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THE GODS

AND OTHER LECTURES.

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GIVE ME THE STORM AND TEMPEST OF THOUGHT AND ACTION, RATHER THAN THE DEAD CALM OF IGNORANCE AND FAITH. BANISH ME FROM EDEN WHEN YOU WILL; BUT FIRST LET ME EAT OF THE FRUIT OF THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE.

PEORIA, ILLINOIS.
1874.

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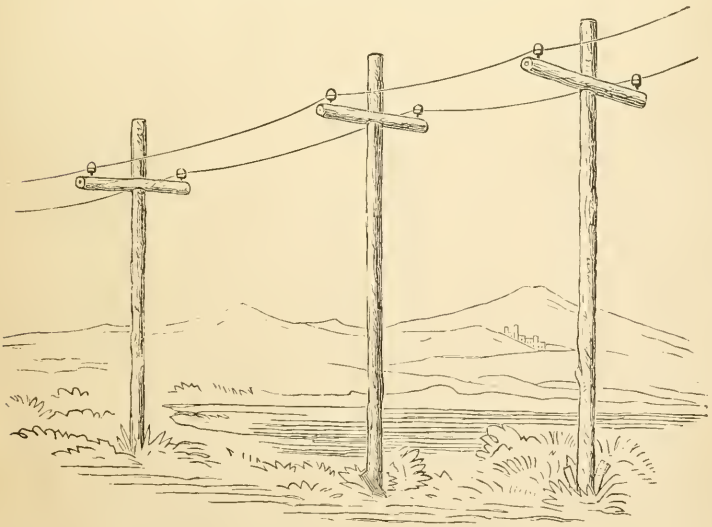
PREFACE.

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD.



FOR THE USE OF MAN.

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THE GODS.

The truth shall prevail.
if this book is the truth
it will prevail
history
shows it does.

book - words
not paper

THE GODS.

An Honest God is the Noblest Work of Man.

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

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

These gods did not even know the shape of the worlds they had created, but supposed them perfectly flat. Some thought the day could be

lengthened by stopping the sun, that the blowing of horns could throw down the walls of a city, and all knew so little of the real nature of the people they had created, that they commanded the people to love them. Some were so ignorant as to suppose that man could believe just as he might desire, or as they might command, and that to be governed by observation, reason, and experience was a most foul and damning sin. None of these gods could give a true account of the creation of this little earth. All were wofully deficient in geology and astronomy. As a rule, they were most miserable legislators, and as executives, they were far inferior to the average of American presidents.

These deities have demanded the most abject and degrading obedience. In order to please them, man must lay his very face in the dust. Of course, they have always been partial to the people who created them, and have generally shown their partiality by assisting those people to rob and destroy others, and to ravish their wives and daughters.

Nothing is so pleasing to these gods as the butchery of unbelievers. Nothing so enrages

them, even now, as to have some one deny their existence.

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

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

These gods differed just as the nations differed; the greatest and most powerful had the most powerful gods, while the weaker ones were obliged to content themselves with the very off-scourings of the heavens. Each of these gods promised happiness here and hereafter to all his slaves, and threatened to eternally punish all who either disbelieved in his existence or suspected that some other god might be his superior; but to deny the existence of all gods was, and is, the crime of crimes. Redden your hands with human blood; blast by slander the fair fame of the innocent; strangle the smiling child upon its mother's knees; deceive, ruin and

desert the beautiful girl who loves and trusts you, and your case is not hopeless. For all this, and for all these you may be forgiven. For all this, and for all these, that bankrupt court established by the gospel, will give you a discharge; but deny the existence of these divine ghosts, of these gods, and the sweet and tearful face of Mercy becomes livid with eternal hate. Heaven's golden gates are shut, and you, with an infinite curse ringing in your ears, with the brand of infamy upon your brow, commence your endless wanderings in the lurid gloom of hell—an immortal vagrant—an eternal outcast—a deathless convict.

One of these gods, and one who demands our love, our admiration and our worship, and one who is worshiped, if mere heartless ceremony is worship, gave to his chosen people for their guidance, the following laws of war: "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, *then proclaim peace unto it.* And it shall be if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it.

And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thy hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. But the women and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself, and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies which the Lord thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these people which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, *thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth.*"

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

And we are called upon to worship such a god; to get upon our knees and tell him that he

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

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

Strange! that no one has ever been persecuted by the church for believing God bad, while hundreds of millions have been destroyed for thinking him good. The orthodox church never will forgive the Universalist for saying "God is love." It has always been considered as one of the very highest evidences of true and undefiled religion to insist

that all men, women and children deserve eternal damnation. It has always been heresy to say, "God will at last save all."

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

The doctrine that future happiness depends upon belief is monstrous. It is the infamy of infamies. The notion that faith in Christ is to

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

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

Salvation through slavery is worthless. Salvation from slavery is inestimable.

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

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

Our ancestors not only had their god-factories, but they made devils as well. These devils were generally disgraced and fallen gods. Some had headed unsuccessful revolts; some had been caught sweetly reclining in the shadowy folds of some fleecy cloud, kissing the wife of the god of gods. These devils generally sympathized with man. There is in regard to them a most wonderful fact: In nearly all the theologies, mythologies and religions, the devils have been much more humane and merciful than the gods. No devil ever gave one of his generals an order to kill

children and to rip open the bodies of pregnant women. Such barbarities were always ordered by the good gods. The pestilences were sent by the most merciful gods. The frightful famine, during which the dying child with pallid lips sucked the withered bosom of a dead mother, was sent by the loving gods. No devil was ever charged with such fiendish brutality.

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

One of these gods is reported to have given the following directions concerning human slavery: "If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years shall

he serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out free. Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him unto the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever."

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

All these gods threatened to torment forever the souls of their enemies. Did any devil ever make so infamous a threat? The basest thing recorded of the devil, is what he did concerning Job

and his family, and that was done by the express permission of one of these gods, and to decide a little difference of opinion between their serene highnesses as to the character of "my servant Job."

The first account we have of the devil is found in that purely scientific book called Genesis, and is as follows: "Now the serpent was more subtile than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made, and he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. * * And the Lord God said, Behold the man is be-

come as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever. Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So he drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life."

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

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

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

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

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

Some nations have borrowed their gods; of this number, we are compelled to say, is our own. The Jews having ceased to exist as a nation, and having no further use for a god, our ancestors appropriated him and adopted their devil at the same time. This borrowed god is still an object of some adoration, and this adopted devil still excites the apprehensions of our people. He is still

supposed to be setting his traps and snares for the purpose of catching our unwary souls, and is still, with reasonable success, waging the old war against our god.

To me, it seems easy to account for these ideas concerning gods and devils. They are a perfectly natural production. Man has created them all, and under the same circumstances would create them again. Man has not only created all these gods, but he has created them out of the materials by which he has been surrounded. Generally he has modeled them after himself, and has given them hands, heads, feet, eyes, ears, and organs of speech. Each nation made its gods and devils speak its language not only, but put in their mouths the same mistakes in history, geography, astronomy, and in all matters of fact, generally made by the people. No god was ever in advance of the nation that created him. The negroes represented their deities with black skins and curly hair. The Mongolian gave to his a yellow complexion and dark almond-shaped eyes. The Jews were not allowed to paint theirs, or we should have seen Jehovah with a full beard, an oval face, and an aquiline nose. Zeus was a perfect Greek,

and Jove looked as though a member of the Roman senate. The gods of Egypt had the patient face and placid look of the loving people who made them. The gods of northern countries were represented warmly clad in robes of fur; those of the tropics were naked. The gods of India were often mounted upon elephants; those of some islanders were great swimmers, and the deities of the Arctic zone were passionately fond of whale's blubber. Nearly all people have carved or painted representations of their gods, and these representations were, by the lower classes, generally treated as the real gods, and to these images and idols they addressed prayers and offered sacrifice.

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

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

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

Man, having always been the physical superior

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

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

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

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

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

Man, in his ignorance, supposed that all phenomena were produced by some intelligent powers, and with direct reference to him. To preserve friendly relations with these powers was, and still is, the object of all religions. Man knelt through fear and to implore assistance, or through grati-

tude for some favor which he supposed had been rendered. He endeavored by supplication to appease some being who, for some reason, had, as he believed, become enraged. The lightning and thunder terrified him. In the presence of the volcano he sank upon his knees. The great forests filled with wild and ferocious beasts, the monstrous serpents crawling in mysterious depths, the boundless sea, the flaming comets, the sinister eclipses, the awful calmness of the stars, and, more than all, the perpetual presence of death, convinced him that he was the sport and prey of unseen and malignant powers. The strange and frightful diseases to which he was subject, the freezings and burnings of fever, the contortions of epilepsy, the sudden palsies, the darkness of night, and the wild, terrible and fantastic dreams that filled his brain, satisfied him that he was haunted and pursued by countless spirits of evil. For some reason he supposed that these spirits differed in power—that they were not all alike malevolent—that the higher controlled the lower, and that his very existence depended upon gaining the assistance of the more powerful. For this purpose he resorted to prayer, to flattery, to worship and to sacrifice.

These ideas appear to have been almost universal in savage man.

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

To pacify these spirits was considered of infinite importance. The poor barbarian, knowing that men could be softened by gifts, gave to these spirits that which to him seemed of the most value. With bursting heart he would offer the blood of his dearest child. It was impossible for him to conceive of a god utterly unlike himself, and he naturally supposed that these powers of the air would be affected a little at the sight of so great and so deep a sorrow. It was with the barbarian then as with the civilized now — one class lived upon and made merchandise of the fears of another. Certain persons took it upon

themselves to appease the gods, and to instruct the people in their duties to these unseen powers. This was the origin of the priesthood. The priest pretended to stand between the wrath of the gods and the helplessness of man. He was man's attorney at the court of heaven. He carried to the invisible world a flag of truce, a protest and a request. He came back with a command, with authority and with power. Man fell upon his knees before his own servant, and the priest, taking advantage of the awe inspired by his supposed influence with the gods, made of his fellow-man a cringing hypocrite and slave. Even Christ, the supposed son of God, taught that persons were possessed of evil spirits, and frequently, according to the account, gave proof of his divine origin and mission by frightening droves of devils out of his unfortunate countrymen. Casting out devils was his principal employment, and the devils thus banished generally took occasion to acknowledge him as the true Messiah; which was not only very kind of them, but quite fortunate for him. The religious people have always regarded the testimony of these devils as perfectly conclusive, and the writers of the New Testament quote the

words of these imps of darkness with great satisfaction.

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

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

stone.' Jesus said unto him: 'It is written again, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and saith unto him: 'All these will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me.'"

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

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

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

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

This belief in good and evil powers had its origin in the fact that man was surrounded by what he was pleased to call good and evil phenomena. Phenomena affecting man pleasantly were ascribed to good spirits, while those affecting him unpleasantly or injuriously, were ascribed to evil spirits. It being admitted that all phenomena were produced by spirits, the spirits were divided according to the phenomena, and the phenomena were good or bad as they affected man.

Good spirits were supposed to be the authors of good phenomena, and evil spirits of the evil—so that the idea of a devil has been as universal as the idea of a god.

Many writers maintain that an idea to become universal must be true; that all universal ideas are innate, and that innate ideas cannot be false. If the fact that an idea has been universal proves that it is innate, and if the fact that an idea is innate proves that it is correct, then the believers in innate ideas must admit that the evidence of a god superior to nature, and of a devil superior to nature, is exactly the same, and that the existence of such a devil must be as self-evident as the existence of such a god. The truth is, a god was inferred from good, and a devil from bad, phenomena. And it is just as natural and logical to suppose that a devil would cause happiness as to suppose that a god would produce misery. Consequently, if an intelligence, infinite and supreme, is the immediate author of all phenomena, it is difficult to determine whether such intelligence is the friend or enemy of man. If phenomena were all good, we might say they were all produced by a perfectly beneficent being. If

they were all bad, we might say they were produced by a perfectly malevolent power; but, as phenomena are, as they affect man, both good and bad, they must be produced by different and antagonistic spirits; by one who is sometimes actuated by kindness, and sometimes by malice; or all must be produced of necessity, and without reference to their consequences upon man.

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

them into temptation. All these prayers rest upon, and are produced by, the idea that some power not only can, but probably will, change the order of the universe. This belief has been among the great majority of tribes and nations. All sacred books are filled with the accounts of such interferences, and our own bible is no exception to this rule.

If we believe in a power superior to nature, it is perfectly natural to suppose that such power can and will interfere in the affairs of this world. If there is no interference, of what practical use can such power be? The scriptures give us the most wonderful accounts of divine interference: Animals talk like men; springs gurgle from dry bones; the sun and moon stop in the heavens in order that General Joshua may have more time to murder; the shadow on a dial goes back ten degrees to convince a petty king of a barbarous people that he is not going to die of a boil; fire refuses to burn; water positively declines to seek its level, but stands up like a wall; grains of sand become lice; common walking-sticks, to gratify a mere freak, twist themselves into serpents, and then swallow each other by way of exercise;

murmuring streams, laughing at the attraction of gravitation, run up hill for years, following wandering tribes from a pure love of frolic; prophecy becomes altogether easier than history; the sons of God become enamored of the world's girls; women are changed into salt for the purpose of keeping a great event fresh in the minds of men; an excellent article of brimstone is imported from heaven free of duty; clothes refuse to wear out for forty years; birds keep restaurants and feed wandering prophets free of expense; bears tear children in pieces for laughing at old men without wigs; muscular development depends upon the length of one's hair; dead people come to life, simply to get a joke on their enemies and heirs; witches and wizards converse freely with the souls of the departed, and God himself becomes a stone-cutter and engraver, after having been a tailor and dressmaker.

The veil between heaven and earth was always rent or lifted. The shadows of this world, the radiance of heaven, and the glare of hell mixed and mingled until man became uncertain as to which country he really inhabited. Man dwelt in an unreal world. He mistook his ideas,

his dreams, for real things. His fears became terrible and malicious monsters. He lived in the midst of furies and fairies, nymphs and naiads, goblins and ghosts, witches and wizards, sprites and spooks, deities and devils. The obscure and gloomy depths were filled with claw and wing — with beak and hoof — with leering looks and sneering mouths — with the malice of deformity — with the cunning of hatred, and with all the slimy forms that fear can draw and paint upon the shadowy canvas of the dark.

It is enough to make one almost insane with pity to think what man in the long night has suffered; of the tortures he has endured, surrounded, as he supposed, by malignant powers and clutched by the fierce phantoms of the air. No wonder that he fell upon his trembling knees — that he built altars and reddened them even with his own blood. No wonder that he implored ignorant priests and impudent magicians for aid. No wonder that he crawled groveling in the dust to the temple's door, and there, in the insanity of despair, besought the deaf gods to hear his bitter cry of agony and fear.

The savage as he emerges from a state of bar-

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

The people are beginning to think, to reason and to investigate. Slowly, painfully, but surely, the gods are being driven from the earth. Only upon rare occasions are they, even by the most religious, supposed to interfere in the affairs of men. In most matters we are at last supposed to be free. Since the invention of steamships and railways, so that the products of all countries can be easily interchanged, the gods have quit the business of producing famine. Now and then they kill a child because it is idolized by its

parents. As a rule they have given up causing accidents on railroads, exploding boilers, and bursting kerosene lamps. Cholera, yellow fever, and small-pox are still considered heavenly weapons; but measles, itch and ague are now attributed to natural causes. As a general thing, the gods have stopped drowning children, except as a punishment for violating the Sabbath. They still pay some attention to the affairs of kings, men of genius and persons of great wealth; but ordinary people are left to shirk for themselves as best they may. In wars between great nations, the gods still interfere; but in prize fights, the best man with an honest referee, is almost sure to win.

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

A devout clergyman sought every opportunity to impress upon the mind of his son the fact, that God takes care of all his creatures; that the fall-

ing sparrow attracts his attention, and that his loving kindness is over all his works. Happening, one day, to see a crane wading in quest of food, the good man pointed out to his son the perfect adaptation of the crane to get his living in that manner. "See," said he, "how his legs are formed for wading! What a long slender bill he has! Observe how nicely he folds his feet when putting them in or drawing them out of the water! He does not cause the slightest ripple. He is thus enabled to approach the fish without giving them any notice of his arrival." "My son," said he, "it is impossible to look at that bird without recognizing the design, as well as the goodness of God, in thus providing the means of subsistence." "Yes," replied the boy, "I think I see the goodness of God, at least so far as the crane is concerned; but after all, father, don't you think the arrangement a little tough on the fish?"

Even the advanced religionist, although disbelieving in any great amount of interference by the gods in this age of the world, still thinks, that in the beginning, some god made the laws governing the universe. He believes

that in consequence of these laws a man can lift a greater weight with, than without, a lever; that this god so made matter, and so established the order of things, that two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time; so that a body once put in motion will keep moving until it is stopped; so that it is a greater distance around, than across a circle; so that a perfect square has four equal sides, instead of five or seven. He insists that it took a direct interposition of providence to make the whole greater than a part, and that had it not been for this power superior to nature, twice one might have been more than twice two, and sticks and strings might have had only one end apiece. Like the old Scotch divine, he thanks God that Sunday comes at the end instead of in the middle of the week, and that death comes at the close instead of at the commencement of life, thereby giving us time to prepare for that holy day and that most solemn event. These religious people see nothing but design everywhere, and personal, intelligent interference in everything. They insist that the universe has been created, and that the adaptation of

means to ends is perfectly apparent. They point us to the sunshine, to the flowers, to the April rain, and to all there is of beauty and of use in the world. Did it ever occur to them that a cancer is as beautiful in its development as is the reddest rose? That what they are pleased to call the adaptation of means to ends, is as apparent in the cancer as in the April rain? How beautiful the process of digestion! By what ingenious methods the blood is poisoned so that the cancer shall have food! By what wonderful contrivances the entire system of man is made to pay tribute to this divine and charming cancer! See by what admirable instrumentalities it feeds itself from the surrounding quivering, dainty flesh! See how it gradually but surely expands and grows! By what marvelous mechanism it is supplied with long and slender roots that reach out to the most secret nerves of pain for sustenance and life! What beautiful colors it presents! Seen through the microscope it is a miracle of order and beauty. All the ingenuity of man cannot stop its growth. Think of the amount of thought it must have required to invent a way by which

the life of one man might be given to produce one cancer? Is it possible to look upon it and doubt that there is design in the universe, and that the inventor of this wonderful cancer must be infinitely powerful, ingenious and good?

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

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

Admitting that a god did create the universe, the question then arises, of what did he create it? It certainly was not made of nothing. Nothing, considered in the light of a raw material, is a most decided failure. It follows, then, that the god must have made the universe out of himself, he being the only existence. The universe is material, and if it was made of god, the god must have

been material. With this very thought in his mind, Anaximander of Miletus said: "Creation is the decomposition of the infinite."

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

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

Force, then, must have also existed from eternity, and could not have been created. Matter

in its countless forms, from dead earth to the eyes of those we love, and force, in all its manifestations, from simple motion to the grandest thought, deny creation and defy control.

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

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

If neither matter nor force were created, what evidence have we, then, of the existence of a power superior to nature? The theologian will

probably reply, "We have law and order, cause and effect, and beside all this, matter could not have put itself in motion."

Suppose, for the sake of the argument, that there is no being superior to nature, and that matter and force have existed from eternity. Now suppose that two atoms should come together, would there be an effect? Yes. Suppose they came in exactly opposite directions with equal force, they would be stopped, to say the least. This would be an effect. If this is so, then you have matter, force and effect without a being superior to nature. Now suppose that two other atoms, just like the first two, should come together under precisely the same circumstances, would not the effect be exactly the same? Yes. Like causes, producing like effects, is what we mean by law and order. Then we have matter, force, effect, law and order without a being superior to nature. Now, we know that every effect must also be a cause, and that every cause must be an effect. The atoms coming together did produce an effect, and as every effect must also be a cause, the effect produced by the collision of the atoms, must as to something else have been

a cause. Then we have matter, force, law, order, cause and effect without a being superior to nature. Nothing is left for the supernatural but empty space. His throne is a void, and his boasted realm is without matter, without force, without law, without cause, and without effect.

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

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

There is but one way to demonstrate the existence of a power independent of and superior to nature, and that is by breaking, if only for one moment, the continuity of cause and effect. Pluck

from the endless chain of existence one little link; stop for one instant the grand procession, and you have shown beyond all contradiction that nature has a master. Change the fact, just for one second, that matter attracts matter, and a god appears.

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

No one, in the world's whole history, ever attempted to substantiate a truth by a miracle. Truth scorns the assistance of miracle. Nothing but falsehood ever attested itself by signs and

wonders. No miracle ever was performed, and no sane man ever thought he had performed one, and until one is performed, there can be no evidence of the existence of any power superior to, and independent of nature.

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

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

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

In the olden time, the church, by violating the order of nature, proved the existence of her God. At that time miracles were performed with the most astonishing ease. They be-

came so common that the church ordered her priests to desist. And now this same church — the people having found some little sense — admits, not only, that she cannot perform a miracle, but insists that the absence of miracle — the steady, unbroken march of cause and effect, proves the existence of a power superior to nature. The fact is, however, that the indissoluble chain of cause and effect proves exactly the contrary.

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

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

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

The science, by means of which they demonstrate the existence of an impossible intelligence, and an incomprehensible power is called, metaphysics or theology. The theologians admit that the phenomena of matter tend, at least, to disprove the existence of any power superior to

nature, because in such phenomena we see nothing but an endless chain of efficient causes — nothing but the force of a mechanical necessity. They therefore appeal to what they denominate the phenomena of mind to establish this superior power.

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

the existence of a god. No one infers a god from the simple, from the known, from what is understood, but from the complex, from the unknown, and incomprehensible. Our ignorance is God; what we know is science.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The moment these great truths are understood and admitted, a belief in general or special providence becomes impossible. From that instant men will cease their vain efforts to please an imaginary being, and will give their time and attention to the affairs of this world. They will

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

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

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

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

Nature, so far as we can discern, without pas-

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

And yet man continues to believe that there is some power independent of and superior to nature, and still endeavors, by form, ceremony, supplication, hypocrisy and sacrifice, to obtain its aid. His best energies have been wasted in the service of this phantom. The horrors of witchcraft were all born of an ignorant belief in the existence of a totally depraved being superior to nature, acting in perfect independence of her laws; and all religious superstition has had for its

basis a belief in at least two beings, one good and the other bad, both of whom could arbitrarily change the order of the universe. The history of religion is simply the story of man's efforts in all ages to avoid one of these powers, and to pacify the other. Both powers have inspired little else than abject fear. The cold, calculating sneer of the devil, and the frown of God, were equally terrible. In any event, man's fate was to be arbitrarily fixed forever by an unknown power superior to all law, and to all fact. Until this belief is thrown aside, man must consider himself the slave of phantom masters — neither of whom promise liberty in this world nor in the next.

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

Although many eminent men have endeavored to harmonize necessity and free will, the existence of evil, and the infinite power and good-

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

During that frightful period known as the "Dark Ages," Faith reigned, with scarcely a rebellious subject. Her temples were "carpeted with knees," and the wealth of nations adorned her countless shrines. The great painters prostituted their genius to immortalize her vagaries, while the poets enshrined them in song. At her bidding, man covered the earth with blood. The scales of Justice were turned with her gold, and for her use were invented all the cunning instruments of pain. She built cathedrals for God, and dungeons for men. She peopled the clouds with angels and the earth with slaves. For cen-

turies the world was retracing its steps — going steadily back towards barbaric night! A few infidels — a few heretics cried, "Halt!" to the great rabble of ignorant devotion, and made it possible for the genius of the nineteenth century to revolutionize the cruel creeds and superstitions of mankind.

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

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

to nature must decrease, while the horizon of the known must as constantly continue to enlarge.

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

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

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

A belief in special providence does away with the spirit of investigation, and is inconsistent with personal effort. Why should man endeavor

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

Through the dim long years that have fled,

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

Of what use have the gods been to man?

It is no answer to say that some god created the world, established certain laws, and then turned his attention to other matters, leaving his children weak, ignorant and unaided, to fight the battle of life alone. It is no solution to declare that in some other world this god will render a few, or even all, his subjects happy. What right have we to expect that a perfectly wise, good and powerful being will ever do better than

he has done, and is doing? The world is filled with imperfections. If it was made by an infinite being, what reason have we for saying that he will render it nearer perfect than it now is? If the infinite "Father" allows a majority of his children to live in ignorance and wretchedness now, what evidence is there that he will ever improve their condition? Will God have more power? Will he become more merciful? Will his love for his poor creatures increase? Can the conduct of infinite wisdom, power and love ever change? Is the infinite capable of any improvement whatever?

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

Supposing this to be true, what is to become of those who die in infancy? The little children, according to this philosophy, can never be developed. They were so unfortunate as to escape the ennobling influences of pain and misery, and as a consequence, are doomed to an eternity of

mental inferiority. If the clergy are right on this question, none are so unfortunate as the happy, and we should envy only the suffering and distressed. If evil is necessary to the development of man, in this life, how is it possible for the soul to improve in the perfect joy of paradise?

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

supposed that the almost infinite variety of vegetable and animal forms had existed from the first.

Suppose that upon some island we should find a man a million years of age, and suppose that we should find him in the possession of a most beautiful carriage, constructed upon the most perfect model. And suppose, further, that he should tell us that it was the result of several hundred thousand years of labor and of thought; that for fifty thousand years he used as flat a log as he could find, before it occurred to him, that by splitting the log, he could have the same surface with only half the weight; that it took him many thousand years to invent wheels for this log; that the wheels he first used were solid, and that fifty thousand years of thought suggested the use of spokes and tire; that for many centuries he used the wheels without linch-pins; that it took a hundred thousand years more to think of using four wheels, instead of two; that for ages he walked behind the carriage, when going down hill, in order to hold it back, and that only by a lucky chance he invented the tongue; would we conclude that this man, from the very first, had been an infinitely ingenious

and perfect mechanic? Suppose we found him living in an elegant mansion, and he should inform us that he lived in that house for five hundred thousand years before he thought of putting on a roof, and that he had but recently invented windows and doors; would we say that from the beginning he had been an infinitely accomplished and scientific architect?

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

Would an infinitely wise, good and powerful God, intending to produce man, commence with the lowest possible forms of life; with the simplest organism that can be imagined, and during immeasurable periods of time, slowly and almost imperceptibly improve upon the rude beginning, until man was evolved? Would countless ages thus be wasted in the production of awkward forms, afterwards abandoned? Can the intelligence of man discover the least wisdom in covering the earth with crawling, creeping horrors, that live only upon the agonies and pangs of others? Can we see the propriety of so constructing the earth, that only an insignificant por-

tion of its surface is capable of producing an intelligent man? Who can appreciate the mercy of so making the world that all animals devour animals; so that every mouth is a slaughter-house, and every stomach a tomb? Is it possible to discover infinite intelligence and love in universal and eternal carnage?

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

And yet this is exactly what the orthodox God has done.

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

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

A very pious friend of mine, having heard that I had said the world was full of imperfections, asked me if the report was true. Upon being informed that it was, he expressed great surprise that any one could be guilty of such presumption. He said that, in his judgment, it was impossible to point out an imperfection. "Be kind enough," said he, "to name even one im-

provement that you could make, if you had the power." "Well," said I, "I would make good health catching, instead of disease." The truth is, it is impossible to harmonize all the ills, and pains, and agonies of this world with the idea that we were created by, and are watched over and protected by an infinitely wise, powerful and beneficent God, who is superior to and independent of nature.

The clergy, however, balance all the real ills of this life with the expected joys of the next. We are assured that all is perfection in heaven — there the skies are cloudless — there all is serenity and peace. Here empires may be overthrown; dynasties may be extinguished in blood; millions of slaves may toil 'neath the fierce rays of the sun, and the cruel strokes of the lash; yet all is happiness in heaven. Pestilences may strew the earth with corpses of the loved; the survivors may bend above them in agony — yet the placid bosom of heaven is unruffled. Children may expire vainly asking for bread; babes may be devoured by serpents, while the gods sit smiling in the clouds. The innocent may languish unto death in the obscurity of dungeons;

brave men and heroic women may be changed to ashes at the bigot's stake, while heaven is filled with song and joy. Out on the wide sea, in darkness and in storm, the shipwrecked struggle with the cruel waves while the angels play upon their golden harps. The streets of the world are filled with the diseased, the deformed and the helpless; the chambers of pain are crowded with the pale forms of the suffering, while the angels float and fly in the happy realms of day. In heaven they are too happy to have sympathy; too busy singing to aid the imploring and distressed. Their eyes are blinded; their ears are stopped and their hearts are turned to stone by the infinite selfishness of joy. The saved mariner is too happy when he touches the shore to give a moment's thought to his drowning brothers. With the indifference of happiness, with the contempt of bliss, heaven barely glances at the miseries of earth. Cities are devoured by the rushing lava; the earth opens and thousands perish; women raise their clasped hands towards heaven, but the gods are too happy to aid their children. The smiles of the deities are unacquainted with the tears of men. The shouts of heaven drown the sobs of earth.

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

Probably, the first thing that tended to disabuse his mind was the discovery of order, of regularity, of periodicity in the universe. From this he began to suspect that everything did not happen purely with reference to him. He noticed, that whatever he might do, the motions of the planets were always the same; that eclipses were periodical, and that even comets came at certain intervals. This convinced him that eclipses and comets had nothing to do with him, and that his conduct had nothing to do with them. He perceived that they were not caused for his benefit or injury. He thus learned to regard them with admiration instead of fear. He began to suspect that famine was not sent by some enraged and revengeful deity, but re-

sulted often from the neglect and ignorance of man. He learned that diseases were not produced by evil spirits. He found that sickness was occasioned by natural causes, and could be cured by natural means. He demonstrated, to his own satisfaction at least, that prayer is not a medicine. He found by sad experience that his gods were of no practical use, as they never assisted him, except when he was perfectly able to help himself. At last, he began to discover that his individual action had nothing whatever to do with strange appearances in the heavens; that it was impossible for him to be bad enough to cause a whirlwind, or good enough to stop one. After many centuries of thought, he about half concluded that making mouths at a priest would not necessarily cause an earthquake. He noticed, and no doubt with considerable astonishment, that very good men were occasionally struck by lightning, while very bad ones escaped. He was frequently forced to the painful conclusion (and it is the most painful to which any human being ever was forced) that the right did not always prevail. He noticed that the gods did not interfere in behalf of the weak

and innocent. He was now and then astonished by seeing an unbeliever in the enjoyment of most excellent health. He finally ascertained that there could be no possible connection between an unusually severe winter and his failure to give a sheep to a priest. He began to suspect that the order of the universe was not constantly being changed to assist him because he repeated a creed. He observed that some children would steal after having been regularly baptized. He noticed a vast difference between religion and justice, and that the worshipers of the same God, took delight in cutting each other's throats. He saw that these religious disputes filled the world with hatred and slavery. At last he had the courage to suspect, that no God at any time interferes with the order of events. He learned a few facts, and these facts positively refused to harmonize with the ignorant superstitions of his fathers. Finding his sacred books incorrect and false in some particulars, his faith in their authenticity began to be shaken; finding his priests ignorant upon some points, he began to lose respect for the cloth. This was the commencement of intellectual freedom.

The civilization of man has increased just to the same extent that religious power has decreased. The intellectual advancement of man depends upon how often he can exchange an old superstition for a new truth. The Church never enabled a human being to make even one of these exchanges; on the contrary, all her power has been used to prevent them. In spite, however, of the Church, man found that some of his religious conceptions were wrong. By reading his bible, he found that the ideas of his God were more cruel and brutal than those of the most depraved savage. He also discovered that this holy book was filled with ignorance, and that it must have been written by persons wholly unacquainted with the nature of the phenomena by which we are surrounded; and now and then, some man had the goodness and courage to speak his honest thoughts. In every age some thinker, some doubter, some investigator, some hater of hypocrisy, some despiser of sham, some brave lover of the right, has gladly, proudly and heroically braved the ignorant fury of superstition for the sake of man and truth. These divine men were generally torn in pieces

by the worshipers of the gods. Socrates was poisoned because he lacked reverence for some of the deities. Christ was crucified by a religious rabble for the crime of blasphemy. Nothing is more gratifying to a religionist than to destroy his enemies at the command of God. Religious persecution springs from a due admixture of love towards God and hatred towards man.

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

For three hundred years the Christian world endeavored to rescue from the "Infidel" the empty sepulchre of Christ. For three hundred years the armies of the cross were baffled and beaten by the

victorious hosts of an impudent impostor. This immense fact sowed the seeds of distrust throughout all Christendom, and millions began to lose confidence in a God who had been vanquished by Mohammed. The people also found that commerce made friends where religion made enemies, and that religious zeal was utterly incompatible with peace between nations or individuals. They discovered that those who loved the gods most were apt to love men least; that the arrogance of universal forgiveness was amazing; that the most malicious had the effrontery to pray for their enemies, and that humility and tyranny were the fruit of the same tree.

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

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

These are the sublime truths that enabled man to throw off the yoke of superstition. These

are the splendid facts that snatched the sceptre of authority from the hands of priests.

In that vast cemetery, called the past, are most of the religions of men, and there, too, are nearly all their gods. The sacred temples of India were ruins long ago. Over column and cornice; over the painted and pictured walls, cling and creep the trailing vines. Brahma, the golden, with four heads and four arms; Vishnu, the sombre, the punisher of the wicked, with his three eyes, his crescent, and his necklace of skulls; Siva, the destroyer, red with seas of blood; Kali, the goddess; Draupadi, the white-armed, and Chrishna, the Christ, all passed away and left the thrones of heaven desolate. Along the banks of the sacred Nile, Isis no longer wandering weeps, searching for the dead Osiris. The shadow of Typhon's scowl falls no more upon the waves. The sun rises as of yore, and his golden beams still smite the lips of Memnon, but Memnon is as voiceless as the Sphinx. The sacred fanes are lost in desert sands; the dusty mummies are still waiting for the resurrection promised by their priests, and the old beliefs, wrought in curiously sculptured stone, sleep in the mys-

tery of a language lost and dead. Odin, the author of life and soul, Vili and Ve, and the mighty giant Ymir, strode long ago from the icy halls of the North; and Thor, with iron glove and glittering hammer, dashes mountains to the earth no more. Broken are the circles and cromlechs of the ancient Druids; fallen upon the summits of the hills, and covered with the centuries' moss, are the sacred cairns. The divine fires of Persia and of the Aztecs, have died out in the ashes of the past, and there is none to rekindle, and none to feed the holy flames. The harp of Orpheus is still; the drained cup of Bacchus has been thrown aside; Venus lies dead in stone, and her white bosom heaves no more with love. The streams still murmur, but no naiads bathe; the trees still wave, but in the forest aisles no dryads dance. The gods have flown from high Olympus. Not even the beautiful women can lure them back, and Danæ lies unnoticed, naked to the stars. Hushed forever are the thunders of Sinai; lost are the voices of the prophets, and the land once flowing with milk and honey, is but a desert waste. One by one, the myths have faded from the clouds; one

by one, the phantom host has disappeared, and one by one, facts, truths and realities have taken their places. The supernatural has almost gone, but the natural remains. The gods have fled, but man is here.

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

sits upon the old throne. Who will be his successor?

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

While utterly discarding all creeds, and denying the truth of all religions, there is neither in my heart nor upon my lips a sneer for the hopeful, loving and tender souls who believe that from all this discord will result a perfect harmony; that every evil will in some mysterious way become a good, and that above and over

all there is a being who, in some way, will reclaim and glorify every one of the children of men; but for the creeds of those who glibly prove that salvation is almost impossible; that damnation is almost certain; that the highway of the universe leads to hell; who fill life with fear and death with horror; who curse the cradle and mock the tomb, it is impossible to entertain other than feelings of pity, contempt and scorn.

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

Notwithstanding the fact that infidels in all ages have battled for the rights of man, and have at all times been the fearless advocates of liberty and justice, we are constantly charged by the Church with tearing down without building again. The Church should by this time know

that it is utterly impossible to rob men of their opinions. The history of religious persecution fully establishes the fact that the mind necessarily resists and defies every attempt to control it by violence. The mind necessarily clings to old ideas until prepared for the new. The moment we comprehend the truth, all erroneous ideas are of necessity cast aside.

A surgeon once called upon a poor cripple and kindly offered to render him any assistance in his power. The surgeon began to discourse very learnedly upon the nature and origin of disease; of the curative properties of certain medicines; of the advantages of exercise, air and light, and of the various ways in which health and strength could be restored. These remarks were so full of good sense, and discovered so much profound thought and accurate knowledge, that the cripple, becoming thoroughly alarmed, cried out, "Do not, I pray you, take away my crutches. They are my only support, and without them I should be miserable indeed!" "I am not going," said the surgeon, "to take away your crutches. I am going to cure you, and then you will throw the crutches away yourself."

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

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

We are not endeavoring to chain the future, but to free the present. We are not forging fetters for our children, but we are breaking those our fathers made for us. We are the advocates of inquiry, of investigation and thought. This of itself, is an admission that we are not perfectly satisfied with all our conclusions. Philosophy has not the egotism of faith. While superstition builds walls and creates obstructions, science opens all the highways of thought. We do not pretend to have circumnavigated everything,

and to have solved all difficulties, but we do believe that it is better to love men than to fear gods; that it is grander and nobler to think and investigate for yourself than to repeat a creed. We are satisfied that there can be but little liberty on earth while men worship a tyrant in heaven. We do not expect to accomplish everything in our day; but we want to do what good we can, and to render all the service possible in the holy cause of human progress. We know that doing away with gods and supernatural persons and powers is not an end. It is a means to an end: the real end being the happiness of man.

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

We are laying the foundations of the grand temple of the future — not the temple of all the gods, but of all the people — wherein, with appropriate rites, will be celebrated the religion of Humanity. We are doing what little we can to hasten the coming of the day when society shall cease producing millionaires and mendicants — gorged indolence and famished industry — truth

in rags, and superstition robed and crowned. We are looking for the time when the useful shall be the honorable; when the true shall be the beautiful, and when REASON, throned upon the world's brain, shall be the King of Kings and God of Gods.

HUMBOLDT.

HUMBOLDT.

THE UNIVERSE IS GOVERNED BY LAW.

GREAT men seem to be a part of the infinite — brothers of the mountains and the seas.

Humboldt was one of these. He was one of those serene men, in some respects like our own Franklin, whose names have all the lustre of a star. He was one of the few, great enough to rise above the superstition and prejudice of his time, and to know that experience, observation, and reason are the only basis of knowledge.

He became one of the greatest of men in spite of having been born rich and noble — in spite of position. I say in spite of these things, because wealth and position are generally the enemies of genius, and the destroyers of talent.

It is often said of this or that man, that he is a self-made man — that he was born of the poorest and humblest parents, and that with every obstacle

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

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

In the antiquated and romantic castle of Tegel, by the side of the pine forest, on the shore of the charming lake, near the beautiful city of Berlin, the great Humboldt, one hundred years ago to-day, was born, and there he was educated after the method suggested by Rousseau, — Campe, the philologist and critic, and the intellectual Kunth

being his tutors. There he received the impressions that determined his career; there the great idea that the universe is governed by law, took possession of his mind, and there he dedicated his life to the demonstration of this sublime truth.

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

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

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

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

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

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

all facts, so Humboldt became acquainted with all the known sciences.

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

He was to science what Shakespeare was to the drama.

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

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

Origin and destiny were questions with which he had nothing to do.

His surroundings made him what he was.

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

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

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

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

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

He was the companion of Schiller, who believed that man would be regenerated through the influence of the Beautiful; of Goethe, the grand patriarch of German literature; of Weiland, who has been called the Voltaire of Germany; of Herder, who wrote the outlines of a philosophical history of man; of Kotzebue, who lived in the world of romance; of Schleiermacher,

the pantheist; of Schlegel, who gave to his countrymen the enchanted realm of Shakespeare; of the sublime Kant, author of the first work published in Germany on Pure Reason; of Fichte, the infinite idealist; of Schopenhauer, the European Buddhist who followed the great Gautama to the painless and dreamless Nirwana, and of hundreds of others, whose names are familiar to and honored by the scientific world.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Five, upon the nature and limits of physical geography.

Three, were devoted to a history of science.

Two, to inducements to a study of natural science.

Sixteen, on the heavens.

Five, on the form, density, latent heat, and magnetic power of the earth, and to the polar light.

Four, were on the nature of the crust of the earth, on hot springs, earthquakes, and volcanoes.

Two, on mountains and the type of their formation.

Two, on the form of the earth's surface, on the connection of continents, and the elevation of soil over ravines.

Three, on the sea as a globular fluid surrounding the earth.

Ten, on the atmosphere as an elastic fluid surrounding the earth. and on the distribution of heat.

One, on the geographic distribution of organized matter in general.

Three, on the geography of plants.

Three, on the geography of animals, and

Two, on the races of men.

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

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

There are some truths, however, that we never should forget: Superstition has always been the relentless enemy of science; faith has been a hater

of demonstration; hypocrisy has been sincere only in its dread of truth, and all religions are inconsistent with mental freedom.

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

It is almost impossible to conceive of the completeness of the victory that the church achieved over philosophy. For ages science was utterly ignored; thought was a poor slave; an ignorant priest was master of the world; faith put out the eyes of the soul; the reason was a trembling coward; the imagination was set on fire of hell; every human feeling was sought to be suppressed; love was considered infinitely sinful; pleasure was the road to eternal fire, and God was supposed to be happy only when his children were miserable. The world was governed by an Almighty's whim; prayers could change the order of things, halt the grand procession of nature, could produce rain, avert pestilence, famine and death in all its forms. There was no idea of the certain; all depended upon divine pleasure

— or displeasure rather; heaven was full of inconsistent malevolence, and earth of ignorance. Everything was done to appease the divine wrath; every public calamity was caused by the sins of the people; by a failure to pay tithes, or for having, even in secret, felt a disrespect for a priest. To the poor multitude, the earth was a kind of enchanted forest, full of demons ready to devour, and theological serpents lurking with infinite power to fascinate and torture the unhappy and impotent soul. Life to them was a dim and mysterious labyrinth, in which they wandered weary, and lost, guided by priests as bewildered as themselves, without knowing that at every step the Ariadne of reason offered them the long lost clue.

The very heavens were full of death; the lightning was regarded as the glittering vengeance of God, and the earth was thick with snares for the unwary feet of man. The soul was supposed to be crowded with the wild beasts of desire; the heart to be totally corrupt, prompting only to crime; virtues were regarded as deadly sins in disguise; there was a continual warfare being waged between the

Deity and the Devil, for the possession of every soul; the latter generally being considered victorious. The flood, the tornado, the volcano, were all evidences of the displeasure of heaven, and the sinfulness of man. The blight that withered, the frost that blackened, the earthquake that devoured, were the messengers of the Creator.

The world was governed by Fear.

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

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

Slowly, beautifully, like the coming of the dawn, came the grand truth, that the universe

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

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

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

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

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

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

At his bidding the earth began to revolve. At the command of his genius it commenced its grand flight mid the eternal constellations round the sun.

For fifty years his discoveries were disregarded. All at once, by the exertions of Galileo, they were kindled into so grand a conflagration as to consume the philosophy of Aristotle, to alarm the hierarchy of Rome, and to threaten the existence of every opinion not founded upon experience, observation, and reason.

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

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

first science that gave the lie direct to the cosmogony of barbarism, and because it is the sublimest victory that the reason has achieved.

In speaking of astronomy, I have confined myself to the discoveries made since the revival of learning. Long ago, on the banks of the Ganges, ages before Copernicus lived, Aryabhatta taught that the earth is a sphere, and revolves on its own axis. This, however, does not detract from the glory of the great German. The discovery of the Hindu had been lost in the midnight of Europe — in the age of faith, and Copernicus was as much a discoverer as though Aryabhatta had never lived.

In this short address there is no time to speak of other sciences, and to point out the particular evidence furnished by each, to establish the dominion of law, nor to more than mention the name of Descartes, the first who undertook to give an explanation of the celestial motions, or who formed the vast and philosophic conception of reducing all the phenomena of the universe to the same law; of Montaigne, one of the heroes of common sense; of Galvani, whose experiments gave the telegraph to the world; of

Voltaire, who contributed more than any other of the sons of men to the destruction of religious intolerance; of August Comte, whose genius erected to itself a monument that still touches the stars; of Guttenberg, Watt, Stephenson, Arkwright, all soldiers of science, in the grand army of the dead kings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Imposture has always worn a crown.

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

And to-day we are not honoring some butcher called a soldier — some wily politician called a statesman — some robber called a king, nor some malicious metaphysician called a saint. We are honoring the grand Humboldt, whose

victories were all achieved in the arena of thought; who destroyed prejudice, ignorance and error — not men; who shed light — not blood, and who contributed to the knowledge, the wealth, and the happiness of all mankind.

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

We honor him because he has ennobled our race, because he has contributed as much as any man living or dead to the real prosperity of the world. We honor him because he honored us — because he labored for others — because he was the most learned man of the most learned nation — because he left a legacy of glory to every human being. For these reasons he is honored throughout the world. Millions are doing homage to his genius at this moment, and millions are pronouncing his name with reverence and recounting what he accomplished.

We associate the name of Humboldt with oceans, continents, mountains, and volcanoes — with the great palms — the wide deserts — the snow-lipped craters of the Andes — with primeval forests and European capitals — with wildernesses and universities — with savages and

savans — with the lonely rivers of unpeopled wastes — with peaks and pampas, and steppes, and cliffs and crags — with the progress of the world — with every science known to man, and with every star glittering in the immensity of space.

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

versal Mother — and with her loving arms around him, sank into that slumber called Death.

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

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

"THE UNIVERSE IS GOVERNED BY LAW!"

THOMAS PAINE.

THOMAS PAINE.

With His Name Left Out, the History of Liberty Cannot be Written.

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

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

One of the bravest soldiers in this army was

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

Poverty was his mother — Necessity his master.

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

In England he was nothing. He belonged to

the lower classes. There was no avenue open for him. The people hugged their chains, and the whole power of the government was ready to crush any man who endeavored to strike a blow for the right.

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

Upon his arrival in this country, he found himself possessed of a letter of introduction, signed by another Infidel, the illustrious Franklin. This, and his native genius, constituted his entire capital; and he needed no more. He found the colonies clamoring for justice; whining about their grievances; upon their knees at the foot of the throne, imploring that mixture of idiocy and insanity, George the III, by the grace of God, for a restoration of their ancient privileges. They were not endeavoring to become free men, but were trying to soften the heart of their mas-

ter. They were perfectly willing to make brick if Pharaoh would furnish the straw. The colonists wished for, hoped for, and prayed for reconciliation. They did not dream of independence.

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

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

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

A new nation was born.

It is simple justice to say that Paine did more to cause the Declaration of Independence than any other man. Neither should it be forgotten that his attacks upon Great Britain were also attacks upon monarchy; and while he convinced

the people that the colonies ought to separate from the mother country, he also proved to them that a free government is the best that can be instituted among men.

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

Paine was not content with having aroused the spirit of independence, but he gave every energy of his soul to keep that spirit alive. He

was with the army. He shared its defeats, its dangers, and its glory. When the situation became desperate, when gloom settled upon all, he gave them the "CRISIS." It was a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, leading the way to freedom, honor, and glory. He shouted to them, "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier, and the sunshine patriot, will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman."

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

Some said it was not to the interest of the colonies to be free. Paine answered this by saying, "To know whether it be the interest of

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

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

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

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

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

At the close of the Revolution, no one stood higher in America than Thomas Paine. The best, the wisest, the most patriotic, were his friends and admirers; and had he been thinking only of his own good he might have rested from his toils and spent the remainder of his life in comfort and in ease. He could have been what the world is pleased to call "respectable." He could have died surrounded by clergymen, warriors and statesmen. At his death there would

have been an imposing funeral, miles of carriages, civic societies, salvos of artillery, a nation in mourning, and, above all, a splendid monument covered with lies.

He chose rather to benefit mankind.

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

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

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

The dawn of a new day had appeared.

Thomas Paine went to France. Into the new

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

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

The fears of the administration were aroused, and Paine was prosecuted for libel and found guilty; and yet there is not a sentiment in the

entire work that will not challenge the admiration of every civilized man. It is a magazine of political wisdom, an arsenal of ideas, and an honor, not only to Thomas Paine, but to human nature itself. It could have been written only by the man who had the generosity, the exalted patriotism, the goodness to say, "The world is my country, and to do good my religion."

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

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

Upon taking his place in the Assembly he was appointed as one of a committee to draft a constitution for France. Had the French people taken the advice of Thomas Paine there would have been no "reign of terror." The streets of

Paris would not have been filled with blood. The Revolution would have been the grandest success of the world. The truth is that Paine was too conservative to suit the leaders of the French Revolution. They, to a great extent, were carried away by hatred, and a desire to destroy. They had suffered so long, they had borne so much, that it was impossible for them to be moderate in the hour of victory.

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

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

In the Assembly, where nearly all were demanding the execution of the king — where to

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

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

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

a genuine love for the right, he found himself imprisoned by the very people he had striven to save.

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

Thomas Paine had not finished his career.

He had spent his life thus far in destroying the power of kings, and now he turned his attention to the priests. He knew that every abuse had been embalmed in Scripture — that every outrage was in partnership with some holy text. He knew that the throne skulked behind the altar, and both behind a pretended revelation from God. By this time he had found that it was of little use to free the body and leave the mind in chains. He had explored the foundations of despotism, and had found them infinitely rotten. He had dug under the throne, and it occurred to him that he would take a look behind the altar.

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

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

It is wonderful that all his services were thus forgotten. It is amazing that one kind word did not fall from some pulpit; that some one did not accord to him, at least — honesty. Strange, that in the general denunciation some one did not

remember his labor for liberty, his devotion to principle, his zeal for the rights of his fellow-men. He had, by brave and splendid effort, associated his name with the cause of Progress. He had made it impossible to write the history of political freedom with his name left out. He was one of the creators of light; one of the heralds of the dawn. He hated tyranny in the name of kings, and in the name of God, with every drop of his noble blood. He believed in liberty and justice, and in the sacred doctrine of human equality. Under these divine banners he fought the battle of his life. In both worlds he offered his blood for the good of man. In the wilderness of America, in the French Assembly, in the sombre cell waiting for death, he was the same unflinching, unwavering friend of his race; the same undaunted champion of universal freedom. And for this he has been hated; for this the Church has violated even his grave.

This is enough to make one believe that nothing is more natural than for men to devour their benefactors. The people in all ages have crucified and glorified. Whoever lifts his voice against abuses, whoever arraigns the past at the

bar of the present, whoever asks the king to show his commission, or questions the authority of the priest, will be denounced as the enemy of man and God. In all ages reason has been regarded as the enemy of religion. Nothing has been considered so pleasing to the Deity as a total denial of the authority of your own mind. Self-reliance has been thought a deadly sin; and the idea of living and dying without the aid and consolation of superstition has always horrified the Church. By some unaccountable infatuation, belief has been and still is considered of immense importance. All religions have been based upon the idea that God will forever reward the true believer, and eternally damn the man who doubts or denies. Belief is regarded as the one essential thing. To practice justice, to love mercy, is not enough. You must believe in some incomprehensible creed. You must say, "Once one is three, and three times one is one." The man who practiced every virtue, but failed to believe, was execrated. Nothing so outrages the feelings of the Church as a moral unbeliever — nothing so horrible as a charitable Atheist.

When Paine was born, the world was religious, the pulpit was the real throne, and the churches

were making every effort to crush out of the brain the idea that it had the right to think.

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

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

He commenced with the assertion, "That any system of religion that has anything in it that shocks the mind of a child cannot be a true system." What a beautiful, what a tender sentiment! No wonder the Church began to hate him. He believed in one God, and no more. After this

life he hoped for happiness. He believed that true religion consisted in doing justice, loving mercy, in endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy, and in offering to God the fruit of the heart. He denied the inspiration of the Scriptures. This was his crime.

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

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

disliking Paine is that they have been forced to adopt so many of his opinions.

Paine thought the barbarities of the Old Testament inconsistent with what he deemed the real character of God. He believed that murder, massacre and indiscriminate slaughter had never been commanded by the Deity. He regarded much of the bible as childish, unimportant and foolish, The scientific world entertains the same opinion. Paine attacked the bible precisely in the same spirit in which he had attacked the pretensions of kings. He used the same weapons. All the pomp in the world could not make him cower. His reason knew no "Holy of Holies," except the abode of Truth. The sciences were then in their infancy. The attention of the really learned had not been directed to an impartial examination of our pretended revelation. It was accepted by most as a matter of course. The Church was all-powerful, and no one, unless thoroughly imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice, thought for a moment of disputing the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. The infamous doctrine that salvation depends upon belief — upon a mere intellectual conviction — was then believed and preached. To doubt was

to secure the damnation of your soul. This absurd and devilish doctrine shocked the common sense of Thomas Paine, and he denounced it with the fervor of honest indignation. This doctrine, although infinitely ridiculous, has been nearly universal, and has been as hurtful as senseless. For the overthrow of this infamous tenet, Paine exerted all his strength. He left few arguments to be used by those who should come after him, and he used none that have been refuted. The combined wisdom and genius of all mankind cannot possibly conceive of an argument against liberty of thought. Neither can they show why any one should be punished, either in this world or another, for acting honestly in accordance with reason; and yet a doctrine with every possible argument against it has been, and still is, believed and defended by the entire orthodox world. Can it be possible that we have been endowed with reason simply that our souls may be caught in its toils and snares, that we may be led by its false and delusive glare out of the narrow path that leads to joy into the broad way of everlasting death? Is it possible that we have been given reason simply that we may through faith

ignore its deductions, and avoid its conclusions? Ought the sailor to throw away his compass and depend entirely upon the fog? If reason is not to be depended upon in matters of religion, that is to say, in respect of our duties to the Deity, why should it be relied upon in matters respecting the rights of our fellows? Why should we throw away the laws given to Moses by God himself, and have the audacity to make some of our own? How dare we drown the thunders of Sinai by calling the ayes and noes in a petty legislature? If reason can determine what is merciful, what is just, the duties of man to man, what more do we want either in time or eternity?

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

If a man should tell you that he had the most beautiful painting in the world, and after taking you where it was should insist upon having your eyes shut, you would likely suspect,

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

So far as I am concerned, I most cheerfully admit that most Christians are honest, and most ministers sincere. We do not attack them; we attack their creed. We accord to them the same rights that we ask for ourselves. We believe that their doctrines are hurtful. We believe that the frightful text, "He that believes shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned," has covered the earth with blood. It has filled

the heart with arrogance, cruelty and murder. It has caused the religious wars; bound hundreds of thousands to the stake; founded inquisitions; filled dungeons; invented instruments of torture; taught the mother to hate her child; imprisoned the mind; filled the world with ignorance; persecuted the lovers of wisdom; built the monasteries and convents; made happiness a crime, investigation a sin, and self-reliance a blasphemy. It has poisoned the springs of learning; misdirected the energies of the world; filled all countries with want; housed the people in hovels; fed them with famine; and but for the efforts of a few brave Infidels it would have taken the world back to the midnight of barbarism, and left the heavens without a star.

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

Is it necessary to understand Hebrew in order to know that cruelty is not a virtue, that murder is inconsistent with infinite goodness, and that eternal punishment can be inflicted upon man

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

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

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

"That if any person shall hereafter, within this province, wittingly, maliciously, and advisedly, by writing or speaking, blaspheme or curse God, or deny our Saviour, Jesus Christ, to be the Son of God, or shall deny the Holy Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or the Godhead of any of the three persons, or the unity of the Godhead, or shall utter any profane words concerning the Holy Trinity, or any of the persons thereof, and shall thereof be convict by verdict, shall, for the first offense, be bored through the tongue, and fined twenty pounds to be levied of his body. And for the second offense, the offender shall be stigmatized by burning in the forehead with the letter B, and fined forty pounds. And that for the third offense, the offender shall suffer death without the benefit of clergy."

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

In the Old Testament, the death penalty was attached to hundreds of offenses. It has been the same in all Christian countries. To-day, in civilized governments, the death penalty is at-

tached only to murder and treason · and in some it has been entirely abolished. What a commentary upon the divine systems of the world!

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

the moral grandeur to say, "The world is my country, and to do good my religion." And this same Kirk abhorred the man who said, "Any system of religion that shocks the mind of a child cannot be a true system.'

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

About the beginning of the nineteenth century, a boy by the name of Thomas Aikenhead, was indicted and tried at Edinburgh for having denied the inspiration of the Scriptures, and for having, on several occasions, when cold, wished himself in hell that he might get warm. Notwithstanding the poor boy recanted and begged for mercy, he was found guilty and hanged. His body was thrown in a hole at the foot of the scaffold and covered with stones.

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

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

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

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

right, were to gambol on sunny slopes forever and forever.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In our country the Church was all-powerful, and although divided into many sects, would instantly unite to repel a common foe.

Paine struck the first grand blow.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

be expected this side of the clouds, and can only be attained by self-denial and faith; not self-denial for the good of others, but for the salvation of your own sweet self.

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

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

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

Cathedrals and domes, and chimes and chants — temples frescoed and groined and carved, and gilded with gold — altars and tapers, and paintings of virgin and babe — censer and chalice — chasuble, paten and alb — organs, and anthems and incense rising to the winged and blest — maniple, amice and stole — crosses and crosiers, tiaras and crowns — mitres and missals and masses — rosaries, relics and robes — martyrs and saints, and windows stained as with the blood of Christ — never, never for one moment awed the brave, proud spirit of the Infidel. He knew that all the pomp and glitter had been purchased with Liberty — that priceless jewel of the soul. In

looking at the cathedral he remembered the dungeon. The music of the organ was not loud enough to drown the clank of fetters. He could not forget that the taper had lighted the fagot. He knew that the cross adorned the hilt of the sword, and so where others worshiped, he wept and scorned.

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

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

I will tell the Church why.

You have imprisoned the human mind; you have been the enemy of liberty; you have burned us at the stake — wasted us upon slow fires — torn our flesh with iron; you have covered us with chains — treated us as outcasts; you have filled the world with fear; you have taken our wives and children from our arms; you have confiscated our property; you have denied us the right to testify in courts of justice; you have branded us with infamy; you have torn out our

tongues; you have refused us burial. In the name of your religion, you have robbed us of every right; and after having inflicted upon us every evil that can be inflicted in this world, you have fallen upon your knees, and with clasped hands implored your God to torment us forever.

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

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

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

We deny that religion is the end or object of this life. When it is so considered it becomes destructive of happiness — the real end of life. It becomes a hydra-headed monster, reaching in

terrible coils from the heavens, and thrusting its thousand fangs into the bleeding, quivering hearts of men. It devours their substance, builds palaces for God, (who dwells not in temples made with hands,) and allows his children to die in huts and hovels. It fills the earth with mourning, heaven with hatred, the present with fear, and all the future with despair.

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

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

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

And yet we are told by the Church that we have accomplished nothing; that we are simply

destroyers; that we tear down without building again.

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

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

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

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

It does seem as though the most zealous Christian must at times entertain some doubt as to the divine origin of his religion. For eighteen hundred years the doctrine has been preached. For more than a thousand years the Church had, to a great extent, the control of the civilized world, and what has been the result? Are the Christian nations patterns of charity and forbearance? On the contrary, their principal business is to destroy each other. More than five millions of Christians are trained, educated, and drilled to murder their fellow-christians. Every nation is groaning under a vast debt incurred in carrying on war against other Christians, or defending

itself from Christian assault. The world is covered with forts to protect Christians from Christians, and every sea is covered with iron monsters ready to blow Christian brains into eternal froth. Millions upon millions are annually expended in the effort to construct still more deadly and terrible engines of death. Industry is crippled, honest toil is robbed, and even beggary is taxed to defray the expenses of Christian warfare. There must be some other way to reform this world. We have tried creed, and dogma and fable, and they have failed; and they have failed in all the nations dead.

The people perish for the lack of knowledge.

Nothing but education — scientific education — can benefit mankind. We must find out the laws of nature and conform to them.

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

We need men with moral courage to speak and write their real thoughts, and to stand by their convictions, even to the very death. We need have no fear of being too radical. The

future will verify all grand and brave predictions. Paine was splendidly in advance of his time; but he was orthodox compared with the Infidels of to-day.

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

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

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

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

a giant that turns with tireless arm, the countless wheels of toil.

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

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

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

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

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

At the age of seventy-three, death touched his tired heart. He died in the land his genius

defended — under the flag he gave to the skies. Slander cannot touch him now — hatred cannot reach him more. He sleeps in the sanctuary of the tomb, beneath the quiet of the stars.

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

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

"THE WORLD IS MY COUNTRY, AND TO DO GOOD MY RELIGION"

INDIVIDUALITY.

INDIVIDUALITY.

"His Soul was like a Star and dwelt apart."

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

the extent of contradicting the dead witnesses of a popular superstition. Society offers continual rewards for self-betrayal, and they are nearly all earned and claimed, and some are paid.

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

Suppose the astronomers had controlled the science of astronomy; suppose the doctors had controlled the science of medicine; suppose kings had been left to fix the forms of government; sup-

pose our fathers had taken the advice of Paul, who said, "be subject to the powers that be, because they are ordained of God;" suppose the Church could control the world to-day, we would go back to chaos and old night. Philosophy would be branded as infamous; Science would again press its pale and thoughtful face against the prison bars, and round the limbs of liberty would climb the bigot's flame.

It is a blessed thing that in every age some one has had individuality enough and courage enough to stand by his own convictions, — some one who had the grandeur to say his say. I believe it was Magellan who said, "The Church says the earth is flat; but I have seen its shadow on the moon, and I have more confidence even in a shadow than in the Church." On the prow of his ship were disobedience, defiance, scorn, and success.

The trouble with most people is, they bow to what is called authority; they have a certain reverence for the old because it is old. They think a man is better for being dead, especially if he has been dead a long time. They think the fathers of their nation were the greatest and

best of all mankind. All these things they implicitly believe because it is popular and patriotic, and because they were told so when they were very small, and remember distinctly of hearing mother read it out of a book. It is hard to over-estimate the influence of early training in the direction of superstition. You first teach children that a certain book is true — that it was written by God himself — that to question its truth is a sin, that to deny it is a crime, and that should they die without believing that book they will be forever damned without benefit of clergy. The consequence is, that long before they read that book, they believe it to be true. When they do read it their minds are wholly unfitted to investigate its claims. They accept it as a matter of course.

In this way the reason is overcome, the sweet instincts of humanity are blotted from the heart, and while reading its infamous pages even justice throws aside her scales, shrieking for revenge, and charity, with bloody hands, applauds a deed of murder. In this way we are taught that the revenge of man is the justice of God; that mercy is not the same everywhere. In this way the

ideas of our race have been subverted. In this way we have made tyrants, bigots, and inquisitors. In this way the brain of man has become a kind of palimpsest upon which, and over the writings of nature, superstition has scrawled her countless lies. One great trouble is that most teachers are dishonest. They teach as certainties those things concerning which they entertain doubts. They do not say, "we *think* this is so," but "we *know* this is so." They do not appeal to the reason of the pupil, but they command his faith. They keep all doubts to themselves; they do not explain, they assert. All this is infamous. In this way you may make Christians, but you cannot make men; you cannot make women. You can make followers, but no leaders; disciples, but no Christs. You may promise power, honor, and happiness to all those who will blindly follow, but you cannot keep your promise.

A monarch said to a hermit, "Come with me and I will give you power."

"I have all the power that I know how to use," replied the hermit.

"Come," said the king, "I will give you wealth."

"I have no wants that money can supply," said the hermit.

"I will give you honor," said the monarch.

"Ah, honor cannot be given, it must be earned," was the hermit's answer.

"Come," said the king, making a last appeal, "and I will give you happiness."

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

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

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

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

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

brand, and perjury her oath, and the law its power, and bigotry tortures, and the Church kills.

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

feet, and voluntarily robs himself of all that renders man superior to the brute.

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

All that is good in our civilization is the result of commerce, climate, soil, geographical position,

industry, invention, discovery, art, and science. The Church has been the enemy of progress, for the reason that it has endeavored to prevent man thinking for himself. To prevent thought is to prevent all advancement except in the direction of faith.

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

Over the vast plain, called life, we are all travelers, and not one traveler is perfectly certain that he is going in the right direction. True it is that no other plain is so well supplied with guide-boards. At every turn and crossing you will find them, and upon each one is written the exact

direction and distance. One great trouble is, however, that these boards are all different, and the result is that most travelers are confused in proportion to the number they read. Thousands of people are around each of these signs, and each one is doing his best to convince the traveler that his particular board is the only one upon which the least reliance can be placed, and that if his road is taken the reward for so doing will be infinite and eternal, while all the other roads are said to lead to hell, and all the makers of the other guide-boards are declared to be heretics, hypocrites and liars. "Well," says a traveler, "you may be right in what you say, but allow me at least to read some of the other directions and examine a little into their claims. I wish to rely a little upon my own judgment in a matter of so great importance." "No, sir," shouts the zealot, "that is the very thing you are not allowed to do. You must go my way without investigation, or you are as good as damned already." "Well," says the traveler, "if that is so, I believe I had better go your way." And so most of them go along, taking the word of those who know as little as themselves. Now and then comes one who, in

spite of all threats, calmly examines the claims of all, and as calmly rejects them all. These travelers take roads of their own, and are denounced by all the others, as infidels and atheists.

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

In my judgment, every human being should take a road of his own. Every mind should be true to itself — should think, investigate and conclude for itself. This is a duty alike incumbent upon pauper and prince. Every soul should repel dictation and tyranny, no matter from what source they come — from earth or heaven, from men or gods. Besides, every traveler upon this vast plain should give to every other traveler his best idea as to the road that should be taken. Each is entitled to the honest opinion of all. And there is but one way to get an honest opinion upon any subject whatever. The person giving the opinion must be free from fear. The merchant must not fear to lose his custom, the

doctor his practice, nor the preacher his pulpit. There can be no advance without liberty. Suppression of honest inquiry is retrogression, and must end in intellectual night. The tendency of orthodox religion to-day is toward mental slavery and barbarism. Not one of the orthodox ministers dare preach what he thinks if he knows a majority of his congregation think otherwise. He knows that every member of his church stands guard over his brain with a creed, like a club, in his hand. He knows that he is not expected to search after the truth, but that he is employed to defend the creed. Every pulpit is a pillory, in which stands a hired culprit, defending the justice of his own imprisonment.

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

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

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

There is no saying more degrading than this: "It is better to be the tail of a lion than the head of a dog." It is a responsibility to think and act for yourself. Most people hate responsibility; therefore they join something and become the tail of some lion. They say, "My party can act for me — my church can do my thinking. It is enough for me to pay taxes and obey the lion to which I belong, without troubling myself about the right, the wrong, or the why or the wherefore

of anything whatever." These people are respectable. They hate reformers, and dislike exceedingly to have their minds disturbed. They regard convictions as very disagreeable things to have. They love forms, and enjoy, beyond everything else, telling what a splendid tail their lion has, and what a troublesome dog their neighbor is. Besides this natural inclination to avoid personal responsibility, is and always has been, the fact, that every religionist has warned men against the presumption and wickedness of thinking for themselves. The reason has been denounced by all Christendom as the only unsafe guide. The Church has left nothing undone to prevent man following the logic of his brain. The plainest facts have been covered with the mantle of mystery. The grossest absurdities have been declared to be self-evident facts. The order of nature has been, as it were, reversed, that the hypocritical few might govern the honest many. The man who stood by the conclusion of his reason was denounced as a scorner and hater of God and his holy Church. From the organization of the first Church until this moment, to think your own thoughts has been inconsistent with mem-

bership. Every member has borne the marks of collar, and chain, and whip. No man ever seriously attempted to reform a Church without being cast out and hunted down by the hounds of hypocrisy. The highest crime against a creed is to change it. Reformation is treason.

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

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

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

For thousands of years a thinker was hunted down like an escaped convict. To him who had braved the Church, every door was shut, every knife was open. To shelter him from the wild storm, to give him a crust when dying, to put a cup of water to his cracked and bleeding lips; these were all crimes, not one of which the

Church ever did forgive; and with the justice taught of her God, his helpless children were exterminated as scorpions and vipers.

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

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

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

withered and shrunken into the Jehovah of the Jews; that all the longings and aspirations of the race are realized in the motto of the Evangelical Alliance, "Liberty in non-essentials;" that all there is, or ever was, of religion can be found in the apostles' creed; that there is nothing left to be discovered; that all the thinkers are dead, and all the living should simply be believers; that we have only to repeat the epitaph found on the grave of wisdom; that grave-yards are the best possible universities, and that the children must be forever beaten with the bones of the fathers.

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

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

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

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

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

A believer is a bird in a cage, a free-thinker is an eagle parting the clouds with tireless wing.

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

Why is it that these Christians not only detest the infidels, but cordially despise each other? Why do they refuse to worship in the temples of each other? Why do they care so little for the damnation of men, and so much for the baptism of children? Why will they adorn their churches with the money of thieves and flatter vice for the sake of subscriptions? Why will they attempt to bribe Science to certify to the writings

of God? Why do they torture the words of the great into an acknowledgment of the truth of Christianity? Why do they stand with hat in hand before presidents, kings, emperors, and scientists, begging, like Lazarus, for a few crumbs of religious comfort? Why are they so delighted to find an allusion to Providence in the message of Lincoln? Why are they so afraid that some one will find out that Paley wrote an essay in favor of the Epicurean philosophy, and that Sir Isaac Newton was once an infidel? Why are they so anxious to show that Voltaire recanted; that Paine died palsied with fear; that the Emperor Julian cried out "Galilean, thou hast conquered"; that Gibbon died a Catholic; that Agassiz had a little confidence in Moses; that the old Napoleon was once complimentary enough to say that he thought Christ greater than himself or Cæsar; that Washington was caught on his knees at Valley Forge; that blunt old Ethan Allen told his child to believe the religion of her mother; that Franklin said, "Don't unchain the tiger," and that Volney got frightened in a storm at sea?

Is it because the foundation of their temple is crumbling, because the walls are cracked, the

pillars leaning, the great dome swaying to its fall, and because Science has written over the high altar its MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN — the old words, destined to be the epitaph of all religions ?

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

I will not say the Church has been an unmitigated evil in all respects. Its history is infamous and glorious. It has delighted in the production of extremes. It has furnished murderers for its own martyrs. It has sometimes fed the body, but has always starved the soul. It has been a charitable highwayman — a profligate beggar — a generous pirate. It has produced some angels and a multitude of devils. It has built more prisons than asylums. It made a hundred orphans while it cared for one. In one hand it has carried the alms-dish and in the other a sword. It has founded schools and endowed universities for

the purpose of destroying true learning. It filled the world with hypocrites and zealots, and upon the cross of its own Christ it crucified the individuality of man. It has sought to destroy the independence of the soul and put the world upon its knees. This is its crime. The commission of this crime was necessary to its existence. In order to compel obedience it declared that it had the truth, and all the truth; that God had made it the keeper of his secrets; his agent and his vicegerent. It declared that all other religions were false and infamous. It rendered all compromise impossible and all thought superfluous. Thought was its enemy, obedience was its friend. Investigation was fraught with danger; therefore investigation was suppressed. The holy of holies was behind the curtain. All this was upon the principle that forgers hate to have the signature examined by an expert, and that imposture detests curiosity.

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

In short, Christianity has always opposed every forward movement of the human race. Across the highway of progress it has always

been building breastworks of bibles, tracts, commentaries, prayer-books, creeds, dogmas and platforms, and at every advance the Christians have gathered together behind these heaps of rubbish and shot the poisoned arrows of malice at the soldiers of freedom.

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

Even this, in my opinion, as Science, the great iconoclast, marches onward, will have to be abandoned with the rest. The great ghost will surely share the fate of the little ones. They fled at

the first appearance of the dawn, and the other will vanish with the perfect day. Until then the independence of man is little more than a dream. Overshadowed by an immense personality, in the presence of the irresponsible and the infinite, the individuality of man is lost, and he falls prostrate in the very dust of fear. Beneath the frown of the absolute, man stands a wretched, trembling slave, — beneath his smile he is at best only a fortunate serf. Governed by a being whose arbitrary will is law, chained to the chariot of power, his destiny rests in the pleasure of the unknown. Under these circumstances, what wretched object can he have in lengthening out his aimless life?

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

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

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

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

We have all been taught by the Church that nothing is so well calculated to excite the ire of the Deity as to express a doubt as to his existence, and that to deny it is an unpardonable sin. Numerous well-attested instances are referred to of atheists being struck dead for denying the existence of God. According to these religious

people, God is infinitely above us in every respect, infinitely merciful, and yet he cannot bear to hear a poor finite man honestly question his existence. Knowing, as he does, that his children are groping in darkness and struggling with doubt and fear; knowing that he could enlighten them if he would, he still holds the expression of a sincere doubt as to his existence, the most infamous of crimes. According to orthodox logic, God having furnished us with imperfect minds, has a right to demand a perfect result.

Suppose Mr. Smith should overhear a couple of small bugs holding a discussion as to the existence of Mr. Smith, and suppose one should have the temerity to declare, upon the honor of a bug, that he had examined the whole question to the best of his ability, including the argument based upon design, and had come to the conclusion that no man by the name of Smith had ever lived. Think then of Mr. Smith flying into an ecstacy of rage, crushing the atheist bug beneath his iron heel, while he exclaimed, "I will teach you, blasphemous wretch, that Smith is a diabolical fact!" What then can we think of a God who would open the artillery of heaven

upon one of his own children for simply expressing his honest thought? And what man who really thinks can help repeating the words of Ennius: "If there are gods they certainly pay no attention to the affairs of man."

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

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

Although we live in what is called a free government, — and politically we are free, — there is but little religious liberty in America. Society

demands, either that you belong to some church, or that you suppress your opinions. It is contended by many that ours is a Christian government, founded upon the bible, and that all who look upon that book as false or foolish are destroying the foundation of our country. The truth is, our government is not founded upon the rights of gods, but upon the rights of men. Our Constitution was framed, not to declare and uphold the deity of Christ, but the sacredness of humanity. Ours is the first government made by the people and for the people. It is the only nation with which the gods have had nothing to do. And yet there are some judges dishonest and cowardly enough to solemnly decide that this is a Christian country, and that our free institutions are based upon the infamous laws of Jehovah. Such judges are the Jeffries of the Church. They believe that decisions, made by hirelings at the bidding of kings, are binding upon man forever. They regard old law as far superior to modern justice. They are what might be called orthodox judges. They spend their days in finding out, not what ought to be, but what has been. With their backs to the sunrise they worship the

night. There is only one future event with which they concern themselves, and that is their re-election. No honest court ever did, or ever will, decide that our Constitution is Christian. The bible teaches that the powers that be, are ordained of God. The bible teaches that God is the source of all authority, and that all kings have obtained their power from him. Every tyrant has claimed to be the agent of the Most High. The Inquisition was founded, not in the name of man, but in the name of God. All the governments of Europe recognize the greatness of God, and the littleness of the people. In all ages, hypocrites, called priests, have put crowns upon the heads of thieves, called kings

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

chain, God was the acknowledged ruler of the world. To enthrone man, was to dethrone Him.

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

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

Notwithstanding all this, the spirit of persecution still lingers in our laws. In many of the

States; only those who believe in the existence of some kind of God, are under the protection of the law.

The supreme court of Illinois decided, in the year of grace 1856, that an unbeliever in the existence of an intelligent First Cause could not be allowed to testify in any court. His wife and children might have been murdered before his very face, and yet in the absence of other witnesses, the murderer could not have even been indicted. The atheist was a legal outcast. To him, Justice was not only blind, but deaf. He was liable, like other men, to support the government, and was forced to contribute his share towards paying the salaries of the very judges who decided that under no circumstances could his voice be heard in any court. This was the law of Illinois, and so remained until the adoption of the new Constitution. By such infamous means has the Church endeavored to chain the human mind, and protect the majesty of her God. The fact is, we have no national religion, and no national God; but every citizen is allowed to have a religion and a God of his own, or to reject all religions and deny the existence of all gods. The Church,

however, never has, and never will understand and appreciate the genius of our government.

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

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

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

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

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

"Do you believe the bible," said I.

He replied, "Most assuredly."

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

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

It is the duty of each and every one to maintain his individuality. "This above all, to thine own-

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

Surely every human being ought to attain to the dignity of the *unit.* Surely it is worth something to be *one*, and to feel that the census of the universe would be incomplete without counting you. Surely there is grandeur in knowing that in the realm of thought, at least, you are without a chain; that you have the right to explore all heights and all depths; that there are no walls nor fences, nor prohibited places, nor sacred corners in all the vast expanse of thought; that your intellect owes no allegiance to any being, human or

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

HERETICS AND HERESIES.

HERETICS AND HERESIES.

Liberty, a Word without which all other Words are Vain.

WHOEVER has an opinion of his own, and honestly expresses it, will be guilty of heresy. Heresy is what the minority believe; it is the name given by the powerful to the doctrine of the weak. This word was born of the hatred, arrogance and cruelty of those who love their enemies, and who, when smitten on one cheek, turn the other. This word was born of intellectual slavery in the feudal ages of thought. It was an epithet used in the place of argument. From the commencement of the Christian era, every art has been exhausted and every conceivable punishment inflicted to force all people to hold the same religious opinions. This effort was born of the idea that a certain belief was necessary to the salvation of the soul. Christ taught,

and the Church still teaches, that unbelief is the blackest of crimes. God is supposed to hate with an infinite and implacable hatred, every heretic upon the earth, and the heretics who have died are supposed at this moment to be suffering the agonies of the damned. The Church persecutes the living and her God burns the dead.

It is claimed that God wrote a book called the Bible, and it is generally admitted that this book is somewhat difficult to understand. As long as the Church had all the copies of this book, and the people were not allowed to read it, there was comparatively little heresy in the world; but when it was printed and read, people began honestly to differ as to its meaning. A few were independent and brave enough to give the world their real thoughts, and for the extermination of these men the Church used all her power. Protestants and Catholics vied with each other in the work of enslaving the human mind. For ages they were rivals in the infamous effort to rid the earth of honest people. They infested every country, every city, town, hamlet and family. They appealed to the worst passions of the human heart. They sowed the seeds of

discord and hatred in every land. Brother denounced brother, wives informed against their husbands, mothers accused their children, dungeons were crowded with the innocent; the flesh of the good and true rotted in the clasp of chains; the flames devoured the heroic, and in the name of the most merciful God, his children were exterminated with famine, sword, and fire. Over the wild waves of battle rose and fell the banner of Jesus Christ. For sixteen hundred years the robes of the Church were red with innocent blood. The ingenuity of Christians was exhausted in devising punishment severe enough to be inflicted upon other Christians who honestly and sincerely differed with them upon any point whatever.

Give any orthodox church the power, and to-day they would punish heresy with whip, and chain, and fire. As long as a church deems a certain belief essential to salvation, just so long it will kill and burn if it has the power. Why should the Church pity a man whom her God hates? Why should she show mercy to a kind and noble heretic whom her God will burn in eternal fire? Why should a Christian be better

than his God? It is impossible for the imagination to conceive of a greater atrocity than has been perpetrated by the Church. Every nerve in the human body capable of pain has been sought out and touched by the Church.

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

Every church pretends that it has a revelation from God, and that this revelation must be given to the people through the Church; that the Church acts through its priests, and that ordinary mortals must be content with a revelation — not from God — but from the Church. Had the people submitted to this preposterous claim, of course there could have been but one church, and that church never could have advanced. It might have retrograded, because it is not necessary to think or

investigate in order to forget. Without heresy there could have been no progress.

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

In those days the cross and rack were inseparable companions. Across the open bible lay the sword and fagot. Not content with burning such heretics as were alive, they even tried the dead, in order that the Church might rob their wives and children. The property of all heretics was confiscated, and on this account they charged the dead with being heretical — indicted, as it were, their dust — to the end that the Church might clutch

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

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

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

In 1208 the Inquisition was established. Seven years afterward, the fourth council of the Lateran enjoined all kings and rulers to swear an oath that they would exterminate heretics from their dominions. The sword of the Church was unsheathed, and the world was at the mercy of ignorant and infuriated priests, whose eyes feasted upon the agonies they inflicted. Acting, as they believed,

or pretended to believe, under the command of God; stimulated by the hope of infinite reward in another world — hating heretics with every drop of their bestial blood; savage beyond description; merciless beyond conception, — these infamous priests, in a kind of frenzied joy, leaped upon the helpless victims of their rage. They crushed their bones in iron boots; tore their quivering flesh with iron hooks and pincers; cut off their lips and eyelids; pulled out their nails, and into the bleeding quick thrust needles; tore out their tongues; extinguished their eyes; stretched them upon racks; flayed them alive; crucified them with their heads downward; exposed them to wild beasts; burned them at the stake; mocked their cries and groans; ravished their wives; robbed their children, and then prayed God to finish the holy work in hell.

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

every other Christian who denied the smallest fraction of his creed.

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

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

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

Third, That priests should not marry.

Fourth, That vows of chastity were of perpetual obligation.

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

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

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

creed should be made by parliament, so that whatever might be lacking in evidence might be made up in force. The punishment for denying the first article was death by fire. For the denial of any other article, imprisonment, and for the second offense—death.

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

Similar laws were passed in most Christian countries, as all orthodox churches firmly believed that mankind could be legislated into heaven. According to the creed of every church, slavery leads to heaven, liberty leads to hell. It was claimed that God had founded the Church, and that to deny the authority of the Church was to be a traitor to God, and consequently an ally of the devil. To torture and destroy one of the soldiers of Satan was a duty no good Christian cared to neglect. Nothing can be sweeter than to earn the gratitude of God by killing your own enemies. Such a mingling of profit and revenge, of heaven

for yourself and damnation for those you dislike, is a temptation that your ordinary Christian never resists.

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

voured; pitiless as famine, merciless as fire, with the conscience of a serpent: such is the history of the Church of God.

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

that the blood of the unbeliever is a most acceptable sacrifice to heaven.

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

Men and women have been burned for thinking there is but one God; that there was none; that the Holy Ghost is younger than God; that God was somewhat older than his son; for insisting that good works will save a man without faith; that faith will do without good works; for declaring that a sweet babe will not be burned eternally, because its parents failed to have its head wet by a priest; for speaking of God as though he had a nose; for denying that Christ was his own father; for contending that three

persons, rightly added together, make more than one; for believing in purgatory; for denying the reality of hell; for pretending that priests can forgive sins; for preaching that God is an essence; for denying that witches rode through the air on sticks; for doubting the total depravity of the human heart; for laughing at irresistible grace, predestination and particular redemption; for denying that good bread could be made of the body of a dead man; for pretending that the pope was not managing this world for God, and in the place of God; for disputing the efficacy of a vicarious atonement; for thinking the Virgin Mary was born like other people; for thinking that a man's rib was hardly sufficient to make a good-sized woman; for denying that God used his finger for a pen; for asserting that prayers are not answered, that diseases are not sent to punish unbelief; for denying the authority of the bible; for having a bible in their possession; for attending mass, and for refusing to attend; for wearing a surplice; for carrying a cross, and for refusing; for being a Catholic, and for being a Protestant; for being an Episcopalian, a Presbyterian, a Baptist, and for being a Quaker. In

short, every virtue has been a crime, and every crime a virtue. The Church has burned honesty and rewarded hypocrisy. And all this, because it was commanded by a book—a book that men had been taught implicitly to believe, long before they knew one word that was in it. They had been taught that to doubt the truth of this book —to examine it, even—was a crime of such enormity that it could not be forgiven, either in this world or in the next.

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

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

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

This man forged five fetters for the brain. These fetters he called points. That is to say, predestination, particular redemption, total depravity, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints. About the neck of each follower he put a collar bristling with these five iron points. The presence of all these points on the collar is still the test of orthodoxy in the church he founded. This man, when in the flush of youth, was elected to the office of preacher in Geneva. He at once, in union with Farel, drew up a condensed statement of the Presbyterian doctrine, and all the citizens of Geneva, on pain of banishment, were compelled to take an oath that they believed this statement. Of this proceeding Calvin very innocently remarked that it produced great satisfaction. A man named Caroli had the audacity to dispute with Calvin. For this outrage he was banished.

To show you what great subjects occupied the attention of Calvin, it is only necessary to state that he furiously discussed the question as to whether the sacramental bread should be leavened or unleavened. He drew up laws regulating the cut of the citizens' clothes, and prescribing

their diet, and all those whose garments were not in the Calvin fashion were refused the sacrament. At last, the people becoming tired of this petty theological tyranny, banished Calvin. In a few years, however, he was recalled and received with great enthusiasm. After this he was supreme, and the will of Calvin became the law of Geneva.

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

In 1553 a man was tried at Vienne by the Catholic Church for heresy. He was convicted and sentenced to death by burning. It was apparently his good fortune to escape. Pursued by the sleuth hounds of intolerance he fled to Geneva for protection. A dove flying from hawks, sought safety in the nest of a vulture. This fugitive from the cruelty of Rome asked shelter from John Calvin, who had written a book in favor of religious toleration. Servetus had forgotten that this book was written by Calvin when in the minority; that it was written in weakness to be forgotten in power; that it was produced by fear instead of principle. He did not know

that Calvin had caused his arrest at Vienne, in France, and had sent a copy of his work, which was claimed to be blasphemous, to the archbishop. He did not then know that the Protestant Calvin was acting as one of the detectives of the Catholic Church, and had been instrumental in procuring his conviction for heresy. Ignorant of all this unspeakable infamy, he put himself in the power of this very Calvin. The maker of the Presbyterian creed caused the fugitive Servetus to be arrested for blasphemy. He was tried. Calvin was his accuser. He was convicted and condemned to death by fire. On the morning of the fatal day, Calvin saw him, and Servetus, the victim, asked forgiveness of Calvin, the murderer. Servetus was bound to the stake, and the fagots were lighted. The wind carried the flames somewhat away from his body, so that he slowly roasted for hours. Vainly he implored a speedy death. At last the flames climbed round his form; through smoke and fire his murderers saw a white heroic face. And there they watched until a man became a charred and shriveled mass.

Liberty was banished from Geneva, and nothing but Presbyterianism was left. Honor,

justice, mercy, reason and charity were all exiled; but the five points of predestination, particular redemption, irresistible grace, total depravity, and the certain perseverance of the saints remained instead.

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

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

of the innocence of honest error, crucified Christ afresh, and by him he was pursued until rescued by the hand of death.

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

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

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

The doctrines of Calvin spread rapidly, and were eagerly accepted by multitudes on the continent; but Scotland, in a few years, became the real

fortress of Presbyterianism. The Scotch succeeded in establishing the same kind of theocracy that flourished in Geneva. The clergy took possession and control of everybody and everything. It is impossible to exaggerate the mental degradation, the abject superstition of the people of Scotland during the reign of Presbyterianism. Heretics were hunted and devoured as though they had been wild beasts. The gloomy insanity of Presbyterianism took possession of a great majority of the people. They regarded their ministers as the Jews did Moses and Aaron. They believed that they were the especial agents of God, and that whatsoever they bound in Scotland would be bound in heaven. There was not one particle of intellectual freedom. No man was allowed to differ with the Church, or to even contradict a priest. Had Presbyterianism maintained its ascendency, Scotland would have been peopled by savages to-day.

The revengeful spirit of Calvin took possession of the Puritans, and caused them to redden the soil of the New World with the brave blood of honest men. Clinging to the five points of Calvin, they too established governments in accordance

with the teachings of the Old Testament. They too attached the penalty of death to the expression of honest thought. They too believed their church supreme, and exerted all their power to curse this continent with a spiritual despotism as infamous as it was absurd. They believed with Luther that universal toleration is universal error, and universal error is universal hell. Toleration was denounced as a crime.

Fortunately for us, civilization has had a softening effect even upon the Presbyterian Church. To the ennobling influence of the arts and sciences the savage spirit of Calvinism has, in some slight degree, succumbed. True, the old creed remains substantially as it was written, but by a kind of tacit understanding it has come to be regarded as a relic of the past. The cry of "heresy" has been growing fainter and fainter, and, as a consequence, the ministers of that denomination have ventured, now and then, to express doubts as to the damnation of infants, and the doctrine of total depravity. The fact is, the old ideas became a little monotonous to the people. The fall of man, the scheme of redemption and irresistible grace, began to have a familiar sound. The preachers told the old stories

while the congregations slept. Some of the ministers became tired of these stories themselves. The five points grew dull, and they felt that nothing short of irresistible grace could bear this endless repetition. The outside world was full of progress, and in every direction men advanced, while this church, anchored to a creed, idly rotted at the shore. Other denominations, imbued some little with the spirit of investigation, were springing up on every side, while the old Presbyterian ark rested on the Ararat of the past, filled with the theological monsters of another age.

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

These utterances have upon several occasions so nearly wakened some of the members that, rubbing their eyes, they have feebly inquired whether these grand ideas were not somewhat heretical. These ministers found that just in the proportion that their orthodoxy decreased, their congregations

increased. Those who dealt in the pure unadulterated article found themselves demonstrating the five points to a less number of hearers than they had points. Stung to madness by this bitter truth, this galling contrast, this harassing fact, the really orthodox have raised the cry of heresy, and expect with this cry to seal the lips of honest men. One of the Presbyterian ministers, and one who has been enjoying the luxury of a little honest thought, and the real rapture of expressing it, has already been indicted, and is about to be tried by the Presbytery of Illinois. He is charged—

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

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

Who can estimate the misery that has been caused by this most infamous doctrine of eternal punishment? Think of the lives it has blighted—of the tears it has caused—of the agony it has produced. Think of the millions who have been driven to insanity by this most terrible of dogmas. This doctrine renders God the basest and most

cruel being in the universe. Compared with him, the most frightful deities of the most barbarous and degraded tribes are miracles of goodness and mercy. There is nothing more degrading than to worship such a god. Lower than this the soul can never sink. If the doctrine of eternal damnation is true, let me share the fate of the unconverted; let me have my portion in hell, rather than in heaven with a god infamous enough to inflict eternal misery upon any of the sons of men.

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

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

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

Can that tongue be palsied by a presbytery that praises a self-denying and heroic life? Is it

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

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

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

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

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

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

as well as the death of the murderer." What would you then think of the doctrine of "vicarious sacrifice?"

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

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

The Church believes and teaches the exact opposite of this doctrine. According to the philosophy of theology, man has continued to degenerate for six thousand years. To teach that there is that in nature which impels to higher forms and grander ends, is heresy, of course. The Deity will damn Spencer and his "Evolution," Darwin and his "Origin of Species," Bastian and his "Spontaneous Generation," Huxley and his "Protoplasm," Tyndall and his "Prayer Gauge," and will save those, and those only, who declare that the universe has been cursed, from the smallest atom to the grandest star; that everything tends to evil and to that only, and that the only perfect thing in nature is the Presbyterian Confession of Faith.

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

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

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

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

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

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

If this doctrine is true, God, to say the least of it, is an exceedingly poor judge of human nature. It is more than a century since a man of true genius has been found in an orthodox pulpit. Every minister is heretical just to the extent that his intellect is above the average. The Lord seems to be satisfied with mediocrity; but the people are not.

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

There is nothing more stupidly egotistic than the claim of the clergy that they are, in some divine sense, set apart to the service of the Lord; that they have been chosen, and sanctified; that

there is an infinite difference between them and persons employed in secular affairs. They teach us that all other professions must take care of themselves; that God allows anybody to be a doctor, a lawyer, statesman, soldier, or artist; that the Motts and Coopers — the Mansfields and Marshalls — the Wilberforces and Sumners — the Angelos and Raphaels, were never honored by a "call." They chose their professions and won their laurels without the assistance of the Lord. All these men were left free to follow their own inclinations, while God was busily engaged selecting and "calling" priests, rectors, elders, ministers and exhorters.

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

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

> Set thou a wicked man over him; and let Satan stand at his right hand.
>
> When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin.

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

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

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

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

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

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

* * * * * * * * *

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

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

Had this inspired psalm been found in some temple erected for the worship of snakes, or in the possession of some cannibal king, written with blood upon the dried skins of babes, there would have been a perfect harmony between its surroundings and its sentiments.

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

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

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

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

Did Cæsar take the city of Jericho "and utterly destroy all that was in the city, both men and women, young and old"? Did he smite "all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings, and

leave none remaining that breathed, as the Lord God had commanded"?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Of all the failures of which we have any history or knowledge, the missionary effort is the most conspicuous. The whole question has been decided here, in our own country, and conclusively settled. We have nearly exterminated the Indians, but we have converted none. From the days of John Eliot to the execution of the last

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

Why should we convert the heathen of China and kill our own? Why should we send missionaries across the seas, and soldiers over the plains? Why should we send bibles to the east and muskets to the west? If it is impossible to convert Indians who have no religion of their own; no prejudice for or against the "eternal procession of the Holy Ghost," how can we expect to convert a heathen who has a religion; who has plenty of gods and bibles and prophets and Christs, and who has a religious literature far grander than our own? Can we hope with the story of Daniel in the lions' den to rival the stupendous miracles of India? Is there anything

in our bible as lofty and loving as the prayer of the Buddhist? Compare your "Confession of Faith" with the following: "Never will I seek nor receive private individual salvation — never enter into final peace alone; but forever and everywhere will I live and strive for the universal redemption of every creature throughout all worlds. Until all are delivered, never will I leave the world of sin, sorrow, and struggle, but will remain where I am."

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

Why should you read even the New Testament to a Hindu, when his own Chrishna has said, "If a man strike thee, and in striking drop his staff, pick it up and hand it to him again"? Why send a Presbyterian to a Sufi, who says, "Better one moment of silent contemplation and inward love, than seventy thousand years of out-

ward worship"? "Whoso would carelessly tread one worm that crawls on earth, that heartless one is darkly alienate from God; but he that, living, embraceth all things in his love, to live with him God bursts all bounds above, below."

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

Compare this prayer with the curses and cruelties of the Old Testament—with the infamies commanded and approved by the being whom we are taught to worship as a God—and with the following tender product of Presbyterianism: "It may seem absurd to human wisdom that God should harden, blind, and deliver up some men to a reprobate sense; that he should first deliver them over to evil, and then condemn them for that evil; but the believing spiritual man sees no absurdity in all this, knowing that God would be never a whit less good even though he should destroy all men."

Of all the religions that have been produced by the egotism, the malice, the ignorance and

ambition of man, Presbyterianism is the most hideous.

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

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

Another effort is being made to enslave a man.

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

Smith, where everything was cold except the water, and everything sour except the vinegar.

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

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

And what does a trial for heresy mean? It means that the Church says to a heretic, "Believe as I do, or I will withdraw my support. I will not employ you. I will pursue you until your garments are rags; until your children cry for bread; until your cheeks are furrowed with tears. I will hunt you to the very portals of the

tomb, and then my God will do the rest. I will not imprison you. I will not burn you. The law prevents my doing that. I helped make the law, not however to protect you, nor to deprive me of the right to exterminate you, but in order to keep other churches from exterminating me."

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

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

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

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

Heresy extends the hospitalities of the brain to a new thought.

Heresy is a cradle; orthodoxy, a coffin.

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

Is it possible that an infinite Deity is unwill-

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

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

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

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

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

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

The real bible is not the work of inspired men, nor prophets, nor apostles, nor evangelists, nor of Christs. Every man who finds a fact, adds, as it were, a word to this great book. It is not attested by prophecy, by miracles or signs. It makes no appeal to faith, to ignorance, to credulity or fear. It has no punishment for

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

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