broadening brow of science falls the ever coming morning of the ever better day.

Ingersoll on The Chinese God

Messrs. Wright, Dickey, O'Conner and Murch, of the select committee on the causes of the present depression of labor, presented the majority special report upon Chinese immigration.

These gentlemen are in great fear for the future of our most holy and perfectly authenticated religion, and have, like faithful watchmen from the walls and towers of Zion, hastened to give the alarm. They have informed Congress that "Joss has his temple of worship in the Chinese quarters, in San Francisco. Within the walls of a dilapidated structure is exposed to the view of the faithful the god of the Chinaman, and here are his altars of worship. Here he tears up his pieces of paper; here he offers up his prayers; here he receives his religious consolations, and here is his road to the celestial land." That "Joss is located in a long, narrow room, in a building in a back alley, upon a kind of altar;" that "he is a wooden image, looking as much like an alligator as like a human being;" that the Chinese "think there is such a place as heaven;" that "all classes of Chinamen worship idols;" that "the temple is open every day at all hours;" that "the Chinese have no Sunday;" that this heathen god has "huge jaws, a big red tongue, large white teeth, a half-dozen arms, and big, fiery eyeballs. About him are placed offerings of meat, and other eatables—a sacrificial offering."

No wonder that these members of the committee were shocked at such a god, knowing as they did that the only true God was correctly described by the inspired lunatic of Patmos in the following words:

"And there sat in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven

stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp, two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength.”

Certainly, a large mouth, filled with white teeth, is preferable to one used as the scabbard of a sharp, two-edged sword. Why should these gentlemen object to a god with big fiery eyeballs, when their own Deity has eyes like a flame of fire?

Is it not a little late in the day to object to people because they sacrifice meat and other eatables to their god? We all know that for thousands of years the ”real” God was exceedingly fond of roasted meat; that He loved the savor of burning flesh, and delighted in the perfume of fresh, warm blood.

The following account of the manner in which the ”living God” desired that His people should sacrifice tends to show the degradation and religious blindness of the Chinese—:

”Aaron therefore went unto the altar and slew the calf of the sin-offering which was for himself. And the sons of Aaron brought the blood unto him. And he dipped his fingers in the blood and put it upon the horns of the altar, and poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar; but the fat and the kidneys and the caul above the liver of the sin-offering he burnt upon the altar, as the Lord commanded Moses, and the flesh and the hide he burnt with fire without the camp. And he slew the burnt offering. And Aaron’s sons presented unto him the blood which he sprinkled round about the altar.... And he brought the meat offering and took a handful thereof and burnt upon the altar..... He slew also the bullock and the ram for a sacrifice of peace offering, which was for the people. And Aaron’s sons presented unto him the blood which he sprinkled upon the altar, round about, and the fat of the bullock and of the ram, the rump and that which covereth the inwards, and the kidneys, and the caul above the liver, and they put the fat upon the breasts and he burnt the fat upon the altar. And the breasts and the right shoulder Aaron waved for a wave-offering before the Lord, as Moses had commanded.”

If the Chinese only did something like this, we would know that they worshiped the ”living” God. The idea that the supreme head of the ”American system of religion” can be placated with a little meat and ”ordinary eatables,” is simply preposterous. He has always asked for blood, and has always asserted that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

The world is also informed by these gentlemen that ”the idolatry of the Chinese produces a demoralizing effect upon our American youth by bringing sacred things into disrespect, and making religion a theme of disgust and contempt.”

In San Francisco there are some three hundred thousand people. Is it

possible that a few Chinese can bring "our holy religion" into disgust and contempt? In that city there are fifty times as many churches as joss-houses. Scores of sermons are uttered every week; religious books and papers are plentiful as leaves in autumn, and somewhat dryer; thousands of bibles are within the reach of all. And there, too, is the example of a Christian city.

Why should we send missionaries to China if we cannot convert the heathen when they come here? When missionaries go to a foreign land, the poor, benighted people have to take their word for the blessings showered upon a Christian people; but when the heathen come here, they can see for themselves. What was simply a story becomes a demonstrated fact. They come in contact with people who love their enemies. They see that in a Christian land men tell the truth; that they will not take advantage of strangers; that they are just and patient; kind and tender; and have no prejudice on account of color, race, or religion; that they look upon mankind as brethren; that they speak of God as a universal Father, and are willing to work, and even to suffer, for the good, not only of their own countrymen, but of the heathen as well. All this the Chinese see and know, and why they still cling to the religion of their country is to me a matter of amazement.

We all know that the disciples of Jesus do unto others as they would that others should do unto them, and that those of Confucius do not unto others anything that they would not that others should do unto them. Surely, such peoples ought to live together in perfect peace. Rising with the subject, growing heated with a kind of holy indignation, these Christian representatives of a Christian people most solemnly declare that anyone who is really endowed with a correct knowledge of our religious system which acknowledges the existence of a living God and an accountability to Him, and a future state of reward and punishment, who feels that he has an apology for this abominable pagan worship, is not a fit person to be ranked as a good citizen of the American union. It is absurd to make any apology for its toleration. It must be abolished, and the sooner the decree goes forth by the power of this government, the better it will be for the interests of this land.

I take this the earliest opportunity to inform these gentlemen composing a majority of the committee that we have in the United States no "religious system;" that this is a secular government. That it has no religious creed; that it does not believe nor disbelieve in a future state of reward and punishment; that it neither affirms nor denies the existence of a "living God;" and that the only god, so far as this government is concerned; is the legally expressed will of a majority of the people. Under our flag the Chinese have the same right to worship a wooden god that you have to worship any other. The constitution protects equally the church of Jehovah and the house of Joss. Whatever their relative positions may be in heaven, they stand upon a perfect equality in the United States. This government is an infidel government. We have a constitution with man put in and God left out;

and it is the glory of this country that we have such a constitution.

It may be surprising to you that I have an apology for pagan worship, yet I have. And it is the same one that I have for the writers of this report. I account for both by the word superstition. Why should we object to their worshiping God as they please? If the worship is improper, the protestation should come not from a committee of congress, but from God himself. If He is satisfied, that is sufficient.

Our religion can only be brought into contempt by the actions of those who profess to be governed by its teachings. This report will do more in that direction than millions of Chinese could do by burning pieces of paper before a wooden image. If you wish to impress the Chinese with the value of your religion, of what you are pleased to call "the American system," show them that Christians are better than heathens. Prove to them that what you are pleased to call the "living God" teaches higher and holier things, a grander and purer code of morals, than can be found upon pagan pages. Excel these wretches in industry, in honesty, in reverence for parents, in cleanliness, in frugality, and above all by advocating the absolute liberty of human thought.

Do not trample upon these people because they have different conception of things about which even this committee knows nothing.

Give them the same privilege you enjoy of making a god after their own fashion, and let them describe him as they will. Would you be willing to have them remain, if one of their race, thousands of years ago, had pretended to have seen God, and had written of Him as follows: "There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth; coals were kindled by it.... and he rode upon a cherub and did fly?" Why should you object to these people on account of their religion? Your objection has in it the spirit of hate and intolerance. Of that spirit the inquisition was born. That spirit lighted the fagot, made the thumbscrew, put chains upon the limbs, and lashes upon the backs of men. The same spirit bought and sold, captured and kidnapped human beings; sold babes, and justified all the horrors of slavery. Congress has nothing to do with the religion of the people. Its members are not responsible to God for the opinions of their constituents, and it may tend to the happiness of the constituents for me to state that they are in no way responsible for the religion of the members. Religion is an individual not a national matter, and where the nation interferes with the right of conscience, the liberties of the people are devoured by the monster, superstition.

If you wish to drive out the Chinese, do not make a pretext of religion. Do not pretend that you are trying to do God a favor. Injustice in His name is doubly detestable. The assassin cannot sanctify his dagger by falling on his knees, and it does not help a falsehood if it be uttered as a prayer. Religion, used to intensify the hatred of men toward men, under the pretense of pleasing God, has cursed this world.

A portion of this most remarkable report is intensely religious. There is in it almost the odor of sanctity; and when reading it, one is impressed with the living piety of its authors. But on the twenty-fifth page, there are a few passages that must pain the hearts of true believers. Leaving their religious views, the members immediately betake themselves to philosophy and prediction. Listen:

”The Chinese race and the American citizen, whether native-born or who is eligible to our naturalization laws and becomes a citizen, are in a state of antagonism. They cannot, nor will not, ever meet upon common ground and occupy together the same so-called level. This is impossible. The pagan and the Christian travel different paths. This one believes in a living God; that one in the type of monsters and worship of wood and stone. Thus in the religion of the two races of men, they are as wide apart as the poles of the two hemispheres. They cannot now, nor never [sic] will, approach the same religious altar. The Christian will not recede to barbarism, nor will the Chinese advance to the enlightened belt [wherever it is] of civilization.... He cannot be converted to those modern ideas of religious worship which have been accepted by Europe, and which crown the American system.”

Christians used to believe that through their religion all the nations of the earth were finally to be blest. In accordance with that belief missionaries have been sent to every land, and untold wealth has been expended for what has been called the spread of the gospel.

I am almost sure that I have read somewhere that ”Christ died for all men,” and that ”God is no respecter persons.” It was once taught that it was the duty of Christians to tell to all people the ”tidings of great joy.” I have never believed these things myself, but have always contended that an honest merchant was the best missionary. Commerce makes friends, religion makes enemies; the one enriches, and the other impoverishes; the one thrives best where the truth is told, the other where falsehoods are believed. For myself, I have but little confidence in any business, or enterprise, or investment, that promises dividends only after the death of the stockholders.

But I am astonished that four Christian statesmen, four members of Congress in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, who seriously object to people on account of their religious convictions, should still assert that the very religion in which they believe—and the only religion established by the living God—head of the American system—is not adapted to the spiritual needs of one-third of the human race. It is amazing that these four gentlemen have, in the defense of the Christian religion, announced the discovery that it is wholly inadequate for the civilization of mankind that the light of the cross can never penetrate the darkness of China; ”that all the labors of the missionary, the example of the good, the exalted character of our civilization, make no impression upon the pagan life of the Chinese;”

and that even the report of this committee will not tend to elevate, refine and Christianize the yellow heathen of the Pacific Coast. In the name of religion these gentlemen have denied its power and mocked at the enthusiasm of its founder. Worse than this, they have predicted for the Chinese a future of ignorance and idolatry in this world, and, if the "American system"—of religion us true, hellfire in the next.

For the benefit of these four philosophers and prophets, I will give a few extracts from the writings of Confucius that will in my judgment, compare favorably with the best passages of their report:

"My doctrine is that man must be true to the principles of his nature, and the benevolent exercises of them toward others.

"With coarse rice to eat, with water to drink, and with my bended arm for a pillow, I still have joy.

"Riches and honor acquired by injustice are to me but floating clouds.

"The man who, in view of gain, thinks of righteousness; who, in view of danger, forgets life, and who remembers an old agreement, however far back it extends, such a man may be reckoned a complete man.

"Recompense injury with justice, and kindness with kindness."

There is one Word which may serve as rule of practice for all one's life. Reciprocity is that word.

When the ancestors of the four Christian Congressmen were barbarians, when they lived in caves, gnawed bones, and worshiped dried snakes, the infamous Chinese were reading these sublime sentences of Confucius. When the forefathers of these Christian statesmen were hunting toads to get the jewels out of their heads to be used as charms, the wretched Chinese were calculating eclipses and measuring the circumference of the earth. When the progenitors of these representatives of the "American system of religion" were burning women charged with nursing devils, these people, "incapable of being influenced by the exalted character of our civilization," were building asylums for the insane.

Neither should it be forgotten that, for thousands of years, the Chinese have honestly practiced the great principle known as civil service reform—a something that even the administration of Mr. Hayes has reached only through the proxy of promise.

If we wish to prevent the immigration of the Chinese, let us reform our treaties with the vast empire from whence they came. For thousands of years the Chinese secluded themselves from the rest of the world. They did not deem the Christian nations fit to associate with. We forced ourselves upon them. We called, not with cards, but with cannon. The English battered down the door in the names of Opium and Christ. This

infamy was regarded as another triumph for the gospel. At last, in self-defense, the Chinese allowed Christians to touch their shores. Their wise men, their philosophers protested, and prophesied that time would show that Christians could not be trusted. This report proves that the wise men were not only philosophers, but prophets.

Treat China as you would England. Keep a treaty while it is in force. Change it if you will, according to the laws of nations, but on no account excuse a breach of national faith by pretending that we are dishonest for God's sake.

Ingersoll's Letter, Is Suicide a Sin? (Colonel Ingersoll's First Letter)

I do not know whether self-killing is on the increase or not. If it is, then there must be, on the average, more trouble, more sorrow, more failure, and, consequently, more people are driven to despair. In civilized life there is a great struggle, great competition, and many fall. To fail in a great city is like being wrecked at sea. In the country a man has friends. He can get a little credit, a little help, but in the city it is different. The man is lost in the multitude. In the roar of the streets his cry is not heard. Death becomes his only friend. Death promises release from want, from hunger and pain, and so the poor wretch lays down his burden, dashes it from his shoulders and falls asleep.

To me all this seems very natural. The wonder is that so many endure and suffer to the natural end, that so many nurse the spark of life in huts and prisons, keep it and guard it through years of misery and want; support it by beggary; by eating the crust found in the gutter, and to whom it only gives days of weariness and nights of fear and dread. Why should the man, sitting amid the wreck of all he had, the loved ones dead, friends lost, seek to lengthen, to preserve his life? What can the future have for him?

Under many circumstances a man has the right to kill himself. When life is of no value to him, when he can be of no real assistance to others, why should a man continue? When he is of no benefit, when he is a burden to those he loves, why should he remain? The old idea was that "God" made us and placed us here for a purpose, and that it was our duty to remain until He called us. The world is outgrowing this absurdity. What pleasure can it give "God" to see a man devoured by a cancer? To see the quivering flesh slowly eaten? To see the nerves throbbing with pain? Is this a festival for "God"? Why should the poor wretch stay and suffer? A little morphine would give him sleep—the agony would be forgotten and he would pass unconsciously from happy dreams to painless death.

If "God" determines all births and deaths, of what use is medicine, and why should doctors defy, with pills and powders, the decrees of "God"? No one, except a few insane, act now according to this childish

superstition. Why should a man, surrounded by flames, in the midst of a burning building, from which there is no escape, hesitate to put a bullet through his brain or a dagger in his heart? Would it give "God" pleasure to see him burn? When did the man lose the right of self-defense?

So, when a man has committed some awful crime, why should he stay and ruin his family and friends? Why should he add to the injury? Why should he live, filling his days and nights, and the days and nights of others, with grief and pain, with agony and tears?

Why should a man sentenced to imprisonment for life hesitate to still his heart? The grave is better than the cell. Sleep is sweeter than the ache of toil. The dead have no masters.

So the poor girl, betrayed and deserted, the door of home closed against her, the faces of friends averted, no hand that will help, no eye that will soften with pity, the future an abyss filled with monstrous shapes of dread and fear, her mind racked by fragments of thoughts like clouds broken by storm, pursued, surrounded by the serpents of remorse, flying from horrors too great to bear, rushes with joy through the welcome door of death.

Undoubtedly there are many cases of perfectly justifiable suicide—cases in which not to end life would be a mistake, sometimes almost a crime.

As to the necessity of death, each must decide for himself. And if a man honestly decides that death is best—best for him and others—and acts upon the decision, why should he be blamed?

Certainly the man who kills himself is not a physical coward. He may have lacked moral courage, but not physical. It may be said that some men fight duels because they are afraid to decline. They are between two fires—the chance of death and the certainty of dishonor, and they take the chance of death. So the Christian martyrs were, according to their belief, between two fires—the flames of the fagot that could burn but for a few moments and the fires of God, that were eternal. And they chose the flames of the fagot.

Men who fear death to that degree that they will bear all the pains and pangs that nerves can feel rather than die, cannot afford to call the suicide a coward. It does not seem to me that Brutus was a coward or that Seneca was. Surely Anthony had nothing left to live for. Cato was not a craven. He acted on his judgment. So with hundreds of others who felt that they had reached the end—that the journey was done, the voyage was over, and, so feeling, stopped. It seems certain that the man who commits suicide, who "does the thing that stops all other deeds, that shackles accident and bolts up change," is not lacking in physical courage.

If men had the courage they would not linger in prisons, in almshouses, in hospitals, they would not bear the pangs of incurable disease, the stains of dishonor, they would not live in filth and want, in poverty and hunger, neither would they wear the chain of slavery. All this can be accounted for only by the fear of death or "of something after."

Seneca, knowing that Nero intended to take his life, had no fear. He knew that he could defeat the Emperor. He knew that "at the bottom of every river, in the coil of every rope, on the point of every dagger, Liberty sat and smiled." He knew that it was his own fault if he allowed himself to be tortured to death by his enemy. He said, "There is this blessing, that while life has but one entrance, it has exits innumerable, and as I choose the house in which I live, the ship in which I will sail, so will I choose the time and manner of my death." To me this is not cowardly, but manly and noble.

Under the Roman law persons found guilty, of certain offenses were not only destroyed, but their blood was polluted, and their children became outcasts. If, however, they died before conviction, their children were saved. Many committed suicide to save their babes. Certainly they were not cowards. Although guilty of great crimes, they had enough of honor, of manhood, left to save their innocent children. This was not cowardice.

Without doubt many suicides are caused by insanity. Men lose their property. The fear of the future overpowers them. Things lose proportion, they lose poise and balance, and in a flash, a gleam of frenzy, kill their selves. The disappointed in love, broken in heart—the light fading from their lives—seek the refuge of death. Those who take their lives in painful, barbarous ways—who mangle their throats with broken glass, dash themselves from towers and roofs, take poisons that torture like the rack—such persons must be insane. But those who take the facts into account, who weigh the arguments for and against, and who decide that death is best—the only good—and then resort to reasonable means, may be, so far as I can see, in full possession of their minds.

Life is not the same to all—to some a blessing, to some a curse, to some not much in any way. Some leave it with unspeakable regret, some with the keenest joy, and some with indifference.

Religion, or the decadence of religion, has a bearing upon the number of suicides. The fear of "God," of judgment, of eternal pain will stay the hand, and people so believing will suffer here until relieved by natural death. A belief in the eternal agony beyond the grave will cause such believers to suffer the pangs of this life. When there is no fear of the future, when death is believed to be a dreamless sleep, men have less hesitation about ending their lives. On the other hand, orthodox religion has driven millions to insanity. It has caused parents to murder their children and many thousands to destroy themselves and

others.

It seems probable that all real, genuine orthodox believers who kill themselves must be insane, and to such a degree that their belief is forgotten, "God" and hell are out of their minds. I am satisfied that many who commit suicide are insane, many are in the twilight or dusk of insanity, and many are perfectly sane.

The law we have in this State making it a crime to attempt suicide is cruel and absurd and calculated to increase the number of successful suicides. When a man has suffered so much, when he has been so persecuted and pursued by disaster that he seeks the rest and sleep of death, why should the State add to the sufferings of that man? A man seeking death, knowing that he will be punished if he fails, will take extra pains and precautions to make death certain.

This law was born of superstition, passed by thoughtlessness and enforced by ignorance and cruelty.

When the house of life becomes a prison, when the horizon has shrunk and narrowed to a cell, and when the convict longs for the liberty of death, why should the effort to escape be regarded as a crime?

Of course, I regard life from a natural point of view. I do not take gods, heavens or hells into account. My horizon is the known, and my estimate of life is based upon what I know of life here in this world. People should not suffer for the sake of supernatural beings or for other worlds or the hopes and fears of some future state. Our joys, our sufferings and our duties are here. The law of New York about the attempt to commit suicide and the law as to divorce are about equal. Both are idiotic. Law cannot prevent suicide. Those who have lost all fear of death, care nothing for law and its penalties. Death is liberty, absolute and eternal.

We should remember that nothing happens but the natural. Back of every suicide and every attempt to commit suicide is the natural and efficient cause. Nothing happens by chance. In this world the facts touch each other. There is no space between—no room for chance. Given a certain heart and brain, certain conditions, and suicide is the necessary result. If we wish to prevent suicide we must change conditions. We must, by education, by invention, by art, by civilization, add to the value of the average life. We must cultivate the brain and heart—do away with false pride and false modesty. We must become generous enough to help our fellows without degrading them. We must make industry useful work of all kinds—honorable. We must mingle a little affection with our charity—a little fellowship. We should allow those who have sinned to really reform. We should not think only of what the wicked have done, but we should think of what we have wanted to do. People do not hate the sick. Why should they despise the mentally weak—the diseased in brain?

Our actions are the fruit, the result, of circumstances—of conditions—and we do as we must. This great truth should till the heart with pity for the failures of our race.

Sometimes I have wondered that Christians denounce the suicide; that in old times they buried him where the roads crossed, and drove a stake through his body. They took his property from his children and gave it to the State.

If Christians would only think, they would see the orthodox religion rests upon suicide—that man was redeemed by suicide, and that without suicide the whole world would have been lost.

If Christ were God, then he had the power to protect himself from the Jews without hurting them. But instead of using his power he allowed them to take his life.

If a strong man should allow a few little children to hack him to death with knives when he could easily have brushed them aside, would we not say that he committed suicide?

There is no escape. If Christ were, in fact, God and allowed the Jews to kill Him, then He consented to His own death—refused, though perfectly able, to defend and protect Himself, and was, in fact, a suicide.

We cannot reform the world by law or by superstition. As long as there shall be pain and failure, want and sorrow, agony and crime, men and women will untie life's knot and seeks the peace of death.

To the hopelessly imprisoned—to the dishonored and despised—to those who have failed, who have no future, no hope—to the abandoned, the broken-hearted, to those who are only remnants and fragments of men and women—how consoling, how enchanting is the thought of death!

And even to the most fortunate death at last is a welcome deliverer. Death is as natural and as merciful as life. When we have journeyed long—when we are weary—when we wish for the twilight, for the dusk, for the cool kisses of the night—when the senses are dull—when the pulse is faint and low—when the mists gather on the mirror of memory—when the past is almost forgotten, the present hardly perceived—when the future has but empty hands—death is as welcome as a strain of music.

After all, death is not so terrible as joyless life. Next to eternal happiness is to sleep in the soft clasp of the cool earth, disturbed by no dream, by no thought, by no pain, by no fear, unconscious of all and forever.

The wonder is that so many live, that in spite of rags and want, in spite of tenement and gutter, of filth and pain, they limp and stagger and crawl beneath their burdens to the natural end. The wonder is that so few of the miserable are brave enough to die—that so many are terrified by the "something after death"—by the specters and phantoms of superstition.

Most people are in love with life. How they cling to it in the arctic snows—how they struggle in the waves and currents of the sea—how they linger in famine—how they fight disaster and despair! On the crumbling edge of death they keep the flag flying and go down at last full of hope and courage.

But many have not such natures. They cannot bear defeat. They are disheartened by disaster. They lie down on the field of conflict and give the earth their blood.

They are our unfortunate brothers and sisters. We should not curse or blame—we should pity. On their pallid faces our tears should fall.

One of the best men I ever knew, with an affectionate wife, a charming and loving daughter, committed suicide. He was a man of generous impulses. His heart was loving and tender. He was conscientious, and so sensitive that he blamed himself for having done what at the time he thought wise and best. He was the victim of his virtues. Let us be merciful in our judgments.

All we can say is that the good and the bad, the loving and the malignant, the conscientious and the vicious, the educated and the ignorant, actuated by many motives, urged and pushed by circumstances and conditions sometimes in the calm of judgment, sometimes in passion's storm and stress, sometimes in whirl and tempest of insanity—raise their hands against themselves and desperately put out the light of life.

Those who attempt suicide should not be punished. If they are insane they should, if possible be restored to reason; if sane, they should be reasoned with, calmed and assisted.

Ingersoll's Letter, The Right to One's Life Colonel Ingersoll's Eloquent Reply to His Critics

In the article written by me about suicide the ground was taken that "under many circumstances a man has the right to kill himself."

This has been attacked with great fury by clergymen, editors and the writers of letters. These people contend that the right of self-destruction does not and can not exist. They insist that life is the gift of God, and that He only has the right to end the days of men; that it is our duty to beat the sorrows that He sends with grateful

patience. Some have denounced suicide as the worst of crimes—worse than the murder of another.

The first question, then, is:

Has a man under any circumstances the right to kill himself?

A man is being slowly devoured by a cancer—his agony is intense—his suffering all that nerves can feel. His life is slowly being taken. Is this the work of the good God? Did the compassionate God create the cancer so that it might feed on the quivering flesh of this victim?

This man, suffering agonies beyond the imagination to conceive, is of no use to himself. His life is but a succession of pangs. He is of no use to his wife, his children, his friends or society. Day after day he is rendered unconscious by drugs that numb the nerves and put the brain to sleep. Has he the right to render himself unconscious? Is it proper for him to take refuge in sleep?

If there be a good God I cannot believe that He takes pleasure in the sufferings of men—that He gloats over the agonies of His children. If there be a good God, He will, to the extent of His power, lessen the evils of life.

So I insist that the man being eaten by the cancer—a burden to himself and others, useless in every way—has the right to end his pain and pass through happy sleep to dreamless rest.

But those who have answered me would say to this man: "It is your duty to be devoured. The good God wishes you to suffer. Your life is the gift of God. You hold it in trust, and you have no right to end it. The cancer is the creation of God and it is your duty to furnish it with food."

Take another case: A man is on a burning ship; the crew and the rest of the passengers have escaped—gone in the lifeboats—and he is left alone. In the wide horizon there is no sail, no sign of help. He cannot swim. If he leaps into the sea he drowns, if he remains on the ship he burns. In any event he can live but a few moments.

Those who have answered me, those who insist that under no circumstances a man has the right to take his life, would say to this man on the deck, "Remain where you are. It is the desire of your loving, heavenly father that you be clothed in flame—that you slowly roast—that your eyes be scorched to blindness and that you die insane with pain. Your life is not your own, only the agony is yours."

I would say to this man: "Do as you wish. If you prefer drowning to burning, leap into the sea. Between inevitable evils you have the right of choice. You can help no one, not even God, by allowing yourself to

be burned, and you can injure no one, not even God, by choosing the easier death.”

Let us suppose another case.

A man has been captured by savages in central Africa. He is about to be tortured to death. His captors are going to thrust splinters of pure iron into his flesh and then set them on fire. He watches them as they make the preparations. He knows what they are about to do and what he is about to suffer. There is no hope of rescue, of help. He has a vial of poison. He knows that he can take it and in one moment pass beyond their power, leaving to them only the dead body.

Is this man under obligation to keep his life because God gave it until the savages by torture take it? Are the savages the agents of the good God? Are they the servants of the infinite? Is it the duty of this man to allow them to wrap his body in a garment of flame? Has he no right to defend himself? Is it the will of God that he die by torture? What would any man of ordinary intelligence do in a case like this? Is there room for discussion?

If the man took the poison, shortened his life a few moments, escaped the tortures of the savages, is it possible that he would in another world be tortured forever by an infinite savage?

Suppose another case. In the good old days, when the inquisition flourished, when men loved their enemies and murdered their friends, many frightful and ingenious ways were devised to touch the nerves of pain.

Those who loved God, who had been "born twice," would take a fellow-man who had been convicted of heresy, "lay him upon the floor of a dungeon, secure his arms and legs with chains, fasten him to the earth so that he could not move, put an iron vessel, the opening downward, on his stomach, place in the vessel several rats, then tie it securely to his body. Then these worshipers of God would wait until the rats, seeking food and liberty, would gnaw through the body of the victim.

Now, if a man about to be subjected to this torture had within his hand a dagger, would it excite the wrath of the "good God," if with one quick stroke he found the protection of death?

To this question there can be but one answer.

In the cases I have supposed it seems to me that each person would have the right to destroy himself. It does not seem possible that the man was under obligation to be devoured by a cancer; to remain upon the ship and perish in flame; to throw away the poison and be tortured to death by savages; to drop the dagger and endure the "mercies" of the church.

If, in the cases I have supposed, men would have the right to take their lives, then I was right when I said that "under many circumstances a man has a right to kill himself."

Second, I denied that persons who killed themselves were physical cowards. They may lack moral courage; they may exaggerate their misfortunes, lose the sense of proportion, but the man who plunges the dagger in his heart, who sends the bullet through his brain, who leaps from some roof and dashes himself against the stones beneath, is not and cannot be a physical coward.

The basis of cowardice is the fear of injury or the fear of death, and when that fear is not only gone, but in its place is the desire to die, no matter by what means, it is impossible that cowardice should exist. The suicide wants the very thing that a coward fears. He seeks the very thing that cowardice endeavors to escape.

So the man, forced to a choice of evils, choosing the less is not a coward, but a reasonable man. It must be admitted that the suicide is honest with himself. He is to bear the injury, if it be one. Certainly there is no hypocrisy, and just as certainly there is no physical cowardice.

Is the man who takes morphine rather than be eaten to death by a cancer a coward?

Is the man who leaps into the sea rather than be burned a coward? Is the man that takes poison rather than be tortured to death by savages or "Christians" a coward?

Third, I also took the position that some suicides were sane; that they acted on their best judgment, and that they were in full possession of their minds.

Now, if, under some circumstances, a man has the right to take his life, and if, under such circumstances, he does take his life, then it cannot be said that he was insane.

Most of the persons who have tried to answer me have taken the ground that suicide is not only a crime, but some of them have said that it is the greatest of crimes. Now, if it be a crime, then the suicide must have been sane. So all persons who denounce the suicide as a criminal admit that he was sane. Under the law, an insane person is incapable of committing a crime. All the clergymen who have answered me, and who have passionately asserted that suicide is a crime, have by that assertion admitted that those who killed themselves were sane.

They agree with me, and not only admit, but assert that "some who have committed suicide were sane and in the full possession of their minds."

It seems to me that these three propositions have been demonstrated to be true: First, that under some circumstances a man has the right to take his life; second, that the man who commits suicide is not a physical coward; and, third, that some who have committed suicide were at the time sane and in full possession of their minds.

Fourth, I insisted, and still insist, that suicide was and is the foundation of the Christian religion.

I still insist that if Christ were God He had the power to protect Himself without injuring His assailants—that having that power it was His duty to use it, and that failing to use it He consented to His own death and was guilty of suicide. To this the clergy answer that it was self-sacrifice for the redemption of man, that He made an atonement for the sins of believers. These ideas about redemption and atonement are born of a belief in the "fall of man," on account of the sins of our "first parents," and of the declaration that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." The foundation has crumbled. No intelligent person now believes in the "fall of man"—that our first parents were perfect, and that their descendants grew worse and worse, at least until the coming of Christ.

Intelligent men now believe that ages and ages before the dawn of history man was a poor, naked, cruel, ignorant and degraded savage, whose language consisted of a few sounds of terror, of hatred and delight; that he devoured his fellow-man, having all the vices, but not all the virtues of the beasts; that the journey from the den to the home, the palace, has been long and painful, through many centuries of suffering, of cruelty and war; through many ages of discovery, invention, self-sacrifice and thought.

Redemption and atonement are left without a fact on which to rest. The idea that an infinite God, creator of all worlds, came to this grain of sand, learned the trade of a carpenter, discussed with Pharisees and scribes, and allowed a few infuriated Hebrews to put Him to death that He might atone for the sins of men and redeem a few believers from the consequences of His own wrath, can find no lodgment in a good and natural brain.

In no mythology can anything more monstrously Unbelievable be found.

But if Christ were a man and attacked the religion of His times because it was cruel and absurd; if He endeavored to found a religion of kindness, of good deeds, to take the place of heartlessness and ceremony, and if, rather than to deny what He believed to be right and true; He suffered death, then He was a noble man—a benefactor of His race. But if He were God there was no need of this. The Jews did not wish to kill God. If He had only made himself known, all knees would have touched the ground. If He were God it required no heroism to die.

He knew that what we call death is but the opening of the gates of eternal life. If He were God, there was no self-sacrifice. He had no need to suffer pain. He could have changed the crucifixion to a joy.

Even the editors of religious weeklies see that there is no escape from these conclusions—from these arguments—and so, instead of attacking the arguments, they attack the man who makes them.

Fifth, I denounced the law of New York that makes an attempt to commit suicide a crime.

It seems to me that one who has suffered so much that he passionately longs for death should be pitied, instead of punished—helped rather than imprisoned.

A despairing woman who had vainly sought for leave to toil, a woman without home, without friends, without bread, with clasped hands, with tear-filled eyes, with broken words of prayer, in the darkness of night leaps from the dock, hoping, longing for the tearless sleep of death. She is rescued by a kind, courageous man, handed over to the authorities, indicted, tried, convicted, clothed in a convict's garb and locked in a felon's cell.

To me this law seems barbarous and absurd, a law that only savages would enforce.

Sixth, in this discussion a curious thing has happened. For several centuries the clergy have declared that while infidelity is a very good thing to live by, it is a bad support, a wretched consolation, in the hour of death. They have, in spite of the truth, declared that all the great unbelievers died trembling with fear, asking God for mercy, surrounded by fiends, in the torments of despair. Think of the thousands and thousands of clergymen who have described the last agonies of Voltaire, who died as peacefully as a happy child smilingly passes from play to slumber; the final anguish of Hume, who fell into his last sleep as serenely as a river, running between green and shaded banks, reaches the sea; the despair of Thomas Paine, one of the bravest, one of the noblest men, who met the night of death untroubled as a star that meets the morning.

At the same time these ministers admitted that the average murderer could meet death on the scaffold with perfect serenity, and could smilingly ask the people who had gathered to see him killed meet him in heaven.

But the honest man who had expressed his honest thoughts against the creed of the church in power could not die in peace. God would see to it that his last moments should be filled with the insanity of fear—that with his last breath he should utter the shriek of remorse, the cry for pardon.

This has all changed, and now the clergy, in their sermons answering me, declare that the atheists, the free-thinkers, have no fear of death—that to avoid some little annoyance, a passing inconvenience, they gladly and cheerfully put out the light of life. It is now said that infidels believe that death is the end—that it is a dreamless sleep—that it is without pain—that therefore they have no fear, care nothing for gods or heavens or hells, nothing for the threats of the pulpit, nothing for the day of judgment, and that when life becomes a burden they carelessly throw it down.

The infidels are so afraid of death that they commit suicide. This certainly is a great change, and I congratulate myself on having forced the clergy to contradict themselves.

Seventh, the clergy take the position that the atheist, the unbeliever, has no standard of morality—that he can have no real conception of right and wrong. They are of the opinion that it is impossible for one to be moral or good unless he believes in some being far above himself.

In this connection we might ask how God can be moral or good unless he believes in some being superior to himself.

What is morality? It is the best thing to do under the circumstances. What is the best thing to do under the circumstances? That which will increase the sum of human happiness—or lessen it the least. Happiness, in its highest, noblest form, is the only good; that which increases or preserves or creates happiness is moral—that which decreases it, or puts it in peril, is immoral.

It is not hard for an atheist—for an unbeliever—to keep his hands out of the fire. He knows that burning his hands will not increase his well-being, and he is moral enough to keep them out of the flames.

So it may be said that each man acts according to his intelligence—so far as what he considers his own good is concerned. Sometimes he is swayed by passion, by prejudice, by ignorance, but when he is really intelligent, master of himself, he does what he believes is best for him. If he is intelligent enough he knows that what is really good for him is good for others—for all the world.

It is impossible for me to see why any belief in the supernatural is necessary to have a keen perception of right and wrong. Every man who has the capacity to suffer and enjoy, and has imagination enough to give the same capacity to others, has within himself the natural basis of all morality. The idea of morality was born here, in this world, of the experience, the intelligence of mankind. Morality is not of supernatural origin. It did not fall from the clouds, and it needs no belief in the supernatural, no supernatural promises or threats, no supernatural heavens or hells to give it force and life. Subjects who

are governed by the threats and promises of a king are merely slaves. They are not governed by the ideal, by noble views of right and wrong. They are obedient cowards, controlled by fear, or beggars governed by rewards, by alms.

Right and wrong exist in the nature of things. Murder was just as criminal before as after the promulgation of the ten commandments.

Eighth, many of the clergy, some editors and some writers of letters who have answered me have said that suicide is the worst of crimes, that a man had better murder somebody else than himself. One clergyman gives as a reason for this statement that the suicide dies in an act of sin, and therefore he had better kill another person. Probably he would commit a less crime if he would murder his wife or mother.

I do not see that it is any worse to die than to live in sin. To say that it is not as wicked to murder another as yourself seems absurd. The man about to kill himself wishes to die. Why is it better for him to kill another man, who wishes to live?

To my mind it seems clear that you had better injure yourself than another. Better be a spendthrift than thief. Better throw away your own money than steal the money of another. Better kill yourself if you wish to die than murder one whose life is full of joy.

The clergy tell us that God is everywhere, and that it is one of the greatest possible crimes to rush into His presence. It is wonderful how much they know about God and how little about their fellow-men. Wonderful the amount of their information about other worlds and how limited their knowledge is of this.

There may or may not be an infinite being. I neither affirm nor deny. I am honest enough to say that I do not know. I am candid enough to admit that the question is beyond the limitations of my mind. Yet I think I know as much on that subject as any human being knows or ever knew, and that is—nothing.

I do not say that there is not another world, another life; neither do I say that there is. I say that I do not know. It seems to me that every sane and honest man must say the same. But if there is an infinitely good God and another world, then the infinitely good God will be just as good to us in that world as he is in this. If this infinitely good God loves His children in this world, He will love them in another. If He loves a man when he is alive, He will not hate him the instant he is dead. If we are the children of an infinitely wise and powerful God, He knew exactly what we would do—the temptations that we could and could not withstand—knew exactly the effect that everything would have upon us, knew under what circumstances we would take our lives—and produced such circumstances himself. It is perfectly apparent that there are many people incapable by nature of bearing the burdens of life,

incapable or preserving their mental poise in stress and strain of disaster, disease and loss, and who by failure, by misfortune and want, are driven to despair and insanity, in whose darkened minds there comes like a flash of lightning in the night, the thought of death, a thought so strong, so vivid, that all fear is lost, all ties broken, all duties, all obligations, all hopes forgotten, and naught remains except a fierce and wild desire to die. Thousands and thousands become moody, melancholy, brood upon loss of money, of position, of friends, until reason abdicates, and frenzy takes possession of the soul. If there be an infinitely wise and powerful God, all this was known to Him from the beginning, and He so created things, established relations, put in operation causes and effects that all that has happened was the necessary result of his own acts.

Ninth, nearly all who have tried to answer what I said have been exceeding careful to misquote me, and then answer something that I never uttered. They have declared that I have advised people who were in trouble, somewhat annoyed, to kill themselves; that I have told men who have lost their money, who had failed in business, who were not good in health, to kill themselves at once, without taking into consideration any duty that they owed to wives, children, friends, or society.

No man has a right to leave his wife to fight the battle alone if he is able to help. No man has a right to desert his children if he can possibly be of use. As long as he can add to the comfort of those he loves, as long as he can stand between wife and misery, between child and want, as long as he can be of use, it is his duty to remain.

I believe in the cheerful view, in looking at the sunny side of things, in bearing with fortitude the evils of life, in struggling against adversity, in finding the fuel of laughter even in disaster, in having confidence in tomorrow, in finding the pearl of joy among the flints and shards, and in changing by the alchemy of patience even evil things to good. I believe in the gospel of cheerfulness, of courage and good-nature.

Of the future I have no fear. My fate is the fate of the world, of all that live. My anxieties are about this life, this world. About the phantoms called gods and their impossible hells, I have no care, no fear.

The existence of God I neither affirm nor deny. I wait. The immortality of the soul I neither affirm nor deny. I hope, hope for all of the children of men. I have never denied the existence of another world, nor the immortality of the soul. For many years I have said that the idea of immortality, that like a sea has ebbed and flowed in the human heart, with its countless waves of hope and fear beating against the shores and rocks of time and fate, was not born of any book, nor of any creed, nor of any religion. It was born of human affection, and it will continue to ebb and flow beneath the mists and clouds of doubt and

darkness as long as love kisses the lips of death.

What I deny is the immortality of pain, the eternity of torture.

After, all the instinct of self-preservation is strong. People do not kill themselves on the advice of friends or enemies. All wish to be happy, to enjoy life; all wish for food and roof and raiment, for friends, and as long as life gives joy the idea of self-destruction never enters the human mind.

The oppressors, the tyrants, those who trample on the rights of others, the robbers of the poor, those who put wages below the living point, the ministers who make people insane by preaching the dogma of eternal pain; these are the men who drive the weak, the suffering and the helpless down to death.

It will not do to say that "God" has appointed a time for each to die. Of this there is, and there can be, no evidence. There is no evidence that any god takes any interest in the affairs of men—that any sides with the right or helps the weak, protects the innocent or rescues the oppressed. Even the clergy admit that their God, through all ages, has allowed his friends, his worshipers, to be imprisoned, tortured and murdered by His enemies. Such is the protection of God. Billions of prayers have been uttered; has one been answered? Who sends plague, pestilence and famine? Who bids the earthquake devour and the volcano to overwhelm?

Tenth, again I say that it is wonderful to me that so many men, so many women endure and carry their burdens to the natural end; that so many, in spite of "age, ache and penury," guard with trembling hands the spark of life; that prisoners for life toil and suffer to the last; that the helpless wretches in poor-houses and asylums cling to life; that the exiles in Siberia, loaded with chains, scarred with the knout, live on; that the incurables, whose every breath is a pang, and for whom the future has only pain, should fear the merciful touch and clasp of death.

It is but a few steps at most from the cradle to the grave; a short journey. The suicide hastens, shortens the path, loses the afternoon, the twilight, the dusk of life's day; loses what he does not want, what he cannot bear. In the tempest of despair, in the blind fury of madness or in the calm of thought and choice the beleaguered soul finds the serenity of death.

Let us leave the dead where nature leaves them. We know nothing of any realm that lies beyond the horizon of the known, beyond the end of life. Let us be honest with ourselves and others. Let us pity the suffering, the despairing, the men and women hunted and pursued by grief and shame, by misery and want, by chance and fate until their only friend is death.