

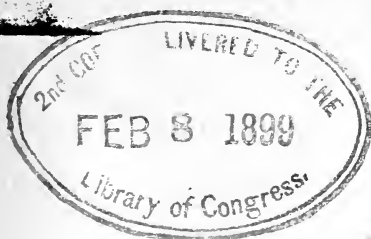
Man Make God
or
God Make Man

An Address by

John B. D. John

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DID MAN MAKE GOD

OR

DID GOD MAKE MAN

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John B. D. John

Did Man Make God OR Did God Make Man

A REPLY TO
ROBERT G. INGERSOLL

✓ BY
JOHN P. D. JOHN, D.D., LL.D.
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INDIANAPOLIS
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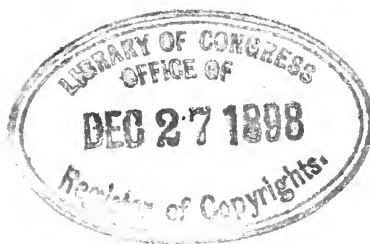
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DID MAN MAKE GOD,

OR

DID GOD MAKE MAN?

A REPLY TO ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

You cannot dispose of God by printing his name with a little g. He came before the printer. God is not determined by the size of his initial letter. He was already in the universe when the alphabet appeared. He is the Alpha of all beginnings and the Omega of all endings. The agnostic philosopher who supposes that God did not make his appearance until he was summoned by men is an eternity behind time. Somebody had been thinking in the universe a long while before men began to think. Man himself was a thought before he was a thinker. He was a thought with which the Infinite Thinker had been busying himself since the time

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when the universe was young; and he is, and is to be, a thought with which the same Thinker will be concerned after the visible universe shall have become a reminiscence. That philosophy is equally an eternity ahead of time which unthrones Jehovah with a witticism. A pun is mighty, but it is not almighty. It will make men laugh, but it will not transform them into creators of their Creator. Pope uttered a noble sentiment when he said:

An honest man's the noblest work of God;
but the eloquent orator of modern agnosticism scarcely improved upon it when he said:

An honest god is the noblest work of man.

You can neither reduce the Creator to the creature by ignoring the rules for capital letters, nor exalt the creature into the Creator with a play of words. Grammatical devices are not logic, and wit is not argument.

Which is the maker, man or God?
Which is the creature, God or man?

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The distinguished agnostic and eloquent orator whose philosophy I am to examine in this address says that man is the maker and God is the creature. The Bible says that God is the maker and man is the creature. The one says that God made men in his image and after his likeness. The other says that men made God in their image and after their likeness. Which is right?

I do not forget that every man has his own ideal of God, which differs with different men, and to that extent that every man makes his own God. So every man makes his own Pyramids of Egypt. But back of his ideal of the Pyramids there is the reality which is the basis of his ideal. And the question now is, whether back of every man's ideal of God there is a real being not made by men, and corresponding in some measure to the conception, or whether the God of the Bible is only a subjective ideal having no other existence than in the vagaries of men, whether of ancient or modern times.

Let me quickly dispose of some prelim-

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inaries. I hasten to say that I am not here on a personal crusade. If any of you have come expecting to hear Mr. Ingersoll denounced as a blasphemer or to see his personality displayed in any light, you are destined to disappointment. I am on a higher mission. He has put some fair questions—I will not shrink from saying, some hard questions—to the defenders of the Christian faith. Most of them, I know, are old questions, and have been answered more or less satisfactorily in every generation from time immemorial; yet they are always new and must be answered by every generation yet to come.

It will not answer these questions to call him a blasphemer. If he is right, he is not a blasphemer; for if there be no God but the gods made by men, there can be no such thing as blasphemy. To answer him by calling him a blasphemer is to beg the question. Fairly show him first to be one if you can, by throwing the light on his philosophy, and you will not need to call him names. His personality, his methods,

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his spirit, have nothing to do with the matter. Is he right or wrong? That is the question. To call him a bad man is not logic; it is cowardice. Logic is not concerned with the goodness or badness of the man; it is concerned with the validity of his argument. Let him be a good man; that will not serve as a crutch for his logic, if it be lame. Let him be a bad man; that will not make his logic limp, if it be sound. Let him be the devil himself; it will not answer him to say: "Sir, your questions are impertinent; and besides you are the devil and are not entitled to a reply." That is not the way Jesus met Satan in the wilderness. He met argument with argument. Truth is in a sorry plight, if it must rest on epithets. It is old enough to stand alone. The truth is worth its face, though uttered by the devil; and sophistry does not become logic even in the mouth of a saint. Let us, therefore, not make faces at the man, but honestly, respectfully and fearlessly examine what he has to say.

Further, the task before me is not self-

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imposed. I am not vain enough to imagine myself better fitted for the work than the distinguished men of this generation who have preceded me, including eminent clergymen, educators, jurists and statesmen. On the contrary, I shrink from the responsibility in the consciousness of my inadequacy to meet it. But I come at the bidding of my conscience upon the call of the young men of my country, whose Christian faith has been obscured by the black clouds of doubt. Time and again I have been urged to accept the standing challenge of the modern Giant of Gath, but I could not fight in Saul's armor, and I was not skilled with the sling. Young men have begged me, both for their own sakes and for the sake of their fellows, to defend the faith against the specific assaults of this brilliant agnostic. I have looked through the well thumbed books of our libraries, only to find marginal comments, in the handwriting of young men, sympathizing with the agnostic rather than with his critics. The young men need help. If I can

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help them, I will no longer hold back. I will go out to meet the Philistine, not with sword or staves, nor yet with sling and pebbles, but solely, I believe, with the naked truth of God.

I come, therefore, in the cause of young men whose sky is beclouded with doubt. I desire to help them. I do not come to tell them they are sinners because they are doubters. I do not hope to help them by saying that they have reached the callow stage when they think it is smart to doubt. God knows that some of them would give their right arm or their right eye if they could only get back the sweet faith of their childhood. God forgive the men who unwittingly drive our precious youth deeper into doubt and despair by sneering at their callowness, or by calling in question the sincerity of their doubts. That is not the way Jesus spoke to Thomas. The man who doubts, doubts with the reason which God has given him; and I will insult neither man nor God by sneering at honest doubt.

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Still further, I make the admission in advance that so far as the Bible is a human book, it is liable to human imperfections.

It is printed by uninspired men, and before the invention of printing it was transcribed by uninspired men. It may, therefore, contain some human flaws. It was translated by uninspired men into languages different from those in which it was originally written, and here again is a possibility of human imperfections. Its various parts were gathered together by uninspired men; and though almost superhuman care was taken, the result may have fallen short of perfection. Some things may have crept in that do not belong there, and other things may have been omitted that belong to the text. It was given originally, as Christians claim, to inspired men who saw the visions of revealed truth through human intellects, and who spoke or wrote the truth as fully as they saw it, and in language as well adapted to the task as their vocabularies could supply. Here again, though the precious truth came directly and super-

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naturally from divine insight and inspiration, we cannot be sure that it has reached us precisely as it left the lips of God; because it must, of necessity, come to us through human media.

Now, turn every light of criticism upon the Bible. Turn on the light of nature; and if science shall discover anything that is contradicted by nature, take it out of the Bible, for God did not put it there. He did not put one thing in nature and another in the Book. But be very sure that what science seems to see is a fact; and then be even doubly sure that the fact does in reality collide with the Book.

But do not stop with the light of nature. Turn upon the Bible the searchlight of the highest criticism, and if it shall surely appear that there are human errors in the text, eliminate the error and preserve the truth. Some of the inexplicable mysteries of the Bible may lie in the imperfection of the human element, and the elimination of this imperfection may clear away the mystery. But in spite of all its possible imper-

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fections, there is no other standard book of approximately equal age so free from human flaw.

Judge the Bible, not by an occasional inaccuracy or some apparent inconsistencies, but by the general sweep of its teaching. Astronomy tells us that the planets move around the sun from west to east; yet at times they seem to move backward from east to west. But this backward motion is not real; it is the fault of our standpoint of observation. The planets still move onward with steady march. Judge the planetary motion, not by what it seems now and then, but by the stretch of an entire orbit. Judge the current of a river, not by the eddies along the shore, but by the steady onflow of its waters to the sea. The occasional retrograde motion in the orbit of inspired truth is only apparent as seen from our eccentric human standpoint, and when the stream of truth seems to flow backward against gravitation it is only the eddy near the shore occasioned by some human impediment.

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A peach tree does not bear crab apples when a few crab branches have been artificially attached to its trunk. Judge a peach tree by the fruit that grows on its own branches, and not by the withered crabs that hang on a foreign branch. Judge the Bible by its legitimate fruit, and not by the bitter product of an artificial branch, whether attached to the trunk in ancient times by mistake, or in modern times by false interpretation. The Bible has vitality enough to yield its own appropriate fruit, even after the parasites have sated their thirst upon its juices. Judge the Bible, not by the parasites that cling to its branches and suck at its vitality, but by its inmost life that reaches from root to fruit. Many of the seeming contradictions of the Bible will yet disappear in the light of candid criticism.

Moreover, judge the Bible by what it proposes to do, and not by a foreign standard artificially set up. The Bible came to teach men of human duty and human destiny—not to teach science, art, literature

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or philosophy. Mr. Ingersoll claims that God is opposed to art, science, education and liberty, because forsooth the Bible is not a good text-book in these subjects. On the same ground, Mr. Ingersoll must be opposed to the public schools, because there is not a word concerning the subject in his remarks at his brother's grave. He must be opposed to mathematics, because he does not call attention to the multiplication table in his lecture on Shakespeare. He must be opposed to pure love and happy homes, because he does not work a love story into his lecture on Ghosts. Judge a funeral oration by what it says of death and the dead, and not by what it fails to say of educational systems. Judge a lecture on Shakespeare by what it says of Shakespeare, and not by what it fails to say of mathematics. Judge an address on ghosts by what it says of ghosts, and not by what it omits saying of domestic life. Judge the Bible by what it says of duty and destiny, and not by what it fails to say of art, science, letters and philosophy.

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One more preliminary. The specific objections brought by Mr. Ingersoll against the God of the Bible are numbered by scores, if not by hundreds. It is evident that I cannot examine them in detail. I shall, therefore, attempt to gather them all together in a few general classes and consider the classes rather than the individual objections. Some of his statements are foolish and frivolous. Some are not true; some are overdrawn; some contain half truths or unfair coloring of whole truths, and some are as true as the Gospel. He has said many beautiful things. His philosophy contains much that is helpful and elevating. It could not well be otherwise at those points in which it coincides with the philosophy of Jesus. But credit to whom credit is due. I wish that much of his inspiration concerning justice, humanity, love and liberty might take possession of the people. I wish that his beautiful pictures of happy homes might in large measure become realities under every roof.

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And they will, when the philosophy of Jesus Christ shall universally prevail.

I shall not stop to correct his specific misstatements, for they will fall of their own weight, if the heads under which I group his objections cannot stand. And now I come to the work before me.

* * * * *

Mr. Ingersoll claims that the Christian religion and its reputed Author were both man-made, and are, therefore, no better than the men who made them.

He objects to the alleged Author of the Bible on the ground that, like the men who made him, he is *ignorant, savage, cruel, unjust, immoral, inconsistent and unfaithful*; and, as I have already intimated, that he is opposed to *art, science, education, progress and liberty*.

He objects to the Christian system on the broad ground that it is *unscientific*—that is, having been made by unscientific men, the Christian scheme is *contrary to fact, unnatural, superstitious and unadapted to the task which it proposes*.

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In order to gain time, I will throw all these objections against God and his Book into two general groups, which, I think, will be all inclusive—viz., *moral objections against his character, and intellectual objections against his revelation.* That is, Mr. Ingersoll objects to the character of God as set forth in the Scriptures on the ground that it is offensive to the nineteenth century conscience, and he objects to his revelation on the ground that it is incompatible with nineteenth century intelligence.

* * * * *

I

First, then, the objection to Jehovah himself on moral grounds. Here it is in a word: He is *cruel*, for he sent fire, flood, famine and pestilence to man and beast and left them to perish in horrible tortures; and, moreover, he has made possible a future hell. He is *savage*, for he commanded his agents to give no quarter to prisoners of war. He is *unjust*, for he

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allowed the innocent to suffer and perish with the guilty. He is *immoral*, for he established and upheld slavery. He is *partial*, for he "killed Uzzah for putting forth his hand to steady the ark," but forgave "David for murdering Uriah." He is *unfaithful*, for he made promises which he did not keep.

I will stop right here long enough to deny specifically this assertion, and challenge a single clear case in which God failed to meet his part of the contract according to the conditions; and I stop still further to deny specifically the charge of partiality—namely, that God ever varied his government for different individuals, the circumstances being alike. He is a respecter of conditions, but not of persons.

Such, then, are the charges against the moral character of Jehovah. Therefore, the God of the Hebrews is only man-made; he was only a subjective existence in the minds of the men who made him and who were like him; and he is only a subjective existence in the minds of the superstitious

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one-third of mankind, who at present happen to be the most intelligent, enlightened and civilized people on the globe.

Now, in my first stricture on the charge of God's moral obliquity, I wish to be clearly understood, and not to be held as claiming for it more than is warranted. Let us for the moment assume Jehovah to be a reality. He is, then, by hypothesis, the God of nature as well as of revelation. But nature is not a dead issue. It is a present fact, and has been a fact facing the history of the past; a history accepted by agnostic as well as Christian. What does history say? What does our own observation declare? They declare that nature seems to be *savage*, for it gives no quarter; that it seems to be *cruel*, for it leaves man and beast to writhe in untold torture from fire, famine, pestilence and flood; that it seems to be *unjust*, for the innocent suffer with the guilty; that it seems to be *partial*, for it helps the strong and opposes the weak; that it seems to be *unfaithful*, for it kindles hopes which are never realized; that it

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seems to be *immoral*, for by the law of the survival of the fittest the weak become the slaves of the strong.

Now I know that it does not answer one question to ask another, and it does not repel one charge to make a counter one. But if the apparent moral obliquity of the God of nature is reconcilable with the moral rectitude which we demand that he must possess, then all similar moral objections to the God of the Bible must disappear. This does not prove the God of the Bible to be a reality, but simply that he is equally possible with the God of nature, and that without moral obliquity. If nature can have a God whose infinite perfection is not irreconcilable with its stern realities, the same is true of the Bible. But nature is a fact; and if it has a governor, his character must be in harmony with his government, however inexplicable and irreconcilable it may appear. Therefore, the God of the Bible may be a fact and yet be morally upright.

The only value of my argument is this: It does not throw upon the Christian the

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entire onus of reconciling the facts with the character of God, but throws the onus equally on all who witness the course of nature. The agnostic as well as the Christian must face the difficulty; and if the agnostic can effect a reconciliation, it is equally a reconciliation for the Christian. If the agnostic is helpless, let him not expect of the Christian what he cannot do himself. Let him not demand more of the God of the Bible, if there be one, than he demands of the God of nature, if there be one. Let him not close his eyes on nature, while he opens them on the Bible. Let him not ignore the beam in nature's eye, while he is discovering the mote in the eye of revelation. Either let him join with the Christian in trying to find some common ground of reconciliation, or let him take down his challenge. If neither he nor the Christian can reconcile the apparent moral contradictions, they are both in the same predicament; but the unexplained facts still remain in the one case precisely as in the other. And if nature is, in spite of the

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apparent contradiction, so may the God of the Hebrews be, in spite of any unanswered questions.

If the agnostic shall answer, "I will not, even for the sake of argument, admit the existence of the God of the Bible or the God of nature," the case is unaltered; for he is still under as great obligation to explain the cruelties and savageries of nature, there being no God, as is the Christian to explain the savageries and cruelties of the Bible, there being a God. If he say, "I cannot explain it," then let him take off his hat to the Christian. If he say, "I do not need to explain it," then let him take back his gauntlet. If he say, "Nature is a great machine that has been grinding from eternity, and will go on grinding to eternity, and there is no sentiment in a machine," I throw back into his face the ever-present savageries and cruelties of nature from which he cannot escape, sentiment or no sentiment, God or no God; and I demand either a reason or a retreat.

I do not say that this relieves the diffi-

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culty; it only makes the agnostic share it. It does not answer the perplexing and unwelcome questions that have come alike to the devout Christian and the honest skeptic, but it puts them both under equal obligation to search for the answer. Nature is, in spite of all contradictions. The God of both nature and the Bible may be, in spite of all irresolvable difficulties.

Let us now squarely face the alleged moral obliquity of Jehovah. I am not here to dodge hard questions; and I freely admit that this question, asked in all ages and by all men, and emphatically renewed by Mr. Ingersoll, is a very hard one. It has been answered time and again, but it will not stay answered. Do what we may, it will spring up before us when we think we have buried it once for all.

The final answer to this question is the answer of faith rather than of sight. Analogy teaches that we must expect unreconciled and apparently irreconcilable contradictions in the government of God. Such contradictions abound everywhere, from the

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atom to the universe; and bold beyond expression must be the man who presumes to pass final judgment upon the Infinite God. Mr. Ingersoll criticises Judge Black for saying that we cannot rejudge the justice of God. If Judge Black means that we are not to pass provisional judgments upon the character of God, then I sympathize with Mr. Ingersoll's criticism. But if he means that we cannot pass final judgment on the character of God, he is right in saying that we cannot rejudge his justice, even though the visible part of Jehovah's government may seem to contradict his justice.

How utterly preposterous, that the finite should pass final judgment on the infinite, when it sees but one of the countless phases of the infinite! You dare not judge the finite so, much less the infinite.

The man who sees but one thing sees nothing; for he cannot tell what his vision is like. The man who knows but one thing knows nothing; for he cannot tell what his knowledge is like. You cannot fully see a thing until you see how other things ap-

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pear. You cannot fully know a thing until you know its relations to other things. You cannot know an atom until you know where it is in the universe, and how it affects and is affected by the rest of the universe. A momentary glance at any phase of history shows nothing. It shows much that misleads, but it reveals nothing which is decisive; for the truth of any moment is projected backward and forward into other truth. It is a part of the truth from which it springs and equally a part of the truth into which it leads.

I saw a mother force her fever-stricken child into a bath of cold water. He cried with pain, but she was relentless. His teeth chattered, and his frame shook in agony, but she was inexorable. O, cruel mother! Have you no love for your child? Have you no pity? Have you no chord of tenderness that vibrates at his helpless cry? I looked a second time, and lo, the fever had fled, and the child was well again. Was it cruelty that shut the mother's ears against the pleadings of her suffering child,

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or was it love? I saw a father take his helpless babe that was choking to death, and deliberately hold its gasping mouth before a hot jet of hissing steam. O, monstrous savage! O, inhuman wretch! Is it not enough that your innocent babe must suffer its own tortures; and must you in its very death struggles add to the horrors of its pain? I listened, and lo, the gasping ceased, the breath of health returned, and the father delivered the smiling babe into its mother's arms. Was it savagery that possessed that father, or was it love?

Now, I say again, a momentary glance at any stage of history is worthless. Take an instantaneous photograph of the world as it is at this moment. What right have you to pass final judgment on such a scene? Cut right through the flow of the world's life, and hold up the cross-section thus made. What do you see? Absolutely nothing that you can depend upon. A beggar has stolen his way into a royal palace, and at this moment is sitting by stealth upon the throne; but is the beggar a king?

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The king has disguised himself in rags and is begging at the cathedral door; is the king a beggar? Virtue is in the haunts of vice; has virtue fallen? Vice is seen at holy shrines; has vice reformed? It is the moment when the good man has evil thoughts, and the bad man pure thoughts; the moment when chastity is wrestling with the tempter, and licentiousness is listening to conscience. It is a moment, like all other moments, when some parts of the world are turned upside down and inside out; and the man who judges the world by instantaneous and cross-section views is unworthy the respect of thinking men. And if you cannot conclusively judge the finite by a partial view, how shall you thus judge the infinite?

I say, the final answer to the charge of God's alleged moral hideousness is the answer of faith, rather than of sight. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Here we finally leave the difficulty, whatever we may do with it in the meantime, for strange as his ways may ap-

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pear when we see them with partial vision, we rest confidently in the assurance that a wider vision would make all things plain. He has shown us enough of his love and his infinite perfections in the complete sweep of his progressive revelation to justify our faith that the exceptions are only apparent, and that they may be reconcilable in a fuller vision.

Nevertheless, this view should not deter us from making honest attempts to account for the terrible visitations and strange punishments permitted and even ordered by Jehovah in the early history of the race. I will put them in two classes:

1. Those instances in which God made use of *natural agents* for the destruction of the people, such as *the deluge, the rain of fire, the pestilence and the like.*

2. Those instances in which punishments and death were inflicted through *human agency* by his command.

1. First, then, is God's use of *natural agents* to destroy human life inconsistent with his alleged infinite perfections? I will

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make short work of this objection. Life is, by hypothesis, the gift of God in trust. It is not an absolute gift, for sooner or later every man must return it. With the exception of those now living, the countless millions of human beings have surrendered that gift, and those now living and those who are yet to live will, in like manner, return the trust of life to the Giver. The most refined ideals of justice demand that a trust once accepted, must be surrendered according to its terms, and that the bestower of such a trust may of right determine the conditions of its bestowal.

But right here my agnostic friend calls me to a halt. He retorts that he never accepted the trust; that he was not consulted about it; that it was thrust on him without his knowledge or consent, and that it is an injustice to make him a compulsory party to the transaction.

I reply that, whether he was consulted or not, he has most formally and irrevocably accepted the terms of the trust. From the moment he was old enough to

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think at all about the matter he has tacitly accepted the trust and stoutly claimed all the advantages arising therefrom. Suppose you approach him with doubled fists and say, "My dear sir, I appreciate your embarrassing situation in having the trust of life forced upon you without your knowledge and consent, and I am now going to relieve you of the embarrassment by taking from you the life which you never accepted and which you still refuse to accept." What does he do? He doubles his fists in reply, and proceeds to protect himself against your well meant endeavors to relieve him from an embarrassing situation which he never accepted. When he falls sick, and the fever begins to foreclose the terms of his unwelcome and unaccepted trust, he sends for the best physician in town and begs him to prolong the life for which he never asked. He puts a lightning-rod on his house, just as you or I would do; and when the cyclone comes, he takes refuge in the cellar precisely as does the man who has accepted the trust of life.

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As long as men accept the life that has come to them unsought, as long as they continue to breathe God's air, to eat God's bread, to delight in God's sunshine, as long as they consent to live on his bounty, human life is a trust as sacred as if it had been originally sought from the hand of God.

This answers, once for all, the objections against the character of God founded on his visitations of *pestilence, fire and flood*. Death is a law of nature, a law ordained and executed by God, whether it occur on pillows of down or on the wild wastes of the deluge; whether it occur by slow and painful approaches or by the sudden rain of fire from heaven. And God is as much responsible for the ordinary as for the extraordinary death; for the law of death is God's law, and we cannot relieve him of responsibility by placing the law between him and the death bed. If he made the law, he is directly responsible for its action; as much so as if by an immediate and direct exercise of his omnipotence he should stretch forth his arm in every case.

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It avails nothing to say that much of the death in the floods and pestilences was premature. Who is to determine whether any death is premature, the giver of life or the receiver? "But innocent babes went down under the waters." Do not innocent babes in vastly greater numbers go down under the fires of fever? If death be premature when it occurs before life has reached its maximum vigor, then nearly all the death in the world is premature. Charge not this prematureness upon the extraordinary visitations of God, but upon his ordinary plan. Indeed, if justification be needed, we can more easily justify his extraordinary than his ordinary proceeding. For in nearly every case, the extraordinary visitation came after due warning and might have been prevented by the victims themselves. Nothing, therefore, remains of the objections to God's extraordinary visitations of *pestilence, fire, storm and flood*.

2. But, further, what of the *savageries of war carried on by men under his sanction and command*, or the cases of *individual*

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destruction of life and deprivation of property and liberty by human agency under his direct order? What of the wholesale slaughter of prisoners, including not only able-bodied soldiers, but helpless old men and women and harmless, innocent children? What of the forcible expulsion of the Canaanites and the seizure of their lands and products without returning an equivalent? What of the reduction to abject slavery of those who escaped death? In a word, what of that long series of acts committed by Israel under direct divine command—acts which men dare not commit against their fellows without being guilty of oppression, robbery and murder?

The only new element in this case, compared with the case of fire, flood, pestilence and the like, is the reflex influence on the men who acted as the agents of God in the infliction of pain, the confiscation of property and the destruction of life. Here is the criticism in this case: will it tend to increase their respect for the rights of their fellows, whether in life or property, to

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despoil them of these rights continually; and will it serve to make them more law-abiding by constantly violating their own laws in their dealings with others? This reflex effect on Israel and other observers is the only new item in the case.

For, life being a trust, all its content is equally a trust, including possessions of all kinds. A man has a right to that which he holds in trust—a right against all comers, except against those under whom he holds the trust. He has a right to his life against the attacks of his fellow-men. He has a right to his property against the robbery of his fellows. He has a right to the fruits of his labor against the oppression of slavery by a human master. All these rights are inalienable against the approaches of his fellow-men; but they are not inalienable against the Giver or givers of the trust. A deed to a farm makes a man impregnable against his fellow, but not against God, who permits him to hold the farm in trust. The evidence that any product is the work of one's own hand is sufficient against all

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claims by his fellow-man, but it is of no avail against the claim of God, who gave him in trust the power of producing. The possession of life is sacred against the plans of one's fellow-man, but not so against the plans of Him who bestowed the life in trust.

Society may for its own protection deprive a man of these rights, each and all, when the exercise of the right becomes destructive of society itself. Society may deprive him of life, if its own existence demand it. It may confiscate his property in self-defense. It may take away his liberty to preserve its own. Society accomplishes these ends through its authorized agents, who are in no manner responsible for the deed. The deed is that of society, and not of the agent. Neither the judge who pronounces sentence of death nor the executioner who touches the electric button is a murderer; the warden of the prison is not a task-master, and the sheriff who seizes the debtor's property is not a highway robber. Society authorizes these agents to act in

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its behalf, and the real actor is society itself.

Now, if society can delegate to its officers the power to deprive citizens of what would otherwise have been their rights, shall not the Maker of heaven and earth be permitted to do the same? If society can determine what method of capital punishment shall prevail—whether the offender shall be hung, shot, decapitated or swiftly dispatched by the electric shock, shall not the Almighty determine his method of execution, whether by natural agencies or by human agents?

I repeat, then, the only new element in the case of human instrumentality as compared with the instrumentality of flood, fire and storm is the effect of the method on the human agents themselves. They were the officers of God, as much as the executioner is the officer of society, and they acted under his order. If they had acted on their own authority, they would have been tyrants, oppressors, task-masters, robbers and murderers. They would have

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been flagrant violators of their own laws, which forbade all these crimes. But they were the directly constituted agents of God to execute orders which he had a right to give. The ancient Canaanites were doomed. They had to be exterminated, root and branch. And for two reasons—first, directly because of their sins, which were so beastly and outrageous as to be unnamable here; and second, indirectly, lest if they remained Israel should fall into the same bestialities. And this they did in every instance in which they failed to act as God's agents to exterminate the possessors of the land. The Canaanites must go, and the God who gave them both their lives and possessions in trust must determine the manner of their going. He can send fire and pestilence, as in other instances, or he can commission men as his agents to expel them.

But if the land of Canaan must be set apart for the children of Israel, why did not God drive out the Canaanites by storm, pestilence or other natural agency, instead

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of educating Israel in the cruelties of war, the savageries of blood and the horrors of slavery? He had a right, we all admit, to destroy the Canaanites, even though they had been righteous; for sooner or later they must all go down under God's universal law of death. Whether by one means or another, it was still God's act. No less, then, had he the right to destroy them because of their unparalleled and unnamable wickedness, and to make room for a people over whom he had kept providential watch for centuries, and whom by a long process of education he was preparing to be the medium of a great revelation to mankind.

But why destroy the Canaanites by human hands rather than by some great convulsion of nature? What had war and slavery, with their unspeakable horrors, to do with Israel's education for a high and holy mission? Why this long and painful process of education? Why did not God, with whom a miracle is so easy, says Mr. Ingersoll, make Israel at once what he

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wanted them to be, and be done with it? Simply because he could not. God can make sticks and stones the way he wants them, and so they will remain; but he cannot make two and two five, for then it would no longer be two and two. He can take two things and two more things, and by his omnipotence produce five things, but the five things are not the two and two things, and omnipotence cannot make it so. He cannot make parallel lines meet, for they would no longer be parallel. He cannot make men virtuous against their wills, for they would no longer be men.

Moreover, education everywhere is a process of steps, and not a sudden bridging of extremes. And God himself does not at a single stroke make roses of buds, trees of saplings, or men of babes. If the agnostic is willing to give nature unlimited time in which to develop a savage from a lower animal, he ought not to begrudge the God of nature a few hundred years in accomplishing a mightier task. For I do not hesitate to say that the gulf between an animal

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and a savage is not so wide or so difficult to bridge as the gulf between the Hebrew freedman as he emerged from centuries of unmitigated slavery and the intelligent, pure and holy man, toward which Christian civilization is now tending, and which is but the continued unfolding of God's ancient plan of education. The agnostic is firing into his own guns when he finds fault with God for following the same plan in revelation that he follows in nature—namely, the plan of evolution—the plan of steps instead of leaps.

But why this evolution through the horrors of war and slavery, rather than through the agency of insensitive means, such as natural agents? This is the old question, made new by the rhetoric of Mr. Ingersoll. Will it soften the savage hearts of Israel to redden their hands with human blood? Will it give them a higher conception of the sacredness of human life to destroy it by wholesale? Will it increase their respect for the rights of others to liberty to make slaves of their fellows? Will it serve to

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illustrate the inalienable right of a man to the product of his own hand and brain to take it away by force? How are you going to educate a man to be law abiding by compelling him to be a constant violator of the law? That is the agnostic's question.

And here again I say that the final answer to this question, as to the one preceding, is the answer of faith. We cannot see enough of the universe to say that God's plan in this regard was not best. But we can see enough to say that God will do right, and that it is sufficient evidence of the wisdom of any plan to know that it is the plan of God.

Nevertheless, it is not difficult to see how even the horrible spectacle of oppression, slavery and war might serve to lift Israel more rapidly and surely toward a better and higher development. It served to teach them most effectually the heinousness of sin; and God's choice of them to execute his laws against the Canaanites, steeped as they were in unutterable wickedness, kept constantly before their gaze the

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inviolability of his law. If the reeking sword and the clanking chain are so horrible, what must be the sinfulness of sins that call forth the sword and chain! Israel was confronted with a continuous object lesson showing the heinousness of sin in the eyes of God. The hangman may blunt his sensibilities by the frequency of his work, but his respect for law and his abhorrence of crime will only grow deeper as the years go on. Israel well knew that what they did as the agents of Jehovah they could not do as individuals without violating the very laws which, as agents, they were enforcing. God was not training them as murderers and taskmasters, but he was training them to hate murder and slavery. Society is not training the judge and the executioner in murder, or the prison officer in oppression, but it delegates them to show to the people the majesty and sacredness of law. And even at this long distance from those ancient horrors, we exclaim: "How great must be God's abhorrence of sin, if he will make men as

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well as nature his agents for its punishment."

Ancient Israel had been slaves for centuries. They came out of their bondage debased, ignorant, sensual, animal, brutal; and God simply had to do the best he could with them. He could not train them by the methods he would use under the civilization of the nineteenth century. God was compelled to "wink at their ignorance," and adapt his methods to their capacity. You cannot train a lion by the methods of a lamb. Love, confidence, tenderness and the like, all have their place in education; but there must be something in those to be educated to respond to these sentiments, or education will be a failure. Physical force in a den of lions is safer than affectionate caresses. Love may look into the viper's eyes only to receive its death wound. Education can proceed only in harmony with environment. A magnet will not lift a feather, though it will lift a ton of steel. The feather does not know the magnet. Ancient Israel did

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not know beauty, tenderness and lofty sentiment, and God could not do otherwise than begin with them where they were, and adapt his methods of education to their feeble capacity for truth.

Thus disappear all the moral objections against the God of the Bible in his dealings with men in this world.

But Mr. Ingersoll raises his chief objection against the moral character of God because of his proposed dealings with men in the world to come. He hates hell, he says; and so do I; but neither of us can hate it out of existence. If hate were an exterminator, how many things you and I would exterminate this very moment! I hate murder, treachery, oppression, robbery, tyranny, slavery, sin, but here they are in spite of my hate. Hell is already here. Men do not need to wait for the hereafter to encounter its flames. The majority of mankind are already in its fires. But the hell of the future is not the one depicted in such lurid color by the rhetoric of Mr. Ingersoll, and long ago

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rejected by intelligent Christians. There is no hell, here or hereafter, other than that whose flames are kindled by the law of sowing and reaping. That is the hell of science as well as of the Bible. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," is the verdict of science as well as of revelation. Hell has already come into the universe, because sin has come; and it will stay as long as sin endures. Why sin came, I do not know; neither does the agnostic; but it is here. A fact is a fact, whichever way it looks, and sin and hell are facts.

Mr. Ingersoll says that he will not believe in a God who has made hell possible. He prefers to go to hell, rather than live in heaven with such a God. Does he refuse to believe in nature, which has made the Chicago fire possible; and when the conflagration breaks out in that city, does he take the first train to Chicago that he may burn in its flames, rather than dwell in the heaven of his happy home, under the smiles

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of nature which has made possible such a conflagration?

The Gordian knot which we are to untie is the present hell, rather than the future one. Sin and suffering are already here; and as long as sin remains, suffering must remain. The Christian is under no more obligation to account for the present hell than is the agnostic; for God or no God, the world is already in its flames. And whoever accounts for the hell on earth will equally account for the hell to come; for they are both, alike, the outcome of the law that sin and suffering cannot be divorced in this world or in any other. The fires of hell cannot go out until sin disappears from the universe. Mr. Ingersoll exalts science, but science proclaims that hell must be eternal, if sin be eternal.

Thus all the *moral objections* against Jehovah vanish, whether they relate to his government here or hereafter.

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II

There remain now to be considered the *intellectual objections* against the revelation of God. I may put all the alleged intellectual shortcomings of the Bible under one general charge, namely, that it is *unscientific*. It is unscientific because, as alleged, *it is not in harmony with well known facts of science, it is unnatural, it is superstitious, and it is not adapted to the work it proposes to accomplish.*

If any of these specifications be true, the Bible scheme is, without doubt, to that extent unscientific. But what are the facts?

1. First, does the Bible conflict with *any known facts of science?*

Mr. Ingersoll claims, as the chief instance, that the Mosaic account of creation is not in harmony with the facts of modern science. Now, if it can be clearly shown that Moses made a mistake in his brief history of the origin of the universe, he was not inspired by an omniscient God. But

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if it shall appear that his account, as far as understood, agrees with the facts, as far as understood, this alone would be overwhelming proof that he must have been supernaturally inspired. For the best astronomical, geological and biological knowledge of the age contemporaneous with Moses was a chaotic mass of ignorance. If Moses gave an account of the creation which does not conflict with what modern science knows about the matter, it was more than any of his contemporaries could have done; and if his account shall yet be found to be in harmony with future discoveries of science, it is an achievement which the historians in the blaze of the nineteenth century cannot accomplish. Nothing short of omniscient inspiration could have prevented a historian of three thousand years ago from falling into humiliating and stupendous blunders, if he undertook to describe the creation of the worlds. If he speak of astronomy, all the mathematics, physics and chemistry of the approaching centuries will throw their light upon his declara-

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tions. He had not dreamed of the telescope or spectroscope, and yet they will find him out, if he make the slightest mistake concerning the remotest star. If he speak of geology, and make the least deviation from the facts, the upturned strata of the coming centuries will witness against him. If he speak of the origin of life, the microscope will search among the atoms for a blunder.

The history of science, like the record of all things human, has been, in part, a history of mistakes, and in further part, a history of the correction of these mistakes by making new ones. The foremost scientist in any generation, past or present, cannot fully write the science of his next generation, much less that of a hundred generations to come. If the account of Moses, as far as it goes, does not conflict with what the nineteenth century knows of the origin of the universe, it was more than a human history.

I do not forget or ignore what the higher criticism has to say of the Mosaic records.

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But whatever may finally be the outcome of the higher criticism, one thing remains: somebody wrote those records; and another thing equally remains: whoever wrote them anticipated in a remarkable way the science of the nineteenth century. Moses gives an account of the creation in progressive stages which, so far as understood, are in harmony with the latest declarations of science. The science of the past few centuries has, time and again, collided with Moses, but in certain instances it has appeared either that science itself, in that regard, was wrong, and Moses was right, or that a legitimate interpretation of Moses did not conflict with the certainties of science.

One of the glaring inconsistencies in the Mosaic account which science could not reconcile and which troubled the candid inquirer was the creation of light before the sun. Light came during the first stage, while the sun did not appear till the fourth stage. I do not know that Mr. Ingersoll directly speaks of this, but his predecessors

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have pointed to this apparent absurdity in derision.

If you and I had written an account of the creation three thousand years ago, we should not have committed the blunder of Moses in getting the effect before the cause! If you and I had written an account of the creation less than a century ago, we should not have fallen on the mistake of Moses, for even then we should have created light and the sun simultaneously! But we should have been wrong, for Moses was right. It was either a remarkable piece of good fortune that Moses stumbled upon the fact,—a wild guess,—or he was divinely inspired to make a statement wholly at variance with his contemporary knowledge and with subsequent science down almost to the present generation. He saw without a telescope or spectroscope what the nineteenth century has discovered with one. The nebular hypothesis demands the appearance of light before the sun himself; and what took place in our system during the ages of which Moses wrote is now

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taking place in other parts of the universe under our very eyes. We do not need to go back to the time of which Moses wrote, for there are universes now in process of evolution before our eyes, in which light has dawned, but whose blazing suns will not appear for eons to come.

Go out with me on a winter night and look at the magnificent constellation of Orion. With the naked eye we see something besides the stars of that beautiful group. We see a hazy patch of nebulous light. Is that cloud of light composed of stars so far away that they seem to touch? That is what the astronomers used to teach. Turn on the telescope. Still it appears as a cloud of light, and not as a group of stars. Perhaps they may yet be stars so remote that the telescope cannot resolve them. Even that is what the astronomers taught when the telescope failed to separate them. Catch the light in the spectroscope, for that will unveil the mystery. Lo, it is not an assemblage of suns, but a nebulous mass of cloudy matter in the process of becoming a

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sun. It is the first day in that evolving system. God has already said in that remote region, "Let there be light," for we see it even here; but there is yet no sun. It is now only the closing period of the first stage, or day, in the development of that new universe, at the beginning of which the system "was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep."

Science can trace some of the remaining steps that are yet to be taken yonder in the eons to come. The central mass now visible to us will yet become a fiery globe like our sun, but that will be long after other things have come to pass in that distant universe. That revolving mass of nebulous matter has either already thrown off rings, or will yet throw off rings, that will condense into worlds like ours. And God will say in the second stage, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters," and the atmosphere of these new worlds will be cleared of its mists, and the waters will settle to their places in the great deeps.

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And in the third stage he will say, although science cannot see how, "Let the worlds bring forth life," and vegetation will appear, born of the glowing heat and light of the condensing central mass of nebulous matter from which the young worlds had already sprung.

And in the fourth stage he will say, for science can see this vision, "Let there be lights in the firmament, the sun for the day and the moons for the night;" for by the time that fourth stage shall have come in the sweep of the far-off future the nebulous mass will have condensed into a burning sun, long after the edict of Almighty God had gone forth: "Let there be light."

This is as far as science can clearly see, but with the eye of Moses it may penetrate still farther into the remoter future and see the fifth stage, in which God shall say, "Let the seas bring forth life;" and living creatures will appear.

And with the Mosaic vision science may catch glimpses even of the sixth stage, in the beginning of which God shall say, "Let

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the worlds bring forth beast and cattle and creeping things;" and the obedient orbs will teem with life, sprung at the divine command from lower forms. Yea, with Mosaic eye, science may peer even to the ending of the sixth stage, when God shall say, as only God can say: "Let us make beings in our image and after our likeness;" and lo, a godlike race of immortals will appear.

When Moses wrote the history of the successive stages of creation he wrote nothing that conflicts with the science of the closing years of the nineteenth century, provided we compare what we understand of his history with what science knows to be true. Moses is not incorrect up to date. There are some obscure things in his account that seem to conflict with some obscure things in science; but when the obscurity in both cases shall disappear in the light of future discoveries, we may expect to see the apparent conflicts disappear, as others have done in the light of past discovery.

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The other alleged instances of conflict, presented by Mr. Ingersoll, between the Bible and the known facts of science, are trivial and unworthy, such as the charge that the Bible teaches that the world is flat, that the earth is the center and the sun revolves about it, and the like. The Bible simply uses the common language of appearances, precisely as does Mr. Ingersoll himself, and the science which he glorifies. He speaks of the rising and the setting of the sun, and so does every scientific writer of this age; do they still believe the world flat, and the center of the universe? Whatever may have been the ignorance of the sacred writers themselves concerning the course of nature, their inspired accounts are, for the most part, easily squared with present knowledge, and that without violent interpretation.

2. Mr. Ingersoll charges that the Bible is unscientific, because it is *unnatural*. That is, it rests its claims on the "fraud" of miracles. "A miracle," he says, "is the badge and brand of fraud. No miracle ever

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was performed." A miracle is unnatural, he claims, and, therefore, unscientific.

Now, I am not going over the arguments for and against miracles. Mr. Hume put the case against them as strongly as it can be done, and his argument has been torn to pieces a thousand times since his day. Not a shred of it remains. I have something better to do than to dig up the bones of a dead issue. I am here on a living issue, and with the latest word of science; and I undertake to say that if a miracle is unscientific, then science itself is unscientific; for of all the miracles in the history of the visible universe, those demanded by science are the most stupendous. The standing still of the sun on Gibeon, the lifting up of the waves of the Red Sea, the gushing forth of water from dry rocks, the healing of lepers—yea, even the raising of the dead,—all of these are insignificant in comparison with the standing miracle of the visible universe itself with which science is concerned.

Whence came the universe that confronts

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us, and of which we are a part? Science is unable to account for it except by an infinite miracle. I am not speaking of theology now, but of science. And I am speaking of that branch of science whose most extravagant dictum we are accustomed to accept as an incontrovertible truth,—I mean the science of mathematics. Mathematics cannot account for the visible universe unless by a stupendous miracle. Let us see. I shall use familiar words, rather than the technical terms of science.

Mathematics is unable to account for the present high temperature of the sun without a miracle. That is, the sun is hotter than he ought to be if his heat has come from known sources alone. All the heat of the sun, with insignificant exception, is the direct result of the contraction of his gaseous mass. But the sun is vastly hotter than this contraction can explain. Mathematics indicates that he has already parted with more heat than he ever could have possessed as the result of known forces.

It is a fact beyond question that the visi-

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ble universe is parting with its heat. The planets are radiating it in every direction, and only an infinitesimal fraction of it is being returned by reflection or re-radiation from the orbs of space. The sun himself is radiating heat at an enormous rate, only an inappreciable part of which is returned to his diminished store. What is true of the sun and planets in this respect is true of all suns and systems of worlds. The visible universe is, therefore, losing its heat. If it is now losing heat, then by the law of continuity, the same was true a thousand years ago,—a thousand ages ago—indeed, if the visible universe has existed from eternity, the loss must have been going on forever.

Now, it is well known that a gaseous body in a free space grows hotter by cooling. This is how it occurs: Assume such a body acted on by no forces except its own gravity and the heat of its molecules. It radiates heat into the surrounding space and at once becomes cooler. Immediately upon this loss of heat, the gravity of the mass,

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having less repulsive force to oppose, draws the particles nearer to the center. That is, the gas contracts, and it does so by a fall of its particles toward the center. The body thereby becomes denser, and the average heat of its particles is accordingly increased. The visible motion of the atoms in falling is transformed into heat when the fall ceases; and mathematics easily shows that the gain of temperature in the contraction is greater than the loss of temperature which occasioned the contraction. A gaseous body, then, upon cooling contracts, and upon contracting grows warmer than it was before the contraction occurred; and thus the temperature will steadily rise until near the time when the mass begins to liquefy. After liquefaction, the body will lose heat more rapidly than the contraction can restore it.

If the sun be a perfect gas, he will continue to contract and grow hotter thereby until he approaches a liquid state. Then radiation of heat will take place more rapidly than contraction can restore it, and the

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great luminary will begin to grow cooler. Until that time comes,—if it has not already come,—the sun must grow hotter. If he has already reached or passed that stage, then at some time past, while yet a gas, he reached his maximum temperature.

Beginning at that time and going backward, we find the sun in this reverse process expanding and growing cooler the farther back we go. Let us carry this process backward to the time when the sun filled all the space out to Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune,—and perhaps crowding closely upon the territory of the nearest star. He was then very large, but relatively cold.

Now the heat of the sun at the present time should at least be equal to the amount generated by the fall of these particles through this immense space to their present position in the sun, less the amount of heat radiated into space during the entire time of the fall, or contraction.

The larger the original dimensions of the sun, the greater will have been the amount

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of heat generated by the fall; but it can be readily shown that if the sun originally filled infinite space—which he could not have done—and had been contracting and rising in temperature from all eternity, the total amount of heat generated during the infinite period of contraction would be finite. Moreover, it is calculated within a reasonable degree of approximation that the total amount of heat generated during an eternal contraction of the sun down to his present dimensions would have been eighteen million times the amount of heat which he now radiates in one year. It is also believed by astronomers that the annual radiation of heat during the past eighteen million years of the sun's existence could not, on an average, have been less than the annual radiation at the present time. Professor Newcomb thinks that the radiation was greater.

We are thus driven to the astounding conclusion that the sun must have been contracting forever in order to have supplied the radiation of heat that has been

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expended during only the last eighteen million years.

That is, the actual expenditure of heat during the last eighteen million years would have exhausted the total supply of heat produced by an eternal condensation, leaving none of that heat for radiation before or after this epoch of eighteen million years. But the sun was, without doubt, radiating heat at a rapid rate before this epoch began, and will continue the radiation for ages yet to come.

That is, the sun must have existed from eternity in order to have existed only during the past eighteen million years!

That is, the sun must have existed forever before he began to exist at all!

In order, therefore, to relieve this absurdity, mathematics cannot find any ground except that a miracle by which this excess of heat was supplied must at some time in the finite past have been wrought upon the sun, provided he has existed forever; or that the miracle of creation must have

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brought forth the sun at a period in the finite past.

What is thus true of our sun, would seem to be true of all suns. That is, either the visible universe existed eternally before it began to exist at all, or a miracle of creation was wrought in the finite past. The visible universe is either an infinite miracle or an infinite absurdity. When it comes to a choice between a miracle and an absurdity, I will take the miracle and leave the absurdity for the agnostic.

I will not consume your time by showing, as science most conclusively shows and demands, that whatever may have been the manner of man's origin or of the origin of the various species, the original advent of life into the universe must also have been a miracle.

Here, then, are the two greatest miracles in the history of the visible universe: the original appearance of the universe itself, and the original advent of life, miracles which science itself cannot gainsay. A miracle, therefore, is not necessarily unsci-

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entific, and the Bible may rest on miracles without clashing with science.

3. Mr. Ingersoll charges that the scheme of revelation is unscientific, because it is *superstitious*: that is, it rests on faith. When it cannot see any farther, it simply shuts its eyes and trusts. Now, if shutting one's eyes and trusting when one has reached the limits of his vision be superstition, then Mr. Ingersoll is as superstitious as St. Paul, and science is as superstitious as the Christian scheme.

If faith be unscientific, science is unscientific; and the agnostic who exalts science and ridicules faith is equally unscientific. Mr. Ingersoll himself has not taken a step in the last fifty years that was not based on faith. He has not performed an act that was not founded in faith. He has not withdrawn himself into a state of passivity so extreme as to get beyond the domain of faith. He has not ascended the heights of reason so far as to get out of the atmosphere of faith. His memory cannot carry him back beyond the beginning of faith.

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His imagination cannot outrun or outfly faith. His intuition cannot penetrate so deeply into the invisible essence of things as not to find faith already there waiting for its coming. Yea, every moment of his life, sleeping or waking, he exercises the same faith that the Christian scheme demands of the children of God,—the very faith which he stigmatizes as childish, superstitious and fetish,—the faith not merely of belief, but of trust.

His sleep is the sleep of trust. What warrant has he that his heart will keep on beating, his lungs will keep on breathing, and his blood will keep on flowing during the unconscious hours of the night? The warrant of faith alone.

He eats the bread of faith. Whence came it? It grew in the fields where the air of heaven blew upon it. That was God's work and he could well afford to trust it. But men gathered it in sheaves. What room for treachery! Men whisked it through the threshing machine; might naught but the dust of the thresher have settled among

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the shining grains? Men ground it between great stones; can his eye distinguish flour from strychnia? Men bartered it for gold, but gold will buy poison as well as flour. Is he sure that there was no treason against human trust in the long train of men between the farmer who sowed his grain and the baker who prepared the loaf for his table? He eats by faith in a thousand men he never saw.

Whence comes the water with which he slakes his thirst? From the clouds, through air tainted with poison; over rocks on which the venomous reptile has sunned himself; through poisonous germs and fetid remains in the soil; through vaults and caverns where disease breeds and death reigns. Does he carry his microscope with him? Does he stop long enough to read the tell-tale lines of death in the spectroscope? No; he slakes his thirst by faith.

He opens wide his lungs to receive the air; but whence comes it? From everywhere; from other lungs, both human and animal; from hospital and dungeon; from

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the upper rim of the atmosphere and from the dank caverns of the earth; from kissing the dew drop and from fanning the fevered brow; from the spray of the waterfall and through the poisonous breath of the pestilence. It has come from where death is, and it may bear death on its wings; but he opens his lungs and bids it welcome. Does he stop to analyze it? Just how long would he live if he stopped to scrutinize every atom of every current that flows into his lungs? He breathes by trust. Either let Mr. Ingersoll withdraw the charge of superstition against the Christian scheme, or let his anathemas fall upon his own head.

And science itself—it cannot take a step without faith. Science raises the level of human knowledge by induction, and by induction alone; and the very essence of induction is faith—faith in the uniformity of nature and the continuity of its processes. Science writes the history of the universe by faith. Science pursues its present processes by faith. Science predicts the future

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by faith. For all of the great laws of nature discovered by science were reached by induction, and they still stand by faith.

Moreover, some of the postulates of science produce a greater strain on faith than do any of the postulates of the Christian scheme.

No scientific scholar doubts the reality of Newton's great law of gravitation, and yet that law demands a contradiction; namely, that matter can act where it is not. Every atom in the universe, by Newton's law, acts instantaneously on every other atom, whether near or remote. It is a hopeless contradiction that an atom can act where it is not; science itself recognizes the absurdity; but in spite of the contradiction, the world of science accepts the law because it explains the facts.

The molecular theory of physics demands a quality in the atoms which contradicts our experience, namely, perfect elasticity, a property which we know does not exist in matter as it is presented to our senses. Science perceives the anomaly but accepts

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the law, because it is a satisfactory working hypothesis.

But perhaps the wildest postulate of modern science is the existence of the ethereal medium, or ether of space, through which heat, light and other forms of energy are transmitted. This ether is assumed to be an adamantine solid, more rigid than steel, and yet more pliable than air. Did you ever see such a solid? Suppose Moses had described such a solid! It is infinitely elastic and yet infinitely rare or diffuse,—two qualities which are hopelessly contradictory. We live in it, and move through it; but it offers no apparent resistance. This contradiction of thought, this stupendous absurdity, fills all space, even between the atoms. The worlds fly through it in their orbits, but are not appreciably impeded. It is infinitely tenacious, and yet it pours around us like the rarest gas. This apparent and utter impossibility and irreconcilable contradiction of modern science is accepted, believed in, defended and sworn by, because it explains the facts of

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heat and light. No postulate of science is too absurd or too impossible, provided it serve as a good working hypothesis.

Yet Mr. Ingersoll stumbles at a few mysteries in the Christian scheme,—mysteries that presume less on credulity than do the mysteries of science,—mysteries that strain faith less than do the mysteries of science,—contradictions which vanish as insignificant when set alongside the contradictions of science. It is all right for science to bow down and worship a contradiction, if it happen to furnish a good working hypothesis; but it is superstitious for religion to insist on an apparent contradiction, even though it furnish the only working hypothesis by which the human race can be redeemed. In the name of science I declare that the alleged contradictions in the law of gravitation, the molecular law of physics and the ether of space are only seeming contradictions; for they are working hypotheses which reveal the truth of nature, and they must in some unseen way be in harmony with nature. And in the name of the

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Christian religion I declare that the alleged inconsistencies of the Bible are only seeming conflicts, for the Christian scheme is a working hypothesis which reveals the truth of God in the upward trend of the nations that have come under its sway. The Christian scheme, however mysterious in some of its parts, fits in with the scheme of human nature, and cannot, therefore, be self-contradictory.

A working hypothesis in science is one which must be able to prophesy, and the working hypothesis of Christianity is the prophecy of the ultimate redemption and elevation of the human race and of an immortal destiny for the individual soul.

If science is not unscientific because it rests on faith, the Christian religion may safely rest upon the same foundation.

4. All the remaining so-called scientific objections against the Christian scheme can be summed up under the charge that *it is not adapted to the work which it sets out to do.*

The essence of the Gospel is self-sacrifice, and Mr. Ingersoll condemns the philosophy

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of self-sacrifice as taught by Jesus. He says that it is impracticable, absurd and impossible.

That it is neither impracticable, absurd nor impossible plainly appears when we look at the author and exemplifier of the philosophy of self-sacrifice. A thing which has been done is neither absurd nor impossible. The absurdity lies in the charge of absurdity. Jesus Christ asks men to do what he did,—no more,—namely, to sacrifice themselves for others. He asks men to weep tears which else had been wept by others; to endure pain which else had been endured by others; to forego pleasures which else had been foregone by others, and, if necessary, to pass through deaths which else must have been suffered by others. And if the world of mankind should at the opening of the twentieth century universally begin to practice the philosophy of self-sacrifice as Jesus practiced it and as he commands men to do, how long, think you, before strikes would cease; before the social questions would

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solve themselves; before war, slavery and oppression would disappear, and before the millennium of universal justice, liberty, brotherhood and love would dawn upon the race?

Mr. Ingersoll objects to Jesus because his philosophy is passive and non-resisting, and therefore, because it is not adapted to the environment in which it must work. Do not be confused. The philosophy of Jesus is passive and non-resisting only as between man and man, when their selfish interests seem to clash. In such a case, each is to give way to the other. But it is not passive and non-resisting when truth faces error, when right faces wrong, when human liberty faces slavery and when the good of the race is threatened by the sword of evil. Then comes the day of battle, in which the man who would die for the sake of his fellow must thrust forth his sword for the sake of truth. The man who sacrifices himself for others is no more an exponent of the gospel of self-sacrifice than the man who will fight to the end lest truth,

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right and liberty be sent to their graves. There must be war in the universe until wrong goes down to its fathomless grave. Here is the philosophy of the Gospel,—self-crucifixion as between man and man, but self-assertion as between the eternal right and the eternal wrong.

The proof of a working hypothesis is in the way it works. There is no demonstration like success. Wherever the Christian philosophy has had its way, both nations and individuals have been exalted to a plane of unexampled prosperity; and all this in spite of the unnamable horrors and corruptions that have been practiced along the highway of history in the name of the Gospel, by men who wore the cloak of Christianity, but who never knew its spirit.

I know that Mr. Ingersoll intimates that silk hats and suspenders have had as much to do with western civilization as Bibles and churches; but the world will be slow to accept his view until he shows how the silk hat and suspender philosophy has in it the promise and potency of a grand civilization.

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So far as the philosophy of the hat and the suspender contains within itself the elements that tend to civilize, so far I will give credit to the hat and suspender civilization. And while the Gospel contains the essence of all that is good in the new civilization as it now exists, and the essence of a newer and better civilization yet to come, the world will not be deceived by the cry of silk hats and suspenders.

After all, the test of a philosophy is in its outcome. Suppose a consignment of silk hats and suspenders had been sent out nineteen centuries ago from Jerusalem to the western world. Is it likely the present civilization would have been the outcome? But something was sent out which took hold of the consciences and intellects of men, and wherever it went a new civilization appeared, and men began to grasp the sublime truth of universal brotherhood. It took hold upon the hearts as well as the brains of the people and found therein a response to its innermost essence. I know that Mohammedanism spread rapidly, but

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it spread before the sword and not before the unarmed truth. But there were no swords for the establishment and propagation of the Gospel. It needed none. It opened its own way into the wills of men. The more intelligent men become, the more rapidly they come under the sway of its philosophy. During the nineteenth century, when modern civilization has reached its climax, the philosophy of the Gospel has commended itself more cogently to western intelligence than ever before; and during the years of this century it has made greater headway than during all the eighteen hundred years gone by. During this century, in which by the prophecy of Voltaire Christianity was to be sleeping in its grave, it has more than doubled the number of its followers. Just how long it will require for Christianity to die if it continue, as now, to double its forces every century, I leave to the mathematics of agnosticism.

Christianity keeps pace with the progress of history simply because, contrary to Mr. Ingersoll, it is adapted to its environment,

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—and that environment is the intellect, heart, volition and conscience of humanity. The author of the Gospel and the author of the human soul must be one and the same, for the soul and the Gospel fit each other completely; and humanity can never cease to be the half hinge of which the Gospel is the other half, until the constitution of the human soul is reversed.

I have now examined the principal strictures of Mr. Ingersoll against the God of the Bible. I have ignored much—his blunders, both historical and scientific, his unfair and overdrawn statements, his half truths which he has stated with such beauty and eloquence as to have the appearance of whole truths, and his many foolish, frivolous and flippant charges, which cannot stand alone. I have overlooked his men of straw that he has taken delight in setting up that he might thereupon knock them down again. Vanquishing straw figures has constituted no little part of his work. He has killed more dead men in the last quarter of a century than any other prominent orator

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of the land. He has gone out to the theological grave yards and laboriously dug up the carcasses of dead and decaying theories, and has heroically brought them forth and—killed them. It is not difficult to kill a dead thing.

I have overlooked his wit in which he has time and again begged the question while he carried his audience by storm. How easy it is to beg the question in a flash of wit and then to disguise the fallacy by dazzling the eye with the lightning of the wit!

Here is an instance. He says that, if he had been God, he would have made health catching instead of disease. His auditors applaud the brilliancy of that sentiment, and fail to discover that he begs the whole question in the flash of wit. Just as if health were not catching! What have you been doing through all these years? The majority of you during the greater part of your lives have scarcely known a pain. You easily remember the isolated instances of discomfort and suffering, but what of those other uncounted moments of ease and

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enjoyment? You have been catching health by night and by day. You have been catching health from the sweet sleep your Heavenly Father has given you, from the pure air you have breathed, from the cheerfulness and contentment of your fellows, and from God's beneficent laws everywhere. Mr. Ingersoll forgot to say in the same connection that, if he had been God, he would have made grass green instead of cucumbers.

All these things I have overlooked, but I have frankly endeavored to consider in a calm, comprehensive and fundamental way, the real essence of his criticisms. If I am wrong and he is right, then man made God. If I am right and he is wrong, then God made man.

* * * *

Nothing now remains for me to do but to show you the outlook under either case.

If man made God, what is the future? What does agnosticism propose for humanity? It offers nothing but the visible, and the visible does not extend beyond the

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present. If there be no God but the one made by men, there is no future either for the race or for the individual.

Take away from all men the ever present conviction of a supreme Ruler and Judge, and the human race will lapse into barbarism more rapidly than, under this conviction, it has forged its way up the heights of civilization. Mr. Ingersoll may believe, if he will, that reverence for the unseen Jehovah, and the spirit of submission to his will are exploded superstitions, and that they are obstacles in the progress of civilization, discouraging art, science, education and liberty; but once let the human race lose its reverence for God and deny his authority to rule, and that instant the wheels of civilization will begin to roll backward, and art, science, education and liberty will vanish more rapidly than they ever grew. If man owes no allegiance to a higher throne than humanity; if there are no checks upon mankind other than those it sees fit to put upon itself; if humanity has to answer to no more authoritative

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behests than those of its own issuing, then the future of the race is written; its destiny is deterioration, decay, barbarism, savagery and despair. The hope of the race is its anchorage to the invisible.

And if man made God, what is to be the destiny of the individual? If the whole fabric of immortality, guaranteed by the immutable character and word of Jehovah, vanish into nothingness with the unmaking of a man-made God, what is the promise for the soul in the worlds to come? What shall make equal the inequalities of this life? What shall render justice to the myriads who lived and died under the smart of injustice? What shall give liberty to the clanking chains of slavery under which the oppressed of all ages went down to their fate? What shall proclaim emancipation to the high spirited and noble minded who chafed under the rod of tyranny? What shall compensate for the relentless poverty, the gnawing hunger, the burning thirst, the biting cold, and the raging fevers, under the horrors of which untold myriads

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marched from the cradle to the grave? What shall undo the treachery of false friendship, the disappointments of noble ambition and the failure of hard wrought plans, at the sight of which so many human hearts have broken? What shall restore the wrecks of hope? What shall give back health to the blight of faith? What shall be the resurrection for the grave of love?

Look down into the grave, and what can the agnostic show you? What comfort can he give you? What hope can he kindle? What pictures of immortality can he paint? What promise can he make to your trembling heart? Behind you is the brief span of life. You loved awhile, but you could not keep the objects of your love. They slipped from your grasp into the grave. Your heart, your life went with them. Ask the agnostic for one word of cheer. He gives you none. The grave is the end. Love is only a reminiscence, and is not to come forth to greet you beyond the charnel house. The coffin is the goal. They nailed under its lid the faith, hope, love, intellect, con-

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science, power and possibility of those you loved. The somber hearse and the mournful funeral train announced the termination of careers,—careers begun in time and ended once for all in time. The sexton smothered the fires of immortality under the clods. There is no more music in the universe, for those who went or for you who stay. The birds will sing no more. The flowers will never bloom again. The sun will cease to shine. The stars have gone out forever. Truth is dead, and the horrible pall of despair spreads over the soul. Again I say, what shall be the resurrection for the grave of love?

Let the mother, as she catches the first glimpse of the hectic flush on the cheek of her darling, send for the agnostic and beg for a word of consolation. "Fever?" he replies, "Why, it is only the rush of atoms; and those smiles of beauty you once looked upon with ecstasy were only the march of atoms; those childish peals of laughter were only the play of molecules; that instinctive clinging to you for protection in

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the moments of its terror was only a molecular disturbance; those shafts of love shot forth from its beaming eyes, were only the vibrations of the invisible ether. Have courage, dear mother. The atoms will soon take other form, and the child of your heart will after awhile reappear to you in the snow-flake, the dew-drop, the rose-bud, the lily, the sting of the adder, the tooth of the lion and the claw of the tiger." And is that to be the outcome of the hectic flush on the cheek of the mother's darling?

Let the mother, gazing through the coffin lid with eyes that cannot weep, ask the agnostic for comfort. "Death," he replies, "it is the end; the end of smiles as well as tears; the end of hope as well as despair; the end of joys as well as sorrows; the end of love as well as hate; the end—*the end*—THE END! Command your molecules, dear mother, to fall in line and to go on obediently with their monotonous rounds, until the next coffin comes into your home, *and the next*, AND THE NEXT, and then after

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your heart has broken with despair, you may go to be a fellow atom with your child in the busy laboratory of the world."

And once again, I say, what shall roll away the stone from the door of love's sepulchre? Call upon the agnostic for the answer. What does he say? What can he say? What must he say? The only answer he can give is the wild wail of despair.

What mean the irrepressible yearnings of the soul for a destiny? What means the instinct of God and immortality that cannot be scourged from the soul by centuries of the lash, that cannot be educated from the soul by ages of culture, that cannot be dazzled or outshone in the soul by the inkindling of the blaze of intelligence; an instinct that knows neither age nor climate, neither circumstance nor condition; an ever present prophet in the soul that speaks of destiny? Is the prophet true, or false? The soul feels within itself the stirrings of immortality and in the present it reads the promise of a glorious future. But if man made God, that future will never come. The

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inequalities of life will never be made equal. The stupendous failure of human life will never be undone. The soul sees within itself the prophecy of better things to be, but they will never come. The soul sees within an endless destiny as the arena for its new-born powers, but the destiny will never come. The soul ceases in the very act of becoming. Reason, judgment, memory and imagination shall perish, the will shall relax its grasp, conscience shall become extinct, faith shall fade, hope shall wither and love shall die.

If man made God, then after the irreparable failure of life, human destiny is to rot in the grave.

But if God made man, what is destiny? What shall be the destiny of the race? The destiny of the race will be toward a perfect civilization, in which self-assertion for the truth and self-crucifixion for others will be the ideal.

But what shall I say of the destiny of the individual? If man was made by God, his destiny will be in keeping with his origin.

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Tell me the origin of man, and I will show you his destiny.

We cannot tell whither we are going, until we know whence we have come. We cannot rise above our source. If we came from matter, to matter we shall return. If the clods were our origin, the clods will be our destiny. But if we had our origin in the eternal purpose of God, we shall have our endless destiny in him. If God began thinking about us innumerable ages before we were ushered into being, he will not cease thinking about us, now that we have come.

Go back to the beginning, before sun or moon or star had appeared, when all space was filled with nebulous matter infinitely diffused through measureless lengths and breadths and depths. Suppose God said, "I will make a race of beings like unto myself. I will not be in haste, but will take the infinite future for the task." So he hid himself in every atom as a ceaseless force, and began, in its initial stages, the unending work of development. Matter began to

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move upon itself. By infinitely slow processes the work of condensation went on. But all the time God saw in the far-off future the beginnings of a race of beings that were eventually to approximate his own perfection. Age after age went by; cycle after cycle rolled on. The pendulum of the clock of eternity moved slowly over its infinite arc, and after an infinite number of vibrations, each vibration requiring infinite ages for its majestic sweep, the stars began to form out of chaos. The sun, a seething mass of nebulous matter, his circumference reaching out to the nearest star, took his place where God had decreed in his ancient plan. All this time God was getting a place ready for the coming of something higher than star-dust and more glorious than the stars. His eternal plan was gradually unfolding. By slow degrees the huge solar mass gathered toward the center, leaving planet after planet behind. And then the earth appeared, fiery like the sun from which it sprang. But every motion of every atom through all these

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innumerable ages was only a part of the stupendous plan by which a godlike race of beings was to appear. And then came life by the divine energy, life in its lowest form; and after untold ages of waiting, a higher form appeared, and still a higher, until at last, by the fiat of omnipotence, man took his place on the earth; man, of whom God had been thinking from eternity, and for whose advent he had prepared the earth by processes of marvelous complexity through cycles of inconceivable duration.

If God has thus taken infinite pains to bring us here, he is not going to withdraw his hand from us at this late day. At this late day? Nay, rather, at this early day; for there is more before us than there is behind us. I have said that we cannot tell whither we are going, until we know whence we have come. We have come through the eternal purpose of God, working through endless cycles of the past on a scale of inconceivable magnitude; and God alone can tell the measureless heights to which he will yet bring us in the endless unfolding

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of his plan. If we become dizzy, looking back into the fathomless depths out of which we have sprung, we are overwhelmed at the still greater heights that tower above us.

Shall we venture to ascend the slope a little way? We have tried to measure the distance between the dead atom back yonder in the beginning and the living soul now here, and on its way to destiny; but we have found the distance immeasurable. Go forward into the future as far as we have come out of the past, remembering that the rate of progress in the upward sweep of the soul is geometrical and not arithmetical. The onward march of the soul is not at a constant pace, but at an ever increasing rate. A body falling to the earth passes through sixteen feet the first second, three times that distance the next, five times as much the third, and so on through each succeeding second of its fall. That is what I mean by an increasing rate. The distance through which the body falls would constantly increase, even if the

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rate of fall remained the same; how much more will the distance of its fall increase when you give it an accelerating rate! If away back in the depths of eternity a body had started from the outer limits of space to fall toward the sun, its rate of approach at first would have been inconceivably slow; but as the ages rolled on, its velocity would have increased with each succeeding instant, until at last it would have darted into the fiery billows of the sun at a rate of appalling speed. The longer a body approaches a center of attraction, the more rapid becomes its approach. With a uniform velocity, it will, if you give it time enough, pass over an inconceivable distance; how much more so, if its velocity increase as the distances are traversed!

Away back in the eternities when God determined to take the first beginnings in the development of the universe toward beings capable of destiny, how slow and tedious was the progress! But on through the cycles the rate of advance increased, until now we find the human soul with an

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infinite distance behind it reaching back to the eternal purpose of God from which it sprang, and with expanding powers and accelerating pace approaching the unattainable perfections of God to which it shall forever press. God is the center toward which we may tend, and the soul drawn by him shall sweep on with an increasing rate through the eternity yet to come.

The powers of the soul, already godlike in their nature, will expand until they become godlike in their compass. Memory will not be limited to the events of a day, but will seize all of its past in one comprehensive grasp. Perception will not be limited to the narrow circle of contact, but will spread out over an ever widening horizon. Judgment will not be confined to the comparison of two mental states at a time, but will gather into its view a constantly increasing throng of conceptions. Imagination will not be held to a region determined by five physical senses, but unseen heights will rise before its expanding wings. Reason will not need to climb by slow and

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painful ascent the steepening summits of truth, but with godlike majesty it will swoop upon the greatest thoughts. The will, center of the soul, will reign with equal poise, its inflexible purpose reaching out into the eternity to come. The conscience, eye of the soul, that gazes unhurt into the eye of God, and through which God gazes back into the soul, will look out upon ever broadening fields of duty. The spiritual energies of the soul, which have barely commenced their being in the present stage of destiny, and which lift us highest toward kinship with God, will open visions of Jehovah unspeakably more glorious than Moses caught from Sinai. If in forty days of imperfect spiritual vision of God, the natural face of Moses so shone like the sun that the eyes of the people could not endure the reflected brightness, what shall be the glory of our spiritual faces after we have gazed for endless ages upon the very throne of God?

Go on up the heights of the future as far as you have come out of the depths of the

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past, and you reach the second stage in the destiny of the soul. But stop not there; go still on through other eternities to yet dizzier heights that steepen as they rise, until you have passed through innumerable other equal stages in the advancing destiny of the soul, and having put these unnumbered stages all in one, start on afresh with this infinite combination as the new unit of measurement, and you will find before you still more dizzy slopes that lead up towards the summitless heights of destiny. And if God shall have brought us thither on the upward scale of destiny, will he then remove his hand?

If man made God, the destiny of the soul is in the clods; but if God made man, the soul will find its destiny in the bosom of the infinite.

Which will the human race accept,—the philosophy of agnosticism or the philosophy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

I have traveled northward on a swiftly speeding train as the sun hung low in the horizon. Trees and telegraph poles sped

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rapidly to the south, but the sun kept even with the train. Fields of corn and pastures of green went flying southward, but the sun swept northward in majestic movement with the progress of the train. Towns and villages hurried by, and the sun disappeared from sight behind the opposing walls; but when the train reached again the open highway, the sun was still in line. We plunged into long black tunnels, and our traveling companion was lost in the darkness, but scarcely had we emerged from night into the light of day ere the sun shot his beams athwart our track. It requires a fast train to outrun the sun.

Nineteen centuries ago the Gospel appeared on the horizon of human history. The train of the world's progress sweeps down through the centuries, but the Gospel keeps in sight. Yonder flies backward the Roman Empire, with its power, pomp and magnificence, but the Gospel keeps in line. Yonder through the black tunnels of the dark ages the Gospel disappears from view, but as the train of progress emerges from

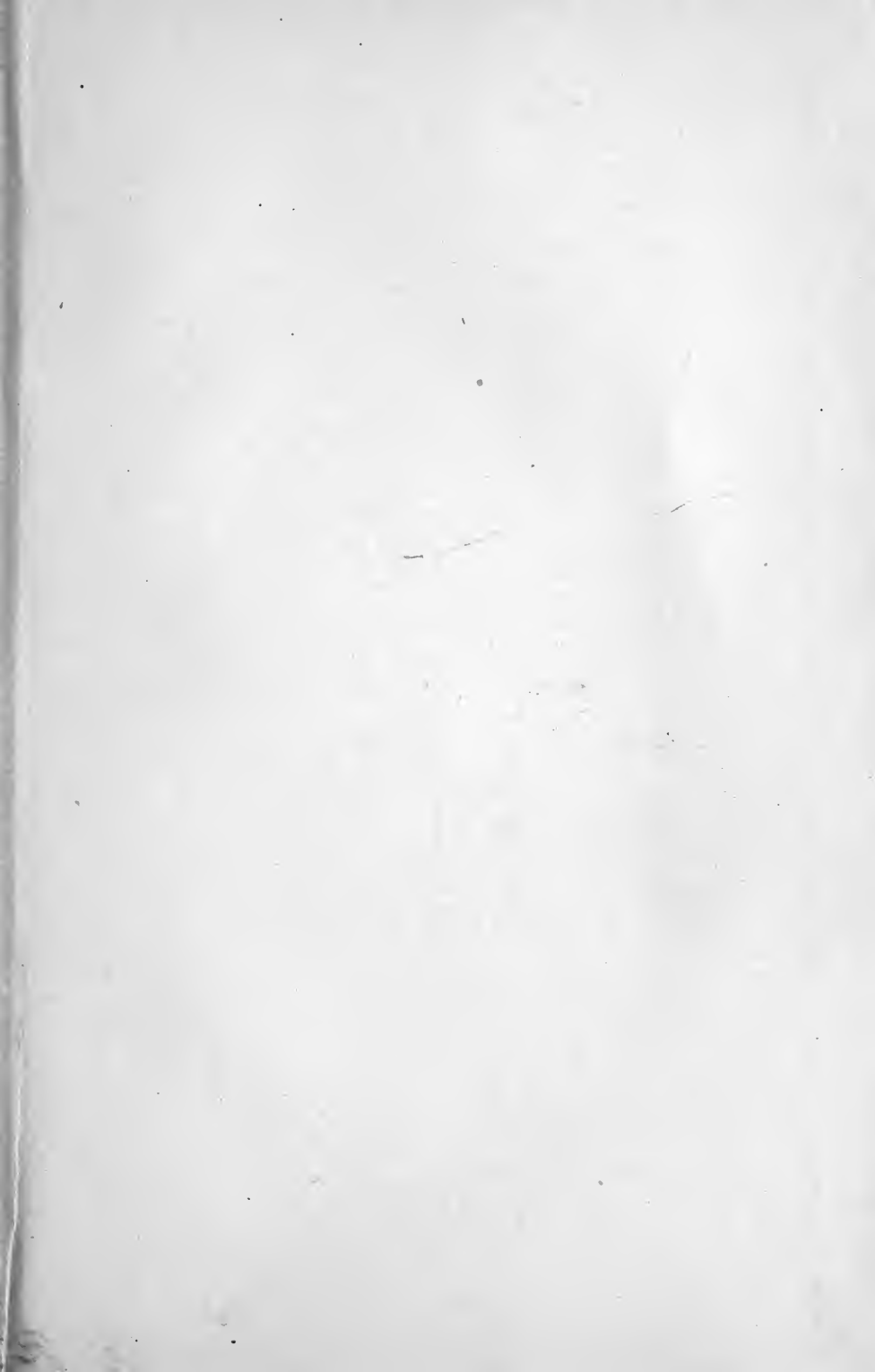
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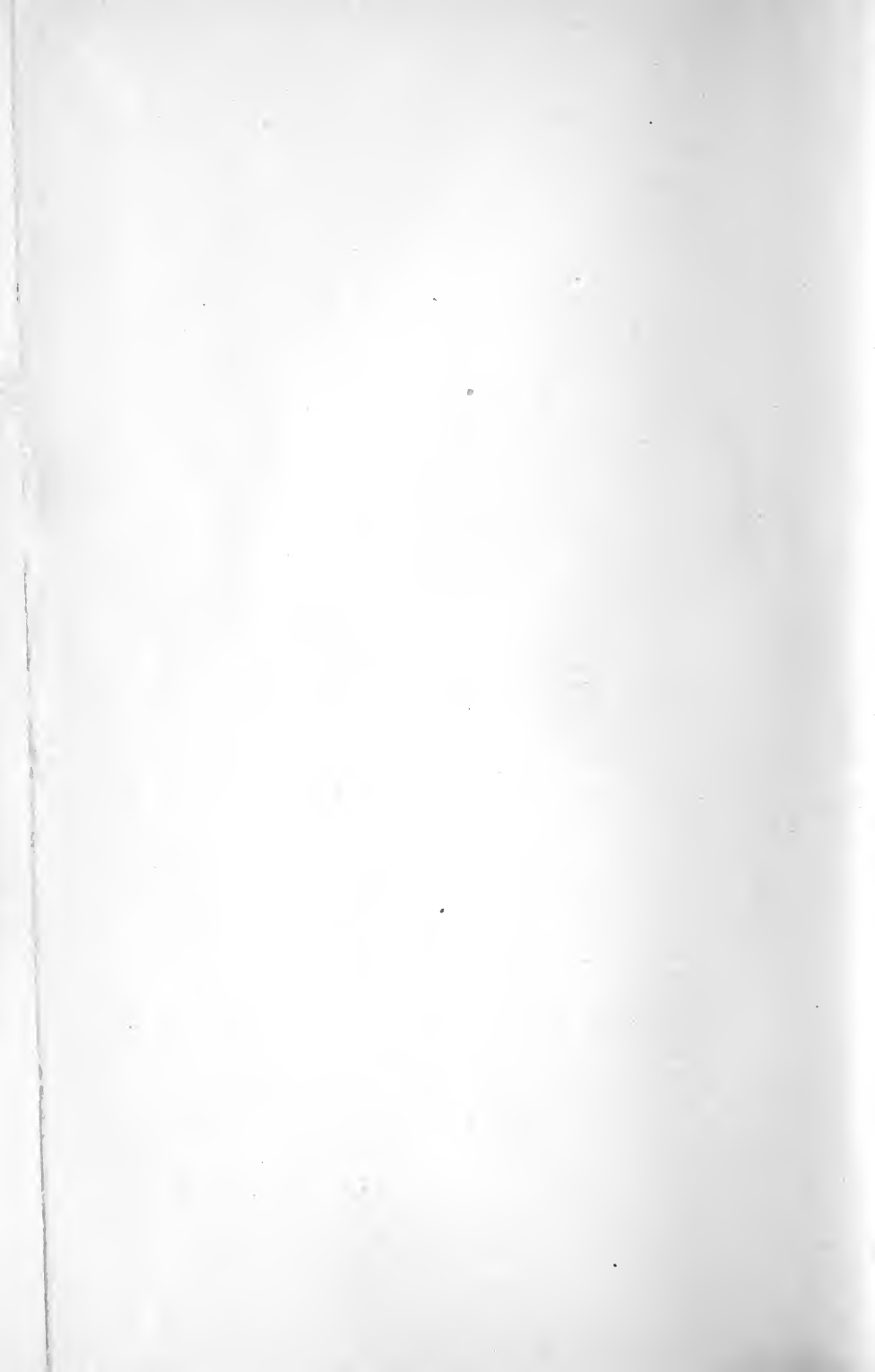
this night of centuries, the first sight that greets the eye of the world is the Gospel, even with the march of history. Yonder go the nations of modern Europe in their flight into the past, but the Gospel remains abreast the train. Yonder go the men of destiny, hurrying backward into oblivion, but the Gospel, leaving them behind, keeps pace with the train. Yonder go the great infidels of history. I see Hume, loaded down with his argument against miracles, plunging past into obscurity. I see Voltaire, who thought the open grave of Christianity was just in sight,—there he goes into the past, chasing his vagaries among the shadows of oblivion. I see Thomas Paine, the patriot and the scoffer,—yonder he flies with his “Age of Reason” to join the armies of the obsolete. And yonder—can it be?—yes, there goes Robert Ingersoll, with his witty lectures on Ghosts and Skulls and Gods, stumbling over his “Mistakes of Moses” into the deep grave of the past, from which no Gabriel of future history will ever call him forth to tender memories.

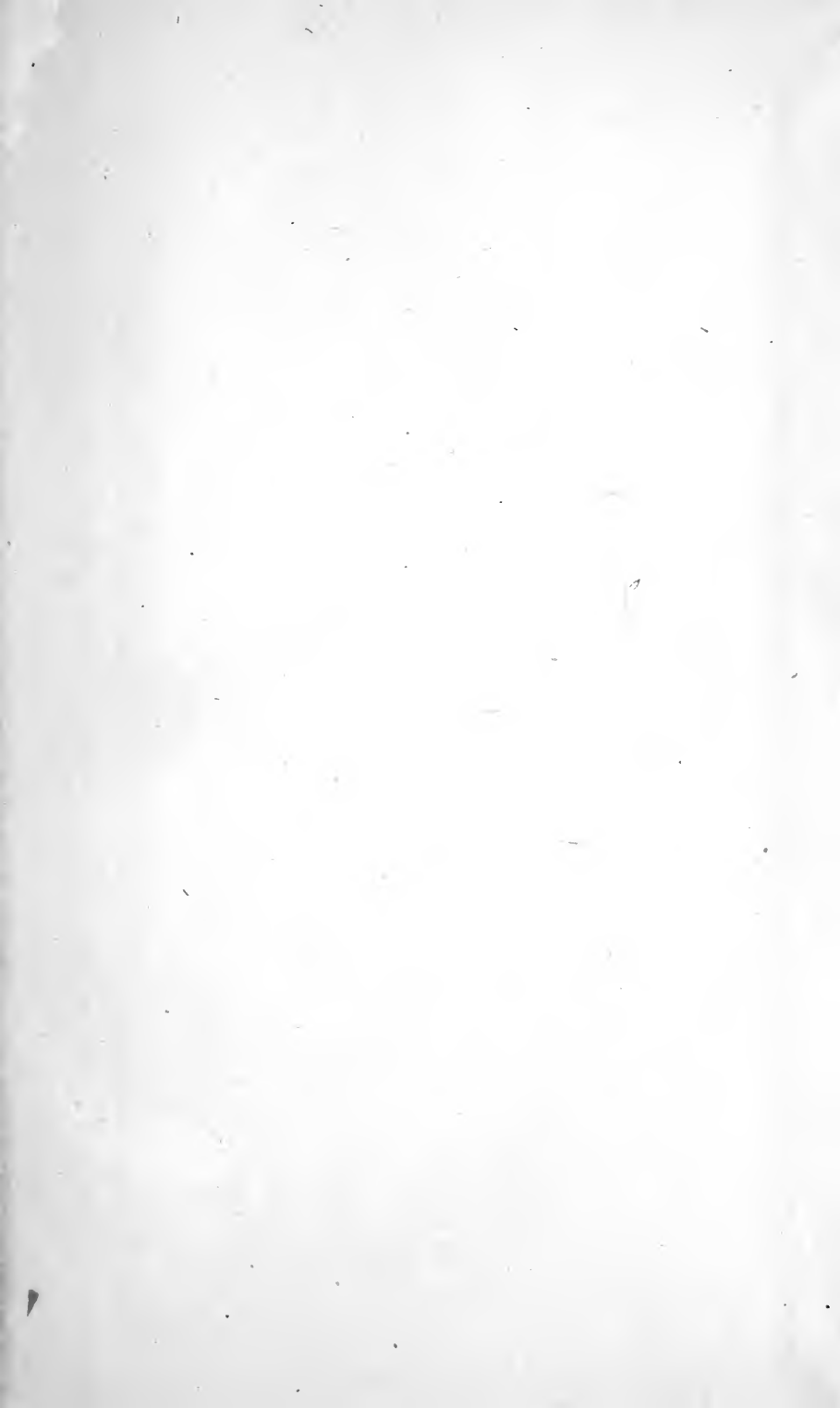
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But lo, what is this I behold, still blazing gloriously on the ever changing horizon of advancing history? It is the Sun of Righteousness, the undying Gospel, still abreast the forefront of the train of human progress.

Whoever or whatever undertakes to outrun the Gospel of Jesus Christ must measure footsteps with the Eternal God.







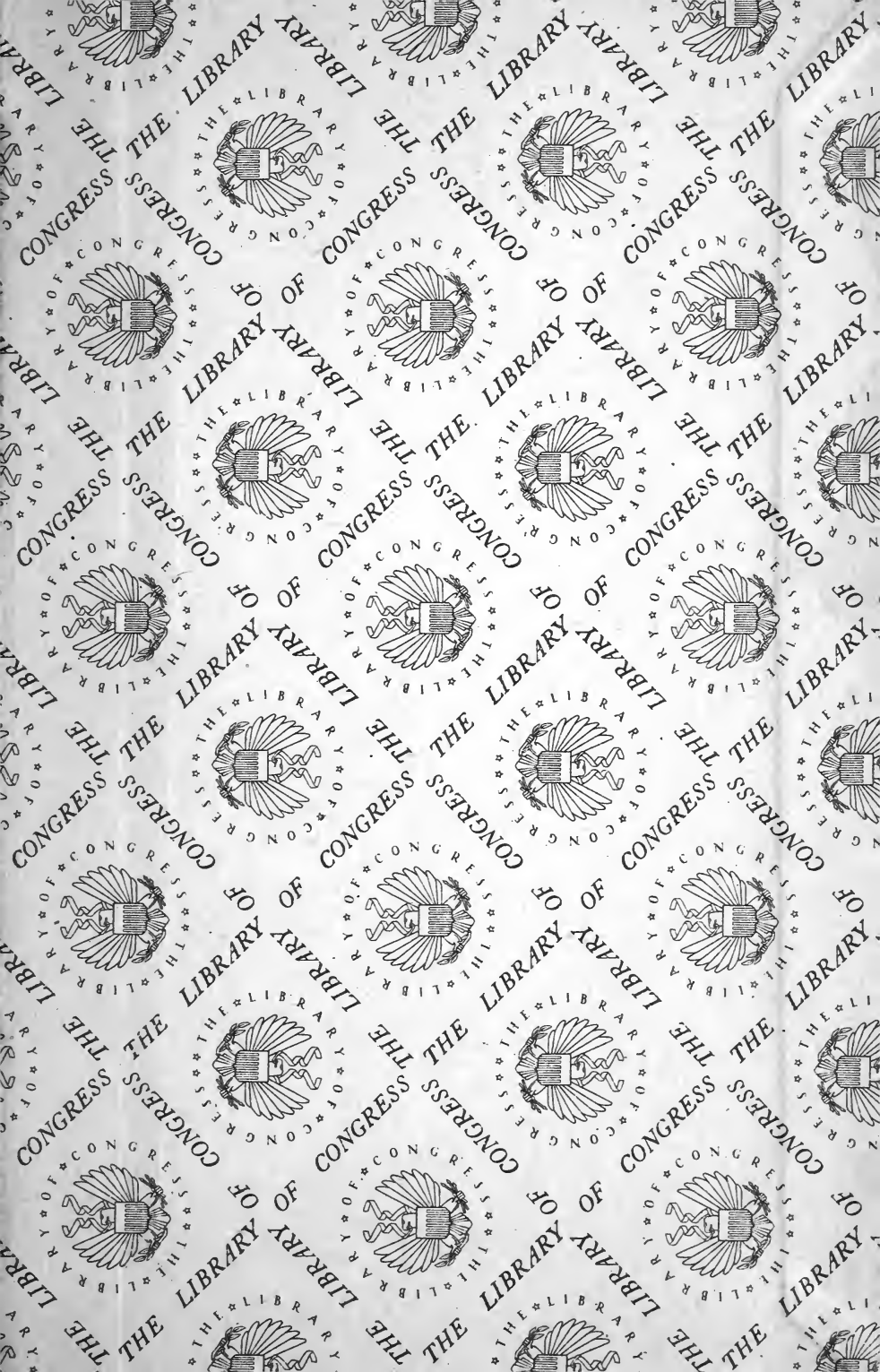


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