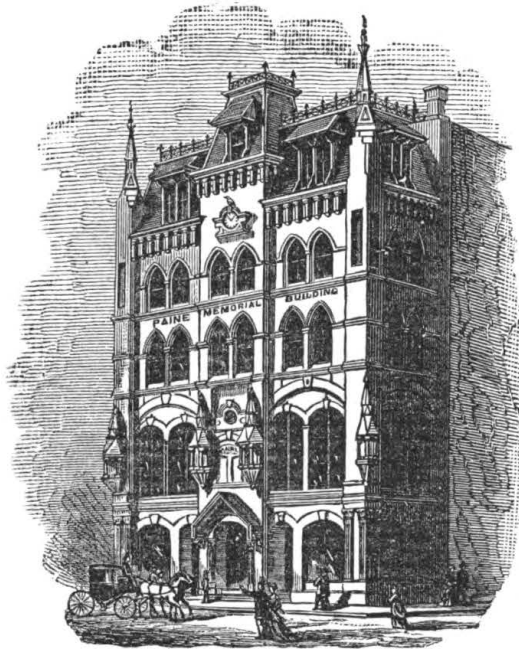


THE INFIDEL PULPIT.

LECTURES BY GEORGE CHAINEY.

VOLUME I.



"The World is my Country. To do good my Religion."—*Thomas Paine.*

"Those who can read the signs of the times read in them that the kingdom of man is at hand."
—*Clifford.*

PUBLISHED BY

GEORGE CHAINEY,

51 FORT AVENUE, ROXBURY, BOSTON, MASS.

306600

JUL 21 1926

BSG

.C34

TO

MARTHA A. CHAINEY,

MY WIFE,

*Who has kept close to my side in all the changes of relation and thought
compelled by devotion to truth, preferring a crust with
self-respect to plenty with hypocrisy, this
volume is*

DEDICATED.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. LESSONS FROM THE LIFE AND WORK OF KARL HEINZEN	1
II. MINOT SAVAGE'S TALKS ABOUT GOD	11
III. MORAL OBJECTIONS TO THE GOD IDEA	22
IV. NATURE AND DECLINE OF UNITARIANISM	30
V. ROBERT G. INGERSOLL	38
VI. ASSASSINATION OF THE CZAR	46
VII. LIGHTS AND SHADES OF LIBERALISM	53
VIII. THE SPIRIT OF THE PRESS	62
IX. RELICS OF BARBARISM	69
X. THE SPHINX	77
XI. THE CHOIR INVISIBLE	84
XII. LESSONS FOR TO-DAY, FROM WALT WHITMAN	91
XIII. TRUE DEMOCRACY	98
XIV. MY RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE	105
XV. THE IDEAL MAN AND WOMAN	111
XVI. WHAT IS MORALITY?	118
XVII. WHAT IS RELIGION?	125
XVIII. THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE	132

PREFACE.

THE following explanation of this book will increase its interest for many readers. I commenced to preach in my eighteenth year, spent seven years in the Methodist and three in the Unitarian ministry. Through all these years, every book I read and every experience of life led me toward the conclusion that theology is all the baseless fabric of a dream. After separating the last tie that bound me to the Church, and finding myself outside of all fences, a free rover on the broad, bright, breezy, and unfenced prairie of the universe, I endeavored to make the world my parish by lecturing from place to place. This necessitated continued absence from my family that was very painful, and enforced a waste of time and neglect of study, to me utterly demoralizing. While recognizing the value of this work and honoring the men and women who have done it so nobly and successfully, I cherished the idea that Liberalism was capable of interesting and holding a permanent audience, and that, by lecturing every week in some large city, I could do more good for humanity than in the itinerant field. Inspired by this conviction, I wrote to Elizur Wright, President of the Paine Memorial Corporation, and offered to undertake a lectureship in Paine Hall. He immediately seconded the motion, and presented it to the annual meeting of the stockholders of the corporation. As it was thought best to make it an independent movement, the directors tendered for such purpose the use of Paine Hall, free of rent.

Through the generous assistance of Colonel R. G. Ingersoll, I was enabled to introduce myself to Bostonians by lecturing to a large audience in Music Hall, on "The Clergy," February 6. On the following Sunday, February 13, I lectured for the first time in Paine Hall, on "Our Work as Liberals." At the close of the lecture, the motion to establish me as a permanent lecturer was unanimously indorsed by the large audience present. Elizur Wright was appointed treasurer. Subsequently, the Paine Memorial Lecture Society was formed in a resolution that "all

holders of stock in the Paine Memorial Corporation, all contributors to the support of the lectures, and all subscribers to the *Infidel Pulpit* are entitled to act as members." The following ladies and gentlemen were chosen to officially act for the society: Horace Seaver, *Chairman of the Society. Executive Committee:* Elizur Wright, *Chairman*; George N. Hill, *Secretary*; Mrs. Rosa P. Heinzen, Mrs. James Harris, Frank Rivers, Simeon Palmer, George Chainey, Mrs. George Chainey, Miss Hattie E. Mendum, Ernest Mendum, Walter Elliot, F. C. Babbitt, Mrs. Howell Matson, John A. O'Malley, Walter C. Wright.

The printed lectures were commenced in the *Infidel Pulpit*, price \$1 a year, March 5, with the third lecture in the course, "Lessons from the Life and Work of Carl Heinzen." This, in the short space of four months, has reached a circulation of two thousand, and is still increasing every day. Many will be glad to learn that H. L. Green, the veteran liberal worker, is with me, acting as agent. I owe to all who have helped to contribute to the success of this movement a debt of gratitude I can never repay. I am under special obligation to Elizur Wright, to whom I think the whole world is in debt for his noble life and unselfish devotion to every good word and deed; to Walter C. Wright, who has shown himself the true son of his royal father; and to Messrs. Mendum and Seaver, proprietor and editor of the *Investigator*, for their most generous and hearty co-operation. The interest attached to the lectures has been largely increased by the fine music furnished by Miss Anna F. Baldwin, Miss Georgine Dewey, E. H. Smith, and Miles Joyce, under the able leadership of J. F. Wright.

Hoping that all who read these lectures will find as much pleasure and profit as I did in writing and delivering them, I send them out to the world fully conscious of their many imperfections. The ideal I fain would have portrayed has often soared above my reach. The glow at my heart for humanity has seemed to freeze when it fell from my lips in words. I have felt like one who has gone out in the morning and gathered a bouquet of flowers all sparkling with dew, but, before reaching those to whom he would give them, finds that they have lost all their pearly beauty. Still, as I have always done my level best, I trust you will take the will for the deed, and so encourage me in the struggle to find worthy expression for the truth of nature and religion of humanity.

GEORGE CHAINEY.

Lessons from the Life and Work of Karl Heinzen.

I FEEL as though it was my duty to commence this lecture with an explanation, if not an apology. I do not wish any one to think for a moment that I feel adequate to draw the full lesson that is to be learned from the life and work of Karl Heinzen. That can be done only by one who knew him personally, and to whom is open the rich storehouse of his thought, locked to me in the German language. The resolution to speak on this subject was born far more of feeling than of knowledge. It was an impulse of the heart, springing from the grateful remembrance of the service he had been to me. Such emotions often lead us to essay tasks which, though lying beyond our strength to accomplish, yet prove of infinite service to us, owing to the inspiration that must always flow forth from our striving to be true to our best instincts. He who never attempts to do anything that reason says lies beyond his reach will never do what is within the compass of attainment. All progress is made by striving to grasp more than we can hold. The results of human life are far more in what we become than in what we achieve. If it were otherwise, it were a mad world indeed. The last ten years of my life have been spent in learning things that have now to be set aside as worse than useless. When eighteen years of age, through following the impulse of my heart, I entered the service of the ministry, and gave my youthful enthusiasm to what Karl Heinzen called "the stony sum total of all

vices and all despotism, of all darkness and barbarity, the Church."

While if I could have been, through proper and early education, led to give the devotion I gave to the shadows and falsities of superstition to the realities and truths of nature, it would have been great gain, and saved me much mental and heart pain. Still, I cannot but acknowledge that, through being true to myself, even, that service was by no means lost. So, though I cannot paint for you the full life-picture of this great man, you will at least permit me, without blame, to cluster around his name a few flowers of truth, springing forth largely from my own heart, but watered and refreshed with the healthful light and rain of this man's thought and feeling. To some of you, he was doubtless an entire stranger. Perhaps you hardly knew that such a man lived and died among you. If you heard his name, it never thrilled you to the innermost recesses of your being, as it would if you had ever felt the sublime heroism of his moral and mental life.

His name was never hurraed by the crowd. The demagogues of our time never thought of asking him to lead them in a campaign, the almost sole aim of which is to gain the spoils of office. He seldom figured in the newspaper lists of notable personages. Still, that is no reason why he should be considered unworthy of your interest. These cheap notorieties are no criterion of real worth. The most potent

influences of nature are those that work silently. The light, the persistence of force, the law of gravitation, are mightier far than howling wind, noisy thunder, or roaring seas. We are awed by the strength of the thunder-bolt that shatters a mighty oak into splinters; but it was a far mightier task for the silent forces of nature that had wooed it out of the earth, and built it up patiently through the long years, until it stood there, firm-rooted in the ground, and spreading its broad limbs as if to caress at once the earth and skies in its glad embrace. Our life is like the earth reaching out into the infinities. If our world was not held from the sun by other planets, we would fall into the sun; and, if they were not held from us by still other stars, they would fall into us. And so on forever. So that beyond all the stars we see in a clear night—so far removed from us that their light, always travelling toward us, yet never reaches us—there are no doubt worlds that are still part of that incomprehensible, because endless, chain that binds us so firm and safe amid the Titanic and infinite forces of nature. So is it in the moral world. Our life is in some real way bound up with every other life. Each great and noble soul that has breathed forth sentiments of justice, truth, or liberty, has contributed to the moral atmosphere that goes to the making of our character, as truly as the physical atmosphere goes into the building of our bodies. Hence, in this lecture, I shall lay but little importance on the historical events of its subject's life. It scarcely matters where such a man was born and lived, so long as we know the quality of the work he performed. That is the thing that abides when names of places and dates carved on the most enduring granite or marble have crumbled into dust. My desire is not to train your memory, or even to eulogize, but simply to make you feel a little of the moral force of Karl Heinzen's life. This is the worship of the true Liberal. Worship means the recognition of worthship, and the heart and mind hungering to be blessed with the same.

Many have bent the knee this day to gods, creations of the imagination in the skies, hungering and thirsting to become more like those to whom they ascribe every excellence. The fears of ignorance and the craft of priests have mingled so much that is utterly unworthy with what is worthy in these ideals that the worshipper is degraded and cursed instead of elevated and blessed. While we abhor the object of worship, pity and respect the worshipper, still we cannot but reverence that inward hunger of the heart that leads them to look above them, craving goodness, as the flowers turn hungering and thirsting toward the light and dew of heaven. But for us the skies are depopulated. We no longer strain our eyes to see gods, any more than we think of looking for fairies when we take a walk in the woods. But that does not keep us from looking for the sweet wild-flowers that fill the air with fragrance, or for some new vista of beauty through the leafy avenues. Yea, the absence of all belief in these mystical beings has only prepared us the better to discern the worth of Nature, and to drink deeper draughts of inspiration from her perennial springs of beauty and truth. So, though we bend not the knee of craven fear in this temple of liberty, utter no fulsome eulogy to unseen and supernatural beings, yet our hearts and minds turn, hungering and thirsting, like the flowers to the sun, toward all worth, truth, justice, or beauty in man or nature. Though denying all religions, yet we are more than religious. Though scorning every form of prayer, yet we are more than prayerful. Though chanting no psalms, yet the sentiments that here exhale their fragrance should lift us on their wings into the spirit and harmony of the blending music of wisdom and love. Though blinded not with the dazzling glory of gods nor of supernatural saviors, yet every strong and true man or woman is for us a savior, and every principle that underlies the rights and joys of all the race worthy of the supreme loyalty of our hearts and minds. To reverence, to love, and to understand the worth of another,

whether living or dead, is not to flatter. No one can truly honor the worth of man but the Liberal. Every church is founded on the degradation of man. Every one who enters a church to join in the worship must leave his manhood at the door. Though he have walked uprightly among men, been a loving husband, a faithful father, a kind friend, divided his bread with the hungry, and comforted the afflicted, yet all that must be renounced, that he may give a jealous God all the glory, and say, "We beseech thee, good Lord, have mercy upon us, most miserable sinners." But here we claim all that we claim for ourselves on the street or at home. Here we honor and respect ourselves. Beneath this roof, erected to the memory of a true patriot and reformer, whose country was the world, and to do good his religion, we can unite to honor every other patriot and reformer whose life has been consecrated to the great and divine service of humanity, among whom there ranks none more worthy of our most sincere admiration and emulation than Karl Heinzen.

In his own words, we can say:—

"'Twas Freedom that my spirit fired and strengthened,
'Twas Truth that my heart's springtime kept and lengthened.

And Nature fed me silently my fill.

Not by base arts and flatteries sought I favor,

My speech ne'er of hypocrisy did savor,

Nor open truth held I as contraband.

The torch of thought I have kept brightly flaming;

Toward high endeavor have kept boldly aiming,

And never thought it shame to be a man."

It was only about a year ago since I was first introduced to the writings of Karl Heinzen, by one of his ardent admirers, Dr. Ludwig Fritch, of Evansville, Ind. It was at a critical time in my life. I had just made the acquaintance of Robert G. Ingersoll, and found that the highest intellectual power and the most Titanic affectional nature could live and flourish without any doctrine of religion. For three years, I had been steadily drifting away from supernaturalism. Christianity had become to me the embodiment of falsehood. The very idea of the Church was daily growing more and more repugnant to my sense of right.

As I turned page after page of the history of the past, I found that, in spite of all it boasts to have done for mankind, our art, our literature, our science, our education, our liberties, have all been torn from its covetous grasp from time to time in moments of sheer desperation, as starving men have sometimes snatched something to eat from the jaws of a cruel tiger. I was expected by my church to say God, to read hymns of fulsome eulogy, to open my lips in supplication, and compelled by my position to profess to be a Christian. I went to my task on Sundays like a whipped slave. I knew not what to do. To leave the Church was renouncing the only certain means I had of gaining a livelihood for myself and family. I had done it once before, and fortune favored me. But the pain of it, in the loss of love and friendship, had been so bitter that I constantly wondered how I endured it. In moments of enthusiasm, we often do things we can never repeat, because the retrospective glance palsies us with fear. Love and friendship are too precious to be lightly thrown away, especially when you know that all your honor will be treated with contempt, and you, who have been loyal at so great a cost, denounced as a traitor.

Perhaps, after all, I was deceived. Surely there must be some remnant of truth in these things before which the world had so long bowed. It was not much that was expected of me. I was already an infidel to every other church, and in this one I was supposed to be perfectly free. In this frame of mind, I took up carelessly for the first time a work of Karl Heinzen. On the fourth page, I read: "Religion, which pretends to be pre-eminently the teacher or even the creator of humanity, forms a direct contradiction of it, even should she prescribe many actions which in their special operation can be human. Robbing the human being of self-sovereignty, she thus robs him of his own motives, as well as his own aims; she crushes out this instinct of honor which makes him responsible to himself; she condemns his

highest power—reason—to suicide, in order to set faith above its grave; she makes his own nature an object of fear to him; she turns him away from real life, the only field for his human tasks, in order, in an imaginary life, to make him either a blessed angel who no longer needs humanity, or a condemned sinner whom she can help no more; she leaves him no free choice, but makes his will and his acts only the practice of obedience to an external law; and, where self-satisfaction should be his sole aim, she presses upon him as motive either the fear or the approval of a so-called higher authority. The religious believer is man denied and renounced: the free human being is man recognized and restored. In other words, man begins where ceases the believer; and the intelligent liberation from religion is the real development into manhood.” To describe my feelings is not possible. Every word was backed with my complete self-consciousness. I said to myself: Here is a man indeed from whose gaze no sham can hide the truth. This man not only speaks the truth, but is the truth. I read on through the pamphlet, intoxicated with a wild delight. Every line was as bright and luminous as the noonday sun, every word charged with justice and conscience. To break from the Church into the world where such a moral giant lived and toiled for truth and liberty became at once the noblest aim of life. To stand in company with such a mind seemed more desirable than the fellowship of all the timid, compromising sentimentalists whose communion I enjoyed in the Unitarian Church. Through the long vistas his prophetic mind opened before me, I saw grander ideals and possibilities of a noble, serviceable life than I had ever dreamed of before. From that day to this, I have never heard his name mentioned without its thrilling my whole being. One of the lessons he helped me to learn is that manhood, real humanity, is impossible without the total surrender of religion. He or she who makes any compromise with it does to that degree become inhuman. To be a man, one must

give to every other man every right he claims for himself. The supreme right of life is to be and belong to one's self, and whoever acknowledges any authority above man and the rights of man must regard his fellow-being in the light of a slave. He can neither belong to himself nor extend that right to anyone else. One may not love every one else. The command of Christianity to do so is unnatural. But it is always possible to be perfectly just toward and grant every right to the person who is for us the most disagreeable. What good does a profession of love do me from the man who picks my pocket or poisons the minds of my children with base principles? That is what the Christian Church is doing every moment of its existence. What has this boasted love done for humanity? It preaches submission to our enemies. We are to give to Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's, though his foot is on our necks. Its only comfort for the miserable and oppressed is the promise of future bliss. It feeds thousands with a few loaves and fishes; it keeps the slave a slave, and the beggar a beggar; it offers prayers in church for God's blessing on tyrants; it puts into the mouths of those who daily wrong us hypocritical professions, that disarm our just wrath and keep us helpless and dependent; it leads man to look for help from without, when his dependence should be upon himself; it throws the responsibilities of wrongs upon supernatural and absent parties whom we can bring neither to trial nor reformation.

If we could get God and the devil into school or a court of justice, we might induce them, as Burns advised one of them, to take a thought and mend. It keeps the head at war with the heart. The kingdom divided against itself or built on a compromise cannot stand. No more can the individual. Love cannot be commanded nor entreated. It must spring spontaneously out of the heart. There must be the outward conditions that produce it, just as much as there must be soil, light, and warmth to cause a plant to grow and blossom into beauty.

When violets grow on icebergs and snowdrifts, you may perhaps find a Christian, but not before. No law of man or of God, if there is one, can compel love. There is nothing in life that yields such bliss or out of which so many other blessings spring. But to endeavor to force it into existence generally drives it away. But right is the pure perception of reason. It need not be suspended by any one for an instant or on a single doubt. Let the mind be once free from the distortions and falsities of theology, and it at once perceives the fundamental law of the equality of human rights. Religion, from first to last, cultivates injustice and crime. Freethought and unbelief uphold right and justice, from first to last, for their own sakes. Every organized wrong and injustice can be traced to the influence of the Church in authorizing and maintaining standards of authority outside of the individual man. Every advance made by the world in the right adjustment of our social relations has been through the triumph of the spirit of humanity over external standards. Karl Heinzen saw clearly that all titles and honors of kingship and aristocracy, saintship and priesthood, and all obedience to any authority higher than the perception of human reason concerning what is right and just between man and man, is the surrender of our manhood. However much good desire there may be in the heart of the religious devotee, the giving up the right to think for himself, the loss of his own self-respect, the acknowledgment of an allegiance to a God, make him a criminal against humanity. He deepens the cloud of our ignorance, casts a stain upon our honor, and drags us deeper by all the weight of his character into the mire of degradation.

Another most valuable lesson I learned from Karl Heinzen was that the new idea of evolution and organic development is by no means to be worshipped as a god. There is a great tendency in our times to say that there is a stream of tendency, a law of growth, going on, and bearing us onward steadily to perfection. Because so much

has been accomplished in nature by evolution, thousands are so dazzled by this principle that they fail to see that revolution, or resistance to the tendency of things, is the highest prerogative of man. The ideal state, or justice, is perceived by pure reason; and, whatever may be the present condition of things, it is the duty of him who perceives this ideal to labor for its immediate realization. Though Heinzen applied this to the political world, I found it of great service in a serious solution, in the final settlement of my relation to religion. Liberalism has its isms, as you know, as well as Orthodoxy. One party believes in destruction, another in construction. There is quite a tendency among many to be frightened at any sign of hostility toward the Church. If you open your mouth against it, they insist upon it that you must be sweet as sugar and gentle as a zephyr. They seem to think that a pioneer can work with kid gloves on his hands, and that the Church's dungeons of despair and high, thick walls of sectarianism can be battered down by pelting them with roses. They talk a great deal about the orderly sequence of religious ideas, and the work of a cultured Liberalism. Now, while I believe in culture, and strive each day to gain some, yet I am sure that to many this word means moral cowardliness and sentimental aristocracy. They shrink from the rough work demanded of the pioneer; and so, instead of going bravely to work, and by dint of hard blows making a clearing in the forests of superstition, they sow their seed beneath its deep and dark shade, and then wonder why it doesn't grow. The excuse given for letting the Church alone is that it is not so objectionable as it used to be. But this is by no means so certain as many think. It is true that the lake of real fire and brimstone has been changed into a figure of rhetoric, illustrating the torments of conscience and moral despair. But, according to their own confession, spiritual joys and pains are more intense than physical; and so you see that this new charitable hell is a great deal worse

than the old one. They no longer torment the unbeliever with fire and sword. Still, they socially ostracize him, put him under a ban, whisper slander against him, warn young people to keep away from him as from a pest-house, rob him of his friends, and insult his memory after he is dead, all of which, to a sensitive soul, is worse than martyrdom.

Karl Heinzen was never deceived by any of these shams. He scorned to be tolerated or to tolerate. Open warfare was to him a thousand times preferable to peace by compromise. To him, the Church was the sum of all villany, and Christianity, in spite of its profession of universal love, a standing crime against humanity. He saw that, while it was allowed to exist, man must be less than man, service that ought to be given to suffering flesh and blood wasted on phantoms, nature dishonored, science obstructed, art debauched, and foul injustice in the social order be maintained. For his clear vision here, I owe him a debt of gratitude I can never repay. When I think of him in comparison with most liberal writers, who, instead of making truth clear, darken it with their scholarly refinements and mush of concessions to the Church, he seems to outshine them as the sun to a farthing candle. I know that there is a great deal of crudity among those that are in the radical camp: still, the crudest, most vulgar radicalism, if there be in it nothing but denial, is far better than the timid, over-refined, sentimental, compromising spirit of those who sit with folded hands, dreaming and taking their ease upon the sunny banks of the stream of tendency. The light of reason, when its flame burns clear and bright, disperses even the lingering fogs of superstition. It has no more parley with the man who says, "I feel that after all there is a kind of a something in the universe which I must call God and worship," than with the most ignorant, who says he has experienced a change of heart and feels the presence of God in his soul. Each alike is seen to be an unhealthy and a disturbing influence in the moral life of humanity.

Another lesson I learn from the life of this man is one of courage. When but a young man, he dared to speak words of truth and justice against oppression that endangered his life. Though for years he had to live abroad and flee from place to place, yet he continued to labor for the emancipation of his country from the yoke of despotism. Though in Europe and America much of his time was given to journalism, he never sought, as most do in that profession, to set his sails to catch the favoring breeze, but always steered right in the teeth of the wind and face of the storm, in order to rescue the distressed. He had the courage of his convictions, and followed them to their farthest command, though it ever led him to the post of danger, into the very heart of the conflict. Possessing powers of leadership which, Wendell Phillips says, made the highest positions within his reach, yet he lived in comparative seclusion and sometimes wavered rather than betray a principle on which his clear intellect saw depended the rights and joys of humanity. He believed in a perfect and just State, to be realized by perfect democracy. He had faith in the heart of the people. He was willing to trust all to the will of the majority,—not of the rich, or of the white race, or of the male element, but of every man and woman. Now there are many who profess to believe in democracy, pure and simple, who are afraid to carry it out to its logical results. Some wish to limit it with a property qualification, others with an educational one; and many think that, if woman has the ballot, she will enact prohibitory laws, banish tobacco, put God in the Constitution, a bishop at the White House, a majority of preachers in Congress, the Bible and prayer in all the schools, and in every way turn the shadow on the dial of progress backward. But Karl Heinzen feared none of these things. He believed in right, and the power of right. Woman might put God in the Constitution, but let this perfect equality be enshrined above all, and under its illumination he would soon come out again, and not

only out of the Constitution, but also out of human life. Justice begets justice, and injustice breeds injustice. Reason sees that pure and perfect democracy is the only just government, and therefore expects all things that are just will follow its realization. Let the will of the majority rule, and education and opportunity for all will be thrown wide open to all.

It is thought by some that our government is already purely republican in principle, when it is really very far from it. Our Constitution is modelled after that of Great Britain. We have almost all of its defects, and lack many of its virtues. Our king is deposed every four years; but he has greater power, and is under far more temptation to use it for selfish purposes. Our Senate is as truly an aristocracy as the House of Lords. Our people think that they are the sovereign power; but they abandon their sovereignty the moment they elect a representative, and do not take it again until his time expires. Under the debasing principle that to the "victor belong the spoils," and the vast power placed in the hands of the President, our politics have degenerated into the foulest slums of partisanship. Our press is vile, false, and malicious all through a campaign. Every election rends the community into warring factions, paralyzes business, and fills the air with slanderous lies concerning the candidates. The party press stoops to every vile and dirty machination, in order to conquer. Corruption of the public conscience in the buying of votes and the selling of office is openly practised. Almost every paper claims every virtue for its own party, and every vice as the stock in trade of the opposition. Nothing is too mean and malicious to be printed. To use an expression of Col. Ingersoll, "You would think that every editor had a private sewer of his own, into which had been emptied all the slops of hell." The nightly meetings, hot-headed speeches, appeals to the lowest passions, parades, and party malice fill the air with more obscenity than ever Comstock caught, breeding the unhealthy children of hate and jealousy.

Old and young, down to the very infants, are infected with the poisonous contagion. I was away from home during the last campaign, and when I returned I found even my little boys divided, and their minds filled with foul words, of which they knew not the meaning, but could not keep from learning, because the air was full of them. Occasionally, some one says this ought to be reformed. Something must be done, or we shall be ruined. Here and there, a pulpit feebly says the church members should reform politics, and then never says a word how, for fear of losing a pew-holder. After election, a few editors, with a slight flavor of conscience left, apologize in a witty way for the slander and stupid insanity that has reigned riot in their columns for months; and that is the last that is said or done until the old story is commenced again. Not so Karl Heinzen. He never shirked a duty because it failed to be popular. He always took the bull by the horns, though it threatened to kill him. To him, all this evil was the result of a compromise in our Constitution between monarchy and republicanism, aristocracy with democracy, just as the war of the Rebellion, with its enormous cost of life and treasure, was the result of a compromise between slavery and freedom. And, if we do not ere long remedy this, the days of the republic are numbered. No candid person can read his clear and forcible arguments without being impressed that they are almost, if not altogether, true. Here it is he resists the idea that things must be left to take their course, according to the principle of evolution. Reason can discern the perfect State, and should set about at once establishing and working for its construction by a revision of the Constitution. He would have the President and Senate annihilated, the legislative body to be in permanent session, and the executive power consist of a council elected from their number, and changed every year. All important laws should be settled by the final vote of the people, and no law be legal that could be found in any way opposed to the fundamental principles of human rights.

Each member of the Legislature to be liable to be recalled at any time by vote of the people, if he should fail to do their will. This would annihilate parties and party enmity; and elections would be divided only by a choice between individuals. The law-maker being only a servant, selfish and corrupt men would find no attractions in the service; and so the men of self-sacrifice, pure patriotism, and enthusiastic devotion to humanity would be chosen, and often unanimously, by their respective communities. These ideas, my friends, are not to be despised. Karl Heinzen spoke more understandingly on this subject than all our frothy party newspapers and ignorant, canting pulpiteers put together. His whole life was a battle for liberty and the rights of humanity. His activities covered half a century, and were divided between two continents.

On the soil of Germany, in Switzerland, in Paris, and at the centre of American intellectual life, he gave the constant service of his Titanic intellect to the understanding of this subject; and no man, living or dead, deserves to be more reverently studied by the champions of truth, justice, and liberty. What grander, nobler idea can interest any one than that of a perfect State, a social order in which the rights of all shall be assured! We, as Liberals, have no church or private circle, dividing us from the rest of mankind, and want none. We have no God to glorify, nor never-dying soul to save and fit it for the sky. But we have Truth, Right, Liberty, and Justice to contend for. We have countless wrongs to redress. Though the church goes, home remains, with all its infinite loves and joys. And then, above all, because including all, we have the ideal State, the commonweal, to make a reality. The trembling monarchs of Europe endeavor to frighten back the encroachments of radicalism there by pointing to the corruption, and what they are pleased to call the failure, of republican institutions in America. Not so. They have never been fully tried. We have but the groundwork on which a just State may be

built. While in Europe the red sword of war must be unloosed before the flag of liberty can make beautiful the common air, here we can reform through the agency of free speech, a free press, and the ballot-box.

Many, in reading the writings of Heinzen, would call him a socialist, and perhaps a communist. In one sense he was, but in another he was not. He was too jealous of the inestimable prize of personal liberty to associate himself with those who would bring things to a level by force. No man believed more forcibly in the equality of human rights. He also saw before him an ideal of society infinitely superior to the present order. But his mind was too large and his heart too generous to allow him to confine his sympathies to one class, even though that class were oppressed. Liberty, perfect liberty, is too rich a boon to be sacrificed to any temporary suffering. Hence he saw that all approaches to a more equitable adjustment of the relation of labor and capital, rich and poor, weak and strong, would have to be brought about by the elevation of all classes morally. He believed that, if the State could be perfect in its justice, beneath such a sunlit and healthful climate, the social amenities of life would bud and blossom into beauty. Another lesson to be learned from Heinzen's life is the moral power of devotion to a principle.

The Church says that, without faith in God and immortality, life is destitute of all noble incentive. And yet this man's life, though rejecting every part and particle of supernaturalism, was one moral act,—a complete devotion to the well-being of humanity. I acknowledge that there are many that have cast off the yoke of religion who are no better than they should be. Still, I might ask, Who are the swindlers and defaulters? Sunday-school superintendents and members of the Young Men's Christian Association. Who are the adulterers? Often clergymen. Who fill our jails and adorn our gallows? Pious men,—men who have a chaplain to attend them on State pay, and die trusting in the blood of Jesus, ex-

pecting to be psalm-singing saints, while their victims, cut off without time to send for the chaplain, are weeping and gnashing their teeth in eternal torment. Unbelief, they claim, produces immorality. We are ready for the test. We invite an examination. We know that the facts will prove this to be an infamous slander, and one more immorality to be laid at the door of the Church. Morality is the practice of goodness. Good is whatever contributes to the happiness of mankind. Evil is whatever produces misery. To make the world happier is our religion. The fact is, there is no real, true morality that is not founded on intelligent unbelief. The morality of belief is simply that of hire and barter. It savors of the shop. It says, I do this for you, God, and you give me a crown and a harp. The morality of freethought is right for right's sake; nor does it demand, as the believer does, a wave of feeling or an impulse of love. It is devotion to a principle on which reason sees the happiness of mankind depends. There never was a greater falsehood seeking to hide the shining stars of truth than this outcry of the Church against the immorality of unbelief. There is more morality in such a life as that of Karl Heinzen's than in the whole Church. To make men moral, to cleanse them of the foul hypocrisy of saintship, to take them out of the vile, haggling, cheating, huckstering stalls of the Church, in which men and women waste their lives trying to drive a good bargain with God, is our mission. What an infinite lie and absurdity the whole mockery of the Church is in the presence of one real, just man! No wonder that the instinct of self-preservation drives them to traduce and endeavor to cast mud upon him. But this cannot last. In every community there are rising up men and women who hate and detest the Church as a loathsome sepulchre, full of death and corruption, who yet live so unstained in word and deed that their light shines clear and bright above all dim, murky, flickering lamps of grace divine.

But I am nearing the end of my task, or rather coming to the end, without having achieved the task I set myself to perform. The ideal or vision of this man's heart and mind that I wished to bring for your inspiration soars far above my reach. The glow at my heart seems to freeze when it falls from my lips in words. I feel like one who has gone out in the morning and gathered a bouquet of flowers all sparkling with dew, but before reaching those to whom he would give them finds that they have lost all their pearly beauty. So you must even take the will for the deed, and trust that there is more in what I have said than there seems. The life of such a man is in itself a prophecy that can only be told in words that seem like riddles. Because such men live, hope flames brighter above us, love glows warmer in our breasts, the dark, dank shadows of superstition are lifted from our lives: we cease to be a discord to ourselves; wisdom and love blend together in sweetest harmony. To live and be a man is greater than to be crowned king, or think ourselves sons of God. We gladly cast from us the livery of divine servitude, and clothe ourselves in the beautiful garments of humanity. Reason's brightening lamp leads us to higher and nobler paths. No longer quenching wonder in a name or darkening truth with senseless omnipotence, Nature feeds us silently our fill. O my friends, learn what you can of this man's life, and of all men. To live beneath the sun by day and the moon and stars by night; to tread this green earth so thickly strewn with wonders; to stand related to our fellow-men in all the unspeakable joys and sorrows of life,—how dull and stupid must be the mind that needs a voice from the skies to instruct him to walk worthy of so high a calling, to so live and labor that when his place is filled by others they shall find it easier to find their way through the forest, or shall pluck the fruit of joy from some tree he has planted in the garden of sorrow!

Karl Heinzen sleeps the dreamless sleep

of eternal rest. He lies to-day beneath the forest trees he loved. Shall I say he? Nay. He is not there. He, like one of old, has risen, not in the flesh, nor that I know of into spiritual consciousness. I do not say he has not, because I know not all the secrets of life, much more of death. But he is not hidden within the tomb. Friends may plant flowers there and water them with tears, a marble monument may mark the place of his rest; but when the flowers are all dead, when the trees have fallen beneath the axe or the hand of time, when the marble has crumbled back into dust and the very place is blotted from the memory of man, Karl Heinzen will live on with an ever-widening influence in the thoughts and loves of men. It matters but little whether his name live or die: the work for truth and humanity he wrought shall endure while men exist. Things are not what they seem. The great men of this age are not those who are feasted, toasted, and run after by the crowd, but the patient pioneers who with giant blows are making a clearing

in the forests of superstition, causing the wilderness to blossom as a rose, and for the sickening, deadly malaria of piety that saps the manhood of our age bringing the health of self-reliance and the joy of self-respect. They are the men and women who through the long night-watches of the world's ignorance keep brightly flaming the torch of thought, and so are constantly widening the skirts of light and making the struggle with darkness narrower. When man comes to his own; when each child born into the world finds all the avenues of truth open to his exploring mind; when art gladdens every eye with its cheering ray; when right and justice between man and man are the only gods; when the State in its devotion to the happiness of all is but the outward expression of the best instincts of humanity; when the heaven men strive to win is on the earth and the highest honor known is to be a man,—then, but not before, will be learned the full life and lesson of Karl Heinzen.

Minot Savage's Talks about God.

THE very title of my lecture to-day is full of a deep significance. Pictures are often made more beautiful by an appropriate frame, and the angle at which the sun's rays strike them. So words gather much of their meaning from the personality of him whose mouth frames them, and the direction from which the greater sunlight of truth falls upon them. Minot Savage, however near he may be to us, is still a minister. A broad and deep stream flows between him and the new world to which he looks ever and anon with longing eyes. His words can only be understood when we remember that only by saying God, using the form of prayer, directing praise and flattery to be offered to God, can he stand where he does. If he could not do this, his self-respect and honor would compel him to surrender such position, unless the audience should bid him throw aside the last thin veil of drapery that hides the beautiful statue of truth. The pulpit is within one step of liberty, when its occupant, instead of preaching or dogmatically asserting God, dares to simply and bravely talk about him. There is but a small bit of theological wharf left holding the soul from the shoreless seas of liberty, when a man dares to be perfectly just toward those who tell him that his anchoring-ground is keeping him from the larger meanings of life. There are but few preachers who dare to talk in the pulpit. Most preaching is dogmatical, which means calling all the

people who don't agree with you either fools or knaves. No wonder honest men, whose truthful souls have flamed forth in fiery indignation against such impertinence, have called the pulpit the Coward's Castle. This objection is taken away, however, when a man learns to talk to his fellow-men as man to man; claiming no infallibility, but looking them boldly in the face, and saying: This is the way it looks to me. This is my honest thought. I recognize that you can be perfectly true and honest, and yet differ from me. The one who calls such a man a coward shows that he is worse,—a brute that wants discourse of reason, that has no soul, no inward eye, to discern what is manly and noble. Every liberal man and woman ought to thank Minot Savage in their hearts for daring to stand in a pulpit and talk about God. In my lecture on the clergy, I said that the men who succeed in the ministry, in a popular sense, surrounding themselves with wealth and fashion, do so at the sacrifice of truth and honor. But here, I am compelled to acknowledge, is an exception to that rule. Minot Savage evidently owes his popularity and success to the strength of his intellect and the courage of his thought. He has hewed his way to the front of Unitarianism, through a crowd of mediocrity and timid, over-refined sentimentalists, by the sheer strength of his mind and the fearless glance of his soul through most of the shams and coverings

that hide the truth. Many who wait upon his ministry do so, because he goes before them in their boldest, farthest thoughts, and takes them to points of intellectual and moral vision which alone they had not dared to climb. Most preachers owe their popularity to exactly opposite reasons. Churches often select their ministers as a gentleman once selected a coachman, by asking several applicants how near they could drive to the brink of a precipice and not topple over. One of them said within an inch, another swore that he could go in perfect safety within a hair's-breadth; and the last declared that he would keep just as far away from the brink as possible, and got the place. So among the candidates for a pulpit, the one who keeps the farthest away from theological speculation is generally the favorite one. A good sermon is a bundle of pretty sentences that don't mean anything in particular.

But Minot Savage means something when he talks. He is the man who drives his employes within a hair's-breadth of the precipice. He keeps them in a constant state of suspense, wondering how long it will be before they will all go over together. As they sit in their comfortable seats on Sunday, along with their admiration at his fearless skill in guiding the fiery coursers of his thought and imagination, there is mingled somewhat of fear and an unpleasant sensation that they are suspended in mid-air. Still, he drives serenely on, without seeming to think of danger, gayly assuring them that here are the best views, the most inspiring breezes; calling their attention to the lovely valleys below, where agnostics and sceptics live in sweet seclusion and rural enjoyment; even telling them that, though we have thrown away all desire to scale these lofty and daring heights, yet we may be perfectly good and true, and that many of us are more reverent and truly worshipful than those who pretend to be familiar with the Infinite. About the only advantage he claims is a slight superiority of skill that enables him to go securely along

this narrow path, and a nature keenly sensitive to this view, where the horizon seems in its vastness to even hint at a succession of horizons beyond, flowing onward into the infinite. We, however, have no ambition to be the rivals of Blondin, and are quite sure that we derive full as much pleasure in the more limited landscape and smaller fields of space open to our survey. Even artistically, his claim is open to objection, and, when analyzed closely, may be found to have its root in that unconscious soil of egotism with which theology overlays the natural world. The wide vision, the far-sweeping prairies, can never awaken such sweet music of the heart as the green lanes and embowered fields of a broken country. I once tried to live in that rare atmosphere, to gaze from that high mount of vision, to throw into outline the far-sweeping spaces of the infinite; but, to-day, I know by comparison that life is far sweeter in the vale of humanity, the limited fields of nature, engaged in the task of gazing upon the beauty and truth of man or woman, listening to the prattle of little children, and cultivating all the sweet loves and lowly duties of earthly life. In studying these lectures, we must also remember that Mr. Savage is in some sort still related to Unitarianism. Now, Unitarianism, though once a forward movement, a flowing river, has become a stagnant pool. Bright and beautiful as its faith is over Orthodoxy, it is far less true to nature, and, I sometimes think, is doing more to make hypocrites than all the other churches put together. It is the enchanted ground, over which the pilgrim who is seeking the city of humanity is in constant danger of being smitten with the enervating drowsiness of optimism,

" Whose faith must hang
On hard pretence that pain is beautiful,
And agony explained for men at ease
By virtue's exercise in pitying it."

It is an unkindly task to deal roughly with a view of life cherished by such lovable people as most Unitarians are. But they slumber in fairy palaces, created out of the imagination; while the gardens that must yield

the food and pleasure of the world are full of the foul and pestilent weeds of superstition, which they might root out. They throw flowers, when they ought to hurl bombshells full of fiery indignation. They sing and dance, or sit gazing at lovely pictures, while millions live and die as in caverns, through the selfish nature of their faith. Unitarianism is the cream of spiritual aristocracy. All its fine feelings are cultivated in hot-houses; and, if exposed to the natural climate in which men and women ought to live, they would quickly wither and die. The world can no more be saved by Unitarianism than the paupers of England and Ireland could be fed and clothed by the Queen creating them all dukes, lords, earls, and knights. It is grounded on injustice, and constructed out of the wrongs of the multitude. If all could have the opportunities of intellectual and æsthetic culture, without which Unitarianism is like a diamond on a toad's head, it might be very well. As George Eliot beautifully says in *Adam Bede*: "Do not impose on us any æsthetic rule which shall banish from the region of art those old women scraping carrots with their work-worn hands; those heavy clowns taking holiday in a dingy beer-house; those rounded backs and weather-beaten faces that have bent over the spade and done the rough work of the world; those homes with their tin pans, their brown pitchers, their rough currs, and their cluster of onions. In this world, there are so many of these common people who have no picturesque, sentimental wretchedness. It is so needful we should remember their existence, else we may happen to leave them quite out of our religion and philosophy, and frame lofty theories which only fit a world of extremes." Because George Eliot constantly denounced the optimism of our times, simpering sentimentalists tell us that hers must have been a sad life, and speak of her books as tinged with a morbid despair, showing, by their blindness to her truthful insight into nature and her broad, generous, human sympathy, that they deserved her rebuke.

Optimism is a most dangerous and bewitching error. It is like a poisonous fruit that is fair to look upon, pleasant to taste, and yet death to eat; or like some beautiful flowers that intoxicate the senses, sometimes to suffocation and death. It makes men and women fearfully cruel, when they have none but the kindest thoughts and most amiable wishes. Its approach to hypocrisy is along such pleasant and flower-bordered paths that the most sincere are often led into this land of death. Its light, though but the afterglow of a day soon to end in the long, black night of death, is so bewitching that many a noble life is thrown away in trying to make people believe that this vanishing shadow of a dying day is the dawn of the world's new, glad morn of light. 'Tis a hopeful sign of the times that this system of faith is rapidly disintegrating. By a philosophical necessity in the progress of events, this Unitarian dreamland must be the first to fade away at the approach of the kingdom of man. This Church is like a fort out on the frontier. It must feel the first shock of war. The end of the struggle will take place over the grave of Protestantism, between Catholics and Radicals. Unitarian churches are already rapidly declining in power. I have been in a score of New England towns; and in each place I went I was informed that the old members were rapidly dying off, and that there were no young people coming forward to take their places. Those who have no brains go to the Episcopal Church; and those who can think for themselves as well as their fathers did when they founded Unitarianism find that the progress of ideas has taken them outside of all Churches into the great humanity that breaks down all barriers, and flings its protecting banner of equal rights and justice above friend and foe. Those who defend this fort must divide themselves into two parties. A part will throw off the livery of divinity, and put on the beautiful garments of humanity, leave the barren rocks of theological speculation, with its vain attempt to see beyond the horizon, and come into

the sweet fields and contentment of nature. A part will retire into the interior to a position nearer Orthodoxy, throw up the embankments of prejudice, dig deep the entrenchments of bigotry, and run out the cruel cannon of dogmatism. Those who remain in defence will offer to surrender with but one or two slight reservations. If we will but let them say God where we say Nature, religion where we say sentiment, and keep up one or two forms, ghostly shadows of old realities, they will ground the arms of their opposition, and take us with the hand of brotherly love. Those who resist will denounce them as traitors, declare that they have come disguised as friends among them only to betray them into the hands of their enemy. This, as you all know, is the condition of Unitarianism. Many are leaving it with glad hearts. Others reach out to us hands of love, and say that there is no difference between us and them worth quarrelling about; while some denounce us with more bitterness and malice than even the Orthodox. These are especially bitter toward those who dare to listen respectfully to the demands of Radicals.

Minot Savage stands at the head of a large party, that has almost surrendered. A number of young men of like enlarging vision and brave hearts look to him as an acknowledged leader. Still, however friendly they are, we must remember they make what are to us most dangerous reservations. They are unconsciously seeking for a settlement of these questions by compromise. They want peace, but demand that slavery in some modified form be retained. Their desire to maintain an external standard of authority is fatal to the happiness and liberty of man. We demand complete surrender and total abolition of the slavery of the mind. They say that this institution of theology is rooted in all the centuries, and to tear it up entirely is unnatural, and that, if it is to perish, it will die by slow degrees of its own accord. We declare that, though it is rooted into all the history of the past, it is a death-bearing plant, and must be plucked up by the roots.

Though they agree with us almost entire in thought, yet their feelings cling so tenderly about the old forms of worship and expression that they plead for their continuance, though to do so is to

"Keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope."

It puts the new wine of humanity into the old, dried-up bottles of divinity, so that they burst, and the wine is spilled.

Now, in passing judgment on these *Talks about God*, we must remember that Minot Savage is the leader of those who, in the name of their feelings, are demanding these reservations. He has bravely thrown himself between them and those who are denouncing them as traitors. He knows that it is the fear of his bold front and keen sword that keeps the blow from descending upon many a defenceless head. He knows that many a shameless surrender to the demands of superstition is withheld for fear of his indignant protest. He knows that many a harsh and scornful word against the soldiers of truth and nature is choked in the throats of the moral cowards, whose characters, like the dyer's hand, have become subdued to what they work in, because they fear to test the metal of his sword. All this must have an unconscious influence upon him, urging him to superhuman efforts to find a solution in this direction. He were less a man by far than I think him, if not thus influenced. But it has been my fortune to share somewhat in the wealth of his love and truth, and I have every reason to believe him to be the soul of honor. Hence, in interpreting these lectures, I ask you to remember this factor of an unconscious bias, born of the noblest instincts of honor and affection. I have been thus careful, at the risk of tediousness, to prepare the way for a proper understanding of my subject, because I would rather any time be called dull and prosy than be guilty of an injustice to a really noble heart. Our friends are not so numerous that we can afford to cast even one away. For this cause let me repeat that, in bringing Minot Savage to judgment

at the bar of humanity, we must remember: first, his position inclines him to unconsciously lean in the direction of finding an affirmative answer to the question, Is there a God? second, he is bound to do his best to find the answer on this side, by the demands of honor and affection; third, he is unconsciously tainted with the subtle poison of optimism, that hides all defects in the landscape beneath its veil of rose mist, and blinds to the cruelty and inhumanity of trying to maintain the God idea of the universe,—to keep standing an altar on which, from all time, the best and most precious gifts of life have been consumed in useless sacrifice; fourth, that the heart retains for a long time the sentiments and feelings cultivated by ideas that reason has denied.

To quote from George Eliot, who, I think, has seen more keenly than any other modern writer into the motives that underly the paradoxical utterances of those who are just crossing the boundary line between faith and reason,

"Two angels guide

The path of man, both aged and yet young,
As angels are, ripening through endless years.
On one he leans: some call her Memory,
And some Tradition; and her voice is sweet
With deep, mysterious accords. The other,
Floating above, holds down a lamp, which streams
A light divine and searching on the earth,
Compelling eyes and footsteps. Memory yields,
Yet clings with loving cheek, and shines anew,
Reflecting all the rays of that bright lamp
Our angel, Reason, holds. We had not walked
But for Tradition. We walk evermore
To higher paths, by brightening Reason's lamp."

Minot Savage sees the light of Reason, points others to its cheering ray, yet stands clinging to Tradition with loving cheek; while his better angel, Reason, calls him to follow her to higher paths and nobler service for humanity. Though he stands thus clinging to Faith, yet in these lectures he looks boldly forward along the way Reason is seeking to direct his footsteps. No discourses, introduced with devotions offered at the shrine of tradition, ever talked so fearlessly about God or denied so much that men have believed about him. He declares that the idea of God has grown naturally, having its origin in ancestor-wor-

ship, passing, by purely natural process, through fetichism, polytheism, henotheism, to a pure, formless, limitless, spiritual essence that is in the universe, as man's mind is in his body, a component and inseparable part of it. He shows that the common idea of revelation from God is an absurdity and impossibility. He sweeps away all idea of the Bible as the special word of God, or of Jesus as a full and lasting revelation of the divine nature. He puts Christianity in the same category as all other religions, declares that the agnostic who says that it is impossible to know if there be a God may be just as gentle, as pure, as loyal to principle, as noble in his endeavor, as the most earnest and simple-hearted religionist; saying even, "I verily believe that the agnostic is more reverential, in the truest sense of the word,—is more religious, when he simply stands bowed in the presence of the infinite, and says, 'All this is beyond me'; more reverent, more religious, I say, than the man who, with his little chart and compass and measuring-rod, is laying out, as he would an insignificant township, the limitless field of the absolute and eternal."

In the face of the whole Church, which declares almost unanimously that unbelief is the mother of immorality, he dares to say: "I believe the principles of morality have been developed by the social life and experience of man; and, whether there is a God or is not, truth and right, purity and justice and goodness remain the same." He accepts the scientific method of thought and inquiry, declaring that there is no other method by which we can arrive at the truth. Though he has to leave this path to find some of his conclusions, yet he seems to do it honestly, self-deceived by the contradictory character of his position, and by the putting new meanings into what to science is a totally bankrupt phraseology. He demands no worship but the admiration of what reason pronounces worthy; calls for no prayer but the attempt to voice the hunger of the heart and mind for truth and goodness, as the flowers turn hungering toward the sunlight;

crowns such men as Voltaire and Tom Paine with highest honor, and puts them in the same company with Moses and Jesus; reduces the old bugbear of an atheist to the impossible monster who acknowledges no right or truth or goodness in anything, and obeys no law but his own selfish lust.

Some of these acknowledgments must have almost taken the breath away from some of his hearers. They must have felt as though the ground was sliding from underneath their feet, and expected every moment to go toppling over the brink of the precipice. Though he drove bravely on, yet the road over which he went was so rough that he must have given his passengers a terrible shaking-up. And I make no doubt but that some of them, and more than he thinks, or are willing to tell the truth about it, have been shaken out on one side or other of the carriage. Some went over the precipice and lodged, much to their surprise, in the soft arms of their mother nature, and ever since have been at rest; while others fell out the other side, and, fleeing fearfully in the other direction, have ever since been trembling at the thought of how near they lost their balance on the side of the precipice, little dreaming that, if they had, it would have been the best fortune that ever befell them. There are probably but very few of his whole audience, who, if left to themselves, could maintain their balance along the giddy Alpine path to which his aspiring intellectual daring has led them. Here and there, a kindred mind may share his excitement and love of large horizons; but they are very few.

But my business is not so much with what he surrenders as with what he reserves. In spite of all this, he claims to find in the universe a rational and an undeniable proof that God exists; is personal, in some larger way than can be defined; is conscious, intelligent, and loving, revealing himself,—in nature, the aspirations of the minds and hearts of men, worthy of our highest love and admiration; and hence

that it is perfectly rational to trust in and pray to him, and to sing,—

"Thou art, O God, the life and light
Of all this wondrous world we see:
Its glow by day, its smile by night
Are but reflections caught from thee.
Where'er we turn, thy glories shine,
And all things fair and bright are thine."

While he claims that one may live a good and moral life without this faith, be reverent and even religious, yet he encourages all to seek it on the ground that life will be richer and sweeter through its possession.

This, however, is an experience, and can be disproved only by a still richer experience coming from other sources. Mr. Savage makes this claim for his faith from a sincere heart. I do not doubt for one moment that the highest and noblest feelings of his life seem to be related to this trust. It would be the highest folly to try to disprove such a statement by argument. Logic, science, facts, and everything, are powerless against the sway of a deep and strong flood-tide of feeling. The only answer I can make to this is, I once felt the same, but feel so no more. Other facts and ideas have brought to me richer and stronger feelings. A new stream has come in from the other direction, and swept this one out of the channel. As I feel to-day, to believe in God would be to commit a crime against humanity. The vision he paints is for us a castle of the fancy, a palace built of airy nothings, a clever mirage got up, tempting us to go astray from the true path by the power of the heart to reflect the past in endless visions.

What are the false principles out of which he builds his cloud-capped towers. First, by using old words in a new way, he gets his hearers to think of the sum total of the varied phenomena of nature as a being. On this one little assumption, he settles it as a point beyond controversy that God exists. The argument is, in substance, that the cause must contain the effect. Man exists, and is conscious: therefore, the Infinite exists, and is conscious, or else we have the absurdity of making man greater than the universe. But

how do we know that existence is greater than non-existence, or consciousness greater than non-consciousness? So far as we know, or can know, these are but passing phenomena; and we have no more right to say this follows than we have to say, Lemons are sour, therefore the Infinite is sour. This fallacy grows out of our egotism in thinking existence and consciousness the greatest things in the universe. We have no reasonable ground to predicate anything of the infinite that we find in the finite. We can think of a being, because that is a finite quality, or, rather, a fact of our experience; but to think of a conscious infinitude is just as impossible as it is for us to think that there can be a ring without a centre or circumference.

What we call intelligence may be but the roundness of the raindrop, that is lost when it falls into the parent ocean. Carried out to its logical results, this idea is capable of yielding the most glaring absurdities. God is guilty of thinking thoughts that deny his own existence. We cannot imagine an eternal consciousness. If we had never begun to discover that we think, we should be as ignorant of our own consciousness as we are of some one else's. If God has existed from all eternity, he is entirely ignorant of it; for existence or consciousness can be experienced only when thrown on the background of non-existence.

That there are powers in the universe which under certain conditions produce consciousness is self-evident. So there are forces in nature which under certain conditions form a rose that is at once fragrant and beautiful, but that is no proof that the whole of things is pleasant to the sense of sight and smell. We know it to be far otherwise. We know that there are sights that would frighten us to death with their horrible deformity, and that thousands of people from no fault of their own, just as worthy to live as we are, are suffocated to death in foul, disgusting odors, that make us sick to think of. So we know that, while there is a relation and order of events that

is analogous to our own intelligent planning of means to ends, there is also a disorder, a madness, a fury, that is like the wild, raving, unreasonable, and unfeeling actions of a madman. It is just as easy to prove that, if God is, he is insane, as it is to argue him intelligent. The very question, however, Does God exist? however reverently it may be asked, however beautiful and noble the person engaged in the task of proving that he does, is of the same character as that of the ancient theologians, who endeavored to settle how many angels can dance on the point of a cambric needle.

You laugh at the idea to-day; and I believe the time will come soon when most people will laugh equally at the folly of trying to find out whether there is a God or not. But Mr. Savage not only argues that God exists, but also that we can know him. While giving credit to the moral worth of the agnostic, and acknowledging the force of Mr. Herbert Spencer's philosophy of the Unknowable, he yet undertakes to prove that we can know God. The argument used is that we can know nothing perfectly, not even a friend or a flower; but that, as we can know some of the thoughts and characteristics of our friend, behold the beauty of the rose, enjoy its fragrance, so we can know God. I have no doubt some in the audience thought Mr. Savage had proved this point. He had persuaded them that it was all settled that God was; and, when you are sure of that, all the rest follows. Take away the knowledge that your friend exists, or that there is such a thing as a rose, and it will be quite a different thing to understand them.

If we can know God, it is wonderful how few people there are who claim to know him, who agree concerning what he looks like or what his disposition is. He has been compared to everything beneath the sun; and now Mr. Savage tells us that he is like nothing of which we can think or imagine, and yet that we may know him even as we know our dearest friend. Here, again, we are confronted with an experience; and I

shall not try to answer it with an argument, but simply state a fact. For thousands of years, the world has been trying to make the acquaintance of God, with no very satisfactory result, or you may be sure Mr. Savage would never have felt called upon to preach this series of sermons. But to-day, for the first time in the history of man, thousands and thousands of people, in the name of intelligence and humanity, are giving it up as an insoluble riddle, saying: It lies beyond us. Such knowledge is too deep and wonderful for us. It is a weary and unprofitable waste of time. We might as well spend our time in trying to find out the outermost circle of space, the centre of the universe, in which one point must be as near the centre as any other, the meaning of eternity. We therefore give it up, and turn our attention to the possible.

If there is a God, we can do him no good; but every day we can plant a flower in the path of our wife or children, that shall fill their hearts with a joy that shall run over into ours. If we could know him, he is in no need of our friendship; but there are many men and women whom, if we can know, the warm grasp of a friendly hand will hold up, when they might otherwise fall, and be trampled on by the great crowd, who, in the earnest struggle for existence, do not often stop to think whose bleeding form it is over which they rise to fortune and fame.

The infinite stretches on beyond our reach. If, within all the stars that can be brought within our vision by the most powerful telescope, we could see traces of a ruling power, for aught we know, he may be, with all his worlds, only a being as inferior to some higher order as we are to him. For every star we see, there may be such a system; yea, all these be but as a few grains of sand on the infinite shore of eternity, washed by the immeasurable ocean of space. But here, within our reach, are tears to be dried, the hungry to be fed, the ignorant to be taught, oppressions to be destroyed, liberty, equality of right, and justice

to be won for all the children of earth. We are tired of trying to climb to mansions in the skies, and will see what we can do in building houses fit for men and women to live in. We do not see that we accomplish anything by praying for the kingdom of God, and so we will see now if we can't bring in a just and good kingdom of man.

Now, Mr. Savage and any one else may make the acquaintance of God, if they can; but there are a good many of us who have found something better to do with our time. He says that all this is unphilosophical, and that we should never give up striving to obtain even the impossible. But the things, he says, man has gained in this way were natural. We pronounce nothing impossible that is in accordance with nature. Still, we study nature by just such surrenders. If we thought we could change the law of number, or make a round square, we should never make any great progress in invention. So we shall never make much headway in settling the problems of moral and social well-being, until we write it down, Man can no more know God than make a round square.

From knowing God, Mr. Savage passes to prove that he is good. If there is a God, this certainly is a consummation devoutly to be wished. Now, one of the principal agencies at work, producing the surrender of the idea of God, is a growing sense and feeling that there are many incurable evils and miseries in the world. In the olden times, men only knew their few neighbors; and the occasional calamities that befell them, in fire, storm, flood, and pestilence, they attributed to the just anger of God. To-day, we know that these are, so far as we know, incurable defects in the nature of things. All the multiplied accidents, wars, famines, plagues, murders, suicides, starvations, are brought each morning to our breakfast-table. Sometimes, we see millions writhing in famine, nations groaning beneath the yoke of oppression and tyranny imposed upon them by the most Christian nation.

The vast life of great cities is laid open

before us, with its heights of glory and beauty, and its unfathomable depths of cruelest despair and blackest infamy. Though countless churches proclaim with clanging bells and noisy pulpiteers that God is love, and that man is to love all mankind, yet beneath the shadow of their steeples little children are starved and beaten to death, villains prey like cannibals on human flesh and blood, tender, trusting maidens are married for life to brutal wretches, who keep their sensitive flesh black with blows; death, grim death, in some form or another, haunts every abode, and leers with hideous grin upon every joyous scene of earthly pleasure.

Now, Mr. Savage tells us that an infinite, loving, conscious, personal Father keeps watch above all this. He says: "All these things that make death hideous,—the horrible dreams of the beyond that frighten us; the pains and sorrows and lingering diseases, the mangling accidents that accompany and produce it,—these things, did God make them? No, not one of them. They are all preventable accompaniments of death, and no part of death itself,—things for which we, and we alone, are responsible. Death, as God made it, and as it comes to those who live the life of God, is no more horrible than the falling to sleep in my arms of my little girl at night, as I rock her to sleep in the twilight." Now, my whole moral nature, every instinct of humanity in my breast, rises up against this judgment that is born of the sugary, sentimental optimism of his Unitarian surroundings.

If these things are all preventable, I wish he would tell us how. I would like to die like that; but I may die by inches, quivering from head to foot with pain. I may be burned to death, poisoned, murdered, die in thousands of ways by which men have died, and will, I make no doubt, continue to do so while there are any left to die. I cannot believe that all the ills that flesh is heir too are traceable to human responsibility.

It is true that Mr. Savage attempts to relieve this somewhat by saying that pains,

failures, disappointments, are the necessary accompaniments of our finite condition; that, if we had been born perfect from the beginning, we would be no better than automaton. Well, then, God being perfect from the beginning, is only an automaton. This being to whom you ascribe every perfection cannot be so, for he has never felt the dart of pain nor the gleaming flash of joy. He also compares our earthly troubles to those of our children in learning to walk. But that's a careless and a cruel parent that lets them learn to walk on the brink of a precipice or between open fires. Still, this is nothing to what our heavenly Father does. This optimism—that, for the sake of holding on to a belief in God, shuts its eyes to the evil that is in the world, and calls all things good—is a cruel mockery and a hideous lie. However good the heart may be that is drugged by its chloroform, 'tis a dangerous and hurtful philosophy, which increases our danger, and leaves us exposed to many evils from which we might be saved, but for its insane calling of evil good.

Mr. Savage next asks that we worship this God through all that is noble in man or beautiful in nature. He would make his church the abode of all that is beautiful in art or true in science. These to him, however, would be but as means to an end beyond himself, while we love them for their own sakes and the pleasure they afford us. When we admire an heroic deed or praise a noble life, it is not with any desire to glorify God. Art in all her ministrations—in painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and the drama—is to us a ministering angel, cleansing our souls and lifting us into ever-enlarging ideals of harmonious life and noble service. We do not tread her beautiful forms beneath our feet, as a stairway leading up to the feet of God, but admire them and love them as among the fairest uses and effects of the mingling and multiplied powers of nature. We look upon a noble life with earnest, tender, loving gaze, because we know through what struggles

it must have passed, with widening retrospect that oft bred despair, before it attained the heights of goodness and self-respect that compel our worship. We are next told that we can rationally pray to this God; not thinking for one moment that we can change his purpose or his plan or make one hair black or white, but simply turning toward him in our hungering and thirsting after righteousness, as the flowers turn hungering toward the sun.

But, while we can hunger for truth and righteousness, to hunger for God is quite different. All prayer to God necessitates that the hands of superstition should be clasped over the eyes of reason. However sincere one may be in pouring forth in speech the longings of the heart into the bosom of the infinite that men call God, it is the same cloud on the mind that leads others to send forth their petitions on the bosom of the mighty ocean, or to look up with earnest prayer to the all-regnant sun.

There is naught in the idea of the infinite that can feed the heart. It is a great mystery that may fill us with wonder and awe beyond expression. We may say we love, but 'tis from force of habit and fear. How can we entertain affection for a formless, passionless abstraction? For long, weary years, men have sought, in weary pilgrimage and on bended knees, to climb painfully the altar-stairs to the feet of God. When we learn to respect ourselves, we shall cease to pray.

I remember reading some time since of a youth who left his home, and journeyed a long distance through innumerable hardships and dangers, that he might gaze on the divinity of his country, which the priests kept hidden in the temple behind a veil. He was told, however, that he must undergo a period of discipline in order to be pure enough to enter the sacred place. To this he cheerfully consented. But, when the time had expired and he was accounted worthy to lift the veil, he found nothing. He was told, however, by the priests that they had no God, and that, in becoming

worthy to receive this knowledge, he had rendered himself independent of a divinity. Is it not man's ignorance and weakness that has led him to search so long and painfully for a God?

Struggling up through centuries of animalism and barbarism, swayed by passion, fear, and cruelty, men have still had before them, in some dim, unconscious way, the ideal of a nobler life, and so have sought for it enshrined in some temple or paradise. But when man becomes perfectly just, claiming no right for himself that he does not cheerfully accord to everyone else; when reason assumes sway over passion, and he finds reigning in his own breast an enthusiastic devotion to humanity,—then, though the veil be lifted and all the promises of priests be found an empty lie, still it is well. He has become his own God.

To feel the full sway of responsibility to one's self is infinitely more ennobling than blind devotion to any external standard of authority. If we are not infidels, agnostics, and atheists, because a larger, nobler life has come to us, we had better renounce our liberty, and return to the painful but still often disciplinary search after the original nothing. What use is any denunciation we make against the barbarism of the Church, unless our lives show that a life dominated by principle and consecrated to humanity is superior to those ruled by theology and devoted to God? The law of nature is the survival of the fittest. I believe in the final victory of our cause, because we are learning that the highest and noblest thing is for one to be a man, to respect and rely upon ourselves. The worship of the future will be the recognition of everything that is worthy,—the inspirations of music, genius, poetry, and oratory,—the earnest struggle to know and be like that higher self that comes to us in the most exalted moments of life. Instead of worshipping it as enshrined without, we shall worship it as it lies deep within, struggling to make it every day more visible in our words and character.

The signs of the times indicate a universal

decay of the old faiths. Everywhere, they are falling into ruin : scepticism is preparing the way for larger life. The gods are tumbling from their thrones. Olympus has been depopulated : so shall Sinai be. Jove has gone, with his thunderbolts : let Jehovah go too. True happiness shall come to our hearts just as fast as we cease looking upwards, and turn our gaze around us, and behold our gods and goddesses in men and women, our hopes in our children, our

prayers in our daily duties, our creed in the demonstrations of science, our church the whole human race, and all our joys in the onward march of progress, and in the sweet loves and lowly but noble duties of our earthly lives. So shall all prayers and desires be fulfilled ; for through all mysteries of religion in gods, goddesses, and angels, and by all smoking and bleeding altars, men have striven in their blindness to find peace and happiness on earth.

Moral Objections to the God Idea.

I do not approach this subject insensible that the tenderest and holiest feelings of millions are associated with it. I view with profound reverence the earnest struggle of the human race to find rest by leaning on the great heart of some being stronger and wiser than man. From ages of fear, admiration and trust have come to mingle in the worship that is offered at the shrine of Deity. I should not like to say one harsh word against the many sincere and tender souls who are persuaded that they know God by the inward shining of his light. While faith or credulity is a dead calm, a sultry and oppressive atmosphere in which all the best energies of the soul are paralyzed, still there is a trust that clings to the thought that, far above our gaze and deeper than the farthest soundings of our plummet, is a personal, conscious power that is to many a troubled heart at least an imaginary source of comfort and strength.

You may some of you have travelled in Europe, and seen an old castle tottering into ruins, that was once a seat of feudal tyranny and robbery; and though beneath it there are deep, dark dungeons, in which hundreds have been tortured or starved to death, and every chamber be haunted with the tradition of some cruel crime, yet the ever green ivy that has covered its crumbling walls gives it an indescribable beauty, so that travellers turn aside hundreds of miles to gaze upon its charms. In like manner, whatever the sentiments of the heart envelop with their

grace and beauty is made attractive in outward appearance, however false and cruel within. Thus it is with the idea of God. Though to the thoughtful mind, that sees before and behind, this name is synonymous with the most infamous tyranny and cruelty ever practised against humanity; though its tottering, decaying power, hastening swiftly to the black gulf of oblivion, cover the dark and hideous chambers of the inquisition, every conceivable instrument of human torture,—the thumb-screw, the rack, the wheel,—and every separate feature of this idea be associated with the haunting memory of a cruelty that makes the flesh creep with horror only to think on it,—yet the kindly years have enveloped it with a wealth of human sentiment that has hidden every harsh detail beneath a covering of poetical grace and beauty, and so making it to many an object of the most thrilling interest. But this that wins our sympathy is not the idea of God, but the sweet humanities with which the human heart has clothed him. If we could analyze this idea, and take from it all that is finite and human, we should find that in the legitimate and true orthodox idea of God there is no beauty or quality in him to make us desire him. Men and women, swayed by the sweeter humanities of our time, would no more think of encouraging faith in him than they now think of praying for a return of the infamous tyranny and cruelty of feudalism.

Instead of mourning over the spread of

scepticism, the almost universal lapse of faith in this idea, every heart would thrill with delight and gratitude to see that the day of its power was almost to its end. But let us not deceive ourselves, nor be deceived. We cannot afford to treat lightly the sincere faith of any human being, yet it is our duty to boldly draw aside this screen of sentiment, and uncover this charnel-house of horror and death. Unless we do, it will be our fault if the wrongs that spring out of it are not destroyed. Though our mother or dearest friend think it blasphemy to dare to question for one moment the existence of God, yet a larger and more sacred love calls upon us to let the lamp of reason search even here for the truth of nature, though the memories of our childhood, the trust that once seemed to sustain us in hours of trial, the sentiments that were once as wings of enthusiasm to our thought, plead against this step, a larger and richer life of love and truth awaits him who falters not at the portal of this inner chamber of the temple of religion. But many do pause here, and so, instead of returning victors, come back vanquished. After scaling the walls and battering down all the outer defences, they leave the very citadel and stronghold of superstition untouched. They slay the priests, but spare the idol that other priests will come to serve, and by lies and hollow mummeries deceive the world.

This is especially the position of Unitarianism. They have surrendered successively one position of Christianity after another, until this is the only thing they have left. If Minot Savage should find himself compelled to surrender this idea, he would soon find himself shut outside of their fellowship.

The Orthodox Churches are also steadily approaching this point, in spite of all professions to the contrary. If you will say that you believe in God, you can join almost any Church. Many of the most earnest liberals, men and women whom we all love and admire, claim to have found rest in Theism. All this is perfectly natural. Religious belief is seldom torn up by the root. Here

and there, one passes through a period of mental or physical pain, or experiences some injustice through the inherent defects of nature, that tears up his faith, both root and branch. Still, in most cases, it dies out from the branches downward. At first there is a sickly appearance of the foliage. Next, one branch decays, and then another, until the whole tree falls before the storm. Even then, the root remains in the ground long afterward, and sometimes may put forth a second and feeble growth. Now, this is no doubt the method of nature. But it is the highest prerogative of man that he can improve on nature.

In the West, they used to follow nature by girdling the trees, and letting them die out gradually, or, if they cut them down, they would leave the stumps in the ground, unsightly objects, disfiguring the landscape, wasting the land, and taxing the patience of the farmer when he had to guide the plough or reaper around them. But they have improved on this by the invention of a stump-lifter that tears them up by the roots. This is the kind of improvement we want in the theological field.

Our great need is a dogma-lifter that will pull up the idea of God by the roots. This idea is in our way. It is a waste of good ground and time. It is a sore trial to our patience, when we would make a straight furrow, compelling us to work in all sorts of delicate, zigzag ways. The invention of such a lifter would be worth all the other inventions of the past century. It would be a more direct and practical good to mankind. If it is ever found, it will be in the moral objection of the best minds and hearts against this idea of God. The moral power is always the controlling one. If it is on the side of God, as the Church claims so stoutly, his throne is secure; and all this fear that he is about to be expelled from the universe is the height of absurdity. If these alarmed priests really believed in their God, they would take as little notice of an infidel as we would of a man who should declare that the sun was the worst enemy of mankind,

and propose an attempt to destroy it. If, however, this moral force is against him, let him make the most of his time; for his reign is almost at its end. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is at hand." He who to-day observes the signs of the times will say, "The kingdom of man is at hand." Man shall yet surely come to his own. If we are here on sufferance of any deity, we know it not. We came without giving our consent. Many, if advised with, would have preferred never to have come. As a race, we found at first but poor hospitality. To the houseless, the sky was a poor roof. To the defenceless, the wild beasts of the forests were bad neighbors. To the naked and cold, fig-leaves were a poor covering. We have improved our condition. We have overcome almost insurmountable obstacles. We have made the wildest and most hostile powers of nature do patient service. We have subdued the wild passions that once drove us blindly over the precipice of moral ruin into sources of strength and beauty by the light of reason and justice. We have extracted flowers from the most sterile rocks, and made the barren desert a store-house of food and comfort. We have shorn the winter of its rigor, and the summer of its cruellest heat. The wild beast that might have torn and rent us with fierce pain has become our friend and servant.

Nature kneels at our feet, and acknowledges our sovereign power. The lesson of all history is that the redeemer of man is man. Millions of sacrifices have been offered on the altars of the gods to entreat their assistance, but no hand but that of man has moved to defend or succor the distressed. A great deal has been preached about divine justice, but none ever yet righted a wrong but that which man has shown to man. Man as man, standing in the simple dignity of nature's truth and power, is the highest object at which we can aim. Anything additional to this, in aristocracy, priesthood, kingship, or saintship, or divinity, takes from our honor and glory. Every man who exalts himself in any way above his fellow-

men, who reaches higher than his own nature, is an enemy to mankind. By that act, he becomes the author of injustice. He holds up for our guidance a false light, which, like that of the inhuman wrecker, may lure us to ruin when we think that we are gliding safely into the desired haven. We aim at the lowest, while we think our endeavor is toward the highest. Blinded by our affections, we sow weeds for flowers.

You may have heard the story of the Scotchman who emigrated to Australia, and, in writing home to his brother, closed a description of the beauty of the country by saying it would be entirely perfect, if he could only get a sight once in a while of the dear old thistle. His brother, like many another fool, sent him some seed; and in a short time the man had a sight of the dear old thistle quite too often for his peace of mind, or for his neighbors', either.

It is in the same way that these dear religious sentiments fill the fields of truth and justice with the foul and pestilential weeds of bigotry and dogmatism. The God idea is the great sum total of all aristocracies, priesthoods, kingships, and saintships that ever afflicted humanity. Now, as the moral power has swept away many a throne, annihilated the injustice and selfishness of many a proud and haughty aristocracy, destroyed the presumptuous claims of many a priestly class, broken the fetters of millions of slaves, so shall it yet overthrow the throne of the king of kings, destroy the very idea of a great high priest in the skies, and break the chains from every mind that has been bound by the cruel shackles of theology. Now, many seem to think that God is to stand or fall by argument.

Now, a God that can be helped by argument is no God at all; and one that can be destroyed in this way is hardly worth troubling about. No great cruelty was ever destroyed in that way. Discussion is useless, unless it touch the moral springs that underlie the conduct of men. An intellectual gladiatorship may develop mental muscle for nobler service, but the mere tussle of

mind and mind is almost as useless as the struggles of a pair of physical gymnasts.

Much of our opportunity has been wasted by over-emphasizing the power of discussion. However often we may annihilate the ideas of the Church with our sledge-hammer logic, our work will never be done until we thrill the heart of the people with the deep sense of the wrong and injustice contained in the idea of God. We must see and feel cause to weep tears of sympathy for those whose minds are enslaved by this divine master. We must pity with all our hearts the millions who go to their daily tasks, driven only by the tormenting lash of fear. We must know how to put ourselves in the place of the slave of this idea, whose life is a wearisome monotony, because he knows that each to-morrow will be but a repetition of to-day. We must feel ourselves the pain of dishonor, the offence to manhood that sinks into the heart of every one who bows the knee of serfdom in prayer to a God. We must feel keenly that the greatest social wrongs of our times are fed and strengthened from this parent source of injustice and tyranny. However skilfully we may argue that the idea of God is an absurdity, it will be but so many mouthfuls of wind, unless we make them feel its injustice, and so rouse to action this mighty moral force of mankind.

Now, I am aware that there is a good deal of confusion about the nature and source of this moral power. It is even claimed by the Church that there is no such thing independent of this God idea. The instinct of self-preservation has taught them to throw up an embankment at the very point where the surging waves of humanity will beat, until they overwhelm this senseless and even inhuman idea of divinity. This false claim grows out of a mistaken idea concerning the nature and origin of morality. The morality of the Church is artificial, because created by an external power. It is the obeying the will of a deity, not because it is right, but simply because it is his will. If there can be such a thing as infidelity, it is

this. I believe this idea to be at the root of most of the immoralities of our times. The idea that right is the will of another necessitates that wrong be from the same source.

If theology is true at all, the strict Calvinistic predestination and foreordination doctrine is the true one. We ought to be as equally willing to be damned for his glory as to be saved. This faith has inspired the most cruel wars, built the deepest and darkest dungeons, invented the most diabolical instruments of torture, destroyed the most pleasure, blasted the fairest flowers, hushed the sweetest music, murdered the fondest love, and poisoned the noblest friendships. Though the mouths of those who have taught it have been full of words boasting of the righteousness of those who have this faith over those who have it not, yet this religion has created more crimes than all other things put together. In order to understand the relation of morality to religion, let us go back briefly in our thought to the time when man first began to emerge from the savage state. By slow degrees, he has learnt to use a stone spear, to manufacture a bow and arrow, and a few other simple weapons. Instead of living solitary by himself, in the depths of the forest, he has joined himself to others, and lives in a cave. Society is now born. A community of interest is developed. They share each other's joys at the close of each day's sport, and begin by slow degrees to sympathize with each other's sorrows.

The bond of union in the instinct of self-preservation becomes supplemented with one of love and friendship. One has what the other wants, and trade begins. Standards of value are created, and it becomes a matter of honor to abide by them. Law and justice are established. Out of their weakness and fear of other tribes, a chief has been selected on account of superior strength and valor. Through their fear of the mysterious powers of nature, symbolized in various forms, or of the shades of their dead ancestors, a priesthood has sprung up, meaning the go-betweens or mediators twixt the people

and their gods. The superior offices of these men made them arbiters in cases of dispute. They become the makers of the laws. They claim certain privileges. To trespass against them becomes a crime. The laws that favor king and priest as privileged characters continue to increase until simple justice or the enforcement of contracts between man and man is buried beneath a mountain of injustice. To sustain their power, various artificial crimes are created from time to time. It is a crime to stand or sit in the presence of the chief, or to neglect to bring him a large share of the spoils taken in the chase or war. The priest is also a manufacturer of crime, by forbidding them to hunt on certain days or to neglect the making of certain motions or the muttering of certain words.

From such small beginnings have grown all the multiplied tyrannies of kings and priests. Though there is in the uneducated mind an element of fear and desire to please any power called God, yet the way to do this, and not to do it, has all been laid down by the priests. But along with these artificial duties there grew up certain natural ones, independent of any fear of God or man. By living together, they found that their interests became united together. For common safety, they went to the hunt together. When attacked, they fought together. The memory of their own pains made them sorry when others suffered. Whatever gave them pain was evil, and whatever gave pleasure was good. Thus, morality, or real goodness, was born out of the heart of man instead of revealed from heaven. It has grown in the hearts of countless mothers as they have watched over the cradles of little children, and in the breasts of fathers as they have toiled by flaming forge, on giddy scaffolds, in deep, dark mines, among roaring machinery, or on the wide seas, through summer's heat and winter's cold. It is born of the joy of love and the hush of sorrow. It springs up like flowers along the pathway of little children, or upon the graves of parents and friends, as the love of our hearts

speaks through the silent eloquence of flowers. It is the golden coin that rests in the palm of each friendly clasp. It comes to us from every heroic deed that thrills us with admiration, and upon the wings of every memory made sacred by the love and constancy of another. It has no more to do with the duties prescribed by religion or a belief in God than with the laws of number.

Men may have sometimes, under the influence of fear of God, done right when they might otherwise have done wrong. But even this is owing to the substitution of an artificial for a natural standard. The brutal wretch who refrains from beating his wife for fear of hell has been made thus by long centuries of degradation that is fostered by the protection of the Church.

The man who commits a murder has been nurtured under the influence of a belief that God has committed millions of them from the same motive of vengeance. For every impulse that religion gives to morality, it destroys a hundred. Whatever of obligations it enforces is far less feeble than the instincts of a natural man or woman. Instead of doing what is right for the love of it, we are urged by the Church for some ulterior end.

The first moral objection to this idea is that it robs us of our own self-respect. We are the offspring of God. In him we live and move and have our being. He is a conscious agency in our existence, and hence demands our service. But, if we came here without nature being conscious of the fact, then, instead of being the slaves of nature, we are free to compel it to serve us. The God idea fills us with a sense of dependence upon another that is degrading. Minot Savage tells us that God cannot alter the nature of things. Still, if he cannot, he is limited, and so by becoming finite is no longer God. If God is, then I am as though I were not. We are all but as worms of the dust. The Catechism is true: the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. He is all and in all; and we are mere ciphers,

swelling the sum of his wealth, acting as brakemen or switch-tenders, exposed every moment to an accident in the service of this infinite Vanderbilt of the skies. Let us, then, greet with *All hail!* every sign that faith in God is departing. On the ruins of this temple of God shall arise one erected for the worship and glory of man. The sense of responsibility to one's self will yield far richer moral results than this feeling of dependence on some higher power. To strive to win one's own approval is far nobler than the hope of gaining a reward for some one else. To perfectly enjoy one's own company for one short day is better than to sit dazzled with the glory of an infinite, incomprehensible being for all eternity. I protest against trying to build again out of the ruins of supernaturalism faith in the God idea, because this is the tap-root of all superstition.

I am a radical, because radicalism is getting at the root. The medicine for our times is radicals' root. Now, the idea of Minot Savage is that, though all the root has produced is wrong and should be cut down, the root is still all right. Now, is it not more reasonable to say that, after bearing poison and death for centuries, it is hopeless to expect this root to reform? We want to get rid of superstition. We waste our time by chopping off here and there a branch. Let the axe of reason be laid at the root of the tree that has so long cumbered the ground. Every single evil of religion may be traced to this root idea. This is the spring from which flows every dividing stream of bigotry and dogmatism, along whose marshy banks lurks the poisonous malaria of piety. While men believe in God, they will continue to gaze idly into the skies, when the real meanings of life are blossoming like the flowers at their feet; to offer their devotions to a phantom instead of to suffering flesh and blood; to prepare for another world, when all their energies are needed in the present one.

To claim to know God, while others just as intelligent, true, and earnest do not, is to

uphold a spiritual aristocracy, and to create a moral pride that is destructive of the finest quality of our manhood. We have walked under a cloud long enough. We have said Lord and Master and bent the knee far too long. What have we done that we should ask any one in the heavens above or the earth beneath for leave to stand erect and be a man? Let us throw off every chain of mental servitude, and assert our independence in the mental and moral world as boldly as we have in the physical. The time has come to look this question squarely in the face. All around us, the walls of faith are tottering with the crack of doom. Shall we hasten to prop them up for a time with a refined and improved deity? Nay. Let them go down. Only thus shall man see eye to eye, and each throbbing human heart feel beating against it the rights and joys of all the children of earth. By renouncing the service of God, we can enter that of humanity, and outside of all barriers show that there is a truth and goodness of life that is worthy of the highest emulation of all. I protest against this attempt to maintain the idea of God, because it is a waste of the most valuable time. It makes one feel sad to see such an intellect as that of Minot Savage, all aglow with the fire and warmth of a poet, spent in wandering around in the trackless deserts of the infinite, "looking through beauty into blankness," trying to prove that all the old ideas of God are false, and yet that, after all, there is a kind of something, a subtle kind of an essence, an infinite unlikeness to anything, known yet not known, revealed yet not revealed, an impersonal person, a conscious unconsciousness, a limitless it or he, no matter which, for the infinite must include masculine and feminine and even neuter gender. However we may poetize about this subject, this idea necessitates that we be swallowed up in God, or that God be destroyed by us. If we are not part of God, mere thoughts thrown out by him that will fall back into him as the mist which rises from the sea returns in the rain-drops, then

there is something outside of God, and the infinite is destroyed.

I protest, in the name of morality, not only against the old idea of God, but also against this earnest attempt to reform him. An honest God is a noble work of man, but by no means the noblest. To make an honest man is far greater. We have done well to make God as good as he is. We have conferred upon the Jehovah of the Jews so many of the human instincts of our times that he is far superior to him whose heart was supposed to be mirrored in that of a murderer and adulterer, like David. But, for every step in this reformation, thousands of lives have been sacrificed. The process is too much like the practice of some savage tribes, who keep alive their king by giving him to drink the blood of the flower of their youth. Nearly all the persecution men and women have undergone at the hands of religion has been for trying to make God out a little less of a monster than the creed said he was.

No one was ever burned or even condemned for saying that he was worse. All the good there is in God has been born of human love and tenderness, which the donors have paid for giving at the cost of their lives. When men are unjust, their God is unjust. When they are cruel, he is cruel. As men become just and kind, so does God. Still, it is impossible to make a perfect God, because there is no such thing as absolute perfection. In order to have a God, we must ascribe to him the inconceivable and impossible. He must be the author of all that is. We must thank him in the same breath for the smile of love and the frown of hate,—the songs of the birds in spring, and the serpent's fang that glides stealthily beneath the summer's grass, and smites us with death in the very fulness of life,—for the prattle of a little child and the tiger's fangs; praise him for the destroying hurricane that mows its swathe of death as well as for the refreshing rain, for the volcano's fiery storm and the rude shock of an earthquake as well as for seed-time

and harvest. There is no escaping from this. The amiable, harmless deity the Church is trying to substitute for the old Satanic one, whose wrath could only be quenched in the blood of his Son, however pleasant the change, is idiotic in its absurdity.

There is not a single inch of common-sense on which such a faith can be sustained. You may kill the devil if you please, or not: still, these ugly facts in nature remain, and a God that would have had things better and couldn't is an impossibility. Through the idea of God in this relation, evil has been accepted patiently as the divine will, when every energy should have flamed forth in fiery indignation to destroy it. If God surrounds us with difficulties and evil, that by affliction he may chasten us into a meek and holy disposition, then it is right for his children to do the same. The Church is built on this principle of Jesuitism, that says it is right to do evil that good may come of it.

The Apostle Paul was all things to all men, and counted it not sin to take men in his gospel net by guile. The history of the Catholic Church is infamous through the acceptance of this idea. Almost every Protestant Church is supported by treachery. The various denominations do not dare face the consequences of a revision of their creeds. There is scarcely a minister who enters a pulpit that does not practise more or less duplicity. Hypocrisy is everywhere, in pulpit and pew. Influenced by the sophistry of the pulpit, thousands go on defending and supporting doctrines which they know to be false. The very defence made against us half-acknowledges that we are right by pleading for the maintenance of the Church on the ground of its utility. Even Liberalism itself is infected with this poison. The whole body of Liberal Christians is saturated with it. Many who claim to share our convictions still take no part in spreading them, on the ground that the world is not ripe for them. Thus, they unconsciously imitate the God they deny, and

join the great army of Christian Jesuits, whose march of destruction they ought to oppose.

There is no safeguard to either private or public virtue that is not based on absolute sincerity. He who hides a truth that is crying in his heart for utterance, on the ground that men are not prepared to receive it, becomes a moral plague-spot on the body politic. The world is far more ready to receive the truth than those who hold it are to give it. Good may spring out of evil in the irresponsible operations of nature; but he who commits an injustice to one, in order to make another more just, is a monster. If my child burns his finger, and so accidentally learns a lesson that keeps him out of the fire for the future, good. But what would you think of me, if you saw me take a hot iron and purposely brand him on this ground? Now, if there is a God, this is what he is doing constantly. No wonder that, following his example, the Church has passed hundreds of thousands through the fire, in order to save them and others from eternal fire. John Calvin made himself as near like God as a man can be; and so, when he burned Servetus, he ordered green wood, in order to give him more time for repentance.

Men will never become perfectly humane, until they throw aside every vestige of godliness. We shall scarcely catch a vision of the radiant beauty of truth and the moral power of absolute sincerity until this idea of God is destroyed. Out of perfect frankness and naturalness of character will come a sweeter communion and richer joy than ever thrilled the heart of the most religious devotee. Men will be much more likely to be honest, when all temptation to believe in

and defend the impossible is taken from them.

As long as men believe in a God, there will be for them something beyond the truth, that is more than the truth. Truth, instead of being self-eternal, as space and time, will be, for them, a thing of fleeting and fickle fancy, a will-o'-the-wisp not to be depended on. While justice depends on a supreme will or creator, it will be only a treacherous quicksand, instead of the Rock of Ages, to which we may cling when the storm rages and the waves beat high.

While men believe in a law-giver, they must be blind to the beauty and meaning of a law. They will cringe and crawl in the dust, when they ought to stand erect. While they listen for the voice of God, they will be unable to hear the voice of reason and of nature. While they believe in a power that is more than the sum of nature and of man, that has called the world and us forth from naught, they must continue to sing their doleful songs,—

“ Oh, tell me no more
Of this world's vain show.”

A belief in God is the last dividing line that will come between man and man. He that says this is God's truth lays claim to a vision that millions cannot see. However good and noble he may be in every other respect, he becomes in that act a priest. Every priest, however charitable his faith, belongs in some remote way to those who slew little children to give their God a good supper. He who believes in no God, through a deep, moral insight into its injustice, belongs to those who had rather pull down every church than see one hungry child go without a supper.

Nature and Decline of Unitarianism.

I SHALL offer no apology for making this aristocratic, refined, and highly cultured system of faith the subject of a lecture. We acknowledge neither temporal czar nor spiritual pope. We are seeking to establish perfect justice and equality between man and man, and to find the hidden beauty of humanity beneath the tattered and dirty rags of divinity. However irreproachable any person or system may be that defends a czar below or God above, we must sternly and unflinchingly assume toward them the attitude of the Nihilist. But we must be honorable in our warfare, and distinguish justly between those whom we antagonize. I wish it always to be understood that I separate the individual from the principle. Though my heart is full of a just indignation toward Unitarianism, I have none but the kindest feelings for Unitarians. The three years I spent in this communion are full of pleasant memories. Unitarianism would be very beautiful, if true. It is a well-kept and cultivated garden. You can wander all day along shady and flower-bordered paths. To enjoy its beauty is in some respects far more desirable than to tear open a path with our own hands through the unbroken forest. I view with profound admiration the past history of Unitarianism. Highly cultivated as it is, it was won from the roughest part of the forest of superstition by brave and heroic pioneers of thought. But the present generation enjoy luxuriously their well-kept lawns and flower-bordered paths, or waste their time in weaving garlands with which to adorn the statues they have erected to the memories of those who, if alive, would be their most implacable foes. Think of a man like Theodore Parker,

who was a bit of the primeval forest, swayed and shaken by the storm and tempest of thought, serving as one of their garden saints. Unitarians are very much like the spoiled children of rich parents, who, having once been poor, look upon money as the sum of all good.

Springing from Calvinism,—a religion of gloom and terror,—raised beneath its murky skies, they have come to regard sunshine, sweetness, and light as the sum total of all excellency. It is untrue to nature, because there is no shadow in it. It cloyes the appetite, because it is all sugar. It probably seems to some of you too liberal and beautiful a form of faith to be denounced. You may be thinking, if these are not our friends where shall we look for them? Would it not be far better to direct our opposition against the Catholics or the close-communion Baptists? If such are your thoughts, you are mistaken. I sometimes think that the soldiers of nature have more to fear from this body than of all the orthodox churches put together. They wear our uniform, and yet fight on the other side. We are confused and weakened by the deception. They come into our house as friends apparently unarmed, but while embracing us with the right hand the left stabs us with a concealed weapon. They are like some exquisitely beautiful and fragrant flowers, that are yet deadly poison to breathe; or like some of the most beautiful women, who, though possessed of all manner of sweet, lovable ways, are still the most vicious.

It is a most important thing to understand its nature, and be on our guard against it. I think I know something about it, and that I am perfectly justified in saying that it is a

Delilah, who shears many a strong man of his strength as he lies asleep in her arms. I am advised by some of its ministers to be modest, to let my new ideas mature a little before I give them to the public, and so avoid the sin of ingratitude in speaking evil of old friends. They tell me that, when the saner thought comes to me, I shall come around to their point of view again. Because they are always travelling in a circle, they think I must do the same. But I am not mad nor hasty, but speak the words of truth and soberness. I have thought out these convictions I now utter long and patiently, and for them have silently borne the baptism of fire.

What I speak on this subject has been burned into me by mental and heart agony, owing to the existence of this and every other form of superstition. My little boy had the toothache very bad last week, which was in all probability the consequence of eating too much sugar. But the memory of former pleasures derived from candy could not keep him from crying over the pain. I also am a voice giving expression to the pain born of this full diet of sweetness in religion. Nor am I without example or excuse from them in attacking their opinions. They are just as nearly related to Orthodoxy as I am to them. It is no more ungrateful for me to tell the truth about them than it is for them to criticise the faults of their own Mother Calvinism. Neither do I speak ignorantly. I have studied it thoroughly in the East and West.

Having spent seven years in the Methodist and three years in the Unitarian ministry, I have seen it in the strong light of comparison. I entered its service as a student, and gave to it the loving examination of a mind and heart prejudiced in favor of its truth. All my convictions have had to fight and subdue my desires. I know all about its honorable ancestry and right to be proud of its influence in behalf of higher education. I know that the people that make up its congregations are of the highest merit in point of character and intelligence. I

know that its pulpits are filled with men many of whom have done good service in literature and the various philanthropic movements of our time. I know that many are even now finding its sunny faith a bright deliverance from the gloom and terror of Orthodoxy. And yet the deepest and most sacred convictions I cherish compel me to throw down the gage of battle before this system, and tell men that I love with all my heart that they are defending a most false and pernicious institution. Let me admit that to many it is a bridge that carries them pleasantly from the old to the new. Let me also acknowledge that it is a product of nature, and though neither fish nor fowl a link between the two. An old proverb warns us against speaking evil of the bridge that has borne us safely over the stream; but, when you find it a most unsafe structure, it is wisest to demand its removal.

Nature teaches us our duty toward this mongrel faith by hastening to annihilate the connecting links. You know what trouble scientists have experienced in their search for the missing links. I have spoken in these lectures, once or twice, concerning the fact that it is man's prerogative to improve on nature. Because we find in the principle of evolution the idea of progression by slow growth, we must not lose sight of the idea that the inclination to work for a speedy change through a revolution is also in harmony with that larger nature that includes man. Reason sees that theology is entirely based on assumptions. In the name of humanity, it demands the total surrender of divinity. By the groans, tears, and agonies wrung from millions through the maintenance of the expensive aristocracy of the skies, it demands that every institution that gives the loving service of man needed by man to the empty incorporeal air be pulled down. It sees that, while any institution based on theological assumptions remains, science will be obstructed, justice manacled, art debauched, and right inverted into wrong.

While we acknowledge that we have approached this gradually, and that in reaching this goal Unitarianism has been of great service, we refuse to accept the idea that we must always approach it in this slow fashion. Many once travelled to the Pacific coast by the overland route on the backs of mules or in rickety stage-coaches, but that is no reason that they should continue to do so now they can go in a Pullman Palace Car. So, though many have found liberty through Unitarianism, that is no reason why they should not flee swiftly to its Golden Gate along the rapid transit of radical thought.

The discovery of the new method demands the abolition of the old. Suppose the people who once owned the stage-coaches should still insist that they have the best and cheapest method of conveyance, and, by deceiving ignorant emigrants, induce them to waste their time and money in this laborious way: would you not justify every endeavor of the railroad to undeceive these people, and keep them from becoming the prey of these antediluvians? I need not point the moral.

In defining the nature of Unitarianism, I would first emphasize this idea of its being neither fish nor fowl. It tries to maintain a skilful balance on the theological fence between faith and reason, so that no one can tell what it is or where it is. I cannot understand myself, to-day, how I could ever have existed in such a divided state of mind. I can, however, deeply sympathize with a clever young lawyer who once came to hear me tell what Unitarianism was, who on being asked what he thought of it said: "Oh, it was a very fine discourse; but, for the life of me, I knew no more about Unitarianism when he got through than I did when he began. I couldn't tell whether he believed in a God or not. One minute I thought he said he did, and the next I was sure he didn't. He protested in one sentence that Jesus was only a man, and in the next called him divine, and spoke of him as our Lord and Saviour. He declared that the Bible was

only a human book, and then spoke of it as inspired and containing the word of eternal truth. He denounced all creeds, and yet all the time seemed to be trying to make us believe that the Unitarians had a superior though unwritten creed to all other churches, so that I came away a little bit mixed."

I am not by any means the only one who has stood in its pulpits and learned this lesson. When I was at Evansville, struggling with this problem and heartily sick of this fence business, one of its ablest ministers here in the East wrote to me: "I am heartily sick of the miserably impotent attitude of Unitarianism. It is without the sort of dignity that comes with antiquity and largeness, and it balks at the step needed to make itself squarely and consistently rational. It is neither the exponent of reason and science, nor of tradition and authority, but now the one and now the other, neither long enough to get a right to respect itself nor to command the respect of others. Unitarian bigotry is the most petty and aggravating of all bigotry, and in the most absurd and glaring contradiction to the claims made by the body to represent reason. But the world at large cares precious little about any of the sects. Brains have done with them, modern brains; and the race turns its attention to other things." Another of its most talented ministers, who sympathized with me in my trouble, defined Unitarianism as contradictionism. As an illustration of the justness of this definition, when I was trying to find out whether I was a Unitarian or not, I appealed to my brother ministers for light on the dark problem. In response to the earnest cry of my heart, I received forty different letters from as many ministers, twenty of whom were positive that I was, eighteen equally that I was not, and the other two declared that nobody could answer my question, but myself. Besides answering my direct question, most of them entered into an attempt to set me right theologically, in which task every one contradicted everybody else. Think of the frame of mind a traveller would be in on inquiring his way

to a certain place, if forty different persons should each point him in a different direction.

Now, where such an experience is possible, there is something rotten. This quibbling, uncertain attitude is a great breeder of hypocrisy. It covers every variety of opinion with a uniform tint of rose mist,—something as I have seen the valleys, hills, and lakes of New Hampshire toward sunset, all bathed in one purple shade. Contradictions and compromises are hidden beneath this veil of beauty. The temptations offered by it to double-dealing and hypocrisy are so bewitching that the most sincere find themselves sinking in this bog of treachery and death before they know it.

The Church, as we all know, has its advantages as well as its disadvantages. In many places, it is the key to social and business success. Now, there are many people who have become too intelligent to belong at any price to an orthodox church, who are still so corrupted with a religion that means making a good bargain with a Deity that, looking around to see how they can advantage themselves, are led to think: Why, here is the Unitarian body, that has quite a reputation for intelligence, and does not pledge its members to any creed and yet has all the outward appearance of a Church. If we can only have a nice, thriving Unitarian church, we will be as respectable as other people. So they build a church, resolve themselves with a few vague resolutions on the excellency of excellency into a society, and send to Boston for a preacher. Sometimes the experiment succeeds, but far oftener fails.

There are scores of towns in the West in which Eastern Unitarians have sunk thousands of dollars in these unprincipled and hypocritical attempts to have a respectable church. The cause of failure is generally owing to their failure to obtain the social recognition from the other churches, or the popular devotion they relied on. The audience is slim, the sermons cold and passionless. Instead of leading the multi-

tude, they find that the great world cares no more for their highly refined and classical preaching than it does for that of the most ignorant Methodist ranter. Those who at the start were full of devotion to Unitarianism and quite sure they were about to convert the whole town drop out on one pretext or another, until frequently the minister is starved back to Boston.

Eastern Unitarians are often in despair over the poor returns they get for the large amounts of money they send annually to the West. After honestly accepting some of this money for doing my level best to build up a strong church out of the Unitarian faith, I can assure them that all the good I accomplished was in the large doses of radical thought I administered to my hearers, and that in destroying one of these churches I did better service for humanity than I could by building a hundred. There are engaged in this work in the West some of the noblest and brightest men it has been my fortune to meet with. Their fellowship is warm and earnest. Though they are often discouraged, yet they are cheered with the thought that indirectly they are broadening the intelligence and increasing the charity of the whole community. I would like to whisper it in the ear of every Eastern Unitarian that they are doing a great deal of good because they preach ninety-nine parts radicalism with one of Unitarianism. Every year, they are lopping off some limb of the tree of superstition. The time will come, when they will see that the practical work they are trying to do can only be done by laying the axe of reason to the tap-root of the tree, in the idea of God.

I hope much from these men yet, because there is scarcely one of these societies that is worthy of them. They are born to serve the large world outside of all church barriers; and, when that world wakes up to its need of such service from the seer and spokesman of truth, they will leave these churches, as gladly as the butterfly its cocoon, to sun themselves in this larger liberty. The coming teacher will have a definite answer to

definite questions. Instead of beating all around the bush, wasting a world of time in explaining in what sense he does believe and in what he does not, he will go directly and earnestly to his task of proclaiming the clear and definite gospel of Nature's right and justice. Of all things lying beyond the perception of reason, he will reverently say, I do not know. He will deal with the moral forces of principles instead of the vagaries and unrealities of theology and metaphysics. He will ask men to act instead of to pray, and teach them to bow before the noblest ideal of manhood that reigns in their own breasts instead of any deity.

To hasten this day, we must denounce with vigor the contradictory nature of Unitarianism, until it announces authoritatively on which side of the theological fence it intends to stand. Until it does, it will be the author of cruelty. Thousands will be lured into its fold by its promise of perfect liberty, only to find that, after the affections of their hearts have taken root in its soil, they must again be torn up by the roots.

When I entered its ministry, I was told that it was simply a place where I could have a free wing, and always be true to my most aspiring thought. I thought that it was the star of liberty, keeping watch above the cradle of the future, a banner about which every brave and earnest soldier of truth and nature might rally, and bear it forward on their conquering arms until it should float victorious above the last dismantled fortress of superstition. But I found it a will-o'-the-wisp, that led me into a morass. I came to it, lured by its promise of a free wing, and was taken in a net. It is a false light. When, under its guidance, we fancy we are gliding into port, we are driving straight on to the rocks.

I speak this word against it in the hope that it may save some one from the pain and disappointment it gave me. It may be better to love and lose than not to love at all; but, when one loses his love because its object was unworthy of him, there is not one drop of comfort with which to sweeten

the bitter cup. I enter my protest against it, and would, though I knew it to be as helpless as a baby pounding at a mountain, because it quenches enthusiasm and stifles earnestness of thought and action with its optimistic chloroform. It is so afraid of committing an impropriety that it neither loves nor hates. The negative nature of its thought is revealed in the fact that each church exists independent of every other, showing that they are held together by historical and social bonds rather than by any community of principle or unity of conviction.

If its position is true, that of Orthodoxy is utterly false, and yet it begs with hat in hand for crumbs of favor that fall from the rich orthodox tables. It thinks far more of the approval of the churches than of the scientists and radicals. If it can galvanize itself into a spasm of religious fervor, it shouts to the world: Come, see how pious we are! Why, we are almost as devotional as the Methodists.

A friend of mine, who had just come into its ministry in the West, came East to attend the May Anniversary, with heart beating high with hope, and expecting here in Boston, at the fountain source, to drink deep draughts of inspiration to take back with him as a source of strength in his solitary Western field. After being here a day or two, he wrote me as follows: "Each morning at eight o'clock was a prayer-meeting and such things, as much like our Western orthodox prayer-meetings as two beans are alike. Ministers in gowns, praying in Jesus' name, addressing him as Lord and Saviour, proving things by the Bible, talking against infidelity, exalting Channing as the only man that ever lived since Jesus, singing "Coronation," celebrating the Lord's Supper with all the pomp of a Catholic. They looked to me like ministerial lemon-peels, out of which the juice had been squeezed. Not one ringing word for the people, not one burst of prophecy, not one burning thought for freedom, not one attitude for leadership, but a halting quibble, an imprac-

ticable hair-splitting, a learned description of nothing, and a spiritless eulogy upon the vanishing points of obsolete absurdities. It is like a giant's struggling to lift a fly. It is simply ridiculous."

I protest against it also, because it is a spiritual aristocracy which, like every other aristocracy, is founded on injustice to the people. The masses of the people can no more share in its refined and subtle intellectual shadings off from Orthodoxy than they can all live in marble halls and enjoy the luxuries of wealth. In spite of all its professions of charity, it is at the heart a most selfish and exclusive faith.

In the struggle that is going on in Ireland, the English illustrated magazines contain pathetic pictures of lovely women waiting in tearful anxiety at the doors of lordly homes for the return of husband or father who may be shot on his way home by some poor wretch who is maddened through having been turned with his wife and little ones out of house and home. One cannot help sympathizing with those loving hearts in their painful watching. Still, I cannot but remember that these mansions, with their retinues of servants and overflowing plenty, are sustained by a crime against thousands of half-starved men, women, and children.

While one extreme remains there must be the other to balance it. So is it in the moral and intellectual world. The ideas of religion on which Unitarianism is maintained can only be sustained by a crime against humanity. When we give our devotion to the earth instead of the skies, and make our standard of morality the happiness of all the children of earth instead of the glory of God, we shall hear no more of a form of religion that depends altogether upon special privileges and culture for its existence.

I protest also against its method of work in religious reformation. It condemns all earnest and aggressive hostility toward the Church. In dealing with superstition and religious despotism, it advises patience and gentleness. Its whole plea is that there is a sort of historical and internal development

going on within the Church that will regenerate and reconstruct it in good time. In this respect there is an exact parallel between it and the Russian Empire. The new Czar has issued the following proclamation: "His Majesty the Emperor, on ascending the throne, assumes as an inheritance the traditions consecrated by time. Russia has now attained her full development. Feelings of jealousy and discontent are equally foreign to her. The Emperor will first give his attention to the internal development of the State. The Emperor's foreign policy will be entirely pacific. Russia will remain faithful to her friends, reciprocate the friendliness of all the States, and act in common with other governments in maintaining the general peace. Only the duty of protecting her honor or security may divert her from the work of internal development. The Emperor will endeavor to strengthen her power, advance her welfare, and secure her prosperity without detriment to others."

If Unitarians should issue a proclamation, it should read: "Unitarianism, through the murder of Orthodoxy by religious Nihilists having acquired the right to the throne, assumes as an inheritance the traditions consecrated by time. Religion has now attained her full development in us. Progress in ideas is now at an end. Feelings of jealousy and discontent are equally foreign to us. We shall first give our attention to the internal development of religion. Our policy toward superstition will be entirely pacific. Unitarianism will remain faithful to her friends, reciprocate the friendliness of all the churches, and act in common with other religions in the maintenance of peace and good fellowship among all."

Both of these proclamations would be well enough, if there were no great wrongs that cannot be healed in this way, nor any political Nihilists nor religious radicals who have a very different duty to perform.

Think of a man talking in that way to a nation of slaves! In Russia, every man and woman is a slave to the Czar. Every sentiment of liberty that blossoms in a human

heart puts a price on its owner's head. Every young man or young woman who looks toward the future with hope knows that, if he or she lifts a finger to try to give reality to their vision, the mines of Siberia yawn to receive them. The whole land is shadowed with fear and despair. Hope never comes into the breasts of millions. Covered with vermin and rags, they eke out a miserable existence on the pitiful dole that is left of their crops after the vast, lazy, thieving swarm of office-holders have taken the lion's share.

Every intelligent person in the empire knows that this is the sole evil of despotism, and yet they are told that this can only be reformed by historical development. The evils wrought by the despotism of religion are like numerous. Injustice is clothed in the robes of justice, right is trampled beneath the feet of every priest, and wrong worshipped in every prayer offered to a God. Thousands live and die as in caverns, because the devotion that should be given to humanity is offered to a phantom. Nihilism in Russia is born out of ages of injustice and cruelest tyranny. It says to all such proclamations: "I spit upon them. I scorn your laws as crimes, and hate your government as the most gigantic wrong beneath the sun." It desires to see a universal upheaval, so that society may begin again from the foundation. It is full of significance to every thoughtful mind.

There lies at the heart of it a profound faith in the capabilities of nature, when unfettered from the tyrannies of a barbarous past, to regenerate itself. It is sure that the wildest and most elemental chaos will be better than the present iron rule and destructive order. It is espoused by the middle classes, the intelligent, the students at the universities, and the scientific classes.

Now, when we get at the heart of it, this is the meaning of scientific radicalism. It demands reconstruction, new government, new laws, new education, and new morals. Either by peace or war, the time is surely coming when everything will be made to

conform to its interpretation of nature. Everything built on theology must go down. Every myth and fable of the supernatural must be consigned to the limbo of broken idols.

The same sense of wrong, born out of the inequalities and class privileges of our time that are founded on theology, is smouldering in the heart of the people. The spark will become a coal, the coal a flame, and the flame a conflagration that shall burn up these wrongs. The time must come when society and all its interests shall be adjusted in accordance with the demands of science, when men shall seek her guidance as universally as they once did that of the Church.

I have said but little directly in reference to the decline of Unitarianism. I know, however, by observation that it is declining. Orthodox churches frequently make jubilee over its declining power. It is a foolish triumph. Every evidence of decay here proclaims their own swift coming doom. Unitarians, being the nearest to the light, will be the first to be transformed thereby. In the war against superstition, we do not kill our foes, but make them our friends. In this Church there are thousands whose hearts begin to warm toward us.

There is but a thin veil between us and them; and, when they see a little more clearly the vision that inspires us, we shall find them by our sides. Those whose hearts are the fullest of kindly and humane instincts will soon renounce divinity in favor of humanity. Whatever declines, this cause we represent shall never wane. "The Czar is dead, but the people live," said one of the prisoners, suspected of throwing the bomb that killed the emperor; "and I am quite ready to die." So theology and every institution founded thereon shall perish; but the people will live, growing grander and nobler every day beneath the sunlit skies of liberty and truth. For defending these radical truths, we may be for a time cruelly slandered and misrepresented.

Still confessing to this truth of our inward souls courageously, acknowledging that to us

theology is from beginning to the end the baseless fabric of a dream,—a dream that paralyzes with fear the humanities of most of the dreamers,—we can be of good courage. We know that the morn already gilds with splendor the horizon of the future. All things are pledged to the fulfilment of our

cause. There is no rain falls that does not nourish it, no wind blows that does not whisper it, no flower blooms that does not adorn it, no river flows nor tide ebbs that do not follow it with fluid footsteps, to bear it on their swelling bosoms on its way to glorious victory.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

You have often listened to sermons and lectures upon dead heroes. I wish to speak to you of a living one,—Robert G. Ingersoll. Why should we wait until the grand and true are dead until we give them our meed of praise? Why should we whose cause is championed by one of the greatest men of the age, whose character is slandered and whose name is traduced, be backward in defending him? That he needs any praise of mine I do not think. His words are his own best praise; while his life is so rich and full, sweet and strong, that he needs not the approval of others, without which many would faint and falter in the battle of life. But perhaps I can open the way for some of you to appreciate and understand him better. What I have to say is principally concerning the religious problems that cluster about his name. Still, we shall understand better his word by knowing him.

Intellectually, I have never met a man of greater endowment. He is of the race of Titans. His mind is of the Shaksperian order. As Ben Jonson said of Shakspeare, "he knows little Latin, and less Greek; and yet his intellect seems to have kissed all the shores of thought." His brain is on fire, and he thinks with a rapidity that is truly remarkable. Where others have to go through a long process of reasoning, he sees the whole bearing of a subject at a glance. I have sat in a room when he has been surrounded with a score of people, mostly intelligent men, many of them lawyers who had come to him as the lawyers and clever men are said to have gone to Jesus, each with a knotty question to solve,

expecting that they had a point that would floor the great champion of Infidelity. But, before their questions were half-asked, a broad smile would o'erspread his face at the folly of them; and in a half-dozen words they would see their staggerers melt away like snow-flakes beneath a warm sun. If he had lived eighteen hundred years ago, he would have been the founder instead of the destroyer of a system of religion; for this gigantic intellect is supplemented with an equally Titanic affectionate nature. There is that about him which warms and cheers all who come under his influence. He is a sun of righteousness or goodness, with healing on his wings. He can cast out devils with a look. The sourest, most ill-natured man would be sweetened and thawed into good-nature beneath his word and look. His life is so rich and strong, his presence so magnetic, that in a sick-chamber he would be better than many a physician; and it would only require the ignorance of an age like that of Buddha or Jesus to endow him with the qualities and powers of a God.

It is this large affectional nature that makes him the hater of slavery, the foe of oppression, and champion of the liberty of every man, woman, and child. He feels and sympathizes with the countless thousands who suffer beneath the barbarous cruelty of theology. He knows that all the progress the human race has made toward happiness has been through a determined struggle against superstition and ignorance. He flings himself into the deadly breach, and fights with all the energy of his being for the cause that will decrease the sum of human suffering and increase that of its joy. It is objected that he seems oblivious of the feel-

ings of those who hold most sacred the ideas and principles he ridicules. This is by no means true. He would not willingly tread upon a worm or crush a daisy by the roadside. The only shadow that rests upon his life is the intensity of his sympathy with men, women, and children whose lives are joyless through the blight and bane of supernatural doctrines of religion.

If you saw one sick with a painful malady, and knew you could laugh him out of it, would you hesitate to do so? Wit and humor are the most powerful weapons that can be applied in the treatment of those who are smitten by the dreadful disease of superstition and fanaticism. He does not laugh at people, but with them, at the absurd wooden and painted idols which they worship as gods. His pleasantry is born of the largeness of his love. His wit is not the forked lightning that destroys, but the kindly sheet-lightning that plays along the sky on a summer evening and purifies a sultry atmosphere. His mirth is not the heavy revelry that inebriates, but the good cheer that exhilarates and enriches life. We never laugh at him, but with him. He never descends from his dignity into the work of the harlequin. Though he makes us laugh more than forty clowns, yet we never lose our respect and reverence for him any more than we do for Shakspeare, who in his most serious dramas mingles comedy with tragedy, always relieving the dark and grave colors with the light and gay.

The false ideas of life fostered by the Church have accustomed people to think that it is undignified to laugh and a crime to be happy. But, when we get done with these superstitions that are born of fear and ignorance, we shall see that happiness is the only good. It is the free mind that sweeps away the clouds and lets in the sunshine. When we see and feel this, we shall be able to say with him:—

Strike with hands of fire, O weird musician,
thy harp, strung with Apollo's golden hair! Fill
the vast cathedral aisles with symphonies sweet
and dim, deft toucher of the organ's keys!

Blow, bugler, blow! until thy silver notes do
touch and kiss the moonlit waves, and charm the
lovers wandering 'mid the vine-clad hills. But
know your sweetest strains are discord all, com-
pared with childhood's happy laugh,—the laugh
that fills the eyes with light and every heart with
joy. O rippling river of laughter! thou art the
blessed boundary-line between the beasts and
men; and every wayward wave of thine doth
drown some fretful fiend of care. O Laughter,
rose-lipped daughter of Joy, there are dimples
enough in thy cheeks to catch and hold and glo-
rify all the tears of grief!

The true liberal gathers pleasure from every
lowly duty, and sucks the honey of purest
joy from every blooming flower. His life is
in tune with Nature; and every gentle touch
of her hand awakens therefrom sweeter
music than that of the *Æolian* harp when
kissed by the amorous breeze of summer.
Though we behold the darkness in which
many walk, yet before us is the sunlight
that clouds every peak of the future with
brightness and glory. The dawning day of
the world's new, glad morn of light has
touched our hearts; and behind us flees the
night of fear, slavery, ignorance, and crime.
Each day unfolds a new truth. Every night
discovers a fresh star. Each hour flies by on
golden wing. Great deeds invite us; while,
everywhere, noble fellow-workers greet us
with words of friendship and good-cheer.
When the race was but little removed from
the beasts of the forest in its instincts, when
men's heads were low and empty of truth,
it is no wonder that ignorance filled their
souls with fears and terror indescribable, or
that they sought by the sacrifice of their
first-born or the best of their sheep and
oxen to propitiate those cruel and angry
deities that lurked in the crocodiles' jaws,
gleamed in the eyes of serpents, muttered
in the thunders, flashed in the lightnings, or
smote in the pestilence and famine.

Though we see about us the survivals of
these fears in theism and Christianity, in
the black robes of priests, the repression of
human joy and pleasure by the Church, yet
these systems of thought that lead man to
crouch and crawl in the dust are passing

away. No ray of light breaks from them. All about them is dark with the shadow of that eternal night of oblivion into which they are already falling. Reason reigns above superstition, knowledge above ignorance, genius above the sword, love above cruelty, and hope above despair. The mind of man has become a temple. Beneath the spacious dome of his uplifted forehead dwell and worship the divinities of reason, justice, love, and truth, while through every cell and corridor thereof trembles and vibrates the music of human joy. It is also objected to him that he destroys without giving any thing to take its place. And what if he does do this that thousands claim? If you see a deadly snake coiled up in the grass where some children are playing, must you wait until you can find something to put in its place before you destroy it? Or, to make the illustration more perfect, suppose the children are, in their innocence and ignorance, playing with it, must you go and hunt around the stores for a toy snake to exchange for it, for fear they will have nothing to play with, before you seize and crush it? If you bring me a counterfeit bill, must I for telling you it is a counterfeit give you a good one? You say that you have received the bill for a good one, and now why should you not pass it on to some one else? That is the real nature of this argument. People want to pass the pain and loss of settling these things on to their children. Because they have a counterfeit, they want some one else to be the losers, not them.

When a man finds that he has been believing a lie, let him be glad to get done with it. If you are living in an old, damp, rotting house, that is at any time liable to fall about your heads in a heap of ruins, it will be much better to get out of it, and trust to your energy to build another. If you would possess a new country, you must have your pioneers who are not afraid of rough and hard work.

All great epochs and blessings are preceded by men who have the courage to destroy. This Civil Republic was born in a

whirlwind of destruction. So the greater republic of mental liberty must be rocked in the same stormy cradle. But the courage to destroy is born of the vision of the new temple, better government or higher liberty that is to succeed the old. The men who laid the foundations of our civil liberty knew what they were fighting for. So do Mr. Ingersoll and all who are contending for the perfect enfranchisement of the human mind. But the present time demands the destroyer. History moves in cycles, and repeats itself. The development of every people may be traced through an age of credulity or superstition, next of faith, and then of reason. These three periods are the childhood, youth, and manhood of every nation.

Here, in America, we are just passing from faith to reason, youth to manhood. During this transition there is always a dark and unwholesome period. To use the language of Draper: "The constitution of man is such that, for a long time after he has discovered the incorrectness of the ideas prevailing around him, he shrinks from openly emancipating himself from their dominion; and, constrained by the force of circumstances, he lives a hypocrite, publicly applauding what his private judgment condemns. When a nation is making this passage, so universal do these practices become that it may be truly said hypocrisy is organized. Is not this the condition of things here in America to-day, hypocrisy organized in every church, babbling to us from thousands of fat and well-fed priests, who in every sentence, as it is jerked out like the music of an organ-grinder, reveal that their employment is an artificial one; and so, because they are not sincere, they fail to reach the sympathies of their hearers? Think of the thousands of sermons that fall upon sleepy congregations. Where can you point to any influence the pulpit exerts upon our intellectual life? Who goes to church to learn anything? Churches are popular in the same proportion as they let religion or duty and politics alone. No matter what you believe, you can join any Church in

the land, if you have only a well-filled pocket-book.

A sermon is valuable in the same proportion as it is made up of pretty sentences that have no apparent meaning beyond that of enabling the congregation to say, "What a beautiful sermon our dear minister gave us to-day!" I know, my friends, of what I am talking, for I have been behind the scenes; and I am only here to-day because I have all along insisted upon telling the truth. Hypocrisy is also organized in the laity. Almost every church is more or less sustained by a few men who do not believe in its doctrines any more than you or I do, who run it as a business investment; and many of them, sad to say, too often use it simply as a cloak to conceal crime.

You all know that nearly all the adulteries, bank-robberies, and defalcations are committed by prayer-meeting leaders, Sunday-school superintendents, and prominent members of the Young Men's Christian Association. Why? Because sincerity is the only defence and shield of virtue and honor. The man who professes what he does not believe will soon do what he does not profess. The man who will make a trade of his religion will do the same with his politics and honor. A creed outgrown is the worst bane of society, the most deadly serpent that ever coiled itself about the heart of humanity. We must not be afraid to crush it. Honesty is stagnating in this poisonous atmosphere. All our relations in what is called good society are hollow and heartless and most contemptible to every honest and intelligent man or woman, because they are gauged by church relations. Truth is fettered and gagged by the support that is given knowingly to sustain these lies. Hearts pure and good are left to suck, vampire-like, their own life-blood through their devotion to undowered heresy. Hopes, freighted with the harvests of centuries yet to be, are beaten constantly back from their aim by the unfriendly and cruel blasts of social ostracism that come from these churches. Lies smitten to the ground and

left for dead are warmed again into life, and still left to drag their slimy length across our path and destroy the young and innocent with their deadly venom.

When we find people wilfully keeping up a senseless and loathsome imposition, shall we not tear from them their shameless masks? As Froude says:—

What do such impostors deserve but to be denied, exposed, insulted, trampled under foot, danced upon, if nothing else will serve, till the very geese take courage and venture to their derision. Are we to wreath laurels round the brows of phantasms, lest we shock the sensibilities of the idiots who have believed them to be divine?

I wish that we had a thousand Ingersolls to engage in this work of destruction. The storm and tempest of thought must purify the dead calm of ignorance and faith. Thousands are held in the cruellest bondage to these hypocrites, offered as victims on the altars of their avarice. We have only sympathy and tenderness for those who are sincere. But we who are free must break the fetters of the slave, though, like brave Arnold Winkelried, as we cry, "*Make way for liberty!*" we pave together a sheaf of the tyrants' spears into our hearts. The light of the coming age has dawned upon the distant hills, where stand the loftiest and noblest spirits of our time; but the darkness lingers among the people like a dense fog and mist in the valleys. As wind and the rays of the sun drive out these natural mists, so will the commotion of earnest, battling thought and speech, mingled with the warm sun of human love, make the light and beauty of the hills that also of the valleys of humanity. But, before this day arrives, there is a great work of destruction to be accomplished. The times need the reformer, a new and more complete protest against the lies that darken the fair face of truth.

All great men are much alike. There is a very striking contrast between the spirit and work of Luther and of Ingersoll, and, for that matter, between all brave men who are impatient with what is false and cruel and

in earnest to destroy it. I do not like any more to refer much to Jesus, because the whole history of his life is so uncertain. Still, we catch, behind the opinions of the authors of the Gospels, glimpses of a brave and tender-hearted man, who was infidel to the religion of his day, and who, out of a quenchless love for humanity, denounced the false hypocrites and formalists of the age, who laid heavy burdens upon the shoulders of the people, and yet never lifted a finger to help bear them, and who, under cover of long prayers and much fasting, devoured widows' houses and robbed the fatherless. For every seeming harsh expression of Ingersoll, I will find you one still more vindictive in the words ascribed to Jesus. But, when the Pharisees would have stoned a woman to death, he defended her; and, when his disciples would have turned mothers away who came bringing their children, he was honored with their visit, and blessed the children. So, though Mr. Ingersoll denounces every Pharisee and formalist of this age, yet he can also say, —

I don't know what inventions are in the brain of the future, I don't know what garments may be woven with the years to come, but I do know, coming from the infinite sea of the future, there will never touch this bank and shoal of time a greater blessing, a grander glory, than liberty for man, woman, and child.

It would help us to decide this problem of the place and worth of Ingersoll, if we could get clearly before our mind the characters of several leading reformers; for to know well the past is to be at home in the present.

But we cannot in one lecture gather all the scattered rays of the past into a single focus. Still, as one ray has in it all the qualities and colors of a number, I will at this point draw a comparison between Luther and Ingersoll. Luther was a reformer, preparing the way in an age of credulity for one of faith. Ingersoll, in an age of faith, is opening before us the coming age of reason.

The idol Luther sought to smash was the pope, as the vicegerent of God. Ingersoll seeks to destroy every image of God, whether carved in matter or in thought, or enshrined in an infallible book. The world said that Luther was too vindictive and harsh in his methods. In reply to the charge, he said:—

I place my whole glory and honor henceforward in having said of me that I rage and storm against the papists. I will henceforward pursue them with my imprecations ceaselessly, leaving

neither them nor myself repose until I have sunk into the tomb. Never again shall they have a good word from me. I am determined to see them crushed and buried under the weight of my thunders and lightnings. I will pray no longer without intermingling maledictions with my orisons. If I exclaim, Hallowed be thy name, I will add, Cursed be the name of papists and those who blaspheme against thee. If I say, Thy kingdom come, I will put in, Cursed be the papacy and all other kingdoms which are opposed to thine. If I pray, Thy will be done, I will rejoin, Cursed be the papacy, and may their designs be overthrown who oppose thy commands.

In the same spirit, Mr. Ingersoll vows never to lecture on a religious subject without attacking the infamous doctrine of atonement, that encourages men to do wrong on a credit; that sends good men to hell and bad ones to heaven, and pleads with all who hear him to never contribute another dollar to sustain such a monstrous falsehood, saying:—

It has done harm enough. It has covered the world with blood. It has filled the asylums for the insane. It has cast a shadow in the heart, in the sunlight, of every good and tender man and woman. I say, Let us rid the heavens of this monster, and write upon the dome, Liberty, Love, and Law.

But, though Luther's words were so terrible against the papacy,—half-battles, Jean Paul Richter called them,—yet his heart was overflowing with the tenderest pity and love as indeed the truly valiant heart always is. There are few things more touching than the soft breathings of affection, soft as a baby's kiss or as a mother's tenderness. From this great, wild heart of Luther, that seemed to his foes to be as cruel and relentless as a tiger's, such courage and daring as he exhibited in defying the whole power of Rome is always the product of a nature brimming over with affection and humanity. His behavior at the death-bed of his little daughter, so still, so great and loving, is most touching. He who, single-handed and alone, had dared to defy the greatest combined power and cruelty this world has ever been cursed with, fell on his knees at her death-bed, and in hot, passionate tears pleaded that her life might be spared. Though he comforted himself when she died with the thought that she would now shine in heaven like a star, yet he found himself wondrously sad and smitten with her loss, declaring that he carried ever before him

her features, her words, her gestures, her every action in life and on her death-bed.

Does not this make you think of another man who has made the nation weep with him at his brother's grave, when, through the tears he could not keep back, he read?—

Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of a wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word; but in the night of death hope sees a star, and listening love hears the rustle of a wing. He who sleeps here, when dying, mistaking the approach of death for the return of health, whispered with his latest breath, "I am better now." Let us believe, in spite of doubts and dogmas, and tears and fears, that these dear words are true of all the countless dead.

The reformer is also a natural man. He despises artificiality and mockery in every form, because he sees so clearly into the beauty and meaning of nature. Sincerity and sensitiveness to the touch of nature always go together. So we find that, as Luther looks forth at midnight from the lonely castle in which his friends had confined him for safe keeping, he found peace and comfort in looking upward into the great vault of immensity filled with wheeling regiments and battalions of worlds. The storm-tossed soul was hushed before this silent grandeur of the infinite and eternal.

In the garden of Wittenberg, one evening at sunset, a little bird had perched for the night. Looking up at it, he said: "Above it are the stars and deep heaven of worlds. Yet it has folded its little wings, and gone trustfully to rest there as in its home." Does this not make you think of another man, who is so sensitive to the touch of nature that, in illustrating the contrast between the lessons of nature and theology, he would say?—

A little child, a little boy, would go out into the garden, and there would be a tree laden with blossoms, and this little fellow would lean up against the tree; and there would be a bird singing and swinging and thinking about four little speckled eggs warmed by the breast of its mate,—singing and swinging, and the music coming rippling out of its throat, and the flowers blossoming and the air full of perfume and the great, white clouds floating in the sky, and that little boy would lean up against that trunk and think of hell.

Do you wonder that a man like this means

to do his best to take that thought of hell out of every child's mind, and put in its place a sweet and pure naturalness that shall make them as sensitive to the voice of bird or tree or flower as the Æolian harp is to the gentlest whisper of a summer breeze?

Both Luther and Ingersoll are idol-smashers. Yet the idols Ingersoll is doing his best to strike to pieces with the sledge-hammers of his wit, humor, laughter, and tears, are not the same that Luther broke. A new age brings progress and new work for its leaders. The Bible which Luther substituted for the pope is one of these idols. But this different attitude of the two men toward the Bible does not separate them in spirit. The thought of Luther was that the Church of Rome was full of lies,—the pope in his claim to be the vicegerent of God a lie, the doctrine of purgatory a lie, the practice of the sale of indulgences a monstrous lie. But, on the other hand, he believed that the Bible was the infallible word of God.

Criticism had not shown how full of falsehood it is, science how foolish and stupid a thing a miracle is in a universe where everything from the largest sun or world is governed by law. The Church having scattered to the winds the literature of Greece and Rome, and as yet there being none of his own nation, the best he could do was to put into the hands of the people this literature of the Hebrews.

To Ingersoll, the Bible, in connection with the doctrine of its inspiration, is a worse lie than the pope, and equally destructive of the intelligence, liberty, and happiness of mankind. It has maintained slavery, burned witches, beaten and frightened thousands of children to death, obstructed and denounced science and education, declaring that the wisdom of man is foolishness, and that we can only get wise through faith and prayer, drugged the souls of its devotees to sleep, made them indifferent to the possibilities of human progress, destroyed the finest works of art, burned the greatest libraries, encouraged licentiousness, degraded woman to a slave, upheld the monstrous infamy of polygamy, authorized Jesuitism that says it is right to do evil that good may come of it, encouraged dishonesty and insincerity, made thousands insane, filled the heart of man with hatred for his own flesh and blood, haunted his mind with horror, and covered the world with blood. The Bible contains

many true and beautiful things; but, while it is looked upon in any light as a divine book, it cannot but be a curse to humanity.

Let us then strike down this fallible pope claiming infallibility, and then every ray of truth shall be welcomed to the mind of man, happiness shall be our only good, and liberty, instead of floating in the distant horizon or in the dreams of the poet or enthusiast, will come and take up its abode with the children of men forever. Let the people but have faith in science, and seek her light of life as eagerly as they have that of the Bible, and the golden age of which poets have dreamed will be neither in the past as a superstition or in the future as a faint hope, but in the present as a living reality. We would take from the human heart no good. All that Mr. Ingersoll and every true liberal asks is that for bondage we may have liberty, for hatred love, for fear confidence, for falsehood truth, and for despair hope.

Another idol which Mr. Ingersoll seeks to destroy is the orthodox conception of a God.

Men have made to themselves many images of God. They have also chosen a favorite snake or beast or man in which they have supposed him to have incarnated himself. Some of these images have been carved out of wood and stone, others out of spiritual qualities of character, but still carved, only in the place of a material chisel it has been one of thought. The man who worships the stone or wooden image we all call an idolater. Mr. Ingersoll goes further, and says the same of those who worship a mental image. Thousands are feeling the same way. The mind of man in its growing sensitiveness to the touch of nature rises in pure and noble feeling of love and wonder until the idea of omnipotence becomes an insult, and of creation a barbarism. Nature so fills us with joy and uplifts us with strength that there is no room or need for aught beyond. We do not dogmatize and say there is no God, for that would be to affirm something of the unknowable.

But, if there is somewhere in the unknown shoreless vast some Being whose dreams are constellations, and within whose thought the infinite exists,—

"It seems his newer will

We should not think at all of him, but turn,
And of the world that he has given us
Make what best we can."

This universe is infinite, whichever way we look. If our world was not held from

the sun by other worlds, we should fall into the sun, if they in turn were not held from us by still other worlds, they would fall into us, and so on forever. So that, if we could start off in any direction and travel with the swiftness of light or thought, we should constantly pass new worlds forever and forever. If we go backward in the same way, we find no beginning, and forward, no end. It used to be thought that matter was dead, and that it possessed the quality of inertia, and so had to be moved upon by a power without.

Now, we know that the smallest atom of matter is in motion in proportion to its size, just as much as the largest sun or world. It was thought that force was created and destroyed by will. Now, we know that there is no such thing as creation or destruction of force. The mind that sees nature in this light finds it impossible to conceive of a God. The word becomes meaningless, while all worship of the supernatural is seen to be an idolatry that wastes the strength and opportunity of life. So that, in order to work for the happiness of mankind, we have to do our best to destroy this false conception of the universe. We say no word against those who think that they know God by the inward shining of his light. Still, we are so persuaded that, when through Reason's brightening lamp they rise to higher paths and taste these richer joys, they will thank us for leading them to kindle this lamp; we cannot quench this light, though it is to them for the present, because of the darkness in which they have so long walked, painful to bear.

There is no relation between man and the supernatural. We are the children of nature, and must be subject to it. Its limitations are ours. We dare not trespass against its laws. They beset and encompass us behind and before. But theology presents for our worship a being who transcends all these. He is almighty, and can do whatever he pleases. But our strength is finite. We can no more do as we please than nature can produce figs of thorns or grapes of thistles. If our power was infinite, we would fill every heart with joy; but he who has the power does not, and so there is discord between us and him. We cannot worship a being inferior to our own best impulses. This God outside and above nature is also said to be immutable, knowing no change of thought or feeling. We cannot

conceive of such a state of eternal passivity without the surprise of progress or the joy of change. We say that he is without beginning or end of days, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; but we use words with no more sense as to their meaning than a parrot. For such a being to learn or know anything of our existence is utterly unthinkable. To him, we must have been just as much of a reality away yonder through all the eternal past as now. He can experience no sense of time or thought. For us who struggle with imperfections and grow into larger life, he can have no sympathy. He never endured the smart of pain nor felt the gleaming flash of joy.

On earth, we find the largest sympathy between us and those who have wept and rejoiced with us. Why should we look to the skies for that which we can better find leaning on the heart of a mother or bosom of a loving wife or in the arms of our children, who have journeyed by our sides through the changing sunshine and shadow that flecks the horizon of every earthly life from the cradle to the grave? Nature is full of change and capable of constant improvement. Every hour is rich with surprise, and each moment jewelled with joy to him who is content with her limitations. We stand before her as children before a noble mother, ignorant of the largest and deepest meanings of her life. We only know that we rest fondly upon her bosom and submit to her laws. Her skirts are fringed with infinite beauty, and the crown of eternities rests upon her majestic brow. Before we learned to know her right, we, too, sought a foster-mother; but now we gladly fling ourselves into her arms, resolved to meet with her, and in being true to her, any fate.

He who thus finds that he belongs to nature shall in return find that nature belongs to him. She takes only that she may give. Her love never grows cold, and her beauty never fades for him whose heart changes not to her. No words can describe the joy of this relation. The distortions and ghostly visions of theology have no power over him who has found this rest in nature. There are no walls of separation between him and other human hearts. His life is clothed and adorned with her unspeakable beauty. Every hour of life is rich with her sweet and noble companionship. The most common things of life bud and

blossom into beauty at her touch. To toil for her is a perpetual delight. With her, he is no longer a houseless and homeless wretch, tossing upon the wild waves of doubt. The new land he set out in search of, when he left the old rotting wharf of theology, is reached. The lost bowers of childhood, where faith climbs to beauty and prayer to praise, are found again. Untold and inexhaustible wealth is before him, a whole continent to explore and conquer, new opportunities in every department of life. Old tyrannies are left behind, their fortunes allied to theology; but the soil on which he stands is consecrated to liberty. Hereon shall be provided a refuge for all fugitives from bondage. Slowly but surely shall come a new civilization and higher type of humanity, who, in their devotion to the truth of nature, shall yet adjust and equalize in the scales of justice the rights of all the children of earth.

But this will never come until we have destroyed the idea that there is a power that is more than the source of nature and of man,—a master enthroned in the skies who is superior to our reason and the truths of nature. The true brotherhood of humanity will never come save through the destruction of every idea of a God in whose name men hate and persecute each other. Mr. Ingersoll sees and feels this deeply, hence he bravely lifts the hammer of the iconoclast against this idol of idols called the God of gods. Through his brave endeavors, into thousands of minds has come this growing light of nature and of science. Mourn not that this true reformer has broken to pieces before your face the idol which you had outgrown. Let nothing tempt you to pick up the broken fragments and try to mend the image. Regret not that the anchor has broken from the old mooring, and that you are invited to sail forth upon the sea of being in search of new adventures. Many white sails dot the purple and joy-crested billows before you, while those on board cheer each other in their search for a land of eternal summer and beauty. What though you know not the end of the voyage! Truth is your pole star, and the breath of love fills your sails and the joy of life your hearts. A prosperous voyage to you all, brave brothers and sisters of the Liberal Heart.

THE ASSASSINATION OF THE CZAR.

THE subject to which I wish to direct your most earnest thought to day is one of great difficulty, owing to its complex relation to all that is highest and deepest in our nature. There is nothing from which we shrink with such intuitive loathing and horror as assassination. At the same time, I trust that there is nothing in all the range of thought and feeling that thrills us with such joy as to learn that a step forward has been taken by the bleeding feet of millions of our fellow-beings along the thorny path of despotism to the broad and fair fields of liberty.

To be slain on a field of battle is nothing in comparison to assassination. To meet a foe on a fair and open field, to know the danger and in some sort to be prepared for the worst, is indeed bad enough; but to be coming from a feast, a wedding, or some ordinary occupation, thinking and planning for life, and then to be suddenly stricken down by a foe who leaps upon us from the dark, is most horrible. The most repulsive things in life or nature are those that in some way resemble this. The secret tongue of slander, the anonymous attack of a coward in the public press, the snake in the grass, or the sleek and velvet tiger leaping silently to its bloody work, are all intensely repulsive to us, because they resemble this method of attack.

I am not surprised that the great majority have condemned the perpetrators of this deed without judge or jury. All our feelings and prejudices in a case of this kind come into court against the accused. However warm and vital our sympathies and en-

thusiasm may be for the cause of liberty, we shall find it exceedingly difficult to find a verdict in their behalf. We have been so long trained in a school of morals that inverts right into wrong, and wrong into right, that we hardly know what justice is. Thousands may rally about the standard of liberty who, when the hour of conflict comes, will beat a hasty retreat. The new life of humanity, that is just struggling into existence, finds all the ground pre-empted against it by priests, saints, kings, and gods. It is far easier to learn than to forget. Whether this act be right or wrong, it will be well for us to remember that the chances are ninety-nine to one that, if it is right, we will nevertheless find it wrong.

I do not intend to-day to attempt any final decision, but simply to lay before you a few of the facts that led to the act and to draw such conclusions from it as may be of service to us in our own devotion to liberty. Russia may seem to some of you a long way off, and the right or wrong of this event to have but little practical relation to us. Such a feeling should be resisted. The true Liberal will aim at the development of the cosmopolitan spirit. Our cause is that of humanity. The eighty-five millions of Russians ought to be a presence in our lives. "They are fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subjected to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as we are."

The most hopeful fact of our times is that every day the chief events are plying to and fro like a shuttle between the different na-

tions, and so weaving us into a closer relationship with the whole human race. When we surrender our devotion to the skies, we shall find that even the earth is far too large for our hearts to fully grasp. Instead of life growing meaningless, we shall discover that every event is fraught with a new and thousand-fold interest. A daily newspaper is of far more service to us than a Bible. Instead of talking to us of nations that lie buried beneath the dust of centuries, it makes us acquainted with those that are breasting the swelling waves and storms of the great ocean of life. Instead of asking us to bow the knee at the shrine of the dead, it brings for our love and admiration the heroic deeds of the living. Instead of developing sympathy for those who need it not, it solicits our love for those who can be inspired with courage by our words of affection and approval. Wherever railroads, telegraphs, and commerce go, they make an entrance for the thought and love of man. All the triumphs of civilization enrich the inner as well as the outer man.

It is not long since Russia was first brought to swell the import and worth of our lives. During the reign of Nicholas there was but little known of this vast territory and its people. His policy was to build around it a Chinese wall. He saw that autocracy and liberty were foreign to each other, and so he determined to keep his eighty millions of slaves ignorant of the very idea of liberty. He saw that to do this he must cut short the intellectual development of the people. To accomplish this end, he limited the number of students at each university to three hundred. The regular professors were expelled from their chairs, and their places given to officers of the army. Instead of the study of science, education was made to consist in the wearing of uniforms and the punctilious ceremonies of military etiquette.

Though a tyrant by nature, he was a man of great strength of character; and so, during his reign, the iron foot of despotism crushed to the earth every budding plant of liberty.

The walls of the prison in which he kept his eighty millions of slaves were so thick that no hope of escape ever entered their hearts.

But this Chinese wall was broken down somewhat by the Crimean war. The nobles had a chance to compare their condition with the same classes in the rest of Europe. French and German radicalism found their way across the frontier. The serfs were too degraded and ignorant to be reached. But their masters, who in their turn were serfs to the Czar, were able to feel the injustice of their condition. The blessed spirit of discontent began to enter their hearts, and the inspiration of doubt their minds. Many of them commenced to prepare their serfs for liberty. They rebelled against the authority of the Czar. Alexander, who had ascended the throne, in order to decrease their power and to arrest the gathering storm, freed the serfs.

But what was this liberty? Liberty to purchase their right of removal from one part of the empire to another. Liberty to marry whom and when they pleased, instead of at the dictates of their masters. Liberty to work harder, with far less to eat. Liberty to become homeless vagabonds. Some of the land was granted them, upon which they were settled in small rural communes, but under such restrictions and heavy taxation that their last state was worse than their first. So heavy are these taxes that the constant effort of each peasant is to limit the amount of land assigned to him at the annual allotment. Liberty to plough, sow, and reap just how and when the law allows. Liberty to go away from home and work in the city, if they will still pay their taxes. Liberty to have schools by paying for them, so that, in their despair, they often burn the school-house, in order to escape the additional tax. Liberty to enjoy the fruits of their labor after they have satisfied the vast host of hungry officials, who must be the first paid. The majority of them were liberated from kind and sympathetic masters, in order to become the slaves of a blind and unfeeling autocracy.

In Russia, we have the curious anomaly of a reform movement in favor of liberty beginning at the top instead of, as in most cases, at the bottom of society. The peasant classes are so degraded that they have not sufficient energy left with which to aspire to be free. Centuries of oppression have begotten in them a dark and gloomy pessimism. Every change they can remember has increased their burdens, so that they shrink intuitively from every idea of a change.

It is this vast, inert mass that shuts Russia to-day within the grave of the dead past. Once thrill them with hope, and the stone will roll away from the sepulchre, and eighty-five millions be born into liberty. This could be done soon, if the intelligent five millions could reach and instruct them. But to attempt to enlighten the people is the greatest of all crimes in Russia. To go among them as a teacher, or to be even suspected of wanting to do so, is to expose one's self to arrest and the horrors of Siberia.

To be arrested in Russia is by no means followed with a speedy, fair, and public trial. The prisoner is almost invariably left for a year or two in a miserable dungeon. When he is reduced to despair, and the public has lost its interest in his cause, he is tried in comparative secrecy, and hastened off to Siberia. During the last ten years, about sixty thousand political criminals have thus been banished to Siberia, either to work in the mines or to live under constant surveillance of the police.

Those that the government desires to be rid of, and yet fears to execute, are sent to the mines. Here the service is so hard and the treatment so brutal that but few constitutions hold out more than three or four years; though many have been sent for five years, but few ever returned alive. Those who are simply banished are obliged to stay in one place, and to report themselves under penalty to the police every week. Many of these starve, or perish from the poverty of the land or the rigor of the climate.

It is enough to make any one insane with hatred of such a government to think of the noble young men and women whose hearts had been warmed with the glow of liberty, whose minds had been illuminated with the dawn of reason, and whose lives, though up-torn from all the traditions of the past, from all respect for the Church or belief in God, had yet been consecrated enthusiastically and completely to the cause of humanity, snatched suddenly from tender homes to wear out their hearts in a damp and dismal dungeon for years, waiting in the cruelest suspense on the last hope of a trial, and then driven off to Siberia in company with every species of criminal, and compelled to work in the mines beneath the lash, scantily clothed and fed, until, worn out with cold, hunger, and fatigue, they sink beneath the heavy load, and far from home and kindred find in death a boon.

Before we sit in judgment upon the Nihilists, it is certainly right that we should try to understand in some degree their aims and the wrongs that have goaded them on to this desperate deed. I confess, however, that all information on this point is of somewhat an uncertain nature. The government supervises all the press and telegraphic reports on this subject. At the trial of the Nihilists, only the facts that tell against them are allowed to go into the papers.

It is claimed that the movement includes only a few extreme revolutionists and a few hundreds of young and fanatical students at the universities. Still, the fear of the government, the thousands of arrests, and the many precautionary measures, all give the lie to this report. General Grant, who went to St. Petersburg and dined with the Czar, reports that all the time he was there he did not see a single Nihilist. I suppose he expected to recognize them as some people do us, by some visible mark of a horn or a hoof. If he had seen thousands, he would have been none the wiser. Though coming from a republic, he assumed the importance of an Emperor. He doubtless

thought far more of drinking champagne with a Czar than of making the acquaintance of the heroes of a new revolution against a tyranny a thousand times worse than that against which the founders of this Republic rebelled.

There are, no doubt, among the Nihilists men of wild and fanatical views, as there are among religious radicals. Such movements always draw such spirits into their wake. Even persons of criminal designs will sometimes cloak their evil purposes beneath the garment of reformation and devotion to humanity. When the current of thought and feeling breaks from its accustomed banks, it is sure to become soiled and loaded down with a good deal of rubbish.

Still, the idea that this movement is a wild and insane hunger for destruction is simply ridiculous. As far as I can learn, Nihilism in Russia means whatever of intelligence and humanity there is in that country. It is not a conspiracy. If it had been, the arrest of its leading spirits would have broken it up.

The repeated attempts and final success of the movement against the life of the Czar have evidently been the voluntary impulses of individuals whose hearts were so filled with despair that they were quite ready to die themselves in order to bring liberty to eighty-five millions of slaves. This they were ready to do, not on a certainty, but a mere solitary chance that a new Czar might make concessions to the people this one would not, or that, in some way, the event might lead to a change for the better. They had nothing to lose, and everything to gain.

One of the grandest figures in history is that of Arnold Winkelried gathering a sheaf of Austrian spears into his own breast in order to break the ranks of the foe and make way for liberty.

However intuitively we shrink from the idea of assassination, these men were evidently inspired with the same heroic spirit of self-sacrifice. They preferred death to bondage, and risked their lives in the hope that, through the darkness of the grave

closing over them, the holy light of liberty might dawn for millions.

But Nihilism is by no means limited to these extreme impulses of despairing and yet heroic hearts. As far as I can discern through the various statements about it, it is the unorganized spirit of progress and intelligence. Wherever there is a man or woman who believes in progress, who demands reform in the government, who asks for a constitution, who believes that the people should be educated, who demands liberty of speech and conscience, who denounces official corruptions, condemns the infamous burden of taxation put upon every species of labor, and who is unwilling that the life and happiness of every man and woman in the empire shall hang on the arbitrary will of the Czar, he is a Nihilist. To entertain such sentiments is to be in danger of arrest, the dungeon, and the deep mines of Siberia.

The common idea of Nihilism is as foolish as it would be to suppose that thousands of men and women would combine to destroy all the flowers that fill the lap of Nature, or burn all the homes that love has built.

These are men and women. They love and hate, rejoice and sorrow, even as we do. Instead of being inspired by the desire to destroy, they simply recoil from the organized spirit of destruction in the government. They see that hope, love, joy, and every plant of happiness that might fill the homes of millions with beauty, are withered and destroyed by the oppression of the State. Their hearts are filled with hatred of this monstrous wrong. They acknowledge no allegiance to it, but regard it as the most gigantic crime beneath the sun. They know not what is to replace it. The largest idea of liberty they ever dreamed of falls far short of what we already enjoy. But they are sure that whatever may come out of a revolution will be far preferable to the present iron rule and injustice.

Since this startling event, various American papers have informed the Nihilists that

they might advance their cause much more successfully by laboring to convert the people to their way of thinking. That is just what they have tried to do. Hundreds of young men and women, brought up in affluence, have left their homes or the universities, and, disguising themselves as peasants, have gone into the factories and rural communes as laborers or teachers, in order to propagate their ideas. But to do this has been made a crime. The land is covered with a secret police, with arbitrary power of arrest. Hundreds of such noble souls have been arrested, and banished to Siberia. Every liberty of speech, either in the spoken or written word, has been deprived them, so that the only thing left is to wait in silent despair or to precipitate a change or revolution in the death of the Czar. Men and women are not stones, that can wait the slow processes of natural development. If half of what is told of the condition of Russia be true, the only wonder is that they have submitted so long.

The only reason for this is found in the complete despair and submission to fate of the peasant classes. Centuries of oppression seem to have crushed out of them every manly impulse. From this class come the soldiers, whose blind devotion to the Czar is the only support left to his throne. That the peasants will continue thus resigned to their fate is by no means certain. If, by the repeated attempts of the intelligent classes to arouse them, the chance of an improvement ever enters their benumbed souls, the desperation of despair will goad them to run any risk to secure it. They are probably no more resigned to their fate than the French peasantry was before the Revolution. The ideas of liberty for which so many noble souls have perished will increase in power by every drop of blood shed or pang endured in their behalf, until their shining beauty penetrates even this black night of despair. All attempts of the government to arrest their growth will fail. This is a bush that burns, but is never consumed. No banishment or rage can send this invisible spirit

away. Its voice is borne on every breeze. It blossoms in every flower, shines from every star, is born anew in every romance and love of youth, springs up around the cradle of each new-born child, and by the fresh grave of every martyr to its sacred cause.

Though some of you may think that to assassinate an emperor is a poor way to advance the cause of liberty, yet, as I have already indicated, it is not for us to judge them. We owe our liberty to rebellion against a tyrant. We see in Ireland what might be our condition to-day but for such resisters of tyranny as Patrick Henry, Thomas Paine, Jefferson, and Washington.

A drowning man will clutch at straws. A man in a deep, dark pit cannot help but struggle toward the light. However good at heart Alexander may have been, he was the embodiment of a system more cruel than the grave. Instead of responding to the agonizing prayers of his subjects for liberty, he only riveted their chains the tighter. When they asked for bread, he gave them a stone. To turn their attention from their own wrongs, he sought to blind them with the glory of conquest; and so, under the pretence of freeing a small province or two, blessed already with far more liberty than any of his own subjects, he gave thousands of them as food to the red mouth of war.

If it was a crime to take his life, the war he inaugurated against the Turks was also a crime multiplied by every one who was slain on either side. Even Christian missionaries who have gone to Turkey to convert the Mohammedans tell us that the government of the Sultan is infinitely better than that of the Czar.

But beyond the right and wrong of this act are two or three facts of far deeper import, to which I would now call your attention. The first is the significance of the fact that Nihilism and atheism are synonymous. The autocracy of the Czar is founded on the omnipotence of God. He is put forward as God's representative on earth. The character of this representation begets a dis-

trust in the existence of God. If there is no God, then there is no need of a Czar.

The infamous nature of an autocratic form of government compels every sensitive conscience to look upon belief in God as a crime. Every injustice and tyranny in the world is nurtured by this idea of a Czar above. The worship of omnipotence, of a power mighty to save that does not, is the deification of wrong, and is like the blind worship of the Czar by the Russian peasant. The idea that surrounds the Czar is the same that surrounds God. The evils that flow forth from the representative spring first from the ideal he copies. The altar is the main support of the throne. If there is no God, we need no priests. Strip the priest of his power to blind the minds of the people with superstition, and every tyranny in the world would crumble into a heap of ruins. In Russia, wherever the light of knowledge has entered, it has banished the hideous nightmare of religion.

Ceasing to bow the knee to a Czar above, men have found it impossible to submit blindly and slavishly to one below. Hence, for liberty, men have been willing to die. The glimpse they have caught of its radiant beauty has made them willing to be hidden in the darkness of the grave, in order that others might behold the full vision of its inspiring presence, and rest in its arms of loving protection. The peasants, through lack of education, still believe in God, and so the Czar is for them an object of like fear and reverence. Though the Russian peasant hates the priest, because to feed him and his family he must often go hungry himself, though they will lock their doors in his face when he comes to make his annual visit, and heap every contempt upon him, yet in sickness, trouble, and death, they place the utmost dependence on the ceremonies which he alone has power to perform. So, though they hate the official classes, and the taxes they have to pay into the imperial treasury keep them in a semi-state of starvation, yet they cling blindly to the divinity of the Czar.

They must be liberated from superstition before they can be saved from tyranny. Ideas rule the world. The prominent heroes of our own Revolution were mostly infidels. On this idea of God is based every species of injustice. Destroy this idea, and the thousands of priests who babble and perform ceremonies before idols may give their service to humanity. The countless costly buildings that go untaxed will bear their part of the common burden. Instead of standing idle and empty, save as they are used for the degradation of humanity, they may daily contribute, through the inspirations of art, science, literature, and the various reform movements of the age, to the elevation and happiness of mankind. Destroy this idea, and every convent and nunnery, those gloomy caverns built by the Church, will return their living dead to life, love, and joy.

The millions who think that there is some one to be pleased, in the skies, with their groans, stripes, fastings, sighs, and tears, will pass from this long night of sorrow into the pursuit of earthly good and joy. Destroy this idea of a Master enthroned in the skies, and men will cease to hate and curse each other in his name. The cruel walls of sectarianism will crumble to the ground, and every heart shall feel beating against it the great heart of humanity.

The ruling principle of Nihilism is that of humanity. It demands that society be readjusted in harmony with the present well-being and happiness of mankind. It proves by its devotion to humanity that the cry of the Church, that the loss of religious faith robs life of all aim and inspiration to goodness, is an infamous slander against our manhood.

No system of religion has won more sacrifices of life and property than the principle of humanity that underlies Nihilism. The glory on which Christianity has lived for nearly nineteen centuries is that one man laid down his life for mankind. Nihilism has furnished hundreds of just such enthusiasts. In its capability to inspire this spirit of devotion to humanity, we catch a faint

glimpse of the loving strife in devotion to the happiness of mankind that will be born out of the heart of nature, when it shall be finally delivered from the grave of supernaturalism. The cry against the Nihilist is, What will you give us in the place of the present government and our kind papa Czar at St. Petersburg? So the cry against us is, What will you give us in the place of our religious ceremonies, creeds, and kind heavenly Father above?

This belief in a heavenly Father who numbers the hairs of our head, and without whose notice not even a sparrow falls to the ground, is just as inconsistent and almost as unintelligible as the same idea entertained of the Czar by the Russian peasant. To this objection, we answer, our principal care is to make an end of the present injustice. We cannot say exactly what will follow. We know that whatever comes will be infinitely superior to the present wrong. We can trust the hearts of good men and women. In the tears of sympathy shed with the oppressed, in the pulses stirred to generosity, in the loving strife to see who shall be foremost in the battle for freedom, in the principle of the new morality that acknowledges no standard of authority above the right for the right's sake, and no right that does not contribute to the happiness of mankind, we see emerging out of the fading vision of the old paradise of prayers and psalms one of human love and helpful deeds, of happy homes and free republics.

A true love of humanity will never come to our hearts until a pure and noble love of self exalts and glorifies all who are made in the image of man. The true temple of liberty can never be built until the altars and thrones of czars above and below are demolished; and the only authority of man is the right for each one to be happy in his own way, so long as he does not trespass on the same right of some one else. To this vision of liberty let us consecrate our lives. Of every one whose life is limited and caged by any other rule, let us say:—

"I give my word
To stand with those who for thy freedom fight,
Who claim for thee that freedom as thy right."

Already, we see the vision of its radiant beauty from afar. A little of its joy has breathed its sweet music into our hearts. Though we have but touched the hem of its garment, yet we have had virtue enough to flee from the gloomy caverns of superstition, to defy scorn and poverty for the great privilege of toiling in its glorious service. The vision of the future, when man shall come to his own, when each child that is born into the world shall belong to himself, is our inspiration. Gladly we welcome the storm that is soon to rage between us and the alarmed hirelings and slaves of superstition. Every sign of war is to us as sweetly welcome as the first buds of spring will shortly be. Gladly we see ascending the dark clouds of rebellion against kings and priests in all lands. Though to some they are black with eternal doom, for us they are spanned with the beautiful bow of man's salvation from the long night of ignorance, slavery, and crime. However destructive its lightnings, we know that they purify a stagnant and death-laden air. However loud its thunders, they are to us full of sweetest music. Though many hug their bondage in despair as the divine will, like the Russian peasant, we, knowing it the worst curse born out of the barbarism of the past, will free them whether they will or not. Though many say we blaspheme, yet we know that the words we are beginning to stammer will be the dearest sounds in all the language of millions yet unborn. Seeing the tears that fill millions of eyes, having ourselves felt the iron fetters of bondage eating into our flesh and bones, having our hearts bleeding to-day because many who once loved us do so no more, because we forsook all to follow thee, O Liberty, yet the knowledge that, out of these dark events and struggles of human hearts against tyranny of every kind, thy bright and beautiful kingdom is coming jewels every moment with ineffable joy.

Lights and Shades of Liberalism.

Know thyself, was the wise precept once written above the portal of a pagan temple. 'Tis a warning that cannot be too often repeated, especially in regard to our faults. Most people are much more anxious to be posted touching their neighbors' faults than their own. Christians spy out the shadows that rest on the broad fields of Liberalism, while we search for the dark spots along the path they claim leads to heaven.

"O wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see oursels as ithers see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion."

Though no power can grant us this boon, yet if we will wait and watch for the faintest whisper of our hearts, whether of love or hate, truth or falsehood, hope or despair, we may gain it. As we are all pagans, I take it for granted that we are ready to heroically spend an hour in the contemplation of some of our faults. One year ago, I was still within the sacred fenced pasture-grounds of the Church. As a Unitarian minister, my associates were of the most unexceptional kind. Though this denomination has rather an unsavory reputation theologically, its moral and social character is unimpeached.

Starting from Boston, the Athens of America, and capturing Harvard University at the beginning of its career, its claim to culture and intellectual superiority has been undisputed. But I was weary of the fold. I had entered the Unitarian Church with the idea that I was to be perfectly free, only to find it a fenced field, while without stretched in boundless wealth and fascinating beauty the unfenced universe.

But there are other things to be considered in life besides liberty. The sheep in a fold, even if the pasture is a little thin, are

much better off than roaming the forest free that is inhabited by wolves. When I thought of leaving the fold of the Church, I was warned that outside were wolves. A number of my friends were quite earnest in trying to intimidate me on this ground. I was told that you who are searching for the truth outside of all church barriers were a queer lot of rough, crude, ignorant, fanatical, self-opinionated extremists. I was furthermore warned that, after you had exhausted my power to deny, and I should want to assert the affirmative and moral side of Liberalism, you would throw me aside as heartlessly as you would a lemon-peel out of which the juice had been squeezed. The air was full of all sorts of evil reports of obscenity, licentiousness, vulgarity, profanity, ignorance, indifference, and stinginess.

For me to live is to think and speak my thought. I would rather die to-morrow than to have to live and find no opportunity of expressing the ideas that are like fire shut up in my bones. You see I was in a tight place. For a time, all was dark before me. After a while, I caught now and then the echo of a good report sounding clear and sweet amid the noisy clamor of these evil ones. Here and there, a light broke through the darkness, like a meteor flaming across a cloudy sky. I began to feel a longing to cast myself on the great heart of humanity, untrammelled of any obligations to the incorporeal inhabitants of the skies. I said to myself: Outside of all the churches there must be thousands of men and women who have loved and been loved, who have drunk up tenderness while gazing into the eyes of little children, in smoothing the pillows of the sick and shar-

ing the sorrows of the bereaved. Nature surely is not bankrupt. Whatever there is that makes us good and true comes out of the heart of nature, and not down from the skies, as the Church teaches. I was sure that to stay in the Church was to be false to myself, to stifle the voice of truth that was crying in my heart for utterance, to keep the company of hypocrites and moral cowards and every day to become more like them. I knew that outside I should find Robert G. Ingersoll, and I was willing to trade off the companionship of a good many to gain his, just as I would be willing to give up thousands of books to retain Shakspeare. So I took a great resolution of courage, and with one bound cleared the last fence.

You see I am alive yet. Those who saw me before I left the Church tell me that I have increased in flesh and in good looks. I don't know about the good-looking part; but, while the scales justify the truth of the other statement, I was never before so light of heart. It has not been by any means all smooth-sailing. I have seen times during the last year when I was tempted to say the half of the evil has not been told. Still, amid fear and disaster, I have experienced keener delights, thrilled with warmer love, been fed with larger hopes and stirred with nobler impulses than ever before. I have seen always with undimmed vision that the promise of the future lies in this direction.

My principal aim in this lecture is to say frankly how much I think of this evil report is true, and why. After that, I shall essay the prophet's task, and endeavor to show the lights that encircle these shadows. First let me say I have learned to think a sinner worth a great deal more respect than a saint. By a sinner, I do not mean a brute or a villain, but one who is too honest to claim to be a Christian, who can hate as well as love, and does not on any ground of faith or grace claim to be free of faults.

It is said that one of the extreme principles of Nihilism is that a criminal is the true protestant, and so the greatest social

regenerator and benefactor of mankind. I am not surprised in the least that such an idea should spring up on the soil of Russia. No one but a coward or a rascal would conform to such infamous laws as exist there. By far the greatest amount of conduct pronounced by the Church sinful is the highest righteousness. Perfection is an abstraction, saintship a monstrosity, and God a heartless, passionless non-entity. The devil is far the most interesting and worthy of the two, because in him we find the active element of rebellion, the heroism of resistance. In the history of religion, the God of one age becomes the devil of the next. Satan was once worshipped as the prince and potentate of heaven. The God of the Church is rapidly becoming to men and women with warm, humane instincts the enemy of mankind and the incarnation of evil. The martyrs and heroes of every age have been criminals and rebels to some system of religion or government. Those who are looked upon one day as the off-scouring of the world are seen at a later day to have been the founders of a richer and nobler life. So, though to-day we are reviled, the future may throw around us the garment of praise, and crown us with the diadem of honor. I did not expect to find you perfect either in estimation or reality, nor did I want to. Knowing that I myself come a little short of being a saint, I should have been very uncomfortable if I had found you faultless.

With this qualification, let me now confess that this evil report is not altogether without excuse. Some who bear the name of Liberals are as opinionated, unreasonable, and dogmatical as any churchman. The moment any one speaks who does not quite echo their opinion, they begin to shout him down as either a fool or a knave. Instead of moulding the world as the Church would, all after the pattern of one creed, they would have everything viewed through the narrow vision of one very small mind, that knows perhaps as much about the world as

a baby does about the moon. To them, liberty means that one man's opinion is just as good as another's. Of course, every idea that is of service to us must be made our own, yet we should always remember that some are born to teach and others to learn. If I want to know anything of dramatic art, I must go to such a man as Salvini and ask him to be my teacher. The same law holds good in every sphere of life.

Owing to this mental blindness, we are cursed with a great many blind leaders of the blind. A great many who are clamoring to be heard on the great, vital questions of the age cannot produce a single reason why they should receive audience.

The cause of Liberalism is weighted down with a lot of trashy, stupid, vamping, idiotical ravings that go out to the world as liberal literature. But, if so-called Liberals are thus bigoted and opinionated, where did they learn it? From the Church. The only trouble is that they have learned its lessons too well to ever forget them. The spirit of science is teachable, gentle, hospitable to new ideas, ever ready to listen to the expert, and willing at any moment without a murmur to surrender a falsehood for a truth. The spirit of theology is egoistic, self-righteous, and infallible. For centuries, the Church exterminated with flame and sword all who ventured to question for a moment the truth of its assertions. Though many have cast away with the utmost contempt and horror its teachings, yet they have been so long under its influence that they carry with them unconsciously its unlovely spirit into the cause of Liberalism. Here, in America, we boast of our political liberty. Still, many having been trained under monarchical forms of government are saturated with their spirit. If a sprig of royalty comes to our shores, thousands go down on their knees before it. We send telegrams of condolence that give our moral support to the most infamous tyrannies that ever cursed the world with their diabolical presence; while our newspapers shed showers of tears for a slain Czar, but not a single one for the

hundred thousand nobler men and women he banished to Siberia. The poison of autocracy or religion once in the blood, it is hard to get rid of it.

I find also among Liberals a great deal of crudity and lack of culture. But that is by no means the fault of Liberalism. If all the time that has been wasted in teaching men and women how to prepare for another world had been spent in teaching them how to live in this one, there would be none of these deficiencies. Men and women are not gentlemen and ladies because of what they believe, but because they have opportunities of culture and refinement closed to the multitude.

This modern pride of culture is the old spirit of Pharisaism that draws closely about itself the cloak of pride, and says, "I thank thee, O God, I am not as other men are." If every radical was crude and unwashed, I would rather keep them company a thousand times than to take my stand with these timid devotees of culture, who are all the time in a state of nervous anxiety for fear their reputation will be soiled by the company that share their intellectual convictions. Men and women are not made boorish by a loss of faith, but through the deprivation of those equal rights and opportunities, for which injustice the Church is responsible.

That all Liberals are uncultivated is a most extravagant lie. In proportion to our numbers and opportunity there are far more true refinement and real intelligence than can be found in the Church. To be a real gentleman or lady is impossible, unless you are possessed of the true liberal spirit. The first and last command of Liberalism is to extend to every other man or woman every right you claim for yourself. Unless you do this, a perfect respect for the honest opinion of another is impossible. There is always an air of condescension in the spirit of the most charitable Christian. They may acknowledge, as they often do, a great many good qualities in us, but always with the qualification that we lack the one thing

needful. They are the children of the King of kings, and we are his rebel subjects. They belong to the nobility, but we to the peasantry. The spirit of religion is aristocratic. The spirit of Liberalism is democratic. We shall never have a perfect Republic until we get the Church not merely out of the State, but out of society.

Along with this complaint of a lack of culture there goes one that many Liberals are vulgar enough to swear. A minister once wrote to me expressing a great deal of astonishment that a man of my bringing-up could enjoy the society and express warm admiration for Robert G. Ingersoll, whom he said he knew to be addicted to the use of profane language. I replied that I found much more reverence in his swearing than in most praying. But where did Liberals learn to swear? If there is any truth in Orthodoxy, who was it that set the first example of damning the people he don't like? Why should God have a monopoly on swearing and the church a corner on oaths? If the world could be rid of the teaching of the Church, it would not even know that it was possible to swear.

It is also often said that Liberals are indifferent. They claim to have a new gospel, but don't preach it; profess to have been delivered from a swamp in escaping from the Church, and yet are perfectly careless about helping others out or indifferent to any attempt to destroy it, and so keep others from sinking into its foul and treacherous depths. There is at least in appearance far too much truth in this complaint. The sacrifices in time and money made for our cause are very small in comparison to what Christians make for theirs.

But let us look a little closer into this. Is all that is given by the Church prompted by an unselfish spirit? Nay, in fact the very opposite of this is the truth. Almost all they give is in the spirit of trade. They are trying to drive a good bargain with God. It is so much for so much. I do this for you, God,—pay the minister, give to the Bible missionary or tract society,—and in

return you give me a crown and a harp. Religion develops the spirit of selfishness in the name of unselfishness. Many a so-called Liberal is by no means such upon conviction or moral devotion to humanity, but because he has become under the teaching of the Church so selfish that he left it because he was too stingy to pay the pew-rent. It is time we tore from all such any right to bear this name. We can't afford to be compromised by them.

Insincerity is also the mother of indifference. Thousands stay in the Church long after they have lost faith in its doctrines. The commercial spirit cultivated in them by the doctrines of religion leads them to smother their convictions and stay in the Church for the sake of the advantage it may be to them from a social or business standpoint. Every Church is corrupt with such hypocrisy. If Liberalism becomes strong and respectable in their neighborhood, so that it seems to be profitable to leave the Church, they are too thoroughly saturated with this poison to ever kindle with earnest devotion and enthusiasm to the cause of humanity. These indifferentists to the progress and development of human happiness do not belong to us, but to the Church. A careless, stingy Liberal is a hypocrite gone to seed.

I hope that in these lectures we shall be able to shake off all such parasites. If any one is too poor to help support these lectures, he is just as welcome here as the man who pays \$200. But, if there is any one who, though he can afford it, is still unwilling to give to our cause either time or money, we should be a little more pleased with his room than his company. Another shadow resting upon us is that we are unorganized. We have no social life to set over against that of the Church with which to feed the heart. We are at present almost in a chaotic condition. Our future lies before us like a new continent, unsurveyed and unmapped. Here and there is an open valley full of light and beauty, but far the largest portion thereof is unbroken forest, whose

dank shade is the lurking-place of wild beasts and deadly serpents. But all this, instead of being an objection, is greatly in our favor. This wilderness may be made to blossom as a rose. The forest may be cleared and the swamps drained, the deadly serpents and beasts of prey exterminated by the hand of man. The rough but free life of the pioneer is far nobler than that of the slave who tills the lovely gardens and fields of the kings and nobles of the Old World. Life may be altogether free of restraint and almost entirely unorganized on the frontier, still the people are more hospitable and the fellowship is far warmer than in the older and more organized communities. Though as Liberals we have not done much toward outward organization, yet, if we are worthy of the name, our hearts are wedded in holiest consecration and unity to those of all who labor for the happiness of mankind.

Organization, to be effective, must come slowly and unfold itself from the heart outward. At present, we are too busy in making a clearing in the forest of superstition, and find our hearts too warm with love to all our noble fellow-workers, to care much about declaring this love and sympathy with any oaths or promises of fellowship. I am sure that every time we strike a blow against the walls of sectarian and theological exclusiveness that we are hastening on that good time when each heart shall throb in sympathy with that of the whole human race.

Perhaps the principal reason why we as yet lack the comfort and strength of social co-operation is found in the fact that hitherto our work has been principally one of destruction, an intellectual wrestle with the sharp axe of reason against the dense growth of superstition. People do not kindle and enthuse into one spirit beneath the trenchant blows of cold argument and logic. Society that is worth having must be built around the emotions and sympathies of the heart. Is Liberalism capable of producing these emotions? The fact that it can and

yet will is to me one of the gleams of light breaking through these shadows that thrills me with hope and courage. The argument of many in the Church to-day is, Liberalism does not do this; and until it does, however false the creeds, we will cling to the Church. But, having lost their unity of faith, there has gone with it all the warmth and emotion of the heart that grew out of it. The claim they lay to brotherly devotion is a sham. No man can reason himself into a social life with others on any ground of policy. You cannot force the heart. Think of the early Christians propping up their faith by such methods. Love is only born of that perfect faith which casts out fear.

A social life that is worth having cannot be built on ideas about the truth of which it is possible to doubt. The social life and so-called brotherly affection of church members is one of the worst lies and most hollow mockeries of the age. Beneath sweet and charitable professions of love, the heart is often filled with rage and hatred. A church sociable is generally one of the stiffest, coldest, formal gatherings that can be witnessed. The people hang around the walls like a lot of frozen icicles, or sit motionless and dumb as idols, without even worshippers to give the appearance of life. If conversation does flow forth, it degenerates into slander or stupid trivialities, because every one who has an idea knows that it is coupled with a doubt which he is afraid to reveal. Now, the fact that Liberals are rapidly coming into unity of thought proves that out of this intellectual communion will come in time a real warm fellowship of the heart.

All honor to the men and women who, alone and unsustained by outward organizations, have done battle for the truth! Let us bless with our gratitude and admiration those who have gone into the cities, towns, and villages of this country crowded with religious organizations, and, in the face of every hostility of society and press, prejudice and bigotry, bravely proclaimed the gospel of nature's liberty and truth. Though

they have often wielded the unadorned logic of truth, and many times have failed to appeal to the moral nature of man, yet they have opened a path through the forest of superstition, and planted the good seed by many waters that shall bear the bread of life for future generations.

But we are approaching other work. The intellectual contest has been successful. Liberals stand to-day, the acknowledged conquerors, upon this field of battle. As Mr. Ingersoll says, "The stamp of inferiority is on every orthodox brain." The real intellectual leaders of the age hardly consider the ideas of the Church worth noticing. The books it writes are no longer read. Pious people buy them out of a sense of duty, but seldom read them. Even children laugh at its old wives' fables. Political parties begin to bid for the votes of its opponents. Publishers cater to the tastes of unbelievers.

The intellect of the world has left the Church stranded upon the barren rocks of speculation. No flower blooms there. No wave of joy kisses them. They are all black and moss-grown. Science has conquered. It has already rung upon the dial of time the death-knell of superstition. Its hosts have encamped without its walls. The miners and sappers are busily at work, and all its defences are tottering to their eternal doom. This force is augmented with the instincts of the people. They have suffered long. The faces of millions are furrowed with tears, and their bodies bent with toil and cramped with pain beneath the oppression of a religion that says it is good to suffer, and pronounces its blessing on poverty. But they are beginning to awake from their long sleep and dumb submission to ask if the sun does not shine for them, the flowers blossom and shed their perfume for them as well as for the rich. Millions of horny hands are lifted in solemn protest against the superstition that strives night and day to build vast temples for the praise and flattery of God, that go untaxed, while they live in hovels, cellars, and garrets,

and yet out of their meagre pittance bear their part of the common burden.

The future of Liberalism is for me bathed in light, because I see that the power now gathering against the Church is the moral nature of man. The fast-gathering spirit of revolt against kings and priests, shams and humbuggeries, all over the world, means a reawakening of the moral energies of the race. Though little has been said about it, owing to our respect for the feelings of others, still the fact remains that we deny God, because to believe in him is to be immoral. God has become to us the reverence of ignorance, the deification of wrong, and the worship of our fears. We are not agnostics and atheists simply because of an intellectual difficulty, but far more because we see that any conception of the infinite as an object of worship is an obstruction to the moral development and, through that, of the happiness of mankind. We close the Bible because the Church has made an idol of a book which, though containing many good things, is, when taken in connection with the doctrine of its divine authorship, a bad book, an immoral book, a barbarous book, an obscene book, unfit for the pure minds of children to read, and utterly repulsive to the warmer and more humane instincts of our time.

We refuse to be called Christians and to worship Jesus as the highest type of manhood, because, however grand and true he may have been in his devotion to liberty, as painted in the Gospels, he is the foe of liberty, a fanatic, bigot, and communist. According to the record, he never spoke a kind word for Sadducee or Pharisee, while he never opened his mouth against the Essenes. He also sent a rich man to hell just because he was rich, and a poor man to heaven just because he was poor. I don't trouble myself much about this, because I place no dependence on the record. Still, if we accept it at all, we have no right to go outside of it; and, according to it, he was not by any means so just and good a man as many who are alive to-day, and so he is un-

worthy of longer being crowned Lord of all.

We flee from the Church, because it is a whited sepulchre, fair without, but full of death and corruption within. We refuse longer allegiance to its moral standards, because they are infamous tyrannies that are as truly hostile to the natural liberty and happiness of mankind as the despotism of the Czar of all the Russians. In this growing moral protest, we find unity of endeavor and sentiment. Out of this soil there will come as naturally and surely a new social life as that the return of spring will bring back the flowers. The fact that we have conquered in the intellectual world is proof positive that we shall also conquer in the social.

The destruction of theology necessitates a new morality and sociology. Liberalism, having satisfied the intellect, will yet feed all the yearnings of affection, and adorn life with all the fine graces of pity, sympathy, and gentleness. Though we make an end of dogmatism, yet all that is true, beautiful, or good remains. The upliftings and subduings of feeling that many call religion are not born of any creed nor dogma, nor of any forced obedience to arbitrary standards of morality; but they flow down into our lives from the natural heights of beauty and wonder that fade away into the impenetrable infinities of the universe. When all guesses about the infinite are gone, the infinite remains.

When all faith in dogmas is gone, and we are brave and honest enough to say so, there remains in life a sincerity that is more than truth, a goodness that is more than justice; and these blend and flow into each other like the harmonies of color or sound. This fear—that people have to trust us, lest we strip life of its grace and beauty—is absolutely without excuse.

To be intelligently delivered from superstition is to find ourselves where all the fine feelings of life swell into far broader and deeper currents. We no longer explain them away with a creed, nor quench our

wonder in senseless omnipotence. Our hearts throb with constant pulsations of joy at the touch of these waves of feeling that break upon us from life's shoreless sea. Our heart-strings are strung into a more delicate harmony with every sympathetic touch of Nature's hand. All the changing lights and shadows thereof find reflection in more peaceful depths. We humbly confess that we cannot grasp the infinite, and the reward is a sweet contentment enriched with perpetual wonder and delight. Above and beneath us floats the unknown, shoreless, and vast. We see no beginning and no end. Deep calleth unto deep. We waste no more time in building a tower to touch the sky; for every creed is but a Tower of Babel, and great is the confusion of tongues caused thereby. Nature seems to be our mother. We fling ourselves gladly into her arms; and, contenting ourselves with her, we find that her skirts are fringed with beauty, and that the crown of eternity rests upon her majestic brow.

To all questions of the infinite and another life, we say: I do not know. I only know that the morning's and evening's hush, the splendor and glow of night, the first faint delicious odors of spring, the summer's effulgence, the autumnal splendor and glory; the keen delight of winter, the myriad wonders of its snow and ice, the flow of a river like a stream of silver across the landscape of a peaceful valley; the uplifted majesty of a mountain, the solemn, mystic music of the ocean's roar; and, more than all these, the grand music evoked by human genius, that

" Comes o'er the ear like the sweet south
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odor ";

the magic of those splendid children of genius, like Shakspeare and his noblest interpreters, that unfold to us the page of history and permit us to feel beating against ours the throbbing heart of past generations, holding the mirror up to nature, showing us all the good and evil in our lives, bringing into the present all the memory of the past, supplementing our present strength with the

incentive of all past victory, so that we pass through the night to the day; the splendid works of art in painting and sculpture, that are, like sleep, balm to hurt minds, tired nature's bath, cleansing our souls with their beauty, enlarging our common, working-day life with the far-reaching horizon of the ideal, with all the wonders of human thought and

love, come nearer to our hearts when we are delivered from the thralldom of the Church, to subdue us and uplift us with delicious gladness, making us sometimes tremble and weep with joy before all this vastness and grandeur that makes of all creeds and definitions a mockery and a profanation.

It gives us great pleasure to inform the readers of the *Infidel Pulpit* that Colonel and Mrs. Robert G. Ingersoll were present at the delivery of this lecture. At its close, Mr. Ingersoll was invited to address the audience. As a part of his remarks were taken down by Ernest H. Rydall, a short-hand reporter, he has kindly written them out for the benefit of the absent members of our large and interesting parish. After expressing the pleasure he experienced in seeing together such a large number of intelligent people to listen to a perfectly free man, he said:—

Mr. Chainey will forgive me for saying but one little word about the assassination of the Czar. You remember that Thomas Paine was a member of the French Convention and that a law was passed to take the head off the shoulders of Louis; and Thomas Paine had the goodness to draw a distinction between the king and the man. He said, "Let us kill the king, and not the man." That is exactly how I feel toward the Czar of all the Russias. Let us kill the Czar, but not the man! And, following out this line of thought we see that it was his misfortune to have been a Czar. I pity every king in the world. I pity every man that fate has put into a place where he lives on the unpaid labor of his fellowmen!

But there is another thing about this Czar. We had a war a little while ago; and strangely enough that Czar, who was for slavery in his own country, although he signed the proclamation that freed twenty millions of serfs,—although he was the upholder of tyranny in his own country,—he was in favor of liberty in the United States. And England—and you must

recollect that England is, *par excellence*, the most Christian nation in the world—helped somehow the South; but for the freedom of the North the Czar sent six men-of-war to Hampton Roads, and said that, if any other nation struck a blow against America, he would return it. As a Czar,—that is, in that capacity,—I have not a word to say in his favor; but, as a man I am sorry for him. But I don't shed many tears in St. Petersburg. The most of them I shed in Siberia.

Now, I know exactly how the Liberals of this country feel upon this subject. They want the kings destroyed, but not the men; and the question of the means of their destruction is to be left to the Russians themselves. So, when I read of the Czar's assassination, I wondered in my mind,—“Maybe that is the brother of some girl eighteen years of age, who was sent to Siberia for saying a word in favor of freedom, and is now working in the mines of Siberia like a wild beast.” Then, I have not a word to say against that man. I feel as though the Nihilists are keeping alive the fires of liberty that lap the shores of Russian despotism.

In reference to Mr. Chainey and his congregation, the Colonel said:—

When a man is employed to preach a certain creed, he is to preach that: it is his work, and he must be there all the time. Now, the only thing I am afraid of in Liberalism is that you will get the same way. And that is the only fear I have of what you call “organization.” That, when you employ a preacher to preach one year, you will have an idea that he is your property and that he is preaching for you instead of for himself. I want you to give Mr. Chainey liberty, and let him every Sunday give you the best of his thought and the best of his reading

on any subject, no matter whether he agrees with you or not. Then, do you know, you will be ten times as apt to get something valuable. If he disagrees with you, it will set you to thinking; but, if he gets up and says exactly what you think, it is just like moving the handle of a pump up and down in an empty well. I said long ago of a sermon preached by Mr. Chainey, that it was the best ever preached in an American pulpit. I saw in that the germ of real, absolute, intellectual liberty, and what he has said since that time has amply justified the statement I then made. I congratulate you that you have the services of an absolutely free man, and I do not believe he will ever build a prison for your thought. There is very little danger of a prison being built by a man who has escaped from the penitentiary.

It may be that we are all going too far, it may be we are all wrong; and I hope that every Liberal in the world will keep that idea in the horizon of his thought. There is nothing so utterly unlovely as to have a man just dead sure. He thinks he knows, there is no chance of swapping ideas with him. He knows exactly how it is,—that's the end. Now, in every man's mind there is an uncertainty, a *terra incognita*; and every man knows there is more than he has found out. I do want Liberals to keep that in mind. Maybe we are wrong and maybe we are right. The truth probably is that we are right in some things and wrong in a great many.

Some farther remarks on this subject were made. Proceeding, Mr. Ingersoll said:—

The world proves to us that a lie was never destroyed but that you found the truth more beautiful than the lie was, there has never been a mistake corrected but the fact was not more beautiful than the mistake. I do not believe that there is a man on this earth who has brain enough to imagine the magnificent future in store for man.

I want us all to keep in our minds the sweet glories of truth. Let that wonderful thing called genius, or that wonderful thing called imagination, paint all the pictures upon the canvas of the future that they can, but don't stop and think you have got everything figured out. The scientists themselves are just at the bare commencement of things; and all the religious peo-

ple and all the scientific people in the world cannot tell what dirt is. If there is anything that is wonderful, it is dirt. Dirt is too wonderful for me. A little water on it and a little light on it, and we have the flower, filling the air with perfume. Why, it is an everlasting and eternal mystery. I don't pretend to understand it. All that I claim is that nobody else knows much about it, and that I will agree to give a free scope and have a free guess in every direction.

Then there is another thing I want to say to Liberals. Mr. Chainey has said there are a great many stingy people among Liberals, and I believe it. He did not say it a bit too soon. Now, the Church says: "There is a boat going over Niagara Falls. There are a lot of people in that boat, and they will all be lost, unless some one gets a rope. Who will subscribe a dollar for a rope?" But the Liberal says there is no rope needed, and of course the Liberal will not give. Why should he give? There are no falls; nobody is to be drowned; the boat is doing first-rate. Why should he give? Now, the Christian takes into account what is going to happen in another world; and the only question for a Liberal to decide is, Is there not incentive enough for charity in this? Are there here not people who want help, who cannot help themselves? What is to be done with the criminals? Can poverty be put out of this fair world? Is there to be any cessation of crime, and are the penitentiaries to be filled? Are we to have poor-houses everywhere? Are we to furnish the insane for all the asylums we can fill? These are the questions now pressing upon Liberals. Are the minds of our children to be polluted with the superstitions of the past? These are the questions; and, just in proportion as we understand the infamy that is being done in the name of goodness, just in that proportion we will give our time, our labor, and our money.

The Colonel closed his address by congratulating the congregation on their minister and the minister for the audience, as being both free, by expressing the belief that he would live to see the deposition of every crowned head in Europe, and inviting his audience to co-operate with him and all Liberals in the destruction of all human tyranny, whether spiritual or temporal.

THE SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

ALL roads lead to Rome. Whenever I announce my subject, I want you to remember that, however far away it may seem from the great central truths for which we stand, my only reason for its selection is its close relation thereto.

The Bible from which I shall take my texts is the whole world. Having no divine revelation, the book and volume of the brain of humanity is our Sacred Scriptures. Instead of offering our devotions to a phantom, we give them to suffering flesh and blood.

Instead of speculating in real estate in the New Jerusalem, we much prefer to get a home in Boston or New York. Instead of dreaming about golden streets, we are interested in having good cobble or gravel ones here below. Instead of singing about a gospel train, we prefer a thousand times a lightning express, linking us into sympathy of heart and brain with other towns, and knitting the inhabitants of all the world together by bands of steel. Instead of fearing an imaginary hell, we stand in daily terror of the actual ones of ignorance, poverty, vice, and crime. We care but little for wing culture or the raising of celestial poultry called angels, but we do care a great deal about doing our best to help produce good men and women. If there is an infinite God, we cannot by any possibility increase his happiness; but we can plant the flowers of joy in the footsteps of wife and children, or by the public highway on which the multitude of human beings must walk.

In such a work as this, a daily newspaper is of infinitely more service than a Bible. One of the most significant features of our time is the fact that the morning and evening newspaper has almost universally among

people of any intelligence taken the place of the morning and evening prayer. A man sufficiently intelligent to appreciate a daily paper is too nearly a rational being to care much about a Bible or to place much dependence on prayer.

My subject is not the press, but the spirit of the press. I have no desire to give you either the history or statistics of journalism. I care no more about the number of newspapers than I do of the census of the stars. The things that concern us are not temporal, but spiritual. The Church is right when it places the emphasis on the spiritual side of life, only its idea of spirituality is of no importance. There can be no comparison between something and nothing. Still, everything has its spirit or character, by which it is distinguished from all things else. The idea of spirit comes from to breathe, or a wind. It was a power unseen and mysterious, like the wind.

Jesus is represented as saying, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and no man can tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." But man has learned all about its coming and going. If Orthodoxy be true, the newspapers tell us every morning more about the wind and weather than its Maker knew about it less than nineteen hundred years ago. Jesus also said, "God is a spirit." By this, he must have meant to say, God is an unseen power and influence, that comes and goes like the wind. If to believe in God is simply to believe that there are forces in nature that we cannot yet explain, then we all believe in him. But the truth is we do not. This is owing to the fact that we have passed out of the age of personification into one of generalization. Instead of guess-

ing or assuming, we investigate. Larger knowledge obtained by this method of inquiry is constantly changing the meaning of words.

In olden times, men believed that each tree or mountain or star had its separate spirit. The Indian buries the canoe, bow and arrow, and other implements of the chase with the dead brave, because to him they each have a separate spirit that will join the soul of the dead man in the happy hunting-grounds of the Great Spirit. Though this to us is almost painful in its dense ignorance of nature, still the idea from which this comes remains in one sense the most important fact in all the range of human thought and feeling.

The supreme interest of everything centres in its separate spirit or character. The value of the tree is not so much in its age or size as in its personal character of oak or walnut. This also is the chief excellence of man or woman. Beauty of face or form, strength of body or mind, are all outweighed by the spirit or disposition that attracts or repels our love and confidence. In this rational and noble way, all things have their spiritual side. The seasons, a mountain, or storm, or the ocean, all are reflected in man's deepest thought and feeling. Everything from a blade of grass to a star has a super-sensual utility. It is the service of the poet and prophet to find these out, and bring them into the thought and love of men.

In attempting to do this for the spirit of the press, the first idea I want to present is that of its conscience. We have come to feel a sort of fear of the newspaper press, owing to its recklessness and often utter indifference to personal feeling or interest in its blind devotion to party measures. In spite of our instinctive devotion to liberty of speech, we have been compelled to muzzle its mouth in this direction. This, I think, is perfectly right. The liberty of one person ends only where it interferes with the liberty of another. The last thing in the world to be done is to believe or assist to spread an evil report of another. No matter

if there be one hundred reasons for its truth against none against it, we should still close our ears and lips against it, unless by doing so the happiness of some one else is at stake. In so far as the newspaper becomes a tale-bearer and slanderer, it becomes the mouthpiece of the most devilish and infernal spirit that ever crossed man's path.

The whole question of what is right and wrong has yet to be largely settled. The old idea that conduct is always a choice between a right and a wrong is far from true. We are often compelled in action to choose between two evils. To be just to one, we must sometimes commit an injustice to another. What is low and mean for one may be high and noble for another. Life is of a tangled yarn, and to unravel it sometimes into straight lines of consistency is often utterly impossible. Take the case of an Irish farmer. He has promised not to pay an unjust rent. He belongs to the Land League. The success of the whole cause depends upon the unity and determination with which they resist oppression. The sheriff comes, and the only alternative is to pay the rent or be evicted. His wife perhaps is sick, and his children feeble. By constant pinching and scraping, he has the money with which to pay the rent. His wife and children implore him with tears to pay, and save them from being turned out of house and home. No priest, Bible, nor decalogue in the world can tell him what to do. However he acts, he is a hero and martyr. Still, whichever horn of the dilemma he takes, some one will charge him with crime or injustice. That which society denounces as a crime is often in the individual a virtue.

All organizations and party measures are more or less agents of injustice. Yet the press, in working for its party ends, is generally absolutely reckless about the rights of those who are arrayed against it. In a political campaign, every dirty lie hatched in the foul nest of rumor is accepted and circulated as the truth. It is true that the very extravagance of this method largely destroys its power.

Still, ever and anon, some covert insinuation slips into a paper against some one of hitherto untarnished reputation; and ever afterwards his fair fame is darkened, and when he walks among men he sees their faces clouded with suspicion. Nothing is so mean as a charge against which there is no redress, an undefined mistrust breathed into the air, that is like a bad odor, the cause of which you cannot find. Wilful slander against another is the meanest act of which you can be guilty. It is the blind malice of cowards. It is no restriction of the liberty of the press to make the publishers responsible for any charge they may make against the reputation of any man or woman. In Europe, the discussion of certain social and political reforms is forbidden. That is tyranny. The only way to be just to all is to give truth and falsehood an open field and a fair fight.

By the endowment of certain ideas against others, you are liable to supplement the strength of a lie sufficiently for it to defeat the truth. Knowledge is power, so also is ignorance. Truth crushed to earth may rise again, so also will error. A great many people are indifferent to the slanders of the press, on the ground that a good man is invulnerable to its shafts. This is by no means true. Mud will show the soonest on the whitest linen. If a man has lived for years an honorable and upright life, there is even a diabolical element in the nature of some men that seems to rejoice in any evil report against him. A piece of slander is lighted on as eagerly by hundreds as buzzards upon a piece of carrion.

The idea that goodness is its own defence grows out of the belief that above us all is a kind providence protecting us from evil, as a hen shelters her chickens beneath her wings from the hawk. Thousands have leaned in trustful security on this false prop. Religious books and novels almost always represent the triumph of virtue and vindication of innocence. But this is far from true in real life. Every-day, innocence is betrayed and virtue sold at auction by

cowardice and selfishness. In business and politics, the unscrupulous are constantly rising to power and fame by making stepping-stones of the conscientious. We are charged with the crime of destroying the beautiful theory of a divine providence. It would be beautiful enough, if true. But, finding it without the slightest support of truth, I am ready to do my best to destroy it, in order to get in its place a watchful human providence.

Religion also seeks to balance this evil with the approval of conscience, or what it more often calls the voice of God in the soul. I readily acknowledge that I would rather be condemned by all mankind than by my own conscience. To have the good opinion of one's self is the great thing. Still, that does not deprive us of the desire to receive the approval of our fellow-men. Every passion of the human heart is right. The idea of religion that pronounces the ambition for fame a worthless bauble is nonsense. The approval of others, when merited, can give great and real joy to the human heart. It is well worth the striving for. It has been the inspiration of many a noble and successful career. Any power that threatens to render this incentive abortive should be guarded against.

Liberty of speech and liberty to speak evil of men and women are by no means inseparable. Beyond this necessary limitation for the protection of the individual, the newspaper should be unrestricted. Every new idea ought to find hospitality in its columns. The good and bad of every cause should be impartially presented. So far as a newspaper is true to itself, or the spirit that is seeking utterance through its columns, it will be cosmopolitan in its character. Its mission is "to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." When Shakspere wrote this of the drama, the playhouse was newspaper, school-library, platform, and theatre altogether; for, as Hamlet said, "the actors were

the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time. After your death, you had better have a bad epitaph than their ill-report while you live." Though this is no longer true of actors, yet it is perfectly pertinent to the newspaper fraternity.

In the days of Shakspeare, all the personal spleen and malice that lurked in the minds of men attempted to purchase utterance for itself on the stage. The thirst for blood and thunder, murders, trials, and rapes, that is now ministered to by the newspapers, found its full gratification in the theatre. Since the newspaper sluices were opened to receive this filth, the stage has been greatly improved in tone. The lowest play is purer in utterance than the highest then. At its worst, the stage, like the newspaper, was of great service to humanity. The hostility of the Church to the theatre is the most contemptible and unexcusable of all its blind, stupid, insane prejudices. Its jealousy of the secular press and its hostility to Sunday newspapers is of the same character. The newspapers read on Sundays do more good, in my judgment, than all the churches. The daily paper is the child of intelligence, the telegraph, and railroads. Having enlarged the sympathies of the heart to include the whole of the human race, it is just as necessary that this appetite should be satisfied as that of the stomach. The newspaper cultivates the unity and sacredness of humanity, and voices the growing affections of our hearts for what is real in the place of what is unreal. The narrow sympathies of the past, bound in by sectarian and national walls, are, under its beneficent influence, passing away. The triumphs of liberty in Russia or in the Transvaal thrill our hearts as much as though they were on our own shores. When hundreds of Irish farmers are turned out of house and home by the merciless laws of England, our hearts warm with indignation against the oppressor and with sympathy for the oppressed. In the face of these demands upon our humanity, we forget that we are Catholics or Protestants, Infidels or Christians. This to me is one of the

most encouraging facts of our time. It is far more effective against the narrowness and bigotry of the Church than all other hostilities combined.

Mr. Ingersoll told us last Sunday that a mistake was never corrected, unless the correction was more beautiful than the mistake. But this demand of the heart for a larger, richer life than the Church can give is met by the spirit of the press. The Church was well enough, when men's heads were low and empty, and their hearts narrow and selfish. But to-day it is like the prophet's bedstead, that was not long enough for a man to stretch himself, nor the clothing broad enough to cover him.

The life that men live outside the Church is richer and nobler than that which comes to those who are within. The tables are turned. The sinner condemns the saint, and the saint asks mercy of the sinner. Every man who enters an orthodox pulpit apologizes in some form or another for doing so. Half the sermons preached contain reasons why men should stop and listen to them, when, if the preachers really believed their gospel, their only effort would be to proclaim it and leave it to defend itself. God is no longer a king to command, but a client whose cause has to be pleaded at the bar of humanity. The world has become the attacking and the Church the defensive party. The narrow, provincial spirit of the Church begins to blush for shame before the broad, unselfish, cosmopolitan spirit that is thrilling the heart of the people to-day. All the peculiar ideas of the Church are provincial, mere appendages or side-shows tacked on to the great arena of humanity. Every day, this feeling is growing apace.

Men and women are beginning to regard its great professions something as most people do the noisy pretensions of the door-keepers to the side-shows around the entrance to a great circus. Though this figure may seem a little far-fetched, it is yet most apt and true. In the great show, you see nature on a large scale. By watching the lions, elephants, and other species of an-

imals, you get a vision of the plains of Asia or a glimpse into the forests of Africa. Along with this, there are generally representations of the customs and pageantry of the various nations, with displays of physical skill and daring, while in the side-show their whole stock in trade is a few unsightly monstrosities.

So the Church with noisy pretence calls upon us to give our money and to go down on our knees before a few wonders and miracles, which, if true, only proclaim the imperfection of nature, while in the great world we have the struggle of nations, the heroisms of reformers and patriots in daring feats for liberty and fame, and the glittering wealth and wonders of all the countries of the globe.

The newspaper is the reflection of this rich and varied life. Men and women out of the Church and in it prefer the newspaper to the Bible, because it contains far more food for brain and heart. Men look to the newspaper for guidance through the devious paths of life, because experience is teaching them every day that it is safer than to trust in the skies. Living in this larger and rarer atmosphere, our thought and love are daily broadened. As day by day we come to know more fully the instincts and tendencies of our times, our respect for humanity is increased. The reader of a newspaper, if he have a spark of generosity in his nature, cannot help but become public-spirited. He may lose his interest in explorations in Palestine for the purpose of finding the snuffers and candlesticks of King Solomon, or the jawbone of the ass with which Samson accomplished such wonders, but he will find himself daily growing in interest in the sanitary affairs of the city, the preservation of the timber, the establishing of public parks, art galleries, and all that concerns the intelligence and happiness of the people. He may not be able to tell you the names of the twelve Apostles, but he will know something about the public men of our times, and the gospel of science and liberty as it is proclaimed by the apostles of to-day.

The Churches are to-day celebrating the

festival of Easter, but it is a hopeful sign that it is the pagan part of it that comes to the front far more than the Christian. The foolish idea that a man once rose from the dead is almost forgotten in the celebration of nature's resurrection from the grave of winter. The flowers, cards, mottoes, and symbols in art decorations that fill the show-windows reveal that nature is gradually triumphing over the supernatural. Gradually, all the festive seasons of the Church will be freed from superstition, and become a part of the music and gladness of the world. The love of nature and life is already displacing the unhealthy clinging to the grave, and gazing with maniac stare into the unknown that is fostered by the Church. Those who watch and minister to the spirit of the age find that the tide of public feeling is setting strong in this direction. All this is fostered and fed by the spirit of the press. The successful business man or newspaper is not the one that seeks to force the public sentiment, but rather the one who waits on it patiently and serves it, trusting that the instincts of the people are wiser than his own.

No newspaper can succeed and try to force public opinion. They cannot even aspire to become the leaders. If they would be true to their opportunity, they must follow society, contenting themselves with holding the mirror up to nature, instead of trying to create original views, and so lead the van of progress. We sometimes become impatient with the press, because it is full of the prejudice and hostility of society toward any cause that is only supported by a feeble minority. But it is far better so than otherwise. The service they render in reflecting the full form and pressure of the age is far better than it would be, if they simply mirrored for us some small angle or bit of nature.

Of course, new ideas have to have their special organs; and though their constituency is small and feeble, and it is often a close struggle for existence, yet such a paper as Garrison's *Liberator* or the brave old *Investigator*, which for fifty years has carried into

the front of the conflict the flag of perfect mental freedom and battled bravely for humanity against divinity, is worthy of far more reverence than the greatest and most successful daily newspaper. This is not altogether a question of utility. The publication of such a paper is one moral act; while the publication of a daily newspaper is a vast business enterprise, in which conscience plays but a subordinate part. To edit the last successfully requires a man like Napoleon, with a vast ambition and an intellect capable of the largest generalizations, along with the most careful details; while to edit a paper like Heinzen's *Pioneer* or the Boston *Investigator* requires the moral abnegation of an Arnold, Winkelried, or John Brown.

Last week, we celebrated the fiftieth birthday of the *Investigator*. As I am on this subject, I feel that I should be untrue to a noble deed if I did not express my admiration for the steady purpose and persistent endeavor, which for half a century has kept the torch of liberty and reason brightly flaming above the long night of the world's despotism and superstition.

While, however, there is always danger that such papers may become narrow and opinionated, what may be almost a virtue in them is a crime in a daily newspaper. A paper that advertises itself as a newspaper, and then is run on a narrow partisan basis, is a cheat and a fraud. As an example of what I mean, take the Boston *Journal*. Last Sunday, the peerless orator, Robert G. Ingersoll, spoke to three thousand people in the Boston Theatre. It was, so far as this city was concerned, the event of the day. The man and his audience were more pregnant with the spirit of the times than all things else that happened that day in Boston. His genius reflects the vast, seething ocean of modern thought and feeling, as truly as Shakspeare did that of his age. In one of his lectures, you are made to feel both the tragedy and comedy of life. He touches, with searching hand, every chord of the human heart. He draws to hear him the most learned and the most ignorant. He

tears off the false covering of the supernatural, and holds most truly the mirror up to nature. The tender humanities and the strong common-sense, that are the principal characteristics of his lectures, are but the reflections a great mind has caught from the age. But, notwithstanding all this, when I looked in the Boston *Journal* the next morning for its report, not a word did I find. If its readers depended on it for information, they would be ignorant that such an event had happened. It had various reports of homilies and sermons, about a dead world buried beneath the dust of centuries, and sounding like a doleful voice from the tombs.

It would be no greater cheat and fraud on the public if you should go to the Globe Theatre to-morrow night to see Salvini, and find his rôle filled by some one else. On the other hand, the Boston *Herald* is an illustration of the true idea of a cosmopolitan newspaper. It has reported these meetings as impartially as those of the churches. It gave a clear and perfectly just review of Mr. Ingersoll's lecture. Whatever happens of public interest finds reflection in its columns. I am glad that it is rewarded with a circulation almost as large as that of all the other Boston papers put together. The great success of the *Herald* is owing to the fact that it is true to its spirit and mission. Instead of forcing the opinions of men and women, it tries to faithfully and impartially report them. Of course, it is not altogether free from sin. Though its ideal is right, like us all, it often comes short of its aim. Still, it reflects the many sidedness of public opinion. It is an ocean on which float all the explorations of human thought and over which pass all the storms of human passion. The business of a newspaper is not to preach one idea, but to report all ideas, and let the fanning-mill of the public mind sift the chaff from the wheat.

The spirit of the press, when true to itself, is also realistic. It does not seek to gloss things, and present them in a false light. The growing conviction of the age — that

truth, however homely, is to be preferred to the most beautiful fiction—stands behind it and seeks expression through it. The novel and the theatre are beginning to mingle the realistic with the dramatic. Now, I believe in idealism as well as realism. But idealism, to be worth anything, must be founded on nature.

For centuries, we have been living in a world of dreams and myths. The Church is founded on a dream. Most of our literature is full of these airy nothings. But the heart of our times demands reality. We want to understand life. We want to know what poverty and ignorance are. Plays like "The Streets of New York" draw crowded houses. The newspapers must give pen pictures from real life,—scenes at court, in prison and palace, in saloons and brothels. The demand for such things is pregnant with moral meaning. People are tired of the unknowable, and turn with eager zest to what is known. Beneath all this demand for information is a moral inquiry into the fitness and justice of the present order. The Church has fostered the idea, especially the Liberal Christian Church, that everything is perfectly lovely on this earth. But the newspapers are fast delivering us from this blind and stupid resignation. Resignation is good only where there is no room for improvement.

By the education of the press, we shall learn that the only Providence is the eternal

vigilance of men and women. By this constant familiarity with evil that is reported in the columns of the daily newspaper, we may become pessimistic; but that is infinitely better than the false optimism that explains pain for men at ease by virtue's exercise in pitying it. I hope much from this realistic training of the newspapers. Let the cloud-capped towers of the New Jerusalem dissolve themselves into a dew that shall water the earth. Let all the splendors faith in the unknown has painted on the canvas of the future be blotted out, and the pictures of human despair and wretchedness take their place. By knowing where the shadows lurk, we shall know where to send the light that is to disperse them. In this way, we shall discover the impotence of religion, and, instead of praying for God to mend all, can go to work and do something for ourselves. For, as George Eliot sings,—

"Even our failures are a prophecy,
Even our yearnings and our bitter tears
After that fair and true we cannot grasp;
As patriots, who seem to die in vain,
Make liberty more sacred by their pangs.
Presentiment of better things on earth
Sweeps in with every force that stirs our souls
To admiration, self-renouncing love,
Or thoughts, like light, that bind the world in one;
Sweeps like the sense of vastness, when at night
We hear the roll and dash of waves, that break
Nearer and nearer with the rushing tide,
Which rises to the level of the cliff,
Because the wide Atlantic rolls behind,
Throbbing respondent to the far-off orbs."

RELICS OF BARBARISM.

A BARBARIAN is a man in the process of making. He is a mixture of beast and man of about equal parts. This, however, is one of the essential factors of nature in working out the product of humanity. Though we have no particular love or admiration for a man in this middle condition of development, still, considered as a barbarian, he is well enough. He is a great improvement on the beast. I do not scorn the past because of its barbarism. We owe much to it. It is, in spite of its imperfection, our nursing mother. It is the soil into which root all the beautiful productions of to-day. The chipped arrow-head and stone axe of our savage ancestor was the beginning of the carpenter's chest of tools, and all the wonderful machinery of to-day, with which wood is carved and iron wrought into a myriad forms of use and beauty. The first man who found his way home from the chase by marking the position of a star by night, or of a shadow by day, was the promise of the astronomer scanning and mapping the heavens with his telescope, and of the mariner guiding a noble steamship with precious freight of human lives with unerring certainty across the pathless ocean. The child chasing a butterfly across the fields is the forerunner of the man who, as sage, poet, statesman, or artist, chases across the years of life the great ideals of use and beauty that haunt his brain. The barbarian chief conquering the world with his sword is the prophecy of him who at a later date subdues it with the two-edged sword of truth and justice.

But a relic of barbarism is infinitely worse than real barbarism. A relic is a monstrosity, a fossilized failure of nature,

and so a standing sign of its imperfection. It is a corruption of the blood, or foul disease entailed upon us by the vices of the past. Every government beneath the sun that lifts the sword against freedom of conscience, thought, or speech, is a relic of barbarism. So also is every Church that allies itself to the State, and with the strong arm of the law compels those who hold its doctrines false to help maintain them. The barbarian is man before the light of liberty or beauty of justice have thrilled him with joy. He is guided only by selfish motives. His sympathies are bounded exclusively by the members of his own tribe or clan. Self-protection prompts this. All outside are lawful prey. If he is a cannibal, he will kill and make his dinner off the member of another tribe. If not this, he will kill him, in order to steal his horse, wife, house, or land. It is the old instinct of the tiger, hyena, and gorilla. A relic of barbarism is the last remains of this spirit of prey. In the barbarian, it is dying out; while in the relic it has become fixed, yea, it is even worse than this. The disease is regarded by most people as a mark of good health. The vice openly practised in the name of virtue, the devil born of the serpents' fangs and crocodiles' jaws, the ferocity of the tiger, and insane babble of gorillas is exalted to the shining throne of a God, and worshiped in the name of infinite mercy, compassion, and love.

In the history of religion there are many such changes both for good and evil. Satan was once a God, while to the best conscience of to-day Jehovah has become a devil. Heresy was once the greatest of all crimes, but to-day it is rapidly becoming the highest

of all virtues. It has become the star of genius, so that the wisdom of the age worships, like the mythical wise men of the east, only where it points. The word "infidel" once fastened upon the neck of any man would, like a mill-stone, drag him into the lowest depths of social ostracism. But to-day we bear it proudly before the world; and already the power that sought to drown us is under the weight of our condemnation, sinking into the depths of moral infamy to which it vainly attempts to drag us.

The secret love and admiration of millions of hearts warm to the man or woman who bravely claims the right of absolute freedom of thought. The State that takes the sword against liberty pierces its own heart. The Czar of Russia was not slain by the Nihilists: he simply committed suicide. The English government in its infamous action against the Boers and oppression of the Irish people is digging its own grave. Germany, in its rigorous measures against the Socialists and suppression of free speech, is pronouncing sentence of execution against itself, which the justice of humanity will most surely perform. By the same law, the Church that allies itself to the secular power, and compels its opponents by the authority of the constable to pay it tribute, is writing its own infamous epitaph. A Church can have no worse condemnation than this. The very fact that religion has ever used the sword shows that it was born out of the bestial element in man.

In saying this, I am not ignorant that religion has composed wonderful poems, built grand cathedrals that are like frozen music, or that the finest works of art in painting, sculpture, and music are intimately blended with it. I know also that much of the self-sacrifice and heroism exhibited by men and women seem to have been inspired by it. But, after all, these things that still win our devotion and hold millions by the sympathies of the heart to the Church are not born of religion. Though the evil and the good are blended into one stream, the pure water rises in the human heart, and the impure in the

ignorance of barbarism. If we can only separate the two, we need not lose the first. Art in the service of religion is debauched. It composes oratorios, paints pictures, carves statues, and builds cathedrals, which, instead of inspiring us to stand on our feet in self-confidence and respect, drag us on to our knees, and produce in us the emotions of a serf before his august lord. The same argument would support every tyranny

"That ever rode upon the back of man,
Pretending fitness for his sole defence
Against life's evil. How can aught subsist
That holds no theory of gain or good?
Despots with terror in their red right hand
Must argue good to helpers and themselves,
Must let submission hold a core of gain
To make their slaves choose life."

The Czar of Russia builds magnificent palaces, and patronizes the fine arts, and rewards with numerous promotions, decorations, and emoluments his officers and soldiers, which are paid for by robbing the millions. Every temple built for God or symphony composed in his praise is at the cost of humanity.

The other day, while examining the new Christmas cards Mr. Prang is preparing, he made the remark that it is a significant fact that the public had become tired of religious pictures, and received with pleasure any bit of real life, like the one I held in my hand,—a lovely woman, gazing with eyes soft and tremulous with light and love into the beautiful face of her child. It is in just such facts as this we touch the pulse that throbs with the life of the future. We are weary of angels and cherubs. Angels may have seemed beautiful when men and women really believed in them, and every unlooked-for blessing was thought to have been brought by them. Madonnas gazing with hungry, soulful eyes heavenwards seemed beautiful, when all good was thought to come from the skies. Riper knowledge teaches us that our earth, so long evilly spoken of, is, after all, the source of all our comforts, and the hearts of men and women the spring from which all goodness flows. The human heart will inspire nobler architecture, write

sweeter poems, paint more beautiful pictures, and compose grander music, when it is freed from the superstitions of religion than ever before. Sincerity is the companion of all true art. Nature gives us our standards of beauty, and whoever pleases us in its service must be capable of reflecting her truthfully.

The sense of justice is also born of long experience and suffering. Justice is higher than mercy. He that shows mercy must first unlawfully raise himself above those that weep. Religion is merciful, because it is built on injustice. When we become perfectly just toward each other, we shall have no need of mercy.

To establish justice in the earth, in every place, between man and man is the highest aim to which we can consecrate our lives. But this can only be achieved in the establishment of a just government or social order, in which there is no preferment or inequality, but that which is founded on the everlasting nature of things. For, though nature is capable of constant improvement, this progress is all within the domain of unchangeable law. Natural inequalities can no more be destroyed without sacrificing the joy of liberty than the landscape could be reduced to a dead level without the loss of its beauty. In striving for the possible, let us waste no time in searching for the impossible. However sincere the communist may be, he is leaving a foe in the rear that will be sure to rout him at an unexpected time and quarter. There can be no commune, in the true sense of the word, in which liberty and justice are not sacrificed to the spirit of utility. A Utopia on earth is just as destructive of the real meanings of life as a heaven above. Each would reduce man into the condition of a jelly-fish. The Russian peasant has lived since the emancipation in a perfect commune; and yet the clouds of despair and misery that fill his sky are so dark and dense that the holy light of liberty seldom breaks through, while he is also ignorant of the very idea of justice. But, recognizing the limitations of nature, ceasing to strive for an impossible Utopia, the ideal

of a perfectly just State is rising before the best hearts and minds of to-day.

We have already the foundations of it in this Republic. The stars and the stripes float above purer justice and larger liberty than all the other flags of the world. The intention of the principal heroes of the Revolution was to secure the equal right of every citizen to life, liberty, and happiness. But the will was better than the deed. Injustice and tyranny were too deeply rooted in the soil to be entirely weeded out at once. They were too weak in numbers to resist the demands of the great majority whose eyes were still bandaged with superstition. Though they had to fight against England for liberty, yet they modelled their Constitution after the one that had oppressed them. Though they rebelled because they would not be taxed without representation, yet they immediately taxed the largest and best half of humanity, the women, while giving them no voice in the government. Though they proclaimed liberty of conscience, yet they granted favors to the Church which made their proclamation a farce. They intended to keep State and Church separate, but immediately passed laws that closely unite them.

It is these laws that I speak of as relics of barbarism. Now there are thousands who really think that they are already entirely separate. For their benefit let me state briefly in what way they are united. First, by the exemption of all church property, from taxation; second, in the employment of chaplains in Congress, the Army, and State prisons; third, in the stamping of the name of God on our coin and in the use of official and judicial oaths; fourth, in the grants of money and land to sectarian schools, the reading of the Bible and offering of prayer in the public schools; fifth, in the maintenance of Sunday laws that interfere with the liberty of conscience of the individual; sixth, in commanding the people to pray and fast at certain days in the year; seventh, in the privation of an infidel, atheist, or agnostic of the right to

testify in many of our courts or to hold office in many of our States.

All these laws are relics of barbarism. While they remain on our statute-books, the wings of liberty are clipped, and the white robe of justice stained with the blood of savage and inhuman cruelty.

I appeal against these laws to the conscience and reason of humanity. I am sure that this is a cause that only needs to be fairly stated to win for it the warmest devotion of hundreds of thousands who are now indifferent to it. Justice and liberty are so infinitely superior to all things else, that I have the strongest faith in their final triumph. But this glad day of jubilee cannot come too soon, and so I plead for warm and earnest devotion to hasten its coming. There is to-day, in all the range of human vision, nothing so worthy of our devotion as the effort to establish a just and free State. Hereon, we may build an altar and found a church, and bring more passionate devotion than ever blossomed out of suing for mercy. It is more blessed to give than receive. Such a cause as this is not a supplication. We do not cringe and crawl like serfs, but, standing erect on our feet, proclaim our independence, and work to secure for every one the right to be a man.

In order that we may understand this subject more thoroughly, let us look at some of these counts against the Church separately, keeping all the time before us the idea that they are relics of barbarism. The exemption of church property from taxation is just the same as though they were supported by direct taxation. It is no worse to tax the dissenter in England for the support of the National Church than it is to increase the taxes of the atheist, secularist, and agnostic, in order that the property of the Church may be exempt. I know that some attempt to justify this on the ground that the Church is a moral institution. There may have been a time when this was true, but to-day I hold it the worst foe morality has. But, for the sake of argument, granted that it does exert a moral in-

fluence: so does every newspaper and publisher; so do the railroads and telegraphs. Lighting cities with gas decreased quite largely the percentage of crime. Why should we discriminate against these in favor of the Church?

It is said that men enter upon these pursuits with none but selfish considerations, while all that men do for the Church is without hope of gain. This is a slander on human nature. In every profession and pursuit, we find many men controlled far more by a public spirit than desire for private gain.

But is it true that those who support the Church hope for no reward? Not by any means. People pay for the artificial religious emotions produced at church just as others do for the pleasurable sensations they experience at the theatre. That there is not an element of unselfishness in the Church, I do not deny. Still, I know that the main part of its support is in the spirit of a trade with God,—so much for so much. They build a church, sing and pray, in which service they tell him over and over how great and magnificent he is, pay the minister who conducts the ceremonies, for all of which they expect a lot to be deeded to their name in the New Jerusalem. It is called, in pious phraseology, having their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Still, if you tear off this deceptive glamor, you will find the eager spirit of the huckster beneath it.

Not a word can be said in favor of this practice, while a million can be pronounced against it. It compels every one who does not believe it, yea, who holds it as the stony sum total of all barbarism and injustice, by the edge of every sword, the point of every bayonet, the majesty of each court of law, the gloom and disgrace of every prison, to help support it.

The only possible way to have perfect liberty is to have a perfect secular form of government. A just State has no more to do with religion than any other form of business. This government is simply a busi-

ness contract made between men of all opinions for their mutual protection. When the bargain was made, one particular opinion was in the majority; and so they have dealt unfairly with the minority. Suppose three men — say a Presbyterian, Methodist, and Episcopalian — should go into the grocery business together, and then after a while the Methodist and Episcopalian should discover that their Presbyterian partner had been selling their goods to all Presbyterians at half-price.

Now, that is just what we are doing,— selling our government, which belongs equally to all, to Christians at half-price, besides giving them unlimited *credit*, and compelling all others to pay cash down. To compel people in this way to support what they don't believe in is infamous. It is the same spirit of barbarism that drove hundreds of thousands of Jews and pagans into Christian churches, and compelled them to choose between death or baptism.

This practice makes the struggle of ideas unequal. Truth can take care of itself, if you give it an open field and a fair fight. An itinerant Universalist preacher at the close of a sermon, in a new place, once politely asked the congregation if he should come again. A shrewd old Quaker who was present arose and said, "Friend, if what thee has told us is true, we don't need thee; and, if what thee has told us is false, we certainly don't want thee."

If Christianity is true, it is in no need of this advantage. If it is false, we certainly don't want to give it the compulsory support of every man or woman who pays one cent of tax in this great nation. Backed by such a power, any falsehood can hold the truth at bay. Why should the house of God, built and enjoyed almost invariably by the rich, have the advantage over the poor man's cottage? If I was God, I think I should despise to be worshipped through any such stinginess and injustice.

Is it not also infamous that for a mere matter of belief, in many of our States, one may be robbed of all he possesses, and see

his wife and children murdered before his eyes, and yet not be allowed to testify in court against the criminals, while the word of a thief and murderer is taken, if he be found willing to say he believes in God?

No words can be found with which to defend such a law, and none too strong with which to denounce it. It is a relic of barbarism. It was made when might was right and religion was fear. It is of kin to cannibalism, and would look perfectly consistent framed and hanging upon the walls of the chambers of the Inquisition. It is a disgrace to the age, a discord amid the almost universal music of kindness, a deadly serpent hidden within the fair flowers of liberty, truth, and justice of this great Republic. I appeal to the honor and conscience of all if such laws as these belong to a land of liberty. Do you not see that they are of a kin to the lash and the blood-hound? Let us then resolve that they shall follow their relations into eternal oblivion at any cost.

I want no favors shown to the unbeliever. I simply plead for justice. I want that the man who says "nature" instead of "God," and "evolution" instead of "creation," shall have the same respect paid to his word and an equal chance to serve his country with the man who says "God and creation." I want every law struck from our statute-books that offers a reward for insincerity and safety for hypocrisy. I want every man beneath the stars and stripes to be as free to think and express his honest thought without fear of endangering the safety of his wife and children as the eternal stars above us are to shine. I want every man to feel that he has an equal right in this government with every other man. I want every one to be perfectly free to think and do as he pleases, so long as he does not interfere with the happiness of any one else. I should be equally ashamed if this country should pass a single law that would endanger the existence of any religious liberty.

The Church also takes an unfair advantage over unbelievers in having religion

taught in the public schools, or in voting appropriations to churches to enable them to teach it in their own schools. You need not to be told that the Bible is read generally in connection with religious exercises in nearly all our public schools. In New York and other places, appropriations have been made from the public funds for education to the Church. In nearly all the States in the Union, money or land has been given to help found sectarian colleges and universities. In Delaware, it is provided that the court of each county shall pay annually, by orders on the county treasury, to the teacher of each Sabbath-school kept open three months or more in each year, fifty cents for each white scholar, provided the sum annually paid in each county shall not exceed five hundred dollars. I would advise any one wanting to make a living teaching Sunday-school to move to Delaware.

In the State of Georgia, it is provided that all moneys arising from fines imposed for offences the gist of which consists in their being committed on the Sabbath day shall be paid to the treasurer of the county, to be by him distributed for the purpose of establishing and promoting Sabbath-schools in the county. And yet there are plenty of people who believe that in this country the Church is entirely separate from the State. Even here, in Massachusetts, they have a law saying, The school committee shall require the daily reading of some portion of the Bible, without written note or oral comment, in the public schools. All these laws are relics of barbarism. They belong to the age of the Inquisition. They are an insult to the spirit of justice and intelligence of the nineteenth century. They make a mockery of our boasted liberty. Though we have broken the fetters from the bodies of men, we still put chains upon their minds. There is a rent in our flag and a stain upon our escutcheon.

While these laws remain, our Declaration of Independence is an empty lie, and our shouts of liberty but the roaring of fools. We can afford to let all the altars of religion

perish, better than the grand and glorious one of liberty. Without liberty, religion is, in any form it may appear, a degrading tyranny. Liberty is that which gives health to the mind and joy to the heart. It is the good wine that stimulates progress and inspires genius. In its soil alone flourish the fairest flowers of art and the best fruits of knowledge.

There are still other relics of barbarism in many of the Sabbatarian laws of our States. They are too numerous to quote here. The gist of them is that any tradesman, artificer, workman, laborer, or other person whatever, who shall pursue their business or work of their ordinary calling upon the Lord's day, works of necessity and charity only excepted, shall be subject to a fine or imprisonment. In the State of Georgia, for a violation of this law, any one is liable to a fine of \$1,000, imprisonment for six months, or work on the chain gang on the public works for twelve months, either of which may be ordered at the discretion of the judge.

The moral of this law is: If you want at least to see the shadow of liberty, never go to Georgia to live. It is simply infamous. All this Sabbatarian legislation is, in the face of the nineteenth century, the very essence of stupidity. It is utterly impossible to enforce them without placing upon the light of civilization one day in seven the extinguisher of barbarism. Such laws may have done very well for a tribe of half-civilized people living in tents; but under any circumstances they must be stained with injustice, and in our time it would be impossible to frame anything in the shape of a law much more unjust. Think for a moment of arresting all the activities of labor in a large city one day in seven! Why, it would breed a pestilence, murder people by the wholesale, create a dam in the river of commerce that would waste millions of dollars! If the manna of the Israelites was kept fresh by a miracle, no God interferes to keep our meat from spoiling nor our milk from souring.

If this law should be enforced in any city,

hundreds of innocent babes would cry from hunger until their weary mothers would curse the God or the people that could create such a law. I know that these laws are seldom enforced, still every once in a while a few fanatics torment a community and create no end of mischief in their ignorant zeal.

Our only safety from these periodical disturbances is in the repeal of all such laws. If religion cannot enforce the Sabbath by moral suasion, as far as it ought to be kept, then it had better be destroyed. What right has the Church to legislate all employment but its own a crime on one day in seven? Why should the work of preaching be done on Sunday, any more than that of teaching, printing, or acting? There are many other employments that only have in view the moral and intellectual improvement of mankind. Let us have a little sense on these subjects. These Sabbatarian laws from first to last are simply relics of barbarism. We don't need the State to tell us how to spend our time. It is none of its business whether we work or play, so long as we don't trespass on the rights of any one else.

All laws in reference to blasphemy are equally absurd, and yet many of the States have statutes on this subject. The law in Delaware on this provides, "If any person shall be guilty of the crime of blasphemy, he shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor: he shall be fined not exceeding fifty dollars, shall be imprisoned in solitary confinement for any term not exceeding two months, and may, in the discretion of the court, be held to surety of the peace and good behavior for one year after his discharge from prison." In the State of Maine, it is provided that whoever blasphemes the holy name of God by denying, cursing, and contumeliously reproaching God, his creation, government, final judgment of the world, Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost, or the Holy Scriptures, as contained in the canonical books of the Old and the New Testament, or by exposing them to contempt and ridicule, shall be punished by imprisonment not more than two years, or

by fine not exceeding two hundred dollars. Maryland, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Michigan, and other States have similar laws to these. If these laws were levelled against the use of any language that would call a blush to the cheek of modesty, or insult the honor of any man or woman, I would enter no protest against them. But they are capable of an interpretation that would repress all freedom of speech. They can be used any time by fanatics and bigots as an instrument of persecution against any one who may happen to differ from them in opinion.

Think of a State, claiming to be a part of a free Republic, in this age of the world making it a crime punishable by imprisonment to deny the Trinity, the existence of a Holy Ghost, or any part of the inspiration of the Old and New Testament, or the coming of a great theatrical spectacular end of the world, when all the living and the dead are to be judged. Yet this is what the Maine law means.

If these laws were only directed against the common practice of swearing, I should still object to them on the ground that this is only an artificial crime created by the Church, which has no business to influence our legislation. Using the words "Christ" or "God" in common conversation is quite a different thing to the unbeliever than to the believer. For the last to so use them would indeed be sacrilege, but for the first they have no meaning. He can say, By God, in the same harmless way as the other may say, By Jupiter. Blasphemy is only possible to the believer. It may not be in good taste for one to use lightly what others value highly: still, it is only cowardice and injustice to make such a habit a criminal offence.

Our laws make it a crime to take the name of God in vain, and yet provide that this shall be done scores of times almost every day in every court in the land. What is more light and trifling than the practice of swearing witnesses in our various courts, or persons in the various legal transactions to which an oath is attached. The common-

ness of it renders it a bore, while the way in which it is administered generally provokes one to laughter rather than to solemnity. France, the most advanced and prosperous nation in the world to-day, has done away with all oaths of office; and I am sure that we shall have just as good government and far better administration of justice than we have now, if we will follow her example. All this swearing is base in its origin, and appeals only to the lowest and most degraded motive that governs human conduct. It is all born of fear, and roots back into the barbarism of the past. It tempts and often compels men against their conscience to uphold as true what they believe to be false. It binds Church and State together in a way that is unjust to every unbeliever in the land.

The time has arrived when these United States ought to protect the liberty of conscience and the freedom of speech of every one of its subjects. I want this to be the freest and grandest country beneath the stars. I want every one who helps to support this government for the people and by the people to be equal before the law. I want one truth to have just as good a chance to bring us its light and blessing as every other truth. I want every man and woman to be free to worship or believe as they please, but never to compel any one else by the strong arm of the law to believe as they do, or to support their belief against their will.

But we must look further than the State for the root of this evil. Trying to get the Church out of the State is good, but to get it out of human life is better. I am a secularist not only in politics, but from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet. I believe that, wherever the Church touches humanity, it is to our hurt. I believe that religion, as it is understood, is a plant not to be reformed, but to be destroyed root and branch. I think the best way to accomplish this end is to aim directly at the hearts and minds of the people.

What we want on our side is not only the laws of the State, but far more than this. We must gain the moral judgment of the people who make up the State. I believe we shall yet get this. A perfectly just and

free man is the highest ideal we can worship. To strive daily to make this possibility an actuality in our lives should be our highest aim.

Our kingdom is not of this world, after the old idea of force. Might cannot make right. Though our devotion is to the present world, yet it is for us a higher form of spirituality than was ever preached by the Church. The motives that actuate us are neither fear nor gain, but the love and enthusiasm of humanity.

Above the Church and above the world, we see a bow of promise that is painted on the spray cast up by the present strife. All that is good abides and grows. The time is coming when man neither in the name of Church nor State will wrong his fellow-man. The cross of one age is adorned with the crown of the next. The world, so long sacrificed to heaven, shall yet be counted worthy of the highest devotion of human hearts. Eager explorers trace all the rivers to their sources. Before the reality, the myth that the Nile took its rise in the Mountains of the Moon fades away. So eager, questioning minds are looking for the fountain sources of all that is true, beautiful, and good; and, lo! the idea that they take their rise in the skies is vanishing. We find them springing up in the hearts of good men and women, and around the cradles of little children. Herein we find the hope of the world. We cast ourselves upon the heart of humanity, and out of the fellowship of its love and sorrow create a paradise. From every aristocracy, we turn with hearts beating high with hope to the growing spirit of social democracy. In it, we see the sun of righteousness with healing on its wings.

In its passionate love of liberty, we behold the safety of the individual, and in its equal hatred of inequality we behold the promise of a perfectly just State. We cannot destroy these relics of barbarism by acts of legislation alone. What will do the work is to give the world our thought and vision of beauty. Let us win the hearts of men and women by the magic of justice, truth, and liberty, in spite of all their fear and prejudice against us. In this way, and in this way only, can the last relic of barbarism be destroyed.

THE SPHINX.

THE fable and image of the Sphinx are without doubt an image and a fable of life. The fable represents the Sphinx as sitting by the wayside, propounding her riddle to those that passed; and, if they could not answer, she slew them. At length came Œdipus who solved the enigma, whereupon the Sphinx drowned herself in the Red Sea.

The African image of the Sphinx is a lioness resting at full length with a human head of great strength and beauty, with eyes of deep and wonderful meaning as of a soul seeking to express itself through them, dumb with otherwise inarticulate yearnings.

Like this Sphinx, is not life of womanly loveliness and tenderness the face and bosom of a goddess, but ending in claws and the body of a lioness? In each of us lie these two elements. Shall the womanly tenderness or the leonine cruelty get the mastery within us? Shall the strength of the lioness nourish the life of affection and beauty, or shall these be outlawed by the cruelty of selfishness and bigotry? Shall our pathway through life be that of a tender, affectionate woman, dispensing life and blessing from the innate beauty of her soul, or that of a savage beast, meting out death and destruction? Shall the love that flames in each womanly heart be but the type of the all-conquering passion that shall wed our souls in holiest consecration and enthusiasm to humanity, or shall the cruelty and devouring wrath of every lioness robbed of her whelps or lurking by the wayside in search of prey symbolize the evil that shall mark our path? The artist who brought together in one form these two types saw clearly into the secret of life, and, though unknown, deserves our highest reverence and gratitude.

In crowning the Sphinx with the love and beauty of woman, we have preached for us the old, old gospel of love, the gospel that is older than Jesus and the Golden Rule, older than Confucius and his one word, reciprocity, older even than he who thus in this expressive way sought to reveal it, spread forever as a curtain about our couch in the blue sky, gleaming to us from all the stars that fill the lap of infinity, spread upon all the heights that invite us to seek repose and purity in the sublime hush of their solitude, blooming in each flower that nestles in jewelled glory in the valleys at their feet, breaking upon every shore in the immeasurable laughter of the sea, thrilling in each yearning of the heart, beaming from every smile of gladness, resting on the palm of each friendly clasp, intoned in every word of real human sympathy, and giving largest blessing in all the generous deeds of human helpfulness.

To what sublime heights of womanly tenderness and passion, flooding earth with divinest beauty and love, man can attain unto, are seen in such souls as those of Jesus, Buddha, and Florence Nightingale. To what depths of leonine, devouring cruelty, scattering fear and ruin on every hand, man can sink, are seen in Nero and Caligula, Napoleon, and every Czar of Russia. Not so much that these are exceptional figures as typical through the prominence of their lives of all the rest of mankind. In each soul are these possible heights and depths. We are all ready to pronounce Nero an incarnate fiend. But there are those who walk our streets to-day among our money-kings who are just as cruel.

Wherever selfishness and greed reign as

the sole motives of life, there crouches the beast of prey. No words can paint the cruelty of a man who in this world of want, of anguish, of tears, of cold and hunger, of heart struggles with destiny until death becomes a blessed boon compared to life, yet thinks only of his bonds and bank stock.

Personal comparisons are odious and often unjust, still I cannot but feel that the cruelty of dead emperors and living czars is being repeated in the lion-like greed of our Vanderbilts and Goulds. To such, in time, this selfishness must reveal itself as the enraged lioness with hooks and claws. In spite of untold millions, they will find the hunger of the heart unsatisfied. The demands of civilization have depopulated our forests of beasts of prey. The time is surely coming when the higher interests of humanity than the mere preservation of life will clear the world of such monsters of greed. The day has gone by when men and women are simply content to live. They can no longer be stupefied to the sense of present misery with the promise of a paradise to come. They ask to be happy right here and now. The toiler on sea and land begins to feel that the product of his labor, if it could be had, would make the flowers of comfort blossom at his own hearthstone as well as that of his employer. The Church, so long the watchdog of kings and aristocracies, is feeble and toothless with age. Vanderbilt may build and endow a church; but the poll-parrot mutterings of the priests therein cannot arrest for one moment the rising spirit of social democracy, fed and fostered by scepticism, that demands from every one of these tyrants the right of each man to the fruit of his labor.

Let me say, however, to every political and social reformer that progress is impossible in this direction, save through the destruction of superstition. Unless this taproot of every injustice is destroyed, whatever else you may do, you have only scotched the snake, not killed it. She'll close and be herself, while our poor hearts will be in danger of her former tooth.

Superstition is the unbroken forest that shelters every lawless injustice and cruel wrong that afflicts humanity. Intelligent and moral denial of every dogma of theology is the sharp axe with which the sturdy pioneer clears the way for the ploughshare of education and good seed of social and political regeneration.

In opposition to these selfish spirits there are all about us thousands who, by persistent devotion to the good of others, have brought into dominion the womanly affection that brings comfort and rest to many a weary head.

This is the divine love which all the seeking ages have striven to find enthroned in the heavens, when we should look for it wherever love reigns,—queen of passion and of strength. In bidding you think of the shining exemplars of this principle of love in the history of the race as more accidental in their prominent place than superior, I touch one of the greatest truths of life that stands mirrored for us in all the face of nature. In the heavens above and around us there are, it is true, planets and stars that shine brighter than others, and seem to be more nearly related to the destiny of our earth. But every star, however faint its light may be to us, is part of the glorious universe in which our own world rolls forth as a star in its mighty orbit. Among these stars that come and go from our sight as we gaze, because of the feebleness of the ray that comes within our vision, are suns that are the centres of mightier planetary systems than that of which our own earth is a part. Yea, hidden altogether from our sight, there are doubtless more suns and systems than all that come within our ken that are yet, by that all-pervading law of gravitation, constantly influenced and being influenced by us. So these souls that shine with the superior splendor of love are stars whose orbits of activity are nearer to our vision.

But still, as distant specks on the horizon or entirely unseen by us, there are millions of men and women equally resplendent, moving in their silent orbits, unseen by the

applauding multitude, who are a part of that power that is leading us along the path of light and truth into the universal spirit and beauty of love. To them, life has been as earnest as it is to the true mother who watches with sleepless vigilance and infinite patience over the destinies of her children. The unspeakable gladness of the betrothed maiden to her lover has married them to humanity so steadfastly that all of life's joy has blossomed from this devotion.

The Church says we are to be saved through the devotion of one life. 'Tis a most unnatural statement, a tormenting discord breaking in upon the sweet harmonies of nature. We are saved and regenerated by all the affection that ever looked through the trembling, bashful gaze of love's first young dream, or shone in the hungry, wistful look of a mother's tenderness, or inspired the patient industry of a father striving to care for the loved ones at home.

The path of larger opportunity and pleasure in which we walk to-day has been beaten smooth for us through thorns and over sharp rocks by the bleeding feet of the thousands of martyrs, who, listening to the pitiful cry of humanity and pursuing the ravishing vision of liberty, have contended against tyranny and injustice of every kind. Thousands, blinded by superstition, look with longing gaze into the skies for the vision and power of love to bless and inspire, when they should look for it by every hearthstone in every humble home where womanly love and tenderness make the poorest meal a feast, and cover the plainest walls with garlands of unfading beauty.

Would you fill your place in this celestial orbit? Then learn to think how you can minister to others, and help them to escape the lioness of pain, and live the life of friendship and love; for all who are great here are those that serve. There is also in this Sphinx celestial beauty, which means order and pliancy to wisdom; and there are also a darkness, a ferocity and fatality that are infernal. Shall our lives express the divine beauty and order of the life of noblest

womanhood, or shall they reveal the blind passion and fatality that control the beast? Shall divine reason and foresight reign in our lives, or mere sensual passion and blind faith of superstition? Shall we, like a divine goddess whose sceptre brings harmony out of chaos, light from darkness, rule beneficently our lower nature, or shall that lower nature trample all higher claims in the dust, and blindly rush with us over the precipice of ruin? Shall life be to us beautiful and harmonious as the life of noblest woman, or shall it lead us like the lioness through dark and almost impenetrable jungles of confusion? These are some of the questions that are propounded us in the riddle of the Sphinx.

Notice next that this goddess is half-imprisoned, the articulate lovely still encased in the inarticulate chaotic. How true is it that life is to all of us, in some part of it, such an imprisonment, such a mingling of the expressible with what cannot be spoken! The more there is in any life that can be spoken to any one, the nearer are we delivered from our prison. But the more there is that must be dumb and silent, known to none but ourselves, the more are we still imprisoned in the animal.

Free thought and free speech are the measurement of the world's civilization. The State or the Church that puts manacles upon the human mind is in that act copying the lioness crouching beneath a thicket in wait for her prey. Every obstruction placed in the way of knowledge is a secret foe along our path. The fear that lurks in many minds that men and women can know too much about themselves comes from the denizen of the jungle whose foe is light.

In New York there has been for some time published a little paper called *The Physiologist*. As far as I can learn, its sole intention has been to tear away a little of the veil of mystery and ignorance that leaves the birth of children to an ignorant trust in a blind chance and a still blinder providence, and so filling the hovels of the poor with offspring that can only increase the sickness

and misery of the race. The United States postal authorities have just forbidden it the use of the mails. In this decision, they were inspired by the Church, which, like the wild beast of the desert and jungle, grows fat on darkness. In saying this, I do not question the right of the government to shut its mails against the designing villains who use them as a covert from which to spring forth like a destroying fiend upon the life of youth and beauty.

Freedom of thought and speech demands no quarter for corruption within or without the Church. We simply demand that our laws shall be inspired and enforced according to the light and justice of nature, instead of by the darkness and inhumanity of the Church. We hold aloft a higher standard of purity ever dreamed of by the Church. We refuse to consider motherhood a crime, or to believe that any God has commanded a man and woman who cannot get bread enough to satisfy their own hunger to divide that crust between a dozen more hungry mouths. We believe the stigma and mystery with which the Church has surrounded the element of sex in human nature to be the twin parents of most of the vice and disease springing out of it. No effort of this government to put down polygamy in Utah can be successful, while its President takes his oath of office by kissing the book that authorizes it with the sanction of a deity.

To us, sincerity and frankness constitute the highest charm of personal character. Secretiveness and hypocrisy are akin and belong to the brute side of our nature. We inherit them from the lioness, lurking in secret ambush, waiting in silence for her prey. The young man and young woman who have secrets they cannot confide to their parents, the husband or wife who has confidences apart from the other, the merchant who confesses his unbelief to a free-thinker, but smiles blandly upon the church-member and talks pious cant in order to secure his custom, the minister who thinks thoughts in his study that he dare not pro-

claim from his pulpit, are ruled in these things by the inarticulate lioness.

Let every one who is crouching in the darkness, stealing in any way from the light of day, remember the Sphinx and its riddle. Beauty, order, and intelligence do not thus shun the light. Beware, young woman, of any lover who dreads the light, who blushes for shame when other eyes witness his attentions. Beware, young man, of going to any place that needs to be hidden from your parents or from one still dearer. In each of us is this brute nature, that needs to be subdued by intelligence, beauty, and love. Live, then, as though the eyes of all men were resting upon you. Fear not the condemnation of God, but of thyself. Fear not any distant, theatrical, spectacular judgment-day, but rather reverence the present time each day as a doomsday. Consecrate life to sincerity and the pursuit of all that is true, good, and beautiful, and existence, with all its daily struggles, shall yet be as a beautiful bride. Heed not this lesson, and life shall be a thing of teeth and claws, rending and devouring with fierce pain.

Another lesson of the Sphinx is found in the fact that the head represents the masculine strength and courage beneath the softer outlines of woman. It is clothed at once with majesty and beauty. The truly noble life is reached only when we combine in it the softness and tenderness of woman and the strength and majesty of man. Man and woman are one in a nobler sense than many dream. All that is best in either is possible to both.

This is the secret of a true marriage,—that the woman strive to be strong and self-reliant, and the man to be gentle and affectionate, that each worship what is noble in the other, until the two streams of their lives mingle and flow onward together, a broad and majestic stream of blended strength and beauty.

Another lesson of the Sphinx is found in those dumbly speaking eyes of which I have already spoken. Behind them seems to sit the imprisoned goddess, pleading mutely but

eloquently with each passer-by for deliverance. So does each man's soul plead with him for full liberty from animalism.

Are not the eyes the real tell-tale windows of the soul? The man or woman who is ashamed of the company he or she keeps avoids letting you look through those windows. No deception can put a blind on these. The haggard cheeks may be painted, the wasted body hidden by the tailor's and dressmaker's art; but, if life has been degraded to base uses, the fine spiritual lustre of grace and beauty is blurred. Here it is blaze the fires of love and genius. It is as though in each true soul struggling in the world for the victory of right there is a great ideal of divine possibility that escapes all expression in words. The mind, as it were, sees it from afar. The gaze passes beyond the present into the boundless future. The clearer truth, the deeper joys, the richer love, the greater courage, the larger liberty, the surer justice, the brighter hope, and nobler communion with the wise and good are there; and they in some way reflect themselves back into the soul, so as to leave their eloquent shadow in the eyes.

Thus the Sphinx sits by the wayside along which we pass, propounding to each of us its riddle; for in all this that I have endeavored to express the Sphinx is but the type of every man's life. Thus, we all must confront the problem of life with its antagonisms and varying possibilities, and out of its enigma of contradictions and complications produce for ourselves the solution, whether it be good or bad. If we solve the problem wrong, it will slay us; but, if we are wise to discern its true meaning, the enigma shall vanish, and the triumph of victory shall strew our path with the flowers of truth and love.

Tell me what is the meaning of life? Do not I hear one answer, There are so many different theories about it I don't know which is right, so I will stick to the faith of my fathers, and let the priest or minister be my guide? Stay by that, if you please; but be first sure that it is right.

You will never know what it is to live until you have convictions that you know are right, and to which you can give at the consent of your reason all your heart's enthusiasm. The thousands who have no opinion of their own, who live second-hand, credulously on the creeds of their fathers, do not live. They are mere excrescences, *fungi*. They belong to some one else, as the branch belongs to the vine. They swell the sum of existence for Jesus, Luther, or Wesley, but do not live themselves. They have answered the riddle wrong, and it has slain them.

All our churches are peopled with such living corpses. Every creed is a cemetery. Say, what thinkest thou then is the meaning of thy life? Do not I hear some one answer again, I don't care about these things, whether they are true or false? I need food, clothing, and shelter. The world owes me a living, and by hook or by crook I'm going to have it.

But stay, that is the method of the beast in the jungle. Living thus, you will slay conscience, crush out the joy of love, bliss of humanity, and condemn yourself to the darkness of falsehood. You have other wants beyond those of food and raiment. There is another side to existence that demands that even hunger, yea, sometimes even life itself, shall be subject unto it. Beware! Life without order, truth, obedience to the everlasting laws of nature's truth and justice, will be worse than death.

Say, then, what is the solution of this profound riddle? Do I not hear one speak again, and say, What is life for but to be happy in? I will consecrate my life to joy and gladness. I will sing, dance, and sport with the good things of the world as the butterfly dances in the sunlight.

But stop again. Happiness is desirable. It is in one sense the only good. But there is a right and a wrong way to seek it. You are not a butterfly, and cannot live its way and be happy. There is no happiness for man or woman that is not based on self-respect. Your life has its law like that of

the butterfly, and you shall never quaff its delicious nectar of joy until you have found out its true laws, and obeyed them. True greatness of soul is more often a sublime sadness than a happiness. There is too much misery and want in the world to make life all sunshine to the truly noble heart. Where there is most light, there also are the deepest shadows. Tears and laughter flow forth together from the perfect life. Tragedy and comedy mingle in the heart of nature. We sometimes laugh at our griefs and weep over our joys. He who finds out what life truly is often weeps for those who miss of its meaning. Joy is but the blossom of existence. You must care for the root that strikes down into the darkness of the earth before its beauty and perfume come to reward your pains.

Say, then, yet again, What is the answer to the riddle? Does not some one say, To me life means the saving of my soul from hell? Wait, and let us look at that. Who told you that you had a soul to save? And, if you have, how do you know that it is your concern, anyway? Is it not a base fear that fills your eyes, instead of love of truth and right? Suppose there is such a heaven and hell as you claim. Then a soul that is deserving of going to hell, were it not for the pains of another soul, is too mean and small to be happy anywhere. It is the very dregs of selfishness and of moral cowardliness that lead you to respond to such a degrading estimate of life.

This idea, that a man's business here is to save his soul, is enough to damn any one who believes it. Think of one's gaze being forever turned inward upon himself in miserable self-dissection of his feelings, saying, as he turns them over and over, like a baker a piece of dough, Am I right, or am I wrong? Do I love God the most, or the world? Shall I be saved, or shall I be damned? Why, such a one is damned already. I know of no worse damnation than that these kind of people are in. They suffer the perpetual torment of fear. They are condemned to the outer darkness of

ignorance and stupidity. They are cursed with blindness to the fair beauty of the earth. They have never tasted of the high joy of forgetting self in the universal good. Their view of life is so narrow and limited that they cannot see an inch beyond themselves, but sit silent and sad, gazing like a Hindoo devotee forever at their own navel. Some of this kind of people actually think themselves saints, when they are so befouled with their own selfishness that the very lust of the most degraded who sin in good earnest and in the self-abandonment of despair would wash them comparatively clean.

In all these and many other different ways, thousands answer this riddle wrong. Why? Because they are not in earnest. They have simply idly guessed at it, like children at play with riddles.

In this fable of the Sphinx, there were many who answered wrong, but only one who answered right. Each one who lives must solve it for himself alone. There are no substitutions nor vicarious sacrifices in the innermost nature of things. There is no royal road to wisdom, either of mind or heart. Riches, crowns, applause, and honor, by the undiscerning crowd, are all in the lottery of chance. But not so the real jewels of life, the sincerity, love, and truth that unlock to their possessor all the treasures of life's worth and beauty.

How shall we gain this end? First, by being in earnest. Whoever confronts life with a bold and a stout heart, to make the best that can be made of it, is at once at the heart of the secret. All the failures are with those that are either cowardly or careless. The kingdom of life still suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. None but the brave, who dare to take the citadel by storm, triumph here. Without earnestness and courageous daring, life is a living death. With it, it is glorious and worth all things.

Robert G. Ingersoll solved this riddle when he said: "Give me the storm and tempest of thought and action rather than the dead calm of ignorance and faith. Ban-

ish me from Eden when you will, but first let me eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge." To the fearful and cowardly, life is an unending riddle and mystery. But to the brave heart, who stops not to look for the broad and easy path when the way of duty is steep and narrow, the path lies straight before him. The moment one fronts life with courage, he sees straight through all the miserable shams, tricks, and delusions with which silly men and women deceive themselves and others. He sees at once that he has nothing whatever to do with all these fine-spun theories, theologies, and creeds about the unknowable. And so, leaving them to the blind leaders of the blind, he says: "My life to me is a present duty. My faith is what I see is true. My worship is each day an honest day's work. What truth is in me, that will I obey. What right is before me, that will I do." In finding that he himself is a law unto himself, greater than all gods, churches, or creeds, he finds the truth that makes him free. As Matthew Arnold sings:—

"With joy the stars perform their shining,
And the sea its long mooned silver roll;
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul.
Bounded by themselves, and unregardful
In what state God's other works may be,
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
These attain the mighty life you see.
O air-born voice, long since severely clear,
A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear!
Resolve to be thyself, and know that he
Who finds himself loses his misery."

Then be to the best thou knowest ever true. So shalt thou find thy duty, solve the riddle, answer the Sphinx, and lose all thy misery. No more wondering which is true of all the conflicting theories of religion, no more dulness and sleepiness in the performance of life's duties and worship. Your prayers will be to love, to think, and to act.

Your religion will be your present conviction and opportunity, concerning which we have no doubt whatever. No more putting first as our great concern the means of existence. The eternal right and truth is for us before all things. No more misery for fear we shall not be happy. No more miserable anxious, inward self-dissection, trying to find out the condition of our souls, like a morbid dyspeptic forever talking about his stomach, but a healthy, vigorous activity of life, doing with our might whatever our hands find to do, little caring what becomes of us, so that we but get something done that shall

"Make undying music in the world,
Breathing as beauteous order that controls
With growing sway the growing life of man."

The salvation of my soul, even if I have one in the orthodox sense to be saved, is none of my business. If there is a God that can damn any one, I can better afford to be damned than to sue to him for mercy. I had rather be killed by a tiger than to be its slave, and worship it as the ideal of all pity, compassion, and love. But the life that now is, is my business, and shall be delivered from the dominion and cruelty of the beast. Men and women about us, subject to cold, hunger, neglect, injustice, sickness, and death, need all the thought and love we can give them.

So to live is peace and joy. When all the mummeries, tricks, and machine worship, now called religion, are swept away, along with all other refuges of lies, and men, looking earnestly into the solemn, dumbly eloquent, and majestically beautiful face of life, shall see that its meaning is to work in truth whatsoever they find to do, the Sphinx shall be no more for this.

"To be to the best thou knowest ever true is all the creed, religion, or God."

THE CHOIR INVISIBLE.

THE immortality to which I wish to direct your thought is not that of personal existence after death, but the life to come of noble word and deed, by which the gladness of the world shall be increased until the harsh discords and wrongs of the present shall be quenched in the blending harmonies of universal truth, liberty, and justice. I shall take as the basis of my remarks that wonderful poem of George Eliot's, called "The Choir Invisible." What I have to say is not intended to darken for one moment the cherished hopes of those who think that in another life they will realize the ideals earth has failed to fulfil, and clasp again the loved ones parted by death. This is especially true of my feelings toward those who cherish this hope in the free mind and liberal heart.

Immortality as presented by the Spiritualist is far different from the same doctrine advanced by the Christian, with the alternative to believe or be damned. Intelligent Spiritualists and Materialists affiliate, because they feel that the true problems of life, needing immediate solution, are of more practical importance than this one.

We stand shoulder to shoulder in loving comradeship, in the conviction that our present duty is to fight earnestly against the power that denies us all the right and joy of thinking for ourselves, insisting that it has been endowed with divine authority to maintain its creed as the finality of truth, and to hold all men and women accursed

who do not accept it. However much we may cherish separate ideas as spiritualists, materialists, atheists, and agnostics, in our capacity as liberals we do not fight for any theory of life or death so much as we do for the right of each man and woman to be respected for their worth of mind and heart, independent of any belief or disbelief they may hold. I make no doubt that this audience contains as great a variety of opinion as any that meets beneath the sun. Still, we are as one man in claiming to be as good, true, honest, and just as any body of saints who profess to be washed white in the blood of the lamb. When you consider the unanimity with which the Church ascribes to us every perfidy of character because of unbelief, I think you will all excuse me if, to meet this charge with flat denial, I include in my denial even belief in immortality. Not that I wish to deny immortality, but to assert positively that belief is by no means the cause of morality. To do this effectively, I wish to point out how the most radical unbelief is productive of a higher standard and more potent inspiration to righteousness than can be found in any belief. I have selected this poem as my text, because it is the epitome of the inner life of all earnest unbelievers.

The fact cannot be gainsaid, or in any way denied, that many of the best minds and hearts of the present generation have revolted from every form of theological belief. The leading spirits in the scientific

world, and in many a practical reform that has for its end the establishment of justice on the earth, no more believe in the theology of Christianity than they do in the mythology of Greece and Rome.

In every community there are such persons, whose characters are above reproach and beyond criticism. One pure-minded, tender-hearted man or woman, destitute of belief, is a sufficient refutation of every assumption of the Church. The Church begins to feel this; for, instead of denouncing such as of old, it begins to apologize to them, and ask permission to exist. The Church to-day is like those devils who made a bargain with Jesus to come out of the man they had possessed, if they might only go into the swine. You remember they made a great mistake, as the swine immediately got rid of them by drowning themselves and tormenters together in the sea.

The Church commits the same kind of blunder, when it leaves alone the great scientific and reform leaders of to-day, for the acknowledgment that it may yet be of some service to the common people. For it is not these exceptional minds, but the mass of the people, that will produce its final overthrow. History often repeats itself. A new redeemer is born into the world. His star has already appeared in the east. Many are anxiously seeking to find him in kings' palaces or among the reputed wise and learned of the earth. But his cradle is with the lowly. He will seek for his companions and friends among the common people. Unless your righteousness exceed that of the modern Pharisee of culture, who draws around him his scholarly cloak, and says to the multitude, Touch me not, for I am holier than thou, you shall by no means enter into this kingdom of man.

Nor is this redemption born of the superior moral insight of any one man. That some individuals will appear more conspicuous than others is true, but only as they voice the real instincts and yearnings of the people who are revolting from all allegiance to the skies, in order to give their devotion to

the earth. Earnest thinkers may gather the facts and laws of nature into a system of ethics that shall antagonize that of the Church; still the moral life of the future will flow forth from the heart of humanity, independent of any divining-rod of philosophy. Some very small minds will think that the world is to be saved by digging patiently around the dead roots of dead religions, in order to find out the philosophy of their production by the method of comparative theology, which, however interesting to a few, has no practical relation to the many.

Notwithstanding many a timid, debauched sentimentalist shrinks away from the spirit of iconoclasm in the name of morality, yet it is in this very spirit of rude, determined revolt against the falsity and injustice of the Church I find the promise and potency of increased moral life. From this rough and unsightly rock shall flow forth a stream that shall bring to the dry and dusty hearts of thousands a perennial source of moral life and blessing.

What is the meaning of this vast, seething, patient, yet ever-enlarging spirit of revolt in the hearts and minds of the people, that is beginning to attract the attention of the world in the devotion of the Nihilists, Land Leaguers, and the union and co-operation of the many societies of working-men all over the civilized world? Kings, priests, and aristocracies of blood, wealth, and culture, may pass these things by as unworthy of notice; but they are none the less pregnant with the moral and social destinies of the future.

Morality is not the cold judgment of the head, but the warm, impulsive movement of the heart. My opinion or your opinion is of little concern in comparison to the real forces that control the destinies of mankind. The success or failure of any particular person or movement cannot change in any important particular the final verdict. We are all but as bathers on the margin of this incoming sea of humanity. According to our skill, we may drown or receive new life

from its electric waves. But, whether we sink or swim, the great tide comes on freighted with untold and unimagined blessing. The instincts of men and women are better than any belief. The sweet loves and sympathies of the human heart, born of common want, pain, and injustice, are doing better for us than all the creeds. The highest moral teachings of the Church savor of selfishness. The immorality of belief is revealed in the prayers of believers.

However sincere the worshipper may be, however tender and affectionate the heart that is behind the petition, yet it of necessity savors of self-righteousness, pretending as it does a knowledge of the infinite denied to millions equally as good, asking for good from a being whom they indirectly acknowledge might otherwise withhold it or do evil, assuming to know better than infinite wisdom and to feel better than infinite love. For some time before I determined that I would never pray again, I felt every time I did so that I ought to apologize to good men and women for so offending their moral judgment. Thousands of men and women are ceasing to pray, not only because they no longer believe, but because they have become too good to do so.

A new and higher longing than ever voiced itself in prayer to any God fills their hearts toward humanity. The genius of Comte saw and felt that this was the rising truth, only he made the mistake of trying to put the new wine into old bottles by constructing forms of prayer to Humanity instead of to God.

But the nature of this new longing of the human heart finds vent in deeds rather than words. To pray truly, we must act. The supreme thing is to work while it is day, for the night cometh soon when no man can work. The darkness of the grave will soon close over us, but men and women with hearts to suffer and rejoice will live on. Though we die, the race lives, growing evermore grander, nobler, and happier, by every loving word or helping deed cast by us into the sum of existence. Because of this, our

hearts vibrate to the noble aspiration revealed in the first part of my text:—

"Oh, may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence; live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues.

"So to live is heaven,
To make undying music in the world,
Breathing as beauteous order that controls
With growing sway the growing life of man."

But the Church says: "These are good desires only awakened by Christian influences over which you have no control, which, while you refuse to believe, will ever remain unfulfilled. In spite of all this beautiful humanitarianism, you are yet full of all vileness and depravity, from which you can only be saved by faith." They seem to forget that their own standard of authority pronounces all its blessings upon just such instincts of mercy, and hunger and thirst for righteousness.

But, in the name of all that is true and just, I meet their assertion with flat denial, and challenge them to the proof. Yea, the charge they lay against us I return upon them, and condemn them by their own testimony. Are they not constantly saying of themselves, "Unclean"? Is not every religious meeting doleful with lamentations over backslidings and acknowledgments that, when they would do good, evil is present with them? What are all the grand liturgies but wearisome repetitions of "We beseech thee, good Lord, have mercy upon us, most miserable sinners"?

The foundation of the whole Christian system is that all men are sinners, and that there is none that doeth good,—no, not one; for every man, woman, and child is vile in the sight of the Lord. Well do many of us remember when we were in this diseased frame of mind, when each thought, word, and act was watched and tried by an unnatural standard that divided life between cowardly fear and poor anxious penitence; when constant inquiry into our own spirit-

ual condition conjured into existence every moral disease that the human heart is heir to, until, in our despair, we became blind to the very nature of purity.

I do not question for one moment the good desire of those who seek for moral health in faith and prayer. In every life there is a vision of possibility in any direction, that transcends the reality. The Church says, Only believe, and you shall be exalted at once to the very pinnacle of your desire. It offers wisdom without study, power without discipline, wealth without toil, and character without struggle. It grows fat upon the weaknesses and follies of mankind. While men and women remain ignorant of the immutable laws of nature, that demand for every good its adequate price, they will continue to clutch at these tempting illusions. The unfortunate mortal whose life having been given up to lust and passion, standing upon the scaffold, facing to his darkened mind the dreadful mystery of death and fear of hell, cannot help but clutch, like a drowning man at a straw, at the doctrine of the atonement. In doing this, he follows the same blind impulse that led him to commit the murder that brought him to this fate. The minister standing by his side assures him that he will soon be admitted into the society of God and all the blessed angels and saints above. But, if a pardon should arrive, he would be the last man to so much as invite him home to dinner or introduce him to his daughters, say nothing of keeping them company.

You have all heard of the Campbellite Church. Many, who never would have known of its existence, have learned of it lately, because that is the favored church to which President Garfield belongs. Having discovered that their church building at Washington is hardly grand enough for so high a dignity to worship in, they are just now begging all over the land for funds to build a new one with. The principal doctrine of this church is that baptism is a saving ordinance. If you will simply submit to be baptized, no matter how vile you hith-

erto may have been, you will come up out of the water a saint. If Senator Conkling would only remember this, he would probably cease to kick against the pricks.

A zealous preacher of this doctrine had among the candidates for baptism a man of a very belligerent disposition. He would take fire at the slightest offence, and seek to vindicate his honor by giving the offender a good pummelling with his fists. Just as he was about to plunge him into the water, he inquired of the minister if he was sure this would make him a better man. He was assured that such would be the result, because that was the word of the Lord. To which he replied he was glad to hear it, for he certainly wanted to be a better man, but his natural disposition was such that, if there was no change for the better, nothing could keep him from at once giving him a good thrashing. He was immediately advised to wait for a more proper frame of mind in which to receive so sacred a rite. Rough and belligerent as this man was, he was quite likely a better man at heart than the minister, whose fear, providing he wasn't a hypocrite, was stronger than his desire to save a soul from hell.

The claims of the Church at this point break down at every practical test. It makes the mistake of asserting that all immorality is owing to a depraved condition that can only be cured with its specific. The venders of quack nostrums, that claim that every disease that flesh is heir to is owing to an impure condition of the blood, learned their damnable trade of the Church. Every form of religious belief is the offspring of ignorance of nature. But as true medical science teaches that disease is owing to a violation of some law of nature, and so seeks to restore health by bringing into play the self-regenerative power of nature under the influence of pure food, water, and air, so we are discovering that moral health is equally dependent upon obedience to the laws of nature, and that to forget one's self in devotion to others is far more productive of a sound moral condition than any anxiety

about the salvation of our own soul. This is the true redemption. We need salvation, not from a hell down below, but from the hell of lust, animalism, and selfishness all about us.

In like manner, the power that can save us is not from above, but in all the claims of humanity around us. The stars, it is said, tell all their secrets to the flowers. If, instead of looking up, we can learn to look around, we shall find that the real wants of life are blossoming like the flowers at our feet; for

"So we inherit that sweet purity
For which we struggled, failed, and agonized
With widening retrospect, that bred despair.
Rebellious flesh that would not be subdued,
A vicious parent shaming still its child.
Poor, anxious penitence is quick dissolved,
Its discords, quenched by meeting harmonies,
Die in the large and charitable air."

Through this cleansing of our moral vision, we shall see that the worship of God is the conferring upon the shadow that which belongs to the reality.

Every god and goddess the world has worshipped has been an enlarged and glorified man or woman. Through the marriage of the finite with the infinite, we have deified and adored the principle of evil. As we learn to worship this ideal, not as enshrined upon the throne of omnipotence, but as it lies deep within our own hearts, fettered with every weakness of the flesh, our worship will become nobler because worthier.

It is only by the surrender of our manhood that we can believe in or worship any god. Humanity begins where religion ceases. Every motive it presents to us is destructive of our personal honor and self-respect. It is only by ceasing to believe that we dare to think for ourselves, or find satisfaction in the sunshine of the approval of our own hearts.

The greatest need of the world to-day is an increase of self-respect, a sense of personal honor that shall compel men to denounce as false the barbarous doctrines of theology that degrade our civilization. If we have nothing to do here in this life but to make a good bargain for another, I am

sure it is not worth living. But, if we can rejoice in our own thought, follow our own aspiring vision, be true to our own love and hope, then under the greatest calamity there will be a sense of worth, an indwelling sense of honor and nobility of life that shall bear us up against every misfortune that may befall us. If our own company is worth keeping, we shall find that the integrity of our own heart lifts us above all possibility of fear. Thinking our own thought, the joy of liberty shall fill our hearts. Rejecting all creeds and all names and definitions of the eternal mystery of the universe, life will be enriched with new and grander meanings.

This same self-respect is, in fact, the foundation source of moral life. A man who does not respect himself is the blight and bane of society; while one who does is a centre of health and blessing. Only by living a successful life ourselves can we help others to succeed. The star that moves majestically in its own orbit is one of the connecting links of order in the whole universe, while that which dashes wildly across the orbit of another becomes a disturbing element, a note of discord in the music of the spheres. Though in the grand laboratory of nature it gives up all its substance to other worlds, an individual centre of light and power has been blotted out.

So the man who maintains his own self-respect moves serenely in the appointed sphere of his own thought, hope, and love, is a note in the eternal music that makes up the gladness of the world, a point of light and beauty, a connecting link in the grand and beautiful order and majesty of true social and moral life. But let him lose that self-poise, follow blindly some powerful organization outside of the sphere of his own life, and he becomes a note of discord in the music of life, a destructive and disturbing element in the order of society. He may, at his death, leave all his money to the Church or to build an orphan asylum; but if he has been, for purposes of gain in business or social position, the devotee of a creed or a

system contradicted by his own thought and love, there is nothing added to the aggregate of human good, while there has been blotted out of existence a star of light, a power of truth and order that would have been forever a part of the world's brightness and beauty. From this intelligent worship of self is eliminated every element of selfishness.

We do not by any means leave self out of the reckoning. We crave for happiness as innocently and naturally as the flowers turn hungering toward the sun. We are no longer at war with ourselves in the interest of some outside power. Our supreme obligation is to think our best, love our best, do our best, and be our best. Every passion and faculty of mind and heart contributes to the rich music of life.

Without effort or struggle, the sweetest joys we know and feel come to us, when, through our thought and love, the joy of some other heart runs over into our own. In thinking of the better days to come, we forget our grief. Even our failures to realize our highest vision nourish our hopes for the future of our race.

What though the darkness of the grave must soon close over us, when we have loved and been loved, planted in the minds and hearts of our children the ideals laboriously built up out of the mingling joys and sorrows of life, experienced the pleasure of boldest, freest thought, enjoyed communion with kindred hearts, seen the grand works of art, tasted all the pleasures of the senses unmixed with the poison of self-reproach,

"And all our rarer, better, truer self,
That sobbed religiously in yearning song,
That watched to ease the burden of the world,
Laboriously tracing what must be,
And what may yet be better, saw within
A worthier image for the sanctuary,
And shaped it forth before the multitude
Divinely human; raising worship so
To higher reverence, more mixed with love,
That better self shall live till human time
Shall fold its eyelids, and the human sky
Be gathered like a scroll within the tomb,
Unread forever."

In the study of this subject, we must remember that even to the rational mind

some of the highest truths of life are better felt than told. The truths of life and nature are not only to be found in the laws and facts around us, but also in our finest feelings and most inexpressible longings.

Who can describe music, love, or the intoxication of these first days of a new spring time? Most of the best things in life are thus unexplainable. The liberalism that forces every sentiment and feeling into the strait-jacket of logic can never find a welcome in the human heart.

One objection I have to theology is that it takes away the wonderland of the mind, anchors us to a wharf instead of leaving us free to sail forth upon the shoreless sea to daily discover some fresh island of beauty and delight. This is the curse of all dogmatism, whether it be positive or negative.

So far, in this lecture, I may have seemed to some of you to have leaned a little hard on the side of negation. Still, I will repeat again that I do not wish to be understood as denying the possibility of another life. What I have wished to impress upon you is that the morality which to me is synonymous with human happiness is independent of both belief and disbelief in a future existence. It is neither of these that should gauge your respect and admiration for man or woman. It is neither belief nor disbelief in God or immortality that makes you a loyal husband, a loving wife, tender parent, or faithful friend. It matters little to him who has truly lived and thought, loved and been loved, whether death is an endless sleep or a new birth. If the hope to live again in some sweet Elysian fields is ever realized, our joy will be the richer by every moment we have forgotten it in our desire to make this world a little more of a paradise.

Let us daily toil and strive to make some one else happy, to plant a few flowers in some waste corner of the earth, and then, though we die, the race lives on, growing grander, nobler, happier every day. If death be for us a dreamless sleep, hearts of dust do not break. Welcome to every troubled

soul must be the placid waves that lave the shadowy shore of the continent of death. The eyes that are shut forever are closed to tears of sorrow as well as to the light of life. To reappear again in the grass or the flowers, or even to be a part of the dust that makes up the highway along which living feet run on errands of mercy and justice, is far better than to wail in hell or to sit with folded hands in heaven. I had rather a million times be annihilated, and know that in all the illimitable fields of space death, eternal death, should reign triumphant, than that one mind and heart that can suffer as I can should endure eternal pain.

All this may seem to some of you the very sublimation of sentiment, for this whole subject of immortality belongs to the poetry rather than the prose of life. To some, it may seem a waste of time to turn aside from the sterner duties that demand our thought to cull these flowers of sentiment. I almost feel so myself. Nothing is to me so eloquently full of meaning for us to-day as the dying utterance of Henry Thoreau, who, when asked by a friend how it looked to him on the other side, quietly and simply replied, "One world at a time."

Yea, is not this one more than we can well attend to? Here are love, reason, thought, imagination, beauty, truth, and duty. The hours fly by on golden wing.

Great causes invite us. Noble fellow-workers hold out their hands to greet us. Opportunities far better than providences are new every morning and fresh every evening. The air is freighted with good words and thoughts. The darkness is turning into light. Fear is conquered by love. Hope grows stronger in the human breast. Death is swallowed up in the victory of life. For us there are no to-morrows nor yesterdays. Already we have experienced the eternal.

Though, as we have risen on the trembling wings of thought and looked down the dim vista beyond the grave, questioning whither, the answer comes back to us, We know not, and, out of all the unquestioning beliefs of generation upon generation, we are unable to put our finger upon any satisfying proof of personal immortality, still even here we find the larger hope and inspiration transcending all former ones, as the full-orbed sun of day transcends and eclipses the feeble glimmer of the morning star; for

"This is life to come,
Which martyred men have made more glorious
For us who strive to follow. May I reach
That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty,
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible,
Whose music is the gladness of the world."

LESSONS FOR TO-DAY, FROM WALT WHITMAN.

"I strike up for a new world.

Creeds and schools in abeyance,
Retiring back awhile, sufficed at what they are, but
never forgotten,
With accumulations, now coming forward in front.
Arrived again, I harbor, for good or bad, I permit to
speak,
Nature, without check, with original energy."

WHEN a man announces his mission to the world in such words as these, he deserves audience of every one who has thrilled to the hope that life is yet full of untried possibilities. If we have any right to be here to-day, thankful that we have been delivered from all allegiance to the Church that seeks entire guidance from a book that has been closed to every new fact and hope for the last eighteen hundred years, it is because we have drunk deep draughts from this same fountain of life. The lessons I shall try to set for your study from *Leaves of Grass* are for to-day, because Walt Whitman is preëminently the poet of to-day. It might seem nearer the truth to speak of him as the poet of the future. But he has come to his own, and they have received him not. The world still builds the sepulchres of the prophets whom their fathers stoned. No poet of our time has been so coldly received, and yet there is no heart that beats so full and respondent to the life of the living present as that of Walt Whitman. Even in the letter as well as the spirit of his poems, we find an answer to the highest aspirations and deepest yearnings of our hearts. The critics, as they always do, refuse to acknowledge

him a poet, because he wrote by no rule of rhyme or verse made legal by hoary antiquity. He dared to write in his own way. Instead of asking what the books taught, he sought to find out what the great teacher, Nature, had to say. He read his lines beneath the stars, in the presence of the mountains misty-topped, and to the far-sounding immeasurable laughter of the sea. I think he must have learned his style principally from the sea. For though in his verses there is all the irregularity of the waves, yet through their greatest turbulence and gentlest whisper runs a sweet and solemn strain of music that stirs the heart to its innermost depths. Are we not weary of the forms, creeds, and ceremonies imposed upon us by the past? Does not the true heart of to-day yearn to express itself in its own way? Millions still bear the manacles of yesterday, but beneath the most petrified conservatism methinks I hear a smothered cry for liberty. Where is there any enthusiasm for ancient custom? Walk along the streets, and observe the people going to their various churches. Is there any sign that their hearts outstrip their feet? Do they look like people filled with the expectancy of glad tidings? When did you see a minister enter a pulpit or hear him proclaim his doctrine as though he had the remotest idea that he actually had a message of hope to deliver to mankind?

Nearly all the devotees of the Church are bound by a law that does not satisfy their

desire. They present their creeds and ceremonies to a weary world as a salvation from hell, when what they proclaim is hell itself. Hell is bondage, heaven is liberty. Hell means to be held down, heaven to be heaved up. To illustrate: A circus has come to town. Your wife has told your little girl she can go. See her fly along the streets. She is made of down. You would think she had wings. Her feet hardly seem to touch the ground. Her tendency is upwards. The sky attracts her. She is heaved up,—in other words, she is in heaven. You meet her, and, on learning where she is going, command her to go home and forbid her going to the circus. Where now is her lightness? See her as she turns toward home. Her head hangs down, a weary load to carry. She can hardly lift her feet off the ground. She is held down,—in other words, she is in hell. Behold the people going to church or the minister entering the pulpit. Observe the bowed heads and the feet that cling to the ground as though loaded with irons. They are in hell. They are slaves to forms and ceremonies that bind them to the dead past, while their hearts are craving liberty.

This is more or less true of our politics, education, art, and literature. You take but little interest in voting, because you feel that the government is little more than a grab-bag for thieves. Some of you had this morning an indignation meeting against one act of one official. Oh that there was nothing but this to be indignant over! But one swallow doesn't make a summer, nor one piece of injustice a tyranny. In this decision, two or three persons have been hindered in their endeavor to gain an honest living by dealing honestly and truthfully with the world. But is not every honest man and woman in every State of the Union defrauded and insulted every minute by the spoils system of office, which is revealing just now, in the struggle going on between Garfield and Conkling, all its naked, hideous deformity? Let us hold an indignation meeting every day, until justice and truth

are established in the place of this infamy. We call this a democracy; but it is a mockery and a delusion while we endow one man or a body of men with a power greater than that of any king or queen, and then dig between them and all responsibility to the people a gulf of four or six years.

The Church of to-day is fitly matched by the Presidency and Congress at Washington. In the whole history of the world there never was such a mass of insincerity and hypocrisy as the present Christian Church, such a vast gloomy prison-house of hell labelled the kingdom of heaven. So there has never been such an inconsistency between the ideal of Justice and Liberty in the hearts of the people and its expression in the government that exists only by their will. Neither the one nor the other can go on thus much longer.

Is there not the same divorcement between most of our literature and the heart of to-day? Our books stand upon their shelves dust-covered, while we go to the woods or the seaside, or content ourselves with the daily newspaper, because it does reflect to us some of the real life of to-day. We watch with expectant hearts the bulletins of new books, eager for something that will fill the larger hope and love within our breasts, but mostly in vain. We have endless reviews, histories, and literary hash, made from the stale remains of yesterday's feast, plenty of commentaries and notes that only darken and extinguish the feeble glimmer still left of other days, but seldom any new light shining upon the new facts of to-day. Most of the poets simply clothe in new garb the exploded beliefs of yesterday. The sentiments with which they try to feed us are as dry and dusty as the forest leaves of last year. Milton and Dante with all their gorgeous word-paintings awaken no emotion within. To all their pomp and ceremony, we have to say, "Words, words, words!"

Even the great, omnipresent Shakspeare sings of a dead world, presenting to us men and women so far removed from us in circumstance that they are for us but mere

drift-wood burdening and obstructing the flow of his mighty genius. So that we feel like saying with Walt Whitman to every would-be writer for to-day :—

“What is this you bring my America?
Is it uniform with my country?
Is it not something that has been better told or done before?
Have you not imported this, or the spirit of it, in some ship?
Is it a mere tale? a rhyme? a prettiness?
Has it never dangled at the heels of the poets, politicians, literats of enemies' lands?
Does it not assume that what is notoriously gone is still here?
Does it answer universal needs? Will it improve manners?
Can your performance face the open fields and the seaside?
Will it absorb into me as I absorb food, air,
Nobility, meanness,—to appear again in my strength, gait, face?
Have real employments contributed to it? Original makers, not amanuenses?
Does it meet modern discoveries, calibres, facts, face to face?
Does it respect me? democracy? the soul? to-day?”

He who asks these startling and searching questions is the poet of to-day, because he sings the vast, varied, and changeful life of the present. All that is in art or love or friendship or joy or work find reflection in the mirror he holds up to nature. Shakspeare has been compared to an ocean whose waves kiss all the shores of thought, and over whose surface pass all the storms of human passion.

So might we speak of Whitman. Shakspeare was the Pacific, while Whitman is the Atlantic. There is a vastness and shimmer of romance on the Pacific that is not on the Atlantic. Over the pages of Shakspeare sweep the great fleets, argosies, and armadas of kings, queens, and emperors; while over those of Whitman go the multiplied craft and steamers, freighted with emigrants and merchandise of to-day. Instead of imagining things, they simply reveal them. I believe the time is coming when America will weave for herself as fair a garland of glory out of these *Leaves of Grass* as England has for herself out of the dramas of Shakspeare. Though these *Leaves* are of and for to-day, yet they will have to wait for to-morrow for their complete justification. I do

not understand them. I swear to you that I cannot explain them any more than I can explain the grass, sun, or sky. I know that I am madly in love with them, that with their author

“I loaf and invite my soul,
I lean and loaf at my ease, observing
A spear of summer grass.”

I never weary of gazing into the sky, or of the beauty and perfume of flowers. So I love these *Leaves* of Walt Whitman, these thought-provoking, mysterious, symbolic, vague, and often tantalizing words. Sometimes, I am provoked that his meaning is so deep, so far away from the common use of the words. But truth is ever at the bottom of a well. Nature often speaks in riddles. Sometimes, we have to make many wild guesses at her lesson before we make it out. The truth we do find is but a cupful taken from a deep but abundant well. Who can tell all the wonder and truth of this beautiful springtime? How it subdues us with its soft mists on the distant hills, the intoxicating perfume of the atmosphere, the amorous kisses thereof, the eagerness with which we receive it, as if we were in love together, the unspeakable rich coloring of the leaves of grass, so that we are mad to be in contact with it, to take it in our hands, or to recline upon it! But, because it is all a wonder and a miracle, are there no lessons to be learned from it? How eloquently these days discourse to us of hope, of golden opportunity, and of the value of beauty! Does not every flower preach to us, Make beautiful your own life with purity and truth, transmute the strength of the animal into the tenderness of love and beauty of friendship, even as I have been produced from the dust beneath your feet? Does not each blade of grass and budding leaf of the forest whisper to us of boundless opportunity? Does not every sower going forth to sow, in the assurance that idleness to-day means an empty granary to-morrow, proclaim to us that each hour has its own duty, and that the joy of each to-morrow is enfolded in the work of to-day? So, though

I make no profession of understanding these *Leaves of Grass*, and have never been foolish enough to think that the heart of the poet is to be understood with ease, I venture to bring you a few lessons conned from a loving study of these words.

First, our author would fain have us feel the unspeakable worth of to-day. Not that he scorns the past, for that, too, in its own way and time, was as wonderful as to-day. But to him the world is still young. That from which all has been produced still remains. All religions, Bibles, governments, philosophies, and theologies are but to us as the grass of last year. They have fed the world. But to spread the board of humanity with them to-day is like keeping the animal to dry and dusty hay, mouldy with age, that is yearning for the rich, sweet herbage of spring. The life and faith of to-day, that has blossomed out of all the past, is that each human life is intertwined with every other human life. In the growing sympathies of the individual with the joys and sorrows of humanity is the real food of to-day. All the first part of *Leaves of Grass* is given over to the multiplied expression of this thought:—

"I am of old and young, of the foolish as much as the wise,
Regardless of others, ever regardful of others,
Maternal as well as paternal, a child as well as a man,
Stuffed with the stuff that is coarse and stuffed with the stuff that is fine.

.
A learner with the simplest, a teacher of the thought-fullest,
A novice beginning, yet experient of myriads of seasons,
Of every hue, trade, rank, caste, and religion,
Not merely of the New World, but of Africa, Europe, Asia,—a wandering savage,
A farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman, sailor, lover, Quaker,
A prisoner, fancy-man, rowdy, lawyer, physician, priest.
I resist anything better than my own diversity,
And breathe the air and leave plenty after me,
And am not stuck-up, and am in my place.
This is the grass that grows wherever the land is and the water is;
This is the common air that bathes the globe.

Is not this the true lesson set us by to-day?
Are not the hearts of all men being knit together in the widening sympathies of the common fellowship of want and injustice?
Are not aristocracies shrivelling into ashes

before the warm glow of the heart of the people? The conviction that is slowly coming into power, ever growing stronger with the widening sympathies of our hearts, is that the poor fellow down there in the deep coal-mines would enjoy a sight of the blue sky as well as any Czar, King, or President; that the poor seamstress up there in the garret might perhaps better appreciate the opera than the wife of the millionaire, whose heart, through the worship of the golden calf, has become as echoless to music as a flint; that, while a Czar has the power to kill any one of eighty-five millions of people, it may possibly be the duty of one out of that eighty-five millions to kill him; that the seven millions of voters who create all the untold wealth of this country have as good a right to enjoy it as the three millions who control and spend it. Well does he say,—

"These are the thoughts of all men in all ages and lands, they are not original with me.
If they are not yours as much as mine, they are nothing or next to nothing.
If they are not the riddle and the untying of the riddle, they are nothing.
If they are not just as close as they are distant, they are nothing."

This is the gospel for to-day. We know nothing of any God. If he is, we can neither imagine nor know him. But we can see and know men and women. Our hearts are made to love them. We can share their joys as well as sorrows. We can hate or love, grow indignant or tender with all. How full for us of unrealized possibilities are the words love, friendship, brotherhood, and humanity! How beautiful is life when devoted to the happiness of others! How noble is the worship of humanity! What is there in the whole range of human thought worthy to be considered equal to the happiness of one human heart? While this is the lesson that is being set us in a thousand ways to-day, it will only be fully learned to-morrow. If men and women would but heed the words of this real live prophet, they might escape much pain and grief. Oh that they would forsake the refuges of lies with which they defend wrong and error, and rev-

erently inquire of the human heart and of the real life of to-day what is true and just.

Think of the millions that still listen to the preachers who drone into their ears the threadbare arguments that are supposed to prove the infallibility of the Bible and the divinity of the Christian religion, as if truth was anything that could hang for two thousand years on a balance of probabilities. The real, essential right and truth is that of which you cannot by any possibility entertain a doubt. Does anyone doubt my right and yours each to be happy in our own way, providing we do not infringe upon the same right of some one else? If the principles I proclaim from this platform are not the thoughts and feelings of all men at all times and places, then receive them not. I do not mean their professed thoughts and feelings, but those real ones that are left when all shams and falsehoods are torn away and the real truth of nature makes itself felt upon the naked conscience.

With Walt Whitman, I ask you to try this gospel I preach, beneath the stars, in the open fields, and by the seaside. Can you stand beneath the stars, and believe that this infinite universe was ever spun on the loom of time out of the fabric of nothing? Can you go into the fields these spring days and gather the first violets, and still believe in hell? Can you gaze upon the unspeakable beauty of the mountains bathed in purple light, or listen to the music of the sea, and then go back to church and sing,—

"I am washed in the blood of the Lamb,"

or,

"Hark, from the tombs a doleful sound?"

When I preach what will be mocked by the flowers your love for the beautiful puts upon this desk, tell me to hush. If, at the close, you do not feel nearer to each other, cannot take each other by the hand in the name of your common human brotherhood, then I speak in vain.

This brings me right to the next lesson I would present,—our true relation to nature. This kinship stands revealed more in the work of the poet than in that of the scientist. I

would not undervalue the work of the latter. In the classifying of bugs and butterflies, they have contributed to the better understanding of life and duty. From their painstaking and self-denying labors in all departments of physical life have come practical results impossible of estimation. But there is that in nature that escapes science as well as theology. Into this indefinite, unmapped territory come the poet and artist. In the commonest blade of grass is a meaning as yet unwritten in any system of doctrine or text-book of positive science. No square or compass of the system-mongers shall ever destroy this wonderland of the soul.

"A child said, *What is the grass?* fetching it to me with full hands.

How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he."

Hitherto, dogmatism has starved the heart. Out of its vain attempt to explain the unexplainable and map the infinite have sprung many of the worst forms of injustice and tyranny that afflict humanity. That this domain of life be taken from the dogmatist and given over to the poet and artist is most important. The relation of the pure realm of sentiment to what is practical and humanitarian can only be vaguely hinted at. It often involves a contradiction.

But consistency is not always a jewel. There are truths that can only be revealed in apparent contradictions. We are mortal and yet immortal. The body is all and the soul is all. Each is not for his own sake, while all are for the sake of each. I love this book, though it be full of riddles and contradictions, because in every line breathes the command, Let us be done with dogmatism. The Church demands that we surrender reason in the name of the heart. Walt Whitman demands that the Church surrender in the name of both head and heart.

By opening *Leaves of Grass* at random and taking detached lines literally, you might almost consider the author a Churchman. But, when you unfold his allegory and get at the heart of his meaning, you shall find that

to him remains no theology. That in some lines he cherishes a faith in the perfection of the universe and the persistence of identity is true. But in others this escapes him, for in the varied life of feeling he becomes one with both believer and unbeliever.

This is the wide charity and sympathy of every truly free soul. We condemn no sincere belief. We simply seek to destroy every system that narrows the mind and impoverishes the heart. Every Church and creed stands for but a part of the infinite. We would have no barriers. We would have each heart free to sympathize with every other heart. Nature presents both unity and diversity. Only as one mind is just as free as every other mind will the hearts of all throb respondent. Only when your easy explanation given by Bible, creed, or priest, slips through your fingers will you grasp the real worth and beauty of life. Walt Whitman cannot come to his own to-day, because the Church has pre-empted the ground he and many others could far better occupy. Still he can afford to wait, for, as he himself says,—

“There will shortly be no more priests,—I say their work is done.”

That which shall remain when priests are no more shall be larger than all systems of religion, because it is the soil out of which they sprung, into which they are returning, like the leaves of last year, to enrich new growths. When all guesses about the infinite are seen to be false, the infinite remains, provoking the mind of man to larger thought and the heart of man to warmer love. When the heavens are unmapped and unfenced, the shadow of their liberty shall fall upon the earth; and men, responsive to their vastness and grandeur, shall rise to nobler and more beautiful lives.

I do not say that in this soil shall grow no new faith. It may be that a larger and nobler faith is yet to be born than ever yet thrilled the heart of man. And now I must pass by the lessons of democracy, of personality, and comradeship set us in these *Leaves*, and come to the one he gives us in the at-

tempt to sing the glory and meaning of love in those relations of man and woman through whose offspring the future is to be regenerated.

That he has not here sometimes overstepped the modesty of nature I do not say. It may be that he has; for perfection in all things is impossible to man. Still, however faulty the deed, one can see that the purpose underlying these songs is sound and sweet at the core.

But while passion and lust may be the soil from which spring the fair flowers of modesty and virtue, as the soil and manure in your garden yield most beautiful flowers, we would nevertheless keep the soil and manure from too close contact with our bodies. Still there can be no strong love without passion; while without love there would be no poem, picture, statue, romance, nor music. Though the Church has labelled all passion sinful, made motherhood a crime, and love too unholy a thing to come to the heart of a priest, yet from this despised soil have blossomed all the flowers of virtue and beauty.

No man has been more misunderstood in his purpose than Walt Whitman in his frank utterances on this subject. The corruption of the Church has been revealed in the false meanings they have read into his words. So long walking in its darkness, men were first blinded by the clear shining light of a perfectly truthful soul. He reverently attempts to lift the body, and cleanse it from the filth heaped upon it in the name of the soul. I know of no words in any book to which we have such need to give good heed as these:—

“I believe in the flesh and the appetites.
Seeing, hearing, feeling, are miracles, and each part and tag of me is a miracle.
Divine am I inside and out, and I make holy whatever I touch or am touched from.
The scent of these arm-pits, aroma finer than prayer;
This head, more than churches, Bibles, and all the creeds.
If anything is sacred, the human body is sacred.
And the glory and sweet of a man is the token of manhood untainted.
And in man or woman a clean, strong, firm-fibred body is beautiful as the most beautiful face.”

Have you seen the fool that corrupted his own live body? or the fool that corrupted her own live body? For they do not conceal themselves, and cannot conceal themselves.

O my body! I dare not desert the likes of you in other men and women, nor the likes of the parts of you.

I believe the likes of you are to stand or fall with the likes of the soul,
And that they are the soul."

It is time to think on these things. The relations of man and woman, so long covered with infamy, ought to be the most sacred. Only along this path of self-knowledge and obedience to these foundation laws of life shall we reach the final redemption. It is high time parents should feel that their supreme duty to their children is to teach them to understand their bodies, and to adore them more than any temple of God or Christ. The saddest sights that meet my eye every time I walk the streets are the young men who have emasculated themselves and the young women who have murdered their sex and beauty on the altars of religion, lust, or fashion, through physiological ignorance. It is time that we ceased through the ignorance that is fostered and protected by the Church to replenish the earth principally from the inferior classes.

Already, in some far-off way, the hearts of men and women begin to respond to this demand. On the 26th of this month, in this city a body of representative men and women will meet to consider how the law of heredity can be used for the improvement of humanity as well as the bettering of our horses and stock. At the head of the paper that has been suppressed, for which you expressed your indignation this morning, stand these words: "*Holier than any temple of wood or stone, consecrated by diviner rites, and for diviner purposes, is the Human Body.*" The paper has in its own way steadily tried to give to the people the information for which Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant bravely

went to prison. Though it has sometimes touched holy things with unholy hands, yet I have honored it for its noble purpose, which thus far, in my judgment, has been far ahead of its deed. If this subject cannot be advocated unmixed with the flavor of the stables and the coarseness of the brothel, we had better keep silent. The flowers of modesty grow in the soil of passion. Nothing need be said to offend the finest sentiment. The rough feet of reformers must no more be allowed to trample on the pure modesty of nature than those of street loafers.

The *Physiologist* may have been but as a John the Baptist, coarsely clad and fed in the wilderness, but prophesying the advent of the true Messiah. Though it has at times confounded prudishness with true and beautiful modesty, and so offended the finest reverences of our hearts, yet its very failure shall contribute to the future triumph of this persecuted truth. Honoring the motive, and for its sake forgiving the faultiness of the execution, those whose skill shall be equal to their will shall come to the rescue. The silly trivialities and insane personalities dragged into this cause will be weeded out, and the truth and sacredness of the body shall yet usurp the false worship of the soul. I unite with you all in demanding that the laws shall be impartial, that no one truth shall be shown a preference over another, that no single person shall be better defended than another, that the poor man shall be equal with the rich and the unbeliever with the believer. Against every act of injustice, let us appeal to the heart of the people, from which shall come a bloodless revolution, that shall fulfil the Declaration of Independence by securing to each man, woman, and child beneath the stars and stripes, his equal right to life, liberty, and happiness.

TRUE DEMOCRACY.

IN this lecture, I intend to continue my study of *Leaves of Grass*. Walt Whitman is pre-eminently the poet of *to-day*, because he chants the glory of the future that is to blossom out of the heart of *the people*.

In this, he rises superior to every other modern writer. Carlyle and Emerson may be considered in some things his peers, but their faith in the future is based more on aristocracy than democracy. *Leaves of Grass* is thoroughly democratic. This is the meaning of the name. The results he announces are like the grass that grows by every roadside, in all the forests, by every stream, on all the prairies, in all places and lands. No fitter emblem could be found for the free, large, rich, abundant life of the people he predicts. Do you ask me what I mean by *true democracy*? I answer, the reign of the people. It means a social condition that shall be the realization of the instincts of humanity, when freed from the blight and bane of class privileges. Is society so constituted? The defenders of the trembling monarchies of Europe attempt to intimidate the friends of this principle there, by pointing to the corruption of our politics as the sign of the failure of democratic institutions. But the truth is 'they have never had even among us a chance to fail. There are two forms of government, the monarchical and the democratic. The first is not of necessity an autocracy. It may be an aristocracy. Still, if the interests of one class are the controlling power, it is to all intents and purposes a

monarchy, and is far nearer of kin to Russian autocracy than to true democracy. I would ask you from *Leaves of Grass* to

"Recall ages,—one age is but a part, ages are but a part;
Recall the angers, bickerings, delusions, superstitions of
the idea of caste,
Recall the bloody cruelties and crimes."

Think of Russia, with its eighty-five millions of slaves, of whom no loving, tender heart can cherish a sentiment of liberty without seeing the mines of Siberia yawn to receive them in their cruel embrace of death. Think of Germany, with its military despotism and its jealous suppression of all true freedom of thought and speech. Think of England and its treatment of Ireland; while at home there are a thousand men and women on their knees before every lord and duke, begging piteously for the crust of bread that keeps them alive. Think of all the squalor, filth, vice, crime, ignorance, insanity, barbarity that exist wherever this principle of caste, of the power of one or a class of men over all others, reigns. Is it necessary for this kind of thing to go on? Must the English Queen and the Russian Czar be repeated in our President, whose vast power is a constant menace to the peace and prosperity of the people? Must the English lords and dukes be duplicated in our capitalists? Must pauperism and ignorance forever crowd our poor-houses, prisons, and insane asylums? Is there to be no end to these things? For ages, millions with tear-dimmed eyes have despaired of finding rest

or peace on earth, and so have become the slaves of priests for the promise of a paradise hereafter. Are truth and justice never to triumph over superstition and tyranny? Shall we give up in despair, and organize a society to bring about universal suicide? Such is indeed the advice to us who have lost our faith in the promises of religion by many would-be prophets of to-day. But is it true that there shines no star of hope in our sky, or that our hearts can find no soil into which to strike the root of faith in the future of humanity? Nay, our hope shines brighter while our faith finds firm support in the soil of humanity.

"What do you suppose creation is?

What do you suppose will satisfy the soul except to walk free and own no superior?"

Is it not enough to intoxicate us with enthusiasm to see about us the multiplied signs that this day of perfect liberty draws near?

But perhaps some of you say, What right have you to believe in a better condition of society than that which we have already? Are not our present institutions the product of all the wisdom and devotion of ages? No doubt. But there could be no wisdom or devotion at any time without improvement. The present honors most the past by seeking to improve what it gave us. The vision of the most radical democrat is the same that inspired the Magna Charta and Declaration of Independence. The extreme protest we make against the Church existed potentially in the Protestantism of Luther. When he threw his inkstand at the devil of his fears, he started into existence a train of thought and action that is driving this hideous nightmare of superstition from the mind of man. When he defied the viceroy of God, he was unconsciously preparing the way for those who would defy God himself.

Democracy in politics and religion is as old as the first impulse of humanity. The first tear of sympathy that ever dimmed the human eye prophesied it. The first prayer for mercy of the skies and every one offered since are being fulfilled to-day in the convic-

tion that all our worship belongs to humanity, and that the only prayers that avail are deeds. Democracy is the great ocean into which all rivers run, the thought that includes every thought, and the soul that is over, through, and in all things. It means that, if there are any that are wise, they are to use their wisdom for the good of all. It means that, if there are any strong, it is their duty to defend the weak. It means that, if there are any who can see what is beautiful or create it out of themselves, they are to consecrate that power to the happiness of mankind. It means that, if there are swift-winged angels of light who can see into the future or work miracles of deliverance from evil, it is their bounden duty to do it, not ours to grope painfully and wearily through the darkness after them. It means that, if there is any God, it is his highest duty to love and serve us, instead of its being ours to love and serve him on trust. The mountains of the earth receive the rains and hold the snows, that they may pour them down into the parched valleys in the summer. The mother is wise and strong to care for her child, not the child the mother. The Church puts the babe in the place of the wise and strong parent. Our present form of government is conducted as if the people existed for it. But hear what *Leaves of Grass* says on this:—

"We consider bibles and religions divine. I do not say they are not divine:

I say they have all grown out of you, and may grow out of you still.

It is not they who give the life: it is you who give the life.

Leaves are not more shed from the trees, or trees from the earth, than they are shed out of you.

The sum of all known reverence I add up in you, whoever you are.

The President is there in the White House for you: it is not you who are here for him.

The secretaries act in their bureaus for you, not you here for them.

The Congress convenes every twelfth month for you.

Laws, courts, the forming of states, the charters of cities, the going and coming of commerce and mails, are all for you."

The idea of monarchy is that the people belong to the rulers. The principle of democracy is that the rulers are simply the

employés of the people. Now, to many, this seems subversive of one of the most important facts in nature. Thomas Carlyle never prophesied anything but evil of democracy. Though he pronounced all the kings, lords, and dukes of Europe mere shams, yet he saw no bow of promise in the rising spirit of the people.

The only hope for humanity to him was that the people should discover it to be their highest right and privilege to be ruled over absolutely by some wise hero or king-man. No man was ever more impatient with every form of falsity, hollow pretence, and heartless formality. Still, over all he wrote rests this want of faith in the people. In part, he was right. We need to have at the head of our public affairs those who are wise and strong.

And is not this the way to secure this desirable end? Will those who are fit ever seek to govern? Nay, it is the unfit who clamor for office, and, by constructing political machines out of the complicities of the Constitution, hoist themselves into power in defiance of the people's will, instead of by its consent. While the people believe in the equality of rights, there are not many who doubt the inequality of might. How many can you find outside of a mad-house who would advise that a teacher of children or a judge be elected by chance? While recognizing the right of free speech, they do not believe that it is their duty to furnish ears for every fool who wants to talk. He who teaches must present in some way credentials of adaptation to the work he has espoused.

Give the people a chance to vote directly and independently of the machinery of the caucus, which deliberately steals from them all right of choice, and they will never elect an unfit man for office the second time. Let them be free at any time to vote a man out as well as into office, and, if they make a mistake in their selection, they will soon correct it. Above the real life of every man, however vicious he may be, is the ideal of what he ought to be.

Observe at the theatre how the villain is always despised. If a coward beats his wife, see how swift the indignation leaps forth from the very men who will go home and do the same thing. Democracy does not by any means indicate that the lowest moral condition will assert itself to be as good as the highest. Nine out of every ten men are far more desirous of being helped up to a higher level than they are of pulling those above them down to theirs. The true hero-worship and willingness to be taught and governed, which Carlyle thought foreign to democracy, is, after all, synonymous with it. Walt Whitman sees and understands this clearly, and in *Leaves of Grass* expresses a profound faith in the free choice of the people, when he says:—

"Where the city stands with the brawniest breed of orators and bards;
Where the city stands that is beloved by these, and loves them in return and understands them;
Where these may be seen going every day in the streets, with their arms familiar to the shoulders of their friends;
Where no monuments exist to heroes but in the common words and deeds,
Where thrift is in its place and prudence is in its place,
Where behavior is the finest of the fine arts,
Where the men and women think lightly of the laws,
Where the slave ceases and the master of the slave ceases,
Where the populace rise at once against the never-ending audacity of elected persons;
Where fierce men and women pour forth, as the sea to the whistle of death pours its sweeping and unript waves;
Where outside authority enters always after the precedence of inside authority;
Where the citizen is always the head and ideal, and President, mayor, governor, and what not are agents for pay;
Where children are taught from the jump that they are to be laws to themselves and to depend on themselves,
Where equanimity is illustrated in affairs,
Where speculations on the soul are encouraged,
Where women walk in public processions in the streets the same as the men,
Where they enter the public assembly and take places the same as the men, and are appealed to by the orators the same as the men;
Where the city of the faithfulest friends stands,
Where the city of the cleanliness of the sexes stands,
Where the city of the healthiest fathers stands,
Where the city of the best-bodied mothers stands,—
There the greatest city stands."

Nor is true democracy, as some claim, synonymous with communism. The instincts of the people are true to the highest

interests of individuality. The best condition for one is the best condition for all. Possession cannot be acquired by right of birth. He who inherits a fortune often inherits a misfortune. One can enjoy nothing fully that he has not honestly earned. Democracy means equality of opportunity and of right, but not of might nor possession. Literal communism is unjust, because untrue to nature. The arbitrary will of the many controlling the liberty of the individual would be as tyrannical as that of any king. True democracy is an elastic condition of society, giving to every man according to his deserts.

In those things that represent opportunity, there should be perfect equality. The air, water, and land should be common to all, under a wise management to secure their economy and purity. Personal possession should be so regulated by an accumulative income tax that it would be impossible for any one to become a millionaire.

The principle of communism should regulate all opportunity. We condemn the system of heredity which in England hands down the large estates from one generation to another. But there is no practical difference between the estate going by act of parliament or by personal will to the next of kin. The result is the same.

The instinct to provide for one's children can be thoroughly satisfied without one generation pre-empting the land, or, in other words, stealing it from all succeeding ones. Absolute possession of land will some day come to be looked at in the same light as property in men and women.

Nor should the ideas of the future be controlled by to-day. It ought to be regarded as a crime to leave large sums of money for the perpetual maintenance of a political or religious creed. There is ample room for every charitable impulse without forging manacles for the minds of those that are yet unborn. Let every age support its own church and make its own laws. They who will follow us will be better able to do this than we are to do it for them. True democ-

racy means that to-day is better than any yesterday, and that nothing has any right to remain that cannot stand the light of present facts and the test of the needs of to-day. It says with *Leaves of Grass*:—

"Each age for itself.
I demand the choicest edifices to destroy them.
Room, room for new, far-planning draughtsmen and engineers!
Clear that rubbish from the building spots and the paths!"

Nor is true democracy, as some claim, an enemy to individuality in production any more than in principle. Under the fostering reign of the spirit of the people, I believe there will be greater poets, more inspiring orators, wiser teachers, and more wonderful inventions than ever before. All will be real. There will be no illusions wasting the power of genius. The highest personal interest and ambition will accord with the good of all; for true democracy includes all, the one as well as the many. How shall we secure it? First, above all, by peaceable methods. With the ballot already in the hands of all the men, we can use it for our sword. In Europe, where this does not exist, the red sword of war will have to be unloosed before the flag of liberty can adorn the common air. But here in America we can appeal to the people. Let the poets and reformers be heard. Let the golden words of nature's truth and justice be planted in all hearts. In this way, we must strike first at the Church, that upstee of superstition, which, in the shape of the religious ideas of the past, overshadows and makes sickly the life of the present.

The Church is the great stronghold of conservatism. In its God-idea it is an autocracy, and in its saintship and priesthood an aristocracy of the worst type. As long as men believe in a tyrant above, they will be the slaves of one below. As long as they acknowledge an outside right of any man beyond his superior intelligence to teach, they will permit themselves to be trampled under foot by privileged classes. As long as men and women believe in the Church, the present will be buried alive in the grave

of the dead past. Perhaps I seem to some of you fanatical in always connecting the Church with every evil I denounce. But look this question steadily in the face for a minute. Who are the revolvers against the infamous tyranny of the Czar? Unbelievers. Who made France the most prosperous country in Europe? Unbelievers. Who are the soldiers of liberty and justice in Germany? Radical unbelievers. Who is the editor of the *National Reformer* and the champion of republican principles in England? Charles Bradlaugh. Who were the first successful opponents of slavery in this country? Unbelievers, principally. Who to-day respond most readily to the new demands of liberty and justice? Unbelievers. I tell you the altar is leagued to the throne, and the Church is the principal support of every injustice on the face of the earth. It destroys more of the real happiness of life than all things else combined. It forbids freedom of thought and murders reason, in order to set faith above its grave. It takes from us all possibility of self-respect and personal honor, in order to honor God. In demanding that man serve God instead of himself, it is like those lazy, vicious people who send their little children to work in the factories or to beg on the streets, in order to support them in idleness. If repentance and belief will save us, why does not God repent and believe for us as well as die for us? This command to believe and be saved is to many like chaining a starving man within sight but out of reach of some food, and then cruelly beating him for not eating it.

Taking from us all power of being good and then condemning us for not being good is aptly illustrated in the boy who, having killed his father and mother, pleaded with the judge for mercy on the ground that he was a poor orphan.

What we want in the place of the Church is the social compact of a true democracy under which the good of all will be the good of each.

A condition in which the natural egoism

or selfishness of the individual shall find its highest gratification in the general prosperity. I cannot rob you without robbing myself. Still less can I deny you any natural right without denying myself. He who makes himself worthy to possess anything gains all. To bring in this ideal State, woman must become before the law, as she is in reality, the equal of man. Unless the tenderness and grace of woman supplement the strength of man, there can be no true democracy.

The indifference of the majority of men and women to the political equality of woman seems strange. But many of you can remember when the world was equally indifferent to the freedom of the black slave. Future generations will wonder at our blindness. We can no more have a true democracy without the help of woman than we can have a true home. What would a fireside be where she was voted out? What would life be worth anywhere without her? Men will yet say with equal astonishment, What would the Hall of Justice or the Legislative Assembly be with her left out? They will cease to wonder at the barbarism and superstition of the nineteenth century when they remember that every woman was a political slave, and that both the men and women mostly believed it divine. No state of society can be true to nature that is not the free expression of the spirit of the whole people, both male and female.

Here, again, the Church is the real obstruction. The State is nothing but an inferior, a mere secular affair, of no importance in comparison to it. The temple of religion overshadows that of human right and justice. The priest must be honored before and above all men. Thus, the strength and devotion needed for realities are given to shadows. That which is everything is regarded as nothing. It is no crime to rob woman of a mere business and secular affair. To keep her out of politics is supposed to be like keeping her out of the stock exchange or away from the plough. Who wants to see his wife or daughter clamoring

and wire-pulling in a caucus, or stumping the country through the insane babble and universal mud-slinging of a party strife? No one.

But when we have a true democracy and can vote for principles instead of parties, men of acknowledged wisdom and worth instead of the nominees of a packed caucus, it will be altogether a different question. I have no particular anxiety to see woman voting under the present condition of things. I don't care enough about it myself, for that. In order to make it worth something in our hands now, and hers when she shall receive it, we need to cultivate the idea that to establish a perfectly just State is the supreme thing. We must think of the State as something infinitely more than a tax-gathering machine. The true State will include all our mutual relations. Wherever the minds and hearts of men and women can come together in united action to advance whatever is good, true, or beautiful, there is the real State. The just State is whatever is just and true between man and man, the securing to each an equality of right, and as far as possible of opportunity. It means the physical, intellectual, and moral education of the whole people. All the ideas held by all people should be cultivated by the State. Nothing that is rejected as false by any minority has anything to do with it.

We all believe in health, intelligence, and goodness. Let the State encourage and cultivate them in every possible way. We all want to be happy. Let the State by industrial education and perfect equality of opportunity do its best to secure this end. Establish this idea of the State, and you can no more keep the ballot out of the hands of woman than you can deny her the right to love the flowers or breathe the free air. Before we have a true democracy, we must also destroy all the obstructions that hinder the free expression of the people's will. Our constitution with its intricate machinery of a wheel within a wheel, and these united with many other wheels, is the mother of all the abominable political machines that

tyrannize over the free choice of the people.

We want but one law-making and administrative agency, and this to be only and always responsible to the will of the people. To set a Senate as a check to the power of a President is like setting a thief to watch a thief. We have a forcible illustration of this in the fight going on between Garfield and Conkling. No honest man cares a penny who beats, because the whole thing from first to last is a monstrous fraud and crime against the people. Why should Conkling and Pratt have the power to resign at their pleasure, and the people who elected them and other senators have no chance to resign those who refuse to do their bidding? We talk about the sovereignty of the people, but can you tell me what voice the people have had for the last month in what has been going on at Washington? We shall never have a true democracy until all officers receive their trusts directly from the people, and only hold them while they execute the will of the people.

I have already spoken fully on this subject in my lecture on Karl Heinzen, for it was from him I first learned these ideas. And what I learned from him I find amply confirmed and repeated in *Leaves of Grass*. In fact, revolutionary as these ideas are, it seems almost as though they must spring up naturally and spontaneously in every just and intelligent mind. They belong to no one man, but to all free minds and liberal hearts.

Are they not yours? Do you not indorse them? If you do not agree with me, I hereby renounce them. If I do not speak with a response in your souls, then I prefer to keep silent until I can learn what it is you need. I say this, because all free minds and hearts are one in their devotion to the largest liberty and justice. We belong to no State, president, party, clique, sect, or constitution. We acknowledge no law but the inalienable rights of all men and women.

"With one man or woman (no matter which one, I even pick the lowest),
With him or her I now illustrate the whole law:

I say that every right, in politics or what not, shall be eligible to that one man or woman on the same terms as any."

What good are constitutions, when they conflict with liberty and justice?

"To hold men together by paper and seal or by compulsion is no account:

That only holds men together which is living principles, as the hold of the limbs of the body or the fibres of plants."

As Radicals and Liberals, we stand for these unwritten laws. We voice in our protestantism the secret hopes and longings of millions. We lead the way to the largest liberty and most perfect equality. We call upon the people to so change their political institutions that the office shall seek the man, and not the man the office; to see to it that no one person or persons have any favor shown to them or their ideas that is not equally shown to all.

The true home is the type of true democracy, and the State ought to be as dear to our hearts as our homes. It should be one great brotherhood where all hearts throb respondent, where ideas are interchanged peaceably, where all light and beauty is free to all, where the arena of fame and ambition is open without restriction to all, so that our only rulers are the strong and wise,

and our only allegiance the responsive thrill of loyalty in the hearts of the people to those who are truly great and noble.

It is doubtless a long and weary road to this shining goal. But courage, patience, and perseverance will bring us there at last. The future is enfolded in the heart of the present. All the under-currents of society set strong in this direction. Thousands who seem to be going the other way at heart bid us good-speed. The oath of the universe is pledged that all shall come at last to honor man as man only. For

"All self-denial that stood steady and aloof on wrecks,
and saw others fill the seats of the boats;
All offering of substance or life for the good old cause
or for a friend's sake or opinion's sake;
All pains of enthusiasts, scoffed at by their neighbors;
All the limitless sweet love and precious suffering of
mothers;
All honest men baffled in strifes, recorded or unrecorded;
All the grandeur and good of ancient nations, whose
fragments we inherit;
All the good of the hundreds of ancient nations un-
known to us by name, date, location;
All that was ever manfully begun, whether it succeeded
or no;
All suggestions of the divine mind of man or the divini-
ty of his mouth or the shaping of his great hands;
All that is well thought or said this day on any part of
the globe or any of the wandering stars or any of the
fixed stars by those there as we are here;
All that is henceforth to be thought or done by you,
whoever you are, or by any one,—
These inure, have inured, shall inure to the identities
from which they sprang or shall spring."

MY RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

THE last time I lectured on this subject, I thought I would never do so again. It seems to be presenting myself to your attention as the subject of a personal interest and importance which I by no means feel. I have no doubt whatever but that each one who has emancipated himself from theology has travelled over much the same road. Still, since my parish, through my printed lectures, has become such a large one, I have occasionally thought that the interest between me and those I have never seen might become more of a personal one, if I should repeat this tale of my personal experience.

I was brought up under Methodist influences. My first distinct idea of religion was that it was something to get. All who have heard of Methodism have heard of getting religion. The Methodist idea of it seems to be that God keeps it bottled up as a druggist does his drugs. You carry a bottle or vessel of grace inside of you, somewhere, and get it filled on application. In revivals and camp-meetings, the principal efforts are directed toward persuading people to get religion. I grew up under this idea. I thought of religion as a thing apart from human life, which one must be sure and take before dying or be lost. I was almost as much afraid of religion as of dying. The whole subject, as I thought of it sometimes, paralyzed me with terror and made me wish I had never been born. But, fortunately, a love of nature and romance kept

me from yielding to these gloomy thoughts. Up to my seventeenth year, I lived almost unconscious of any particular meaning to life beyond that of not forgetting sometime or another to get ready to die.

But at this time, under the influence of a romantic ambition, I tore myself from my parents' arms and came to this country. As I saw the shore of my native land receding from my sight, and reflected that I was going to a new world where, among strangers, I must confront life for myself, with no mother's bosom on which to lean in an hour of trouble, and no parental hearthstone to flee to if the battle should be against me, the sense of personal responsibility rose up strong within me, and the idea of duty began to take possession of me. I was made acquainted with myself, and began to have some perception of my relation to mankind at large, and to realize that life was to me and all men of infinite and solemn import. The noblest desires filled my heart. I determined not only to be good, but also to be religious.

After this resolve was fixed upon, we passed through a terrific storm, and all was consternation and fear. I believed without a doubt, if I should then be drowned, that I was eternally lost. For what I suffered then, I can never forgive religion, so called. On reaching this country, I was thrown again among Methodists. I went to church, and took almost the first opportunity of telling them I wanted to be re-

ligious. Under their instructions, I went to the mourner's bench, seeking for I knew not what; expecting some strange thing to strike me from the skies, to see some vision or hear some audible voice of God. But nothing remarkable came. I was instructed to believe that Jesus died for me. I had always believed that as much as one could, because I had had no chance to believe or think otherwise. I believed everything they told me as simply and artlessly as a child. After repeated assurances from the minister and all those who labored with me that, if I only believed, I was saved, I began to think I was a Christian, and felt better. I was then received into the Church. I read the Bible and prayed a great deal; and, after working myself up into a state of excitement, I imagined my prayers had been attended to and that I was blessed.

In getting started in this jungle of darkness and confusion, I was much more fortunate than many have been. I have known people to seek for weeks and months for this artificial religion; and many have sought on, until fear and despair have destroyed their reason, and sent them for the rest of their lives to insane asylums. I was the more easily deceived in this matter, because I attributed the larger and richer enjoyment of life, born of the earnest sense of responsibility, my separation from my family, and the beginning life for myself, had brought me to my religious belief and devotion. But all this comes to men and women who never hear of Christianity or of getting religion. Yea, I believe it is far more hindered by it than helped. The false light keeps many from seeing the true light. It is this same experience that makes heroes of rough sailors and firemen. It is born in the joy of love and hush of sorrow. It springs up around the cradles of little children and by the new-made graves of parents. It is the reward of the patriot and the inspiration of the reformer. It is the heart and life of the millions of men and women who make up the rough work-a-day world, and toil on by flaming forge or giddy scaffolds, among

roaring machinery, in deep, dark mines, through summer's heat and winter's cold, in order to keep the wolf of hunger from those they love. That life is of deep and solemn import, that to live on this green earth, beneath the sun by day and the stars by night, to experience the thrilling emotions of human love, to know the wonders of thought, to stand related to our fellow-men in all the unspeakable joys and sorrows of life, is a great and unspeakable reality, cannot be too deeply impressed upon any one. But to associate this noble sentiment of duty and the inspirations of nature with the snivelling, whining attitude of Methodism is an abomination. It gives such a low and degrading view of life, makes all its infinite mysteries cheap and vulgar, and so sows the seeds of cant and hypocrisy.

But at this time I had no more thought of questioning the validity of the Methodist position than that twice two is four. Hell was beneath my feet and heaven over my head. God was on the throne and Jesus at the right hand of the Father. In short, I was a devout and sincere believer in the most Evangelical doctrines, without the slightest moral or rational insight into their meaning. I saw thousands about me careless of these things, and to me they were all standing upon the brink of eternal ruin. I was filled with desire to save them. I felt drawn toward the ministry. Under the superstitions around me, I was led to believe this to be the call of God. Inspired by sincerity, when I spoke to people on religion I grew eloquent and pathetic. A number were thus influenced to become religious. This was a sure sign to the Church that I was called to the ministry, and so I was licensed and commanded to preach. I obeyed at once.

I cannot stop to enumerate the various influences that combined to open my eyes to the very small world in which I lived. All that I read and saw in the world was like the light and warmth of spring to my mind, causing it to slowly arouse from the winter of superstition and clothe itself with new

life and beauty. I saw that outside of the world I moved in was a still greater and worthier one of thought and feeling. I found that many of the best and noblest people of my acquaintance had no faith whatever in the doctrines I preached. The principal doctrines of Methodism, by reading and observation, gradually became to my mind false, to my conscience immoral, and to my heart utterly repulsive. A close study of the liberal Christian school of writers inclined me to the Unitarian view. I proclaimed the truth as I found it, still my position as a Methodist minister rendered my labors abortive. While I meant one thing, most present thought I meant something quite different. I was uncertain whether I ought to stay in the Methodist Church or not. Some of my brother ministers were proclaiming equally advanced views, justifying themselves for staying, in order to reform the Church on the inside. My reason called on me to go out, my heart to remain in. It was the Church of my parents. In it were hundreds of good people who loved and honored me as one of its ministers. All outside was a strange and, for aught I knew, an unfriendly world. Why should I, for the sake of a mere intellectual difficulty, sacrifice the wealth of affection and friendship gathered by years of devotion? Why should I pierce my own mother's heart with a sword of disappointment, and endanger the support of a trusting wife and helpless children for a few intellectual speculations? These new views might not hold water. Some who had tried them had come back gladly to the old Church.

It is not possible to describe all the reasons that present themselves in favor of remaining in the shelter of the fold. Do not be surprised that many remain in the Church long after the head has denied all its doctrines. The power of the heart to enforce its claims is mighty. The remembrance of a mother's prayers, the most sacred associations and tender memories of life, hold captive the intellect. Those who turn aside from the path of rectitude, because blinded

by the gathering tears of affection, are not entirely without excuse. Some of you may be in this position. My experience bids me say, Be true to your intellect, however it may oppress your heart and wound your dearest friends. Still, you must not act from my conviction, but your own. I am not a judge nor law-giver over you. I can only tell you that to me there came a time when I saw that it would be moral as well as intellectual suicide to remain in. And so I came out.

I cannot tell you what I suffered at that time. Do you know what it is to be true to your highest vision of duty, and have some dear friend whom you love with all your heart come and weep over you, upbraid, and charge you with pride and vain-glory? You stand together in the first meeting, heart to heart and hand to hand, and you begin to talk in gentle words. He is sure that he can convince you that you are wrong; and you are sure that he is so good and true that he must at least see that you are honest, and continue your friend, though he cannot agree with your opinions. So you begin to talk. But a little stream begins to flow between you, and it grows wider and wider. You can no longer hold each other by the hand. The clash of argument rises above the gentle entreaties of the heart. The distance becomes wider, and the waters grow deep and strong. You shout to each other in words of despair across the chasm; and then the sad desolation comes over you that the flowers of friendship are dead, and that you are parted forever.

You little realize how many of these tragedies of faith there are going on all over the land. The sad, silent pain of the heart, the conscious integrity, the noble purpose, the manly courage, and the heroic sacrifice you have made,—all regarded as a crime in the eyes of your dearest friends. The price of liberty is no longer the sword and the flame. But it is almost as great, when all your honor is treated with contempt. You who have been loyal at so great a cost called a traitor! You who, having lost much that was dear to you, discovering in your desolation that

those whom you had thought it would ever be your privilege to love have become in their narrowness and bigotry objects only for your pity and contempt.

Why should a mere change of opinion produce such division between those who were once friends? The world is constantly changing. Systems of religion come and go. Why should we not expect our friends to change, and be proud of them when they do? Why should not parents expect their children to have opinions as well as faces of their own? The differentiations of nature are infinite. No two leaves in all the countless forests are exactly alike. The idea of intellectual conformity to a creed is at discord with every law of nature.

But, while I cannot begin to describe to you the tragedy of this action, neither can I paint its new joy of liberty. I felt like one must, I think, just delivered from a charnel-house. The breath of liberty was as welcome and refreshing as the breeze of morning on the cheek of fever. The whole world seemed more beautiful. I saw men and women in a new light. I could look every man and woman in the face with sympathy, and at the same time honestly respect myself. Life was again to me an untried ocean, and a new world of wonder and delight.

I do not wish you to understand that at this time I was entirely free of theology. I fancied I had saved out of the general wreck a few fragments that would stand the perfect test of reason. But these I held only from day to day, ready to let them go gladly the moment I found them false.

In this attitude of new-born freedom, I entered the ministry of the Unitarian Church, with the understanding that what was wanted was a man who would simply give his honest opinion from Sunday to Sunday about life and duty, untrammelled by any creed. At this time, I supposed that I believed in God. I had no idea of a personal God apart from his creation, governing it as a general directs his forces, and moving human affairs as a chess-player moves his

pieces,—an interfering Providence, a Giver of things for the asking, called prayer. But I did believe in a power, a mind, a good-will, a righteousness, or justice, which, while flowing through nature as its order, law, and force, and through man as an inspiring life, was yet more than the sum of nature and of man; and I did believe in prayer as an uplifting of my thought and will into conscious communion and contact with him.

Along with this, I believed in Christianity as one agency through which this impersonal personality had revealed a part of his infinite glory and beauty to finite man. I eliminated from it everything miraculous, proclaimed it as but one of many equally divine systems of religion, presented Jesus as a man naturally endowed to perceive and teach moral truth, and so worthy to be considered as the head of the visible Church. I was a thorough optimist, looking through beauty into blankness. All the world was bathed for me in rose mist. But gradually things turned up; I could not quite get into my poetical world of beauty and truth. The world again grew larger than my faith. I found that, after all, I was expected to preach certain ideas, and use particular formularies of expression, that grew more and more repugnant to my feelings. I found that the demands of reason could not be settled without going over the whole ground with the most careful scrutiny.

At first, Christianity slipped out of my grasp. I was compelled to ask what it had done for the world. It started as an improvement on Judaism. Though the Jews have endured centuries of the cruelest persecution that ever fell on any people, yet, staggering through the blind, pitiless storm of Christian malice, they have preserved their unity, and are to-day in wealth and morals ahead of any Christian people on the globe. It is a very rare thing to meet with a Jew pauper or criminal. Christianity has trampled the Jews beneath its feet, sat upon the throne of almost universal empire. The sword of the most powerful nations has enforced and supported its teachings for

centuries. What has it done? Burned thousands of sincere men and women at the stake for a mere difference of belief; executed with fire, sword, and water hundreds of thousands for the impossible crime of witchcraft; destroyed the finest works of art; consumed the great libraries of past civilizations; maintained and protected the inhuman system of slavery; deluged the world with blood; created an excuse for crime; frightened children to death with its horrible hobgoblin of a devil and lake of eternal fire; filled the asylums for the insane with howling maniacs, and cast a shadow of gloom upon every tender heart of man or woman.

The Church claims the honor of all progress. In calmly scrutinizing its history, I found that our art, our literature, our science, our education, our liberties, had all been torn from its covetous grasp from time to time in sheer desperation, as starving men have sometimes snatched something to eat from the jaws of a cruel tiger. Christianity, in the minds of many, has come to be regarded as synonymous with humanity. I had so regarded it. But intellectual honesty demands that it stand or fall as a system of ethics and theology. In these respects, it is entirely false. It is true that we catch glimpses of a great and blessed man in the record of the life of Jesus, who was infidel to the religion of his day, and faithfully contended for liberty and truth. But for centuries his name has been so identical with the blind surrender of thought to feeling, the attempt to suppress every moral and intellectual right of the individual, that the only way to honor him is to reject with scorn and hatred the system that bears his name.

Reaching this conclusion, I found I could no longer bear the Christian name, and some time before my resignation said the same to my congregation. Only one said that I had gone beyond him, and that in a whisper.

Next, my optimistic veil of rose-mist was rent in twain; and through it I saw that

it was heartless and cruel to make mankind responsible for all the evil that is in the world. What I lost in hopefulness by this touch of pessimism I gained in the power to be just.

The theory of Christianity that there is above us a kind heavenly Father, who numbers all the hairs of our heads, and without whose notice and consent not even a sparrow falls to the ground, is a most comforting thought, if true. I clung to it despairingly, as long as I could. But before me I saw a world where injustice triumphs over justice, where wrong is ever on the throne, clothed in scarlet and fine linen, and right in the dust, clothed in rags, begging for bread, and where brutal vice is often seen trampling ruthlessly beneath its dirty feet the fairest flowers of maiden virtue,—this at home, in every city, beneath the very shadow of Christian churches. Looking further away, I saw whole nations writhing in the agonies of famine, millions upon millions of loving, toiling fathers and mothers almost maddened with hearing their children cry for bread when there is none to give, crawling in helpless imbecility and hunger in the dust, imploring Heaven for the merciful rain that would bring relief, and yet not a single drop descends. And then, as I thought of pestilence and war, earthquake and cyclone, fire and storm, ignorance and poverty, squalor and vice, filth and crime, filling the earth with woe and despair, a gathering pall of darkness filled my eyes with tears of human love and pity, that shut out all sight of and faith in love that is mighty to save and does not.

It was at first an awful moment when I had to confront this thought, and acknowledge that the universe is everywhere ruled by blind and inexorable law and force. The very foundation of things seemed to dissolve beneath me. For a time all was chaos. I could see no truth. Every star of hope seemed to have fallen from its place. But this did not last long. I soon found that what I had endured as a calamity was the greatest blessing. New visions of truth be-

gan to dawn upon me, higher paths of duty to open before me, and brighter stars of hope to shine above me. For long, I had been as one lost in a fog, hardly knowing where I should find myself when the sun broke through. Now, I saw a clear path for my feet. I saw that I could no longer preach any theology. It had become to me all the baseless fabric of a dream. I was determined to do my best to clear away from the truths and beauties of nature this pall of darkness. Prayer was now to me a mockery; hymns of praise, meaningless compliments offered to infinite silence and nothingness; a benediction, a priestly impertinence, degrading for me to give and the congregation to receive. I said so, and with it tendered my resignation. All but a very small minority declared themselves of the same opinion. Knowing that Unitarian churches here in the East had grown out of Calvinism into their present faith and carried their church property with them, we never dreamed that it would be considered a crime to turn our church into a Sunday lecture association and society for the promotion of physical, intellectual, and moral culture. Being almost unanimous in their desire to have me remain as their lecturer, I withdrew my resignation. But everything in this world depends upon whose ox is gored. Unitarians here in the East are quite willing to preach more or less heresy beneath rafters raised by Calvinists, but entirely unwilling that I should go a little beyond them beneath a lowly roof they had erected. So we were sued; and, thinking life too valuable and precious to be wasted in a squabble over a church in a law court, engendering all kinds of bad feeling on both sides, we surrendered the property.

Since that day, I have accepted the world as my parish; and no words can describe to you my profound gratitude for giving me this opportunity to speak each Sunday my best and honest thought. My whole heart is full of gladness. In this service, I am able to connect the present with the past, and voice the brightest hopes and visions of

the freest minds and most liberal hearts. This lecture will be mailed to upwards of eighteen hundred subscribers, while each mail brings new names to enter on our books, accompanied with the most earnest and appreciative words of sympathy and hearty assurance of co-operation. We invite to our union and fellowship all who feel obligated to help in the general interests of humanity. Our work is to maintain the liberty of all; to see, as far as lies in our power, that the light of knowledge shines for all; to save all whom we can from the actual hells of ignorance, vice, poverty, and crime; to let the rays of beauty gladden every life, foster genius, advance art, literature, science, and all things that enlighten and elevate humanity.

However small our contributions may be in these various directions, every blow we strike chips out a little piece at the root of the upas-tree of superstition. Each clear word of truth we send out into the world does a little to widen the skirts of light and make the struggle with darkness narrower. Our worship is humanity. To us there is more love and conscience in man than we can adequately venerate, without wandering through infinite space in search of a God. The awful sweep of the planets, the mighty grasp of gravitation, the immutability of force, the wonder-working power of light and heat, the mystery of human thought and love, the beauty and grace of nature,—all subdue and uplift us, and are to us as a daily means of grace. The perfume of a flower, a gleam of love in the face of a friend, are to us as a prayer that inspires and elevates. The hope of the world to-day is the marriage of refined feeling and emotion to science, such a deepening of man's sense of duty beneath the sun by day and the stars by night as shall obligate and inspire him to seek not for a heaven in the skies, but for one on the earth, in the improvement of things right here and now. When this is achieved, the steps of humanity will keep time to the blended music of wisdom and love.

THE IDEAL MAN AND WOMAN.

THE sentiment of worship is an essential element in human nature. Where there is no worship there is no humanity. When rightly understood, the radical of radicals is more devout than the most fanatical devotee of the Church. True worship is the recognition of worthship, the loving supplement of the heart's enthusiasm to what the mind perceives to be adorable. With Walt Whitman,—

"I say no man has ever been half-devout enough,
None has ever adored or worshipp'd half enough,
None has begun to think how divine he himself is."

Though almost buried beneath a mountain of falsehood, yet this is the true meaning and beauty of life. The ideal of life which any man or woman admires and strives earnestly to attain unto is of more value than all present realization. The book he never writes is far more to the author than those he has written. The song never sung by the musician has sweeter strains in it than those he gives to the world. If it was not for the horizon that ever eludes our grasp, there would be no landscape. The saying of Ingersoll, that an honest God is the noblest work of man, is pregnant with meaning, because all gods and goddesses were in the first place men and women. While they retained their humanity, they exercised a beneficent influence over the lives of their worshippers. But, when the work of deification was achieved and they were separated from men and women by the dark gulf of senseless Omnipotence, they be-

came devils, luring their devotees to death instead of life. All that there is good in any system of religion is human. All that is bad is the irresponsibility of deity. All recognition of the goodness and worthship of man is life. All worship of a God removed beyond the bounds of law and intelligence is death.

While Christianity was the love and admiration of men and women for one who had battled bravely for truth and right, it was a light shining through the darkness, leading to higher paths of life and duty. When the crown of thorns was changed for that of omnipotence, it became a curse and delusion. Every system of religion may be judged and tried by this principle. Unitarians, as men and women, are more liberal and humane than orthodox Christians, because they place the principal emphasis on the humanity of Jesus. But beneficent as this devotion to one man has been at times, it represents only a passing phase in the development of humanity. It is only the kindergarten of political and moral life.

To continue to acknowledge any man living or dead lord of all is as foolish and wasteful as it would be for men and women to spend all their time playing with the toys of childhood. When the only office of government was to lead the battles against the numerous foes of the tribe, a chief or king was a necessity. But when government came to mean the making of laws for all classes, the establishment of justice between

man and man, the enforcement of contracts and the securing to each man and woman the right to life, liberty, and happiness, a king became a tyrant and robber. So, when the moral life of mankind was limited to those of the same clan or tribe, the advent of one whose heart was as large as humanity became a blessing, and his exaltation to spiritual Lordship a necessity. But when morality grows as richly in thousands of hearts, supplemented by the experience and intelligence to make practical their goodwill, the ascription of all honor to one whose feelings were fettered by want of reason and experience is to deceive mankind with a false light.

In the time of Moses and Jesus, human life was exceedingly narrow; and hence one life, with a direct and concentrated devotion to one idea, could fill and overflow its banks. But since then a multitude of interests have sprung up, in democracy, science, education, art, literature, and the drama; and he who would win the crown of all hearts and minds to-day must do the impossible feat of preserving his vigor of action and at the same time spread himself out so as to include all these diverse interests of humanity. You can see at once the injustice of expecting one as worthy of our adoration as Jesus to immediately become the passion of all hearts.

If Christianity could have every element of the miraculous eliminated from it, and Jesus be simply valued as a moral example, the highest interests of humanity would summon us to oppose its supremacy. So important is it that we have a just and correct ideal of life to follow, that it is this very profession of Christianity to furnish this that makes it the greatest foe of moral progress. The light of the wrecker that lures the mariner to destruction is as welcome and beautiful to him as it beams through the darkness that surrounds him as the true one leading to safety would be. How specious and true seems the argument of the Church: "Surely, it can do no harm to ask people to imitate the life of one who went about doing good. Would it not be a good

world if all men and women would keep the golden rule? Is it not right and just that we should love and honor one who gave up his life for humanity?"

How often professed liberals have been silenced by this presentation of its claim by the Church! The great majority of those who still claim to be Christians cling to it on this ground, even though they have long since rejected its supernatural and miraculous claims. To become entirely infidel to it seems to compel them to be unfaithful to what they feel is highest and best in human life. To profess to be a Christian seems to be one with all other love and admiration of what is great and good. To reject Christ is made to seem the same as neglecting or insulting the mother to whose suffering and limitless love we owe our existence.

No sentiment or principle is so vital as that of hero-worship. It is the main interest and fascination in all the stories and dreams that thrill the heart of youth. It is the heart of every drama on the stage or in the real life of mankind that engages the interest of our ripper years.

When I think of these things, instead of wondering at the strength of Christianity, I marvel at its weakness. And if we would succeed in entirely destroying its evil sway and save men and women from being moulded by its narrow and unjust interpretation of life, we must show them that the good it holds lives elsewhere. If we would lead them out of its jungle of confusion, we must prove to them that the flowers of beauty they found beneath its shadow grow more beautiful and abundant in the open fields of liberty and beneath the full-orbed sun of truth.

The question how to do this is the most important one to which we can give our thought. Comte thought it was to be done by building a new church, modelled after the old one, with rites and ceremonies, prayers and sacraments, with the one change that it should be for the worship and glory of man instead of God.

That the end aimed at was the true one, I believe with all my heart and mind; but the means used I am compelled to question. The new wine of the kingdom of humanity cannot be put, with safety, into the old, dried-up, and cracked bottles of divinity. To offer a prayer to an ideal man and woman, though formed out of the actual graces and endowments of mankind, is to me just as hollow a mockery as to pray to a wooden or mental image of a deity. But to offer a prayer to humanity, and to worship or recognize the worthship of mankind, are two quite different things. For any man or woman to do this, well or ill, is the secret of their success in life.

The essential thing, the one thing needful for us all to-day, is to have a clear vision of what excellency of character it is possible for us to reach, and then to bend every energy toward its achievement. Now, I maintain that here Christianity is a hindrance instead of a help. In order to point this out more clearly, let us see first what our ideal of life is. Only thus can we consistently bring any system that claims to be its realization to this bar of final judgment. Are we not all, like Diogenes, looking for a man? Is not this the interest that attaches itself to every stranger we meet? Do we not meet every man and woman on the tip-toe of expectancy, to see if they are as tall as our ideal? I say man and woman, because this hope is by no means limited by sex. Our ideals have been achieved by women as well as men. Our hearts thrill to the heroines of history as well as to the heroes. To be womanly is as noble as to be manly. We find something lacking in every man who is destitute of the graces of womanhood, and absent in every woman who lacks the attributes of manhood. Our highest ideals are possible to both, and so the salvation and development of the race is the promise of the perfect equality of the sexes. As Walt Whitman says in *Leaves of Grass*:—

"The female contains all qualities and tempers them: she is in her place, and moves with perfect balance.

She is all things duly veiled,—she is both passive and active. She is to conceive daughters as well as sons, and sons as well as daughters. . . .

The male is not less the soul, nor more; he, too, is in his place,

He, too, is all qualities. He is action and power.

The flush of the known universe is in him;

Scorn becomes him well, and appetite and defiance become him well;

The wildest, largest passions, bliss that is utmost, sorrow that is utmost, become him well, pride is for him;

The full spread pride of man is calming and excellent to the soul;

Knowledge becomes him, he likes it always, he brings everything to the test of himself.

Whatever the survey, whatever the sea and the sail, he strikes soundings at last only here."

But, in bringing all to this test, what is the judgment? In surveying humanity, what ideal do we reach for the adoration of every man and woman? Do we not expect at last to come upon perfect sanity of mind? Without fellowship of thought and acknowledged mental equality, there can be no true friendship or comradeship between men and women. The first and highest hope of every man and woman is to stand erect and own no master. Only as we give to others this same complete right over themselves can we perfectly respect them, and the heart can never love fully where it does not first respect. This, of course, is only manifest to the perfectly free mind; and yet I believe that the heart never knows any fulness of satisfaction until it rests on this eternal principle of justice. Reason, whether acknowledged or denied, asserts its prerogative and claims its rightful pre-eminence. The worst bigot hates bigotry in another. The most insane fanatic flees from his own shadow.

The devotee of the worst superstition proclaims with zealous fervor the irrationality of every other superstition. All true intellectual communion must be sweetened with the quality of reasonableness. We are beginning to discern in some dim way that, if reason is not to be trusted, the world is an illusion, and all the men and women in it merely fools. Every discovery of science enlarges the domains of reason. Every fulfilment of an astronomical calculation enriches the soil of common-sense. Day by day, the light of intelligence is narrowing the darkness of superstition. Theological

topics are instinctively shunned in miscellaneous gatherings, because experience is teaching us that, when we get away from the domain of reason into the unsurveyed territory of faith, all conversation savors of insanity. How desirable is perfect sanity of thought! How it rests and inspires us to commune with a perfectly free mind! The friendship and companionship of such is the highest reward of life. Are we not all of us more or less conscious of this want, and so seeking for its realization in every new acquaintance?

Our ideal man or woman need not be versed in classical lore. Beauty of form is not absolutely essential, for handsome is that handsome does. But, whatever they lack, they might as well never have been born, for us, if they be not reasonable. But, having this, they are not necessarily complete. Back of the free mind there must be a liberal, or in other words a humane, heart. We can hardly imagine that not long ago that which would most disgrace a man to-day would have secured him highest honor. Men gloried in their skill as duelists or sportsmen. The principal recreations of society were bull and bear baitings, dog and cock fights. The Church thought it was doing God service by torturing and murdering all who would not accept its creed.

Fifty years ago, the preachers of the gospel dwelt with evident satisfaction upon the goodness of God in saving a few from hell, and proclaimed openly from the pulpit, to the delight of their hearers, how they expected that the sight of the torments of the damned would augment their pleasures in heaven. But the growth of Liberalism, or humanity, is outlawing this cruelty and poverty of feeling. Our sympathies are becoming inclusive of all who can feel the smart of pain or the wrong of injustice. A religion that is not perfectly humane must be sooner or later starved out of existence. This is the death-warrant of Christianity, signed and sealed by the blood it has wrung from millions of hearts, commanding it in the name of love to quit and take itself out

of our sight. So sure as day follows night, will this command be executed. The overthrow of every present system of religion is assured by the necessities of both the heart and mind of man. For as George Eliot sings:—

“We demand

Your Church shall satisfy ideal man,
His utmost reason and his utmost love.
And say these rest a-hungred, find no scheme
Content them both, but hold the world accursed,
A Calvary where Reason mocks at Love,
And Love forsaken sends out orphan cries,
Hopeless of answer; still the soul remains
Larger, diviner than your half-way Church
Which racks your reason into false consent,
And soothes your Love with sops of selfishness.”

But the world is not a Calvary, in which the satisfaction of reason compels the heart to go hungry. In this very ideal that is larger than the Church, we find the promise of an harmonious adjustment of the inner life with the outer world. For these ideals are not those of any one man or woman, but of mankind in the aggregate. Instead of thinking the capacity of the human race exhausted in Moses or Jesus, we believe that this ideal exists potentially in every man and woman.

For the lowest and most degraded, this fruit is growing on the tree of life. These are the heavens that bend over all. I do not worship the man in the gutter, but the ideal of humanity I see bending above him. I do not adore the bigot, but the noble reason that is entombed therein. I do not admire fanaticism, but the enthusiasm for humanity which it prefigures. I hate with every energy of my being the passion that revels in suffering, because I see that under proper training the same passion would take equal satisfaction in contributing to the happiness of others. I war against Christianity, not out of any hostility to Christians, but because I covet for them the same sanity of reason and fulness of love and sympathy for mankind emancipation from the dungeon of faith has brought me.

It is by this ideal humanity all things will eventually be tried. It is this that is undermining every throne and commanding all emperors, kings, and queens to lay aside

their crowns. It is this that is sapping the foundations of every sectarian wall, and thundering in tones of authority before the castle of every aristocrat who lives on the unpaid labor of his fellow-men. This is the vision that is mightier in the heart of the Nihilist than all the dungeons of Russia and mines of Siberia. As it grows brighter and brighter unto the perfect day, men will grow more and more restive beneath the injustice of the State and inhumanity of the Church until they will arise in the vigor of its thrilling hope and beauty, and establish its order and justice as the law over all. To speak of its full promise is, in the present time, almost impossible. To tell how it is to be realized is still more difficult. Still there is no question to which we can give our study with equal profit. It is the old question of Comte, How shall we organize it, and set it to work among men? It is the question that engages more or less every thoughtful mind. What shall we do? Shall we leave the old church at once? Shall we labor to destroy it or reform it? What is our duty to the State? Shall we work with the party that comes nearest to our ideal, or make a party for ourself, though no one else belong to it? Can we destroy by building the new temple over against the old, or must we pull down the old and put the new one in the same place? Shall we, for the sake of harmony, compromise any of our convictions, or shall we do better for all by proclaiming our most revolutionary thought, though all the world laugh us to scorn?

Difficult as these questions often seem to us, I believe that they are capable of a final solution. I shall not attempt this to-day. But I intend to continue this subject in coming lectures, when they will come up again. As I have said before, the real question is, By what methods shall we aim to make all men rational and humane, intellectually free and liberal in sentiment? The test of any opinion is, What kind of world would it be, if all men and women should adopt it? If we do not believe the world would be happier for the change, we had better abandon it as a

bad one. But, before we look for new methods, we ought to be perfectly sure that the old are a failure.

Now, for a long time the Church has been trying to make men and women intelligent, reasonable, and loving by the agency of faith and what it calls being born again. Its standard and most potent objection to our protest against it is that, if all would live up to its requirement, the world would be perfect. Unless we can prove that this claim is utterly false, we have no right to resist its demands. Let us take the hardest part first, the personality and example of Jesus. We are told by the most advanced and intelligent representatives of Christianity that it stands or falls with the perfection of his moral character. They used to prove the truth of Christianity with the miracles, but now they prove the miracles with the all-sufficiency of Christ. They do not see it, but this change of base is a virtual surrender. The excellency they adore is not to be found in the Christ depicted in the Gospels. He does not satisfy ideal man. If there is any dependence to be placed in the record, he was narrow and bigoted. He never had a word of kindness for Pharisee or Sadducee. The Jews were divided between these and another small sect called Essenes. It does not stand to reason that all the good people were in this latter sect. Jesus evidently belonged to it, and for that reason, like every other sectarian, never included it in his denunciation. In his treatment of some of the Gentiles, he cruelly judged them for their misfortunes instead of their faults. He showed himself inhuman in condemning all who should not believe on him to eternal torment. A glamour, has been thrown around him, so that he has been seen in a false light. But, as the light of reason grows brighter, and the love of our hearts larger and stronger, he fails to meet our expectations. Most of the words ascribed to him are perfectly unreasonable. It is not good to take no thought for to-morrow.

It is not mercy we ask of man or God, but simple justice. The world is not saved nor

never will be by the principle of non-resistance. To love our enemies is asking an impossibility. Think of Hussy Helfmann, faint with the pangs of motherhood, torn from her bed, tortured and hung by the neck until almost dead, and then, as she is supported on each side by some man turned into a beast by the stolen gold of the emperor, with the rope round her neck, a priest appears, and bids her by the authority of Christ to love the Czar and all his myriad official robbers and human butchers. This, too, she must do in order to be prepared to die. No! such a doctrine is absurd and infamous.

The sweetest consolation at that moment to her must have been that she had done her very best, even to the gift of her life, to supplant the love of Christianity with the justice of reason. For Christianity, that teaches that the powers that be are ordained of God, and inculcates the principle of non-resistance, is the support of the autocracy and every other injustice. Its doctrine of self-surrender is equally false. We are not dependent on him, or any one else that we know of, for the good impulses of our hearts. We are not poor in spirit, nor do we consider it blessed to be so. We have gone into the wilderness and struggled with darkness and confusion as well as he, until the holy spirit of reason and liberty filled us with light and truth. We have labored joyfully and enthusiastically for the deliverance of mankind from ignorance, superstition, and tyranny. We know that our hearts pursue with eager intensity the ideals of truth, goodness, and beauty. Though our ideal of life has always outstripped our achievement, yet, in the purity of our purpose, we claim equality with him. If he was presented as a man, and no supremacy claimed for him over the other earnest and true hearts among men and women, we could revere his memory. But, when he is presented as a master, we revolt, because higher and nobler service claims us.

The doctrine of the deity of Jesus is so inwrought with Christianity that it must

stand or fall with it. When men say that to be a Christian is simply to pattern after and adore the moral example of a good man, they are talking nonsense. When you lose this idea, you lose it entirely. There is not a particle of consistency in any other position. And, when this demand is made upon reason, nothing but revolt in total is possible. However virtuous he may have been, he is removed from our sphere; and, by being freed from all weakness and subjection to law, it becomes absurd for us to ascribe honor to him. It is not a virtue in a king to be rich. It is not a fault in a man born blind to be blind. If a god, he deserves no thanks for what he has been from all eternity without effort or sacrifice. We can only honor those who struggle with temptation and in conscious freedom choose good from evil. To ascribe to him all the glory is to rob mankind.

The honor of our deliverance from animalism belongs to all who have thought and toiled for humanity, to all the mothers who have through their sweet and limitless love given birth and guidance to children, to all the fathers who have toiled beneath the sun and fought manfully the battle of life in order to protect them, to all the young men who have consecrated with their blood the soil of freedom, to all the young women who have kept themselves pure and by the magic of love drawn others up to their height, to all the reformers who have endured scorn, pain, or death for the truth and right, to all the traitors and rebels, to tyrants and despots, and to all the infidels who have denied the false teaching of the Church. The heart of man is becoming too large to be confined in its worship to one man.

Though men and women cling to the Church from the desire to honor the truth and devotion of Jesus as a man, we must show them that they can only do so truly after they have encompassed in their devotion all saviors and helpers of men, and even learned to know and respect themselves. Thus, Christianity stands tried and condemned at the bar of the ideal man and

woman. Instead of cowering in craven fear before its threatened theatrical spectacular judgment day, when we are to be tried midst flaming worlds and falling stars, we bring it to the more august bar of our own reason and love. If it is in its turn to try us, we prefer to be numbered with the goats than with the sheep.

Of all animals, sheep are the most helpless and silly. They can go nowhere without being led or driven. When one bleats, all the rest chime in. They resist neither the thief who robs them of their wool nor the butcher who takes their life. If one crosses a track before a passing train, all the rest will immediately crowd under the wheels. But the goat loves liberty and independence. He resists oppression to the last. He prefers solitude to society, and independence of action to conformity. He will wander to the very brink of the most dangerous precipices, and into the most desert places in search of greener pastures. Instead of running after others into unnecessary danger, he flees at its first approach. If Jesus lived in our times, he would reverse his judgment. It is the sheep that are lost and the goats that are saved. We are tired of being slaughtered as lambs and shorn as sheep. We oppose Christianity, because it is the enemy of mental liberty and the foundation of injustice. We see clearly that the idea of a ruler above is responsible for all those who fleece and murder us below.

We see that the doctrine of inspired authority is the builder of every fence that shuts us away from our rightful possessions. The spirit of revolt against gods and revelations that is rising up so swift and strong in the minds and hearts of thousands is foreshadowed by Goethe's "Prometheus":—

"I know not aught within the Universe
More slight, more pitiful, than you, ye gods,
Who nurse your majesty with scant supplies
Of offerings wrung from fear, and muttered prayers,
And needs must stare, were't not that babes and beggars
Are hope-besotted fools.
I reverence thee!
Wherefore? Hast thou ever
Lightened the sorrow of the heavy-laden?
Thou ever stretch thy hand to still the tears
Of the perplexed in spirit?
Was it not
Almighty Time and everlasting Fate,
My Lords and thine, that shaped and fashioned me
Into the man I am."

But scorning the gods is not enough. When we have destroyed the Church, the question that is above all remains,—What will satisfy our utmost reason and utmost love? "That is the question." All I have said to-day has simply been preparatory to this end. Next Sunday, I shall lecture on "What is Morality?" the following, on "What is Religion?" and the next after that, on "The Church of the Future." In each of these lectures, I shall endeavor to answer clearly and fully the oft-repeated question, What will you give us in the place of Christianity?

WHAT IS MORALITY?

IN nature there is endless variety united by unbroken uniformity. No two leaves in all the forests are exactly alike, and yet how like is one leaf to every other leaf! Every face has an expression of its own, and yet how closely one face resembles every other face! It used to be thought that there were great gulfs of separation between the various forms of vegetable and animal life. Now, we know that there are none. The idea of man seems to have existed potentially in the first appearance of life on the earth. The same law holds in the development of the social life of mankind. Every form of social or religious organization is typified in the one man. Know thyself, and so shalt thou know all men. Understand the possibilities of one man or woman, and you can tell thereby the fitness of any political, social, or religious organization to satisfy human need. If they are not larger than our utmost reason and utmost love, they have for us outlived their usefulness. This is the final test by which all things are to be tried. I endeavored last Sunday to prepare the way for this lecture by presenting to you the ideal man and woman. The sketch was of necessity very incomplete. The two essential features of every fully developed man and woman are perfect sanity of reason and affection for humanity. But these, to be fruitful of good results, must be supplemented with good health. All that we ask for in any man or woman is a sound mind in a sound body

and a good heart. Physical, intellectual, and affectional powers sum up the whole of human possibility. Any government, institution, order, or church that is not true to the body, brain, and heart of man in their largest need, is false. It is only by attempting to satisfy these wants that they exist at all. The State and Church are both attempts to fulfil these demands. The laws of the State and the doctrines of the Church correspond to the mind of man. The patriotism of the State and the religion or emotion of the Church resemble the heart of man. The administration of the laws of the land, and the ecclesiastical or outward forms of the Church, such as preaching, prayer, and sacrament, are to them as the body is to man. To-day, I intend to confine myself to their intellect,—that is, to their laws and doctrines,—and ask if they fulfil the higher law by which they exist, the mind of man.

Both the State and Church have undertaken to answer this question, what is morality? Each comes to us, saying, do this and not that, for this is right and that is wrong. If you disobey the law of the State or of the Church, you are accounted immoral. If you conform to them, then you pass in society as moral. Whence did they get this authority? From God, they reply, with one or two exceptions. In this country, the State refers us to the people as the true sovereign power. But, as I have before said, this is an illusion. Our Constitu-

tion, to which all laws must conform, is modelled after that of England, which was founded on the divine authority idea. We print the name of God on our coin. By exempting church property from taxation, every man or woman who pays one cent of tax is compelled by the authority of every constable, the majesty of each court of law, the point of every bayonet, the edge of every sword, to help maintain it. In our statutes enforcing the Sabbath, concerning blasphemy, and especially those that deny political rights to atheists, we uphold by all the force of this government the morality of the Church as divine. As long as the Republic does this, it nurses at its own breast the deadly serpent that may yet sting it to death. Instead of our laws representing the people, they are mostly made in the interest of some clique or ring. The millions toil; but, through these infamous laws enacted at Washington and in the various capitolis of the States, nine-tenths of what they earn by the sweat of their brows is deliberately stolen from them by gigantic capitalists and corporations. But the root of all this evil is back yonder in the divine authority idea. The lobbyist at the ear of the earthly law-maker, with one hand offering a bribe and the other in the pocket of the people, is the exact image of the priest, who with one hand offers a bribe to God and with the other takes a greedy share of the hard earnings of his flock of innocent sheep. While the ignorance and superstition of the people allow them to be the dupes of heavenly lobbyists, they will continue the prey of earthly ones.

With scarcely an exception, the State and Church is still based on divine authority. While they both acknowledge and uphold many of the laws of nature and reason, these are always considered as subordinate to this divine authority. Because of this, I want to commence the real work of finding an answer to, What is morality? by denying in total this God, in whose name and interest they claim the right of dictating to us what we shall do and what we shall not do.

It is true that for this we must consent to be considered, yea, and known, as infidels and atheists. In my published lectures, I have called this an *Infidel Pulpit*. Several people have written to ask me why. Call it the liberal, radical, rational, scientific, or humanitarian, but not the *Infidel Pulpit*, they have said; for we are not unfaithful. But the truth is, we are unfaithful. We lack entirely the faith which the Church claims can alone save. If we are not unfaithful to the Church, we are guilty of treason against humanity. While I sympathize with the desire to cast off with contempt the ignominious epithets heaped upon us by the Church, I am also thoroughly persuaded that we shall never successfully contend against its destructive power until we accept its most abusive words as titles of honor. We have tried half-way measures long enough. The attempt to shelter infidelity and atheism beneath the name of Liberal Christian or even Free Religion is a compromise with the Church. We see an illustration of the evil influence of this, when we remember that the churches of the most advanced Liberals, and even our Free Religious neighbors, still claim their share of the stolen goods by not presenting their church property to be taxed. If we preach justice, let us practise it. The slightest compromise with faith will bandage the eyes of reason, by whose all-seeing light we can alone discern the law of righteousness. We have eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Our eyes have been opened to discern for ourselves what is good and what is evil. We have become as gods. Though at first we were shamed into trying to hide ourselves beneath the withered leaves of faith, we are fast learning that we can weave more beautiful garments by trusting to our own skill and reason.

In becoming faithless to the Church, we learn to be true to ourselves and the rest of mankind. We are neither faithful nor faithless, neither godly nor godless, but simply and solely human. Still, until we have won the lawful inheritance of humanity from

the impotent and cruel sway of this infinite nothing called God, we must consent to bear unjustly this reproach.

In order to deny from first to last all right of the Church to impose its ideas of right and wrong upon us, and so be free to establish the true ones that are founded in our own reason, we must deny the God by whose authority darkness is presented as light, and death as life.

Now, the very fact that the Church is disturbed by this denial shows to the thoughtful mind the falsehood of its position. What kind of a God is that that can be injured by denial or helped by the noisy assertions of mortal man? They claim that they are absolutely sure of the existence of God. Do you think that, if they were, they would be so alarmed with our denial? They insist upon it that they are as sure of the existence of God as they are of their own. Would they think it worth their while to rebuke us, if we should deny their existence? Nay, they would simply ignore it as an evidence of insanity. If they really believed in God, they would care no more about our attempts to dethrone him than they would at an attempt to put out the fires of the sun or to drag the stars from their orbits.

But whence arose this idea that right and wrong are founded upon the will of God, and committed to the trust of a royal family and established priesthood? We cannot hope to successfully refute its unlawful claim, unless we can master its origin, and so be absolutely sure of its falsehood.

Now, however it may fail to satisfy our reason, we must remember that it grew out of the mind of man, as surely as the grass grows out of the ground.

But in what condition of intelligence can we locate such a poisonous plant? Imagine man just emerging from the blind instinct of the beast into the first glimmerings of thought. He has neither government nor religion. He lives in caves, and wanders wild and unclothed through the forest, living on roots and berries. He knows no society beyond the temporary relations impelled by

hunger and passion. He is surrounded on every side with mystery. He seems to be the sport of innumerable powers. The heavens dart fire, and he knows not how to flee from it. The thunder is the voice of some angry foe. The earth opens at times as if to devour him; and he has no idea of the fire beneath, generating gas that necessitates an explosion. The cold freezes him; and all he can do is to flee before it, like the birds that fly southward when the north wind begins to blow. He knows nothing but himself. The qualities he finds in himself he confers upon all inanimate nature. It would be impossible in this state of barbarism for him to do otherwise. To him, all the powers of nature are personal and conscious as he is. He flees at their approach. He seeks to hide himself from their awful presence. But wherever he goes they are there also. He falls before them, prostrated with fear. He offers them gifts, to secure their good-will. He naturally thinks that they will want what has given him the most pleasure. A child has been born to him. The greatest joy he has yet experienced has come through the ever-open gateway of parental love. Surely, to give the gods what had given him this great joy must win their favor. Thus originated the offering of the first-born. Christianity, with its bleeding Son of God, is the echo of this awful, blind, and savage impulse of fear. Every priest who to-day proclaims salvation through faith in the blood of Jesus is the direct descendant of these trembling, cowering wretches who plunged the sacrificial knife into the hearts of their children, their first-born, in order to placate the anger of the gods who in fire and storm, thunder and earthquake, and all the unfriendly powers of nature, were seeking to devour them. But many were too awe-struck to dare present the gift. The majority dared not in any way seek to deal directly with these powers. But there was always some one whose desperation inspired them with courage, who offered to present it. Thus was born the priest, fathered by fear and mothered by

terror, and yet withal the bravest among them all. No doubt, the first priests were true men. But, however sincere at the commencement, they were under constant temptation to impose upon the people commands invented for their own glory and power, in the name of the God or gods they served.

On this foundation of fraud has been built all the pyramids of priestcraft that shut the human race in the gloomy caverns of fear, that were built by savage ignorance and superstition. The priest was sometimes king. If not king himself, it was his duty to anoint the strongest and bravest of the tribe as chief or king, and perpetuate the sovereign power by declaring him and his heirs the chosen of the Lord. In this way was originated the divine right of all kings and tyrants. As long as mankind were ignorant of nature, they were easily enslaved by despots and duped by priests. How dreadful is the history of the world beneath the reign of this hideous nightmare of superstition! It almost maddens me to think of it. If we could see in one glance one millionth part of the pain and despair born of this falsehood, it would slay us with horror. We can call to mind the tortures, the thumb-screws and racks, the fires and gibbets, the chains and dungeons, the hatred and cursing, the bitter oppressions and bloody wars, that make up its history; but to realize what they have meant is utterly impossible. Beneath the darkness thus spread over the earth, swarms of emperors and kings, vice-gerents and cardinals, priests and ministers, generals and soldiers, police officers and tax-gatherers, jailers and executioners, have plundered, wronged, tortured, fleeced, and butchered mankind by the authority of God. To deny this authority and to rise against this injustice is denounced by the Church as immoral.

For eighteen centuries, the Church has been here by divine authority, preaching righteousness and establishing a kingdom of heaven. But, if it has not brought in its stead the kingdom of hell, there is no truth

on the earth. To it has been given all power. Its hand has wielded every sword. Every cannon has stood ready charged to second its command. Every crown has received its blessing; every standing army, its prayers and the training of its priests. But what has it done to establish justice and truth in the earth? Let the dungeons of the inquisition make answer. Let the gibbets whose chains hang heavily freighted with skeletons rattle it in your ear. Ask the millions of ragged, starving paupers, covered with filth and vermin, on their knees, to the few who are covered with diamonds and royal insignia, to sing its triumph. Alas, poor wretches, blinded by ignorance, they do; but their song breathes no hope for this world. Let the millions upon whom it riveted the fetters of slavery tell how it brought them glad tidings. Let the prisons glutted with men and women, their hearts filled with savage hate produced by the cruelty and vengeance of our criminal laws, illustrate its beauty. Let the thousands of brothels, sustained by the degradation and ignorance it has cursed the bodies of men and women with, in order to save their souls, establish its power to cleanse the world with blood. Let the millions who, after toiling ten hours a day, cannot satisfy the bare necessities of life, the thousands of white-faced and sad-hearted children toiling in the factories, witness to its power to make men just and kind.

In the name of reason and humanity, I ask, is this morality? Are these things right? Is this the ought to be, to which all must yield in the spirit of faith? Must we continue to say that man is born to misery as the sparks to fly upward, and that all this is but just punishment for our sins? Are we always to have the poor with us, because even the revised New Testament says so? Are the powers that be ordained of God? Is there in reality a devil, an almost infinite fiend, who is permitted to go about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour? The revised edition of the Testament has amended the Lord's Prayer by closing with

"deliver us from the evil one." That one hideous sentence, born of the concentrated essence of savage fear, will do more harm than all the Bibles in the world, new translations and old, can do good. The D.D.'s, right reverends, and wrong reverends had a thousand times better spent their time for the last ten years in collecting all the Testaments they could find and burning them, before increasing the fear and superstition of the world by presenting such a doctrine as a part of a prayer, pronounced by the lips of God, as a model for all prayers to be formed by.

After eighteen centuries of faith, of folding our hands and taking no thought for to-morrow, of poverty of spirit, of considering persecution a blessing and so giving as many as possible a taste of its sweet comfort and joy, must we be regarded as monsters, deserving to have our sufferings on earth supplemented with the tortures of eternal fire for refusing to believe that all this is the will of a God whose love is infinite and who folds every child of earth in the protecting embrace of parental affection? Does this condition of things satisfy the reason of any unprejudiced man, say nothing of his heart? Nay! a thousand times nay! Reason, trained in the school of experience, seeking patiently for the light of truth, is rising up strong and clear against these things, and proclaiming without one shadow of doubt, All this is infinitely wrong and cruel. Its first and last utterance, amid the thunder of revolution and the quiet but equally sure work of evolution, is: All men are born with an equal right to life, liberty, and happiness. The State or society that does not conform to this is unworthy of existence. It says: Off with those crowns. Out of those palaces. Burn up in holy wrath those deeds that give to one man a million acres and to a million men not a foot. Let those hoarded millions be scattered where they will feed the hungry and clothe the naked. Take those children out of the factories and send them to play and study. Set those idle loafers, every one of them, to some work

that will increase the wealth of the world, so that no one need longer to toil mechanically ten hours a day to gain the bare necessities of life. Turn those prisons into reformatories and hospitals. Society must protect itself against the vicious, but it has no right to brutalize itself by inflicting punishment on those whose faults are the offspring of its own injustice. Instead of guessing at truth, investigate and interrogate nature, and the powers that now seem to you so hostile shall become your willing servants.

These are only a few of the demands of reason. The Church says this question of morality was closed long ago, amid the thunders of Sinai and in the Sermon on the Mount. Reason says it is only just opening. Men are only just beginning to see truly what ought to be. But enough is seen to condemn the morality of the Church as immorality. It dare not approach the just wrath of this all-seeing eye. It cowers before its bright and penetrating glance, and calls for the mountains that faith can remove to fall and hide it from the great day of its power. By every possible trick, device, and hypocrisy, it tries to turn the shadow backward on the dial of time, and arrest the dawning day of perfect mental liberty and equal human rights. Why? Because its doctrines are not humane. The light of reason is warmed and supplemented with the fires of the heart. The doctrines of the Church quench the flame of human love and pity. They make men ambitious, pious, zealous, but never humane. I mean those who thoroughly comprehend their logic. The thousands who still flock with sincere hearts to the churches do not understand them. But the leaders do, and their hearts are as cold and passionless as that of Napoleon was. They are rendered monsters by their ambition. In the same spirit as Napoleon sought to conquer the world with his sword, they seek to subdue it with their doctrines. The great missionary and Bible societies are controlled and utilized for the same end he organized

and trained his vast armies. What care the leaders of the Catholic Church how much suffering they inflict upon humanity, so that they achieve their all-devouring ambition of universal conquest? I have every reason to believe that the principal leaders who uphold the large Protestant sects are equally oblivious to every humane consideration. They are often as bloodless as flints. That for which they live and die is the triumph of their sect. Their only measure of success is that of numbers. Of course there are many honest, sincere hearts among both clergy and laity; but the master minds who direct the policy of these vast organizations are as ambitious and greedy of power as the Czar of Russia. The same fact prevails in State as well as Church. Our most successful politicians are those who sacrifice every principle of honesty and humanity to their ambition.

The evil of all this can be traced directly to the idea that right and wrong are founded in the will of God. But the reason of man, freed from the fetters of superstition, is rising up in judgment against this. It finds the foundation of right and wrong in the mind of man. It sees that the end to be striven for is the glory of man. It sees that we can only show mercy after being unjust; and that, when all laws insure the equal right of all men and women to life, liberty, and happiness, there will be no need to ask mercy of men or of heaven. All conduct in harmony with this is moral, all that is in discord with it is immoral. There is no other morality beneath the sun but that of the equal, universal rights of all men. Deprive rulers of their slaves and servants, and war will be impossible. Let the only law be perfect justice to all, and crime will be no more. Private interests will become united with public ones, and the most selfish ambition will find its fulfilment in devotion to humanity. Instead of seeking to transform men and women into likeness with society in its present conditions, we must endeavor to reconstruct society so as to advance to the greatest perfection their

physical, mental, and affectional powers.

How shall we do this? must be answered in coming lectures. Some who acknowledge the failure of the Church cannot see any ground for hope here. The failure of Christianity has begotten in them a nerveless, gloomy pessimism, that holds in its deadly grasp many a would-be champion of humanity. Turning disappointed from the skies, they approach humanity with a great enthusiasm and devotion, and, at the first repulses and ill-treatment by the slaves of superstition and semi-savages of ignorance, conclude that mankind is as unworthy of their devotion and worship as the gods. They fail to distinguish between the actual and the possible, and, being still under the influence of the unnatural command of Christianity, seek to love where only justice is demanded. Thus it is that many take refuge in a false and selfish individualism. They imagine that they are doing their whole duty by striving to elevate themselves above the general ignorance and superstition. They talk much about the dangers to morality caused by the breaking up of the old faith, and, in the old spirit of religion, take to priding themselves in their own conduct, and sometimes presume to present themselves as new moral examples and redeemers to the world. But what is moral in one may be very immoral in another. Any final and absolute standard for the individual is impossible. Within the limit of personal liberty, every man must be his own law-giver.

But most of the anxiety over our own moral status is as unhealthy as the constant trouble of the Methodist over the salvation of his own little soul. We shall probably only be thoroughly saved from this Pharisaism, when the construction of society will make it our highest interest to forget self in devotion to the general good. Though at present it is hard and sometimes impossible to do this, let us be of good cheer. Let neither the chloroform of a false optimism nor the despair of an equally false pessimism paralyze the energies of our souls. The light of reason is daily encroaching on

the night of faith. The long, gloomy reign of superstition shall come to its end, like the long drenching rain and gloomy weather of last week. But the darkness of centuries clears away slowly. As I watched yesterday from my study window the slow clearing of the sky, I found in it a symbol of promise.

The clouds seemed to fight with the sun all day. The rain turned first into a mist, that was in some respects worse than the downright shower; but, ever and anon, a gleam of light would break through the thick gloom, as if sent to bid us be of good courage. Later on, the clouds had to break and let the sun shine through; but, instead of departing, they seemed to settle down and hug more closely the sad earth. While the light crowned with beauty the distant hills, the valleys were hidden beneath heavy, steaming clouds of vapor. But toward night, behind all, there was the long strip of clear blue sky that was the promise of this glorious, intoxicating day. For centuries, superstition has poured its destructive floods on

the earth. Its pall of darkness and gloom has hidden from our sight the beauty and grace of nature. The present weakness of the Church is like a good, hard rain turned into a mist.

Changing the sword and flame into social ostracism and private slander is in many respects worse than open hostility. But occasionally, in some passing revolution, the light of reason has shed a smile of hope upon the sad heart of man. Though, when this light broke clear through and began to part the clouds, they commenced to gather closer to the earth, in the hostility of the Church to science and reform, they have still continued to disperse. Though the lofty and mountainous intellects are covered with its light and glory, yet the darkness lingers, like the mist in the valleys, among the people. But behind all these alternations of faith and reason is a long, clear strip of cloudless light of science, promising that in a glad to-morrow the brightness and beauty of the hills shall be that also of the valleys of humanity.

WHAT IS RELIGION?

TO ASK this question to some people would seem like asking, What is day? or What is night?

From their earliest recollections, they have been taught that religion is synonymous with all worth and service and all things bright and beautiful. Many of them suppose that they are true, honest, tender, and affectionate, simply because of religion. But the fact that there are just as noble men, as pure women, faithful and true in all times and places, who reject in total what they call religion, is proof beyond dispute that in this idea they are entirely deceived. Among the deniers of religion, as they hold it, have been many of the great heroes, patriots, and reformers, whose words and deeds are still the principal moral inspiration of mankind. Is not this one fact sufficient reason why earnest truth-seekers should ask anew, What is religion? We have doubtless, all of us, gone beyond the possibility of being troubled about the various, petty, insignificant ideas of it, that split up the Christian world, and divide every community into a number of jealous, envious, exclusive sects. I do not think any of you keep awake nights, trying to solve which is the true religion,—Methodist, Baptist, Episcopalian, or Presbyterian. The men in the various Churches, whose opinions are worth the slightest consideration by sane men and women, have gone beyond this idea themselves. Judging the present from the past, it seems quite certain that a large part of the present Church will come in

time to discard the supernatural hypothesis, and follow the leadership of those men who are seeking to fortify religion with the strongholds of science. The Broad Church movement in England, many Rational Religionists in Germany and France, Free Religionists, and many Unitarians here, and even Joseph Cook, say that religion must stand or fall by the scientific method of investigation. They not only make this admission, but also acknowledge that its facts, such as its appearance and development, must be found in harmony with the natural phenomena and the principle of evolution. The Church has always followed this method. Every new revelation of science is first violently opposed and anathematized as an enemy of religion, and then embraced and received into church fellowship. This, as you all know, was the history of astronomy and geology; and, though not long since Darwinism was denounced as violently as atheism, it has already been baptized and received into Christian communion. Though the creeds and catechisms still teach that "in Adam's fall we sinned all," and common-sense sees at a glance that, if there was no fall, then there was no need of an atonement; yet there are many ministers already who, while still claiming to believe and defend the creed, at the same time teach Darwinism.

The time was when science was compelled to conform to the Bible. Is it not a hopeful sign that the Church itself is beginning to fit the Bible to science? But, though we

are strongly tempted to have no dealings with this method of religious defence save to denounce it as the last and most shameful effort of hypocrisy to maintain a lie, we must not suffer ourselves to be led away by the tempter. There are, no doubt, many grand and true men who are earnestly digging in these trenches, and throwing up these breastworks against the advancing hosts of humanity. While we measure swords with them and test the strength of their defence, let us remember that they, too, are men, and respect them for their courage and devotion, even though sacrificed on the wrong side of truth and justice. They claim that religion is a universal factor in human nature, produced in the same natural way as reason or love. While they willingly surrender at the demands of reason all the miracles and revelations claimed for it, they still insist upon it that its character and presence in the heart of man is proof enough in itself that there exists in the universe a supreme will and heart, an infinite mind and love that has called it forth, even as the light is correlated to the faculty of sight. The fish in the Mammoth Cave have no eyes, because there is no light there to call them into existence. In the same way, they claim the yearning and aspiration of the human soul, reaching out toward the infinite, like an infant blindly in the night reaching out to find its mother, prove the existence of a spiritual parent. With this argument, they enter the Church, and in the name of reason and science summon us back to its forsaken and mouldering altars, and bid us again lift our voices and hearts in prayer and praise to God. Are these men the prophets of the future? Have they in this way removed the necessity of infidelity to religion? Do they meet front to front the ideal man and woman, and at once satisfy their utmost reason and utmost love? Some present here to-day may think they do; but I do not, and I will tell you why. In the first place, they fail to consider the fact that the darkness of the Mammoth Cave is as much a fact as the light. There are the fish with-

out eyes. By what right do they assume that what they call religion is analogous to light instead of darkness? It is quite easy to fall into raptures concerning what religion has done, the heroism and martyrdom it has inspired, the grand cathedrals it has built, the wonderful books it has written, and the lofty music it has composed.

But we must remember that it has also kindled the fagots that slew the martyrs, invented the instruments of torture that were the principal reward of heroism, that beneath the grandest cathedrals were the chambers of inquisition, that the labor of the millions who toiled to rear them was all needed to create bread for the hungry and clothing for the naked and houses for the homeless thousands beaten by the cruel blasts of winter, that the books have been forged into fetters for man's reason and idols that have led him to waste his gifts on the empty air, and that the music, as it has filled the vast cathedral isles, has dragged him down upon his knees like a slave instead of inspiring him to stand up on his feet and be a man. We must remember also that these men associate the highest grace of character, worth, beauty, and nobility of soul, with this that they call religion, when we know that this is not true. I do not wish you to think for a moment that I deny that these qualities exist along with this upward-looking of the heart into the skies for help. We all of us know many such. Some of the men and women toward whom my heart goes out in warmest love, and mind in sincerest admiration, ascribe whatever is best in them to the power of faith. What I claim is that in this they are deceived. These humane qualities of heart and mind are of the earth earthy, and need no spiritual world above to account for them. Instead of being rained down upon us from the love of God, they have grown in the affection of countless mothers as they have watched with sleepless patience above the cradles of their children, and in the hearts of fathers as they have toiled on by flaming forge, on giddy scaffold, among roaring machinery, in deep, dark

mines, on the rushing trains, or on the wide seas, through summer's heat and winter's cold, in order to keep the wolf of hunger from those they loved. The goodness that is in our hearts is the fruit of all the centuries. Every dart of pain, every glow of love, every tear of sympathy, every thrill of joy, every star of hope, every ray of beauty, all the struggles of humanity to find what is just and true from the beginning until now, have made us what we are. What we ascribe of this to the glory of God is stolen from the honor of man.

Now, when I remember how the most rational worship bandages the eyes of reason and blinds to the glory and true meaning of life; when I see how little there is in the largest promises of the most rational conception of religion to reform society or to satisfy the actual crying needs of the human race, I am constrained to acknowledge that this which they call religion is the mammoth cave of superstition that hides from us the glory and beauty of earth. I also deny the universality of this that they mean by religion. Buddhism, a religion representing one-third of the human race, is entirely indifferent to the gods. Edwin Arnold, its best interpreter, makes Buddha say:—

"Which of all the great and lesser gods
Hath power or pity? Who hath seen,—who?
What have they wrought to help their worshippers?
How hath it steadied man to pray, and pay
Tithes of the corn and oil, to chant the charms,
To slay the shrieking sacrifice, to rear
The stately fane, to feed the priests, and call
On Vishnu, Shiva, Surya, who save
None—not the worthiest—from the griefs that teach
Those litanies of flattery and fear,
Ascending day by day, like wasted smoke?"

This is just as true of the most enlightened worship of liberal Christianity as of that of Vishnu or Shiva. All these elegant rituals and beautiful poetic prayers are but as wasted smoke. It does not feed the hungry nor clothe the naked, establish justice nor liberty in the earth. To quote again from Arnold:—

"Hath any of my brothers 'scaped thereby
The aches of life, the stings of love and loss,
The fiery fever and the ague shake,

The slow, dull sinking into withered age,
The horrible dark death?
Hath any of my tender sisters found
Fruit of the fast or harvest of the hymn,
Or bought one pang the less at bearing time,
For white curds offered and trim tulsi leaves?
Nay: it may be some of the gods are good
And evil some, but all in action weak,
Both pitiful and pitiless."

The question arises, If religion be not universal in the yearning of the heart for communion with God, is it so in any sense? I think it is. Has it not been hitherto always a feeling or emotion that has inspired or directed the actions of mankind? Matthew Arnold has defined religion as "duty touched with emotion." This is the only definition that will hold true in a universal sense. Doctrine is but the engine. Religion is the motive power that turns the wheels and drives it along the track. It does evil as well as good, according to the character of the doctrine. It inspires the Thug who follows murder as a profession to please his God, equally with the Quaker who opposes all war in the name of his. I admit that religion concerns the heart, and furnishes the motive to conduct. I acknowledge the potent influence of this feeling in the lives of men and women, but I do not believe that it has been beneficent. So far as the needed inspiration to influence conduct, religion has been a success. But it has oftener led to wrong than right. But when men claim that this incentive to action, born of faith in God and the future, can be married to science and reason, I cannot believe it. I look around me in vain for the first sign of its truth. Take the Churches that approximate the nearest to reason and yet maintain worship, how cold and dead it is! There is nothing in it to warm you, because reason teaches that it is but as smoke wasted in the air. Almost every article in a Unitarian or liberal religious paper is an advertisement for an enthusiasm. In a large conference of Unitarians, they generally imitate the Orthodox by commencing the day with a prayer-meeting. About one in twenty attends; and, after a long impassioned talk

about the necessity of being more devotional, perhaps one or two old ministers manage to draw out a prayer that makes you feel that they are entirely uncertain whether any one listens or whether he will care about it any way, if he does hear.

Those who claim that religion is of the heart are right. Wherever its power and enthusiasm are felt, the intellectual life is suppressed. Faith and reason are as opposite as night and day. You cannot make them mix any more than oil and water. You have seen how a lamp will behave when some water has fallen on the wick. That is exactly like the religion of these most advanced churches. The light at the best burns but dimly, and constantly seems at the point of going out altogether. Most of the preaching is done with the eyes of reason wide open; but occasionally they are shut, and you catch a shadowy idea of faith in God.

But the superiority of reason to faith is found in the character of these worshippers. For though their devotion is so feeble, and their profession of religion a farce, yet they are generally most excellent people. Some of you have doubtless heard the story of the man who dreamed he went to heaven and saw the Lord God himself sitting on his throne, and surrounded, within easy reaching distances, by great crowds of Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Episcopalians, and away off, out of sight and sound, in a distant corner of paradise, a lot of Unitarians and Free Religionists. On asking the reason of God, why they were so far off from his glorious presence, he was informed that they were the only ones he could trust out of his sight.

It was a Unitarian of course who had the dream. But, if it had been a Liberal, Infidel, or Atheist, he would have inquired the reason why there were none of that class of people in paradise. He probably would then have been told that they were so taken up with mankind, and found such perfect satisfaction in working for them, that they had not yet found out whether he existed

or not. Instead of coming here to loaf around in these beautiful gardens, they are off on various exploring expeditions. Some are stirring up a revolt in Jupiter against kings and priests. And all of them are engaged in some enterprise for the improvement of things through the power of reason, science, liberty, and justice. A few of them came here one time, and asked me to perform a miracle (I think it was to make a square triangle); and, on learning that I as much as themselves am subject to law, went off in disgust, and reported that I was only a cheat.

But to return to Unitarians and Free Religionists. Notwithstanding their general good character, they are cold and passionless. They are the hardest people in the world to interest in any real reform. They take scarcely any interest in the advancement of their own cause. They see their churches growing less every year, and yet go on talking about theirs being the new faith. If one of their number does actually get a spasm of enthusiasm, they look upon him as a dangerous character, especially if it be born of some devotion to humanity. If, on the other hand, it be genuine religious fervor, they worship him as a god. Out West, they have a man who is by every characteristic a thorough Methodist, who, by some quibbling over the Trinity, has got into the Unitarian ministry. He holds Unitarian revivals, and puts out the mourners' bench. He is the wonder and delight of the whole denomination. Wealthy Eastern Unitarians send him no end of presents, and build churches for him that are left to stand idle and empty about as fast as they are built. They bring him out at all their conventions to show what depth of feeling and boundless devotional enthusiasm Unitarianism is capable of producing, when the truth is he only exhibits in a more glaring light the utter poverty of rational religion in emotion and enthusiasm. Why is it thus bankrupt? Because they seek for water in empty wells and broken cisterns. They stand gazing into

the skies, waiting for a vision, when the real, inspiring conditions of life are blossoming, like the flowers at their feet.

The attempt to maintain an altar, at which science and reason shall minister to faith, is a complete failure. The religion of the Church must perish with its doctrines. The emotions that touched the old morality cannot be of any service to the new. Free Religion, so called, is a sickly plant, and promises nothing for the future, because it is only a feeble, short-lived sprout, that has sprung up out of the last remnant of sap in the fast decaying root of faith.

That which shall take the place of religion and serve to inspire our conduct shall not even be called religion; for this word has become so thoroughly identified with the worship of God that it can never be made to express the emotions that are in perfect harmony with reason and nature.

But the question arises, What are these emotions that shall touch the new morality? Reason is cold. The mere perception that all men are born with equal right to life, liberty, and happiness, does not inspire us immediately to work for the regeneration of society, that shall secure for them these rights. Is the advent of reason the death hour of all religion or the birth of a new one? Will the tide of emotion that is now ebbing so fast never return, or will it flow again, with new health and freighted with greater store of blessing? We are told by many evil prophets that the first is the sad fate that awaits us. They tell us that, while reason may discern what is good and true and beautiful, it leaves us powerless to realize our ideals. The heart empty of faith becomes so selfish that life is entirely consecrated to the enjoyment instead of to the duty of life. But still, as George Eliot sings:—

“ They who mourn for the world’s dying good
May take their common sorrows for a rock,
On it erect religion and a church,
A worship, rites, and passionate piety,
The worship of the Best, though crucified,
And God forsaken in its dying pangs;
The sacramental rites of fellowship

In common woe; visions that purify
Through admiration and despairing love,
Which keep their spiritual life intact
Beneath the murderous clutches of disproof,
And feed a martyr strength.”

That we are reduced to this extremity is not for a moment to be believed. The capacity of nature is by no means exhausted. Even death waits forever upon life. The withered leaves of last year enrich the growth of this one. Above the battle-field, the grass soon waves more luxuriantly, while the most beautiful flowers twine as lovingly around a skeleton as they would a frame of gold. So above the battle-field of faith and reason shall glow a richer, nobler enthusiasm, and around the skeletons of departed creeds shall twine more beautiful flowers of sentiment, fresh-born from a new spring-time in the human heart. The channel through which has flowed the aspiration and longings of the hearts of many may be to-day dry and empty; but, as soon as they learn where to seek for them, they will find rich and pure springs of healthiest feeling that shall fill it to overflowing again. All that is needed is to fully get the dust of faith out of our eyes. We have gazed into the skies so long that, like people who stare at the sun, we are almost blind. But, when we become content with the present and learn to look around us, our vision will be purified, and new sources of emotion will open in our lives. The sympathy with and enthusiasm for humanity will fill our bosoms. Worship of God is an enchanted veil that hides from us the sorrows of mankind, while the loss of such faith prepares us to understand them.

Humanity not only dreams, sings, and beseeches in us, but also suffers, bewails, and laments. Through infidelity to the skies, we find that the divine essence of truth, goodness, and beauty is to be found on the earth. In place of seeking for a paradise beyond the grave, we labor to build it here. We see that to promulgate our doctrine of equality is to be the overthrow of all kings and nobles, the disbursement of all armies, and

to silence the profane priests who pander to the tyrants. How beautiful are *nature, life, humanity*, these which tyrants and superstition have perverted! To labor for their full deliverance fills our breasts with hope and fervor. We already anticipate in ourselves the day when there shall be no masters and no slaves, when human nature shall be understood, appreciated, and sanctified, when all shall be free, equals, brothers. Already we hear the murmur of the incoming tides of this new emotion and enthusiasm for humanity, in the startling devotion of the Nihilists, the earnest struggles of the Socialists and Republicans of Europe, and the multiplied organizations for the deliverance of labor from the tyrannical and covetous grasp of greedy capitalists. In thousands of ways, we see that, though millions are no longer influenced by either the fear or love of God, they are earnestly swayed and controlled by the fear and love of man.

Another source of emotion that comes to the human heart, when reason assumes its sway, is the sweet sense of liberty. This is better felt than told. The man who has been a slave knows that there is a great difference between his present enjoyment of life and when he was confined by force to a monotonous and wearisome routine. His life may cover no larger ground. He may have some troubles now he never had before. But to him the feeling that he is free, that all fields of life and activity are open to him, that the days to come hold for him many welcome surprises, is a priceless boon.

But the sense of mental liberty is far larger and keener in its contribution to the finest feeling of life. When we were confined in our thought to a creed, life was tame and insipid. All wonder and expectation were quenched in its dogmas. The infinite had no power to thrill and move us, and life was simply like that of the slave who knows that each to-morrow will be a weary repetition of to-day. But now all the fields of truth are open before us. The unfenced universe is evermore our home. We have launched our bark bravely upon a shoreless sea. To-day

we rest by some beautiful island for supplies, and to-morrow sail forth again, an endless explorer, knowing that, wherever we go, we shall find truth and beauty. We are thrilled with the expectancy of him who seeks adventures. Many white sails dot the purple and joy-crested billows, while those on board cheer and greet each other as brothers beloved. But all figures fail to describe the largeness and beauty of life when to-day is always brighter than yesterday, and every to-morrow is pregnant with a new delight. The light of reason leads evermore to higher paths. Fear is conquered by love. Brighter stars of hope shine above us. Duty, once a mere drudgery wrung from us by fear, is now a free-will offering of delight. Fear of an Almighty Taskmaster sitting on the throne of the universe with uplifted whip ready to strike us with cruel blows, if we but falter in doing his arbitrary will, is no more. As the freeman is his own master, so the Liberal becomes his own God.

To do our own will, to be true to the highest and best within us, is to be true to the highest good of all. There is no longer war between our own desires and the law of life. We enjoy the peace of a definite and consistent law of conduct. As the great Shakespeare says:—

"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."

The world needs the healthful and saving influence of absolute mental sincerity. It can stand a great many blunders, when men are honest with themselves and each other; but when, through the influence of popular creeds, thousands profess what they do not believe, the stream of life's worth is poisoned at its fountain source. Every church is a prison-house for some soul. Every doctrine of the supernatural is a cruel fetter on some mind. Every ism is a limitation, because it is only a part of the whole.

In harmony with this, the Church has always despised intellectual attainments. Science and knowledge are everywhere spoken

against. The wisdom of this world is said to be at enmity with God. Belief in supernatural dogmas and knowledge are as antagonistic as slavery and freedom, fire and gunpowder. The tendencies of the age compel the Church for mere self-preservation to seem to favor full and complete education. Still, every opportunity to discredit the teaching of science is eagerly seized upon.

Another source of emotion and true inspiration, independent of religious dogmas, is found in our sense of relationship to nature. The world in which we live is a perpetual cause of wonder and delight. It is in itself to us an infinite mystery. We find much more enjoyment in it than those do who try to explain away this mystery by imagining a still greater mystery.

Wherever superstition clouds the sky of life, there is the shadow of a fearful awe upon the heart. No clouds of fear obscure the light of reason. To all who walk by its brightening ray, the beauty and perfume of the flowers, the wonder and charm of the changing scenery of the landscape, yield a perpetual delight. The sense of our relationship to nature thrills us with a sweet and poetical pleasure. All its moods affect us. We feel our relationship to it, and rest in its truth. There is a power in it which, as Matthew Arnold says, makes for righteousness, that is eternal in its order and harmony; but it is not to us an abstraction outside of nature, but nature itself. As long as men believe that the world has been created out of nothing by a power greater than itself, they will fail to see its beauty or feel its inspiration. Then let the altars of faith perish. Let the old sun of religion haste to its setting; for we know that this new one of nature, liberty, and humanity, is ready to appear.

It is true, as some complain, that in gazing directly upon nature and humanity we discern more clearly the imperfections of both. But, as nature is irresponsible, we need not despise the good on account of the evil, while our lives are enriched and ennobled by this sympathy with the sufferings of humanity. It is far better to weep with a brother than to pass him by in his trouble. To share the grief of another enlarges the heart's capacity to enjoy life. Our joy is increased by the love of every one who remembers us with gratitude for some tender word or kindly deed. Every time we protest against any injustice or tyranny at home or abroad, we plant a flower in the garden of our hearts that shall blossom into fragrant memories. As Liberals, we have greater opportunities in this direction than any people. Our work is in itself a wellspring of never-failing joy. We plead for liberty and equality for all before the law. We demand that the doctrines that fill space with demons and cruelties, and make life a terror to every tender, loving heart, shall stand or fall by their own might or weakness. We do this in the name of little children that are inveigled into the Sunday-schools, and for the millions yet unborn. We know that when sincerity and naturalness abound, when the home shall be the most sacred temple, pure human love the holiest religion, and wealth increase until comfort shall sit by every fireside, our prisons will be to let, our insane asylums and poor-houses will be empty, and happiness will blossom in every heart. It may be that it will be long before this ideal will be reached; but every approach will be made to it by the substitution of the present emotions or religion for those that are born of nature, mental liberty, and humanity.

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE.

ON mentioning to a lady what my subject was for to-day, she expressed the hope that in the future there would be no need of a church. I think we can most of us reciprocate the hope.

The word "church" comes from *cir* or *circle*, and implies a society within a society. Now, the ideal organization is that which is inclusive of all persons and interests. This can only be realized in the State. It is true that it would be perfectly right to call the just State the true Church. Still, the present idea of the Church as something higher than society, and representing a more sacred life than that which concerns our human hearts, bodies, and minds, must be outgrown. The Church of to-day exists on the imperfections of society. It fattens on the sorrows of mankind. It is like a physician who lives on the misfortunes of others. Those who are well have no need of a physician. So, when society becomes in its construction perfectly humane, it will have no need of any church. But, while people are sick, they will employ doctors, whether they are killed or cured. So, while human society is imperfect, it will support the Church, however much it may bleed and torture it. Now there are good physicians and bad ones; men who represent exploded methods of practice that are more harmful than beneficial, and men who do represent and bring to our aid the laws of nature. So there are false and true Churches, Churches that kill instead of cure, that lead the race backward instead of forward, and

present for the regeneration of society a more unjust system than the one they seek to replace. So also there must be a true Church, that can bring to the social ills the curative power of nature. I have shown, in other lectures, how the individual is the type of every Church or State. The ideal man or woman must be intellectually sane, so as to perceive truth and justice. He must also have the right feelings or emotions forcing him to act up to his convictions; while both mind and heart will be wasted, if he lack the physical strength and vitality with which to use them. In like manner, a true Church or State must have laws, doctrines, or morals, whichever you like to call them, that are true and just. Second, it must have the public spirit, patriotism, enthusiasm, or religion, impelling all to obey the law or doctrine. But, again, as in the individual, both of these will be valueless, unless they are supplemented with a healthy and vital organization.

We are living in an age of transformation. Great and important changes are actively taking place. Reason is dethroning faith as a law-giver, the inspirations of humanity and nature filling the hearts and giving intensity to the lives of hundreds of thousands hitherto swayed by religion or emotion, born of faith in God and Christianity. In preceding lectures, I have contrasted the new with the old morality, and the new with the old religion. To-day, I wish to compare the present Church with that which must sooner or later, by the

eternal truth and power of nature, take its place. In the study of this subject, we must take into consideration both the ideal and possible. When you are sick, you have a vision of health. If you had not, you would be ignorant that you were ill. Lying there on the bed, unable to help yourself, pale and haggard, tortured with pain, you dream of climbing mountains and other feats of strength, and sigh for the sweet paradise of good health. Inspired by this desire, you wrestle with disease, and seek in every possible way to regain your health and strength. Now, society is sick. To tell how bad is almost impossible. But it is covered with sores from the crown of its head to the soles of its feet. With hundreds of thousands of paupers, criminals and insane, each one a festering sore; with millions who, through ignorance, live and die as in caverns; with our streets lined with brothels, with lust and intemperance pouring into the life-currents of society their ever-increasing streams of pollution,—it is impossible for any thoughtful person to deny that society is sick. The Church acknowledges this, and offers to cure it. It has had the patient a long time, and, so far as we can see, has done but little good. We begin to suspect that its remedy is not the right one. We begin to look around to see if there is no other physician. We suspect that it is unable to cure, because it has no true ideal of social health. When it has done its best, it does not satisfy ideal man or woman. Our highest vision of what ought to be soars far above its largest promise. The present State is equally at fault with the Church. Many of our laws, instead of being the perceptions of reason, are calculated to destroy it. Some of them are relics of the worst barbarism, and most of them the outcome of class legislation. The true idea of equality and justice is often as far away from them as the east from the west. They were made by men who were slaves to a great tyrant above, and many smaller ones below. They put all the responsibility of crime upon the

individual instead of society. They brutalize thousands, in order to make others still more brutal. They leave thousands without a chance to live. Though they exert every endeavor, yet many find the battle for existence so terrible that, in lone garrets or in the silent waters, beneath the cover of night's mantle, they seek deliverance from despair in the oblivion of death. They prejudice the minds of our children, by teaching theology in the public schools in favor of mental insanity. They necessitate, through ignorance, that the majority should be engaged in pursuits for which they have no attraction, and in hundreds of ways rob mankind of their right to life, liberty, and happiness. Not only are its laws false, many of them, but also its patriotism. There is but little healthy political enthusiasm. That which stirs the community at election times is mostly artificial, and made to order. So many pot-house, illogical harangues, so many torches and flags, with a good sprinkling of the vilest abuse of the opposite party, produces the excitement that passes among many for patriotism. Neither are the organization and administration of the laws perfect. Think of the corruption of our civil service. Witness the farce that is being performed at Albany. Of what avail is the will of the people, when our public officers are removed for the term of election from all responsibility to the only true and lawful sovereign power? While this lasts, society is paralyzed. The feet and hands obey not the will. Still, bad as all this is, the Church is worse than the State, in spite of its pretension to be the true kingdom of God, to which all others should give allegiance. The Church claims here in America to occupy a field of action that does not trespass on the rights of the State. And yet the underlying idea of every Church is hostility to the State. The Catholic Church has claimed the right to make and unmake kings. It is ambitious of universal dominion. And, when we get at the heart of Methodism, or any other Protestant sect, we find that they are really aiming at the same

thing. But, if they should succeed, would they improve our condition? Shall we get rid of our troubles by all going into the Catholic Church, and electing the Pope for President, cardinals for senators, and priests for public officers? Nay, this physician is a quack. The remedy is worse than the disease. It may kill, but never cure. There is more injustice between priest and people than tax-gatherer and tax-payers. The emotion that thrills the devotee at the altar is kindled at worse fires than that which inspires torch-light processions and hurrahs at the stump.

Rome is further off than Washington and heaven still further. The President is hard to reach when justice is wanted, the Pope still harder, while we call in vain for God to protect the innocent. The time in which this Church was the ruling power in society covers what we call the Dark Ages. The condition of Russia to-day is a hundred times better than that of Europe was under the reign of this Church. It is still a source of vast evil in the world and a constant menace to our civil and mental liberties. It educates in our midst a vast army, who are taught that they owe their first allegiance to the Church. It keeps them out of our public schools, in order to develop faith and destroy reason. You can tell its subjects on the streets, as you meet them hurrying to the senseless folly of mass, from the dull, uniform expression of mental imbecility it has stamped on their faces. It is a vast system of treason against the republic. It is a whole army of quacks engaged in sowing disease instead of health, bleeding and fleecing the people of their all too meagre earnings already. When we contemplate the fat paunches of its priests and the lean ones of many of its subjects, the poverty, ignorance, and filth of those it claims to have saved, we are compelled to say, "Physician, heal thyself." How can the blind lead the blind without both falling into the ditch together? But here is the great Methodist Church that says, Amen! with holy fervor to all I have said against Catholicism,

claiming to be the true physician and to hold the panacea for all the ills that flesh is heir to. Suppose it should gain what it is striving for,—the absorption of every other form of society into its own,—would it establish justice and truth in the earth? It is true they call one another brothers and sisters; but are the rich and poor any nearer together for being in the Methodist Church? Do the wrongs and evils of society stop when they touch this or any other Protestant Church? Nay: they only deepen the darkness by making it a crime to be happy. In preaching resignation and faith in an all-wise Providence, they smother the fires of revolution that would swiftly burn up these wrongs. The realities of life are sacrificed to dreams and shadows. Reason is still insulted and denied. The lowest instead of the highest elements in human nature are constantly appealed to. The tricks of the revivalist are of the same order as those of the politician.

The camp-meeting shouts come from the same source as those that greet the stump orator. Think of society turned into one great Methodist Church, everybody compelled at the point of the bayonet to attend class-meeting. If moral suasion was used instead of force, the minority would have to attend against their conscience or be starved out of existence. Life would be divided between pious solemnity and hypocrisy. The theatres would all have to be closed. Every form of amusement but a church sociable would be prohibited. Science would be forced into harmony with Genesis. All the best books would be useless. If a new Shakspeare should appear, he would be turned into a Methodist bishop. The whole intellectual landscape would be reduced to a dead level of uniformity. An original idea would be treated as a crime, an appreciation of any worth or beauty of the earth be regarded as an evidence of depravity. Fifty years ago, they turned a woman out of church if she put just one rose or daisy in her bonnet. To-day, they are inhuman enough to outlaw the rest of man

kind by commanding their members to confine their patronage to those who are of the household of faith. Every Church is equally barren of practical results. The most liberal deny reason in the name of reason, and circumscribe personal liberty with traditional boundaries that are just as tyrannical as those of any creed. By seeking to marry science and reason to faith, they quench enthusiasm. Their devotion to liberty and reason seems so true that many a Samson is enticed by this Delilah and shorn of his strength. What, then, shall we do? "Is there no balm in Gilead?" Have we no conception of social health, liberty, and happiness higher than what they present? Most certainly. Reason has long seen that the Church does not satisfy either the mind or heart of man. Each Church of to-day is a theocracy, and is copied from the pattern by which every monarchy has been formed. Their doctrines, like the laws of the State, do not conform to the inalienable right of every man and woman to life, liberty, and happiness.

What the world wants and waits for is a form of society that shall be founded on this perception of reason. Every one who is born has the right to be well born. If the laws and principles of heredity were fully made known, and the surroundings of life made to conform with them, there would be no imperfect children. Every one ought to be educated, and provided with some attractive way of gaining an honest living. The fear of starving or becoming a pauper in a world where there is abundance for all is proof of the imperfect nature of our social organizations. The ideal State will provide for the education of every child. It will see to it that the pleasures of art, of literature, of nature, of music, and the drama, are within the reach of all.

It will see to it that whatever is true in morals is taught in our public schools, and incorporated into every law. It will recognize the right of each one to belong to him or herself, and so stop the almost universal pre-empting of the minds of children. Ed-

ucation should train the mind to see and judge for itself, instead of confining it in the straight jacket of a dogma. Society must take upon itself the responsibility of both crime and virtue. The true State will concern itself with the inner as well as the outer life of the people. Its schools will be as productive of moral power, sentiment, and poetry, as of mathematics and history. The graces of mind and heart are as subject to culture as flowers. While we leave them to chance, we are in a state of barbarism. The State, in its trinity of law, patriotism, and administration, comprises the moral climate that controls the character of the people as truly as the natural climate does that of vegetation.

There ought to be no way in which any child born beneath its sky can be deprived of physical, mental, and spiritual education. To accomplish this, we must employ the right conditions, just as we must secure the right soil, temperature, and light, to produce a perfect plant. No force is needed. All men and women need is a chance to grow into all grace and beauty in the good soil of justice and beneath the sunshine of happiness. The difference between the most virtuous and vicious is not one of choice, but of faulty education. Crime is energy misdirected, and filth is matter out of place.

These flowers before me were once dirt, foul to touch, smell, and sight. What wonderful enchantment has the proper light and heat wrought? But there is far greater beauty of thought, of love, and noble deed, hidden in the foulest, most degraded man or woman. It is thus because it is out of its place, like a rose-tree planted in a damp, cold, and dark cellar. But how shall we get it in its place? That is the question. Shall we leave it to chance or the voluntary labors of the Churches? It has long been so left, and we can all bear witness how poorly it is done. The failure is owing principally to two reasons: first, they are ignorant of what the right conditions are that can produce a man or woman; second, what they do is given in the name of charity instead of

justice. He who believes that he is saved by the grace or mercy of God, or of his fellow-man, is of necessity more or less ashamed of himself. We shall need neither grace nor mercy, when justice is rendered to all. The true State will cover every interest of life from the cradle to the grave. It should ease the burden of motherhood, and soften the hard fact of death by every ministration of poetry and art. But all this is the ideal that is far removed from the present reality and possibility. It is only when we have bridged this gulf that there will be no need of something that will resemble the Church. When this is accomplished, the State will be the only Church. Every fire-side will be an altar of worship, each school-house a cathedral, every court-house a temple, and every public officer and teacher a minister of religion.

But this is the vision of health and strength that has invaded our sick-chamber; and the question, Where is the medicine and who is the physician that can restore us to health? remains unanswered. We have seen that they are not to be found in either the present State or Church. Now, since we take the liberty of pronouncing them imperfect, should we not be prepared to say, "A more excellent way show I unto thee?" To find fault with the achievement of the State or Church, and go to work and do it better, are two quite different things. But, even if we could not do the last, it would not entirely excuse us from the first. We are under no obligation to furnish a new truth before we denounce a lie, any more than we are to give a good bill for every counterfeit that is tendered us.

But, if there was no true money, there would be no false. So, if we had no truth, we should not discover the falsehood of the Church. It is because we have a better morality and a more generous enthusiasm to offer humanity that we seek to destroy those of the Church. But, to make these effective, we must give them a body or visible organization. If this had been done, the question, What will you give us in the

place of the Church? would never have been asked. We are engaged in a serious warfare. If we would win the victory for liberty, we must concentrate our forces so as to make all our power felt. Even at the risk of being called a Church, we must join hands into a new circle. We must do this, even though we cherish the hope that in the future there will be no church. Pioneers generally have to work together in making a clearing in the wilderness. So must we in battling with the vast growth of superstition. We have for our justification that to us organization is only a means to an end. Instead of seeking to assimilate the State, we seek to be absorbed into it. Nothing can be done without a body. We have both the ideas and motives; but they are valueless, unless we set them to work.

How to do this is the most important question we can ask. I do not promise to furnish the answer, because that is to be given by deed rather than word. The world has lost its faith in prophecy. Its response to all large promises is: The field is open to all comers, go to work and try. This for which we seek is larger than all definitions. But, when the world sees it, it will know it. For it, all hearts wait. The worst bigot begins to discover that his heart and mind are larger than his creed and sect. The most thoughtful see that the day has come for far other and more important revisions than that of the New Testament. The world may be said to be on the tiptoe of expectation for a better solution of the riddle of life. When the wise *Cedipus* comes, he will find *Hosannas* in many hearts. But whether our deliverer be one or many, whether it come in the holy wrath of revolution or the quiet, gentle process of evolution, the real problem will be solved by the establishment of a social order that will produce men and women, as the soil and sun and heat produce a plant. Knowing this, the experience of the past has taught us some useful lessons. Above all, we know that we must avoid the blighting frost of sectarianism. We must invite to the study

of the truth instead of its belief. To believe in the word of another is not enough. Each one must know for himself. Hence, while we stand for all that is true and just, we must not receive adherents on oath of fidelity to a creed. We must accept every man or woman who feels drawn toward us without confession of faith or sacramental rite. To demand even a certificate of good conduct is to be false to the very heart of our being.

A creed of any kind is but a rope of sand, and any drawing around us our cloak of respectability or superior morality to our fellow-man an evidence that we have not yet been born into the true spirit of humanity. We are not to judge, but to inspire. While we compare and denounce principles of action in Church and State, we must avoid all personal condemnation. We must not shrink from lifting the hammer of the iconoclast against the old, but we must at the same time construct a new society that shall aim at both social and political perfection.

The trouble with the organization known as the Liberal League was that it was too exclusively a political one. It sought union in the head alone. But the fires of the heart, kindled by social fellowship, must weld the cold iron of reason before it will hold together. But, while we aim at producing a society that shall hold together until our ideal state is achieved, we must remember that it will be slow work. If it springs up, like Jonah's gourd, in one night, it may wither again as speedily; and then, like him, we shall growl because our prophecies have not been fulfilled. It is not to be drawn up by one man or any number of men in a set of resolutions. It must grow out of the hearts and minds of the people, as the flowers come forth from the earth in the spring-time. I believe that it is coming, because I discern the conditions that will produce it. I can no more describe these than I can that ineffable perfume in the atmosphere that suddenly tells us in some early day of April that spring is coming. Still, we know that it is at hand. So do

those who observe the signs of the times know that the kingdom of man is at hand,—the new, glad spring-time of humanity, that shall unlock all the icy fetters of dogmatism, melt all the snows of formalism, and once more fill the earth with joy and beauty. But we must be careful not to let the brightness and perfection of the ideal unfit us for devotion to the limited possibility of to-day. This is the mistake of many. There is such a contrast between what is and what ought to be, they seek with one bound to cross the gulf. As I was writing this, a large fly that was buzzing around the gas-jet went near enough to get its wings scorched, and fell down at my feet maimed and helpless. Poor thing! thought I, you loved the light too well. If you had been more modest in your desires, you might have lived out happily all the hours of a fly's life. So I constantly meet people whose wings are singed and burnt, who have lost all their enthusiasm by dashing at once into the ideal. Most of our failures in liberal organizations are simply owing to this imprudent virtue of impatience. We must not expect to flash from the dark night of superstition direct into the clearest light of reason and warmest glow of enthusiasm for humanity. If we do, we shall only get our wings scorched, and go to join that large army of failures who are lying on their backs, like flies that have lost their wings, able to do nothing but buzz, complain, and die.

But we must guard against being discouraged by the sight of these calamities. We had better fail ourselves in trying than not try. All these organizations, the wrecks of which are to-day strewn the shore of life, or whose fate of breasting the storm seems to hang in the balance, have served some good purpose. Each new one has enlarged the circle toward the whole of humanity. Unitarianism and Universalism were a great advance on Orthodoxy. Free Religion was necessary to show us that the old feelings must perish with the old doctrines. The Liberal League has taught us that we must supplement our mental activity with social

communion and fellowship, or be afflicted with household quarrels, seeking to rule by force instead of love. The society of humanity is clearly teaching us that the old forms can never be reformed so as to be of any service to us. Thus, as George Eliot says,—

“ Even our failures are a prophecy,
Even our yearnings and our bitter tears
After that fair and true we cannot grasp;
As patriots who seem to die in vain
Make liberty more sacred by their pangs.”

Even we may fail. Still, that will not stay the incoming tide that is already beginning to beat on the shore of humanity. But the conviction grows every day strong within us that large and beneficent results shall in

time spring out of this association. I feel it in your enthusiasm and the generous confidence you have reposed in me.

Shall we not do our best to solve this problem, by showing to the world that union can be preserved without uniformity of opinion, that social coöperation can be carried on without sectarianism, that the deepest feeling and largest enthusiasm can be married to reason, that all the fervor of devotion toward humanity can be kindled in our hearts without playing at church by imitating the old forms, and that all the advantages of concentration of our forces may be had, as a means to a far greater and nobler end?